

Dear Parents:

We are extremely excited to let you know about our **Stand Strong** program. Bullying issues are very much a concern. Prevention is very important and necessary. The definition of bullying is when the following is involved: *1) an intent by the perpetrator to cause physical or psychological harm to the victim, 2) a power imbalance between the victim and the perpetrator, and 3) repeated negative acts.*

Stand Strong is modeled in part after a non-profit organization that sponsors a foundation called Stand for Courage. We are going to focus on creating a culture where all students grow into their best selves. Stand for Courage believes:

It's not the bully.

It's not the victim.

It's you.

Don't be a bystander.

Stand up, step in, and speak out.

Get caught doing the right thing;

Stand For Courage

We have this same belief. We want our students to STAND STRONG. We want to teach students not only how to stand strong, but how to recognize and change behavior that is hurtful to others. By the time an adult is aware of a situation it has been happening for a while. We want to empower our students to help one another, become problem solvers for each other, thus creating a strong culture among our students. When an adult is made aware of a situation we want all adults to be talking the same language, have the same expectations and have continuity in changing behavior.

Teachers and students are trained on specific steps to accomplish this task. Each week teachers will review the Stand Strong 'rule' and procedure. There are specific steps that adults will follow when students need further assistance or when things do not resolve themselves. These steps include questioning, role play, review of procedures, referral to administration if needed.

The 'rule' we will adopt is: **'If someone asks you to stop doing something that they think is disrespectful, you stop – whether you were doing it on purpose or not. When you are asked to stop, do the following: 1. Stop what you are doing. 2. Take a deep breath. (It is hard when a peer tells you to do something.) 3. Go about your day. (No big deal – apologize or just drop it.)**

We will also be teaching our students how to appropriately respond when they feel they are being bullied or mistreated. These steps are to tell the other person to **STOP. WALK away if necessary.** If these steps are done and the other person is not responsive, **TALK to an adult.** Again, teachers and staff have been trained to use specific steps to assist students in decision making, problem solving, appropriate behaviors and productively helping one another.

Our students are amazing! They are smart, bright and want to make a difference. They are capable of problem solving and working together to create positive changes. I am excited for Stand Strong. I am excited to have our students learn additional leadership skills, problem solving strategies and participate in this program.

Sincerely,

Lisa Muirbrook

Art City Elementary