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## FAMILY GAME NIGHT TONIGHT! 6:30-8:00! BRING YOUR FAVORITE BOARD GAME!

### Anti-Bullying and Harassment Lesson Taught

On Tuesday in our monthly student assembly, I taught our students in grades k-5 the legal definitions of harassment and bullying. I teach lessons like this one annually because I do not want our students to make bad decisions and harass or bully. I also cannot ethically hold them accountable if I don't teach them about the laws about harassment and bullying. Honestly, oftentimes the word "bullying" is used inaccurately. Bullying and harassment are not tolerated at WRS or in any other Hartford school and we take reports about unkind, rude and potential harassment or bullying very seriously.

What I've come to realize is that most children don't understand the differences, nor do they understand the implications or how to stand up to a bully. Please read this article as it may be helpful to you when you discuss this with your child(ren). [The differences between bullying and unkind behavior](#) As I shared in our WRS Family Handbook, the investigators in our school are Susan Flanagan and me.

Please read these definitions and discuss them with your child(ren):

**"Harassment"** means an incident or incidents of verbal, written, visual, or physical conduct, including any incident conducted by electronic means, based on or motivated by a student's or a student's family member's actual or perceived **race, creed, color, national origin, marital status, disability, gender, sexual orientation, or gender identity**, that has the purpose or effect of objectively and substantially undermining and detracting from or interfering with a student's educational performance or access to school resources or creating an objectively intimidating hostile, or offensive environment.

**"Bullying"** means any overt act or combination of acts, including an act conducted by electronic means, directed against a student by another student or group of students and which:

- a. **Is repeated over time;**
- b. Is intended to **ridicule, humiliate, or intimidate the student;** and
- c. (i) occurs during the school day on school property, on a school bus, or at a school-sponsored activity, or before or after the school day on a school bus or at a school sponsored activity;  
or (ii) does not occur during the school day on school property, on a school bus or at a school sponsored activity but can be shown to pose a clear and substantial interference with another student's right to access educational programs.

Examples:

- Name-calling and verbal taunts
- **Teasing that doesn't stop and that embarrasses or hurts another**
- **Excluding someone from a group**
- **Ganging up on others**
- Physical threats or actual physical harm

- **Punching, shoving,**
- **Kicking, pinching**
- **Spitting**
- Written or electronic messages or social media posts that ridicule or intimidate
  - **Spreading rumors or lies about someone, even it is with a fake identity**
  - **Posting unkind pictures or hurtful messages**
  - **Sending mean text, email or instant messages**

Some of you know that this is my 30th year as an educator. I've become aware of too many cases of children using devices at home to send messages to others that are rude, unkind and that could warrant a harassment or bullying investigation. Personally, I don't think that students in an elementary school have the impulse control or the maturity to have a device that allows them to send messages through apps. It is not my business whether or not your child has a device. It becomes my business if a student reports to me that they've received a message or messages that affect him/her at school. I am appealing to all of you to become informed and to closely monitor your child's use of technology. Here are a couple of good resources: [commonsensemedia.org](http://commonsensemedia.org) and [Very well - Know More](#).

### **Farm Day Was a Blast!**

I hope that your child was able to tell you about her/his experience at Farm Day last Friday. The weather was great, but the presenters that we had were fantastic! Soon we will post pictures on [our website](#). I want to thank the many parent volunteers that baked and/or donated bread for taste testing at the WRS PTA Farm Stand as well as those of you who were able to run the farm stand. The kids loved it!

### **Norwich Lions' Club Provides Vision Screening**

On October 10th we were very fortunate to have six members of the Norwich Lions' Club provide a vision screening for our students. They use a tool called Welch Allyn Spot Vision Screener that can detect seven conditions of the eye and vision including near sightedness, farsightedness and astigmatism. The screening showed that 21 students should be seen by an optometrist to have a comprehensive evaluation. Once again, I'm in awe of yet another program in our community that volunteers at the White River School to provide opportunities for our students!

### **Upcoming Events**

- October 20 - CHaD Penny Drive last collection day
  - October 20 – PTA Game Night 6:30 PM
  - October 26 – Picture Retake day
  - November 2 - Early Release for students at 12:50 for Parent/Teacher Conferences
  - November 3 - Parent Teacher Conferences- no school for students
  - November 17<sup>th</sup> – PTA Family Movie Night
  - November 30 - WRS Winter Concert @ 6:30 p.m.
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