

Vermilion Elementary School has implemented the Dare to Care anti-bullying program in all grades, ECS through grade six. Through the use of the anti-bullying curriculum, frequent activities in multi-grade groups to promote empathy, skill building and cross grade relationships, and reinforcement by visits from professionals such as Lisa Dixon-Wells, VES has reduced bullying and increased empathy and a sense of belonging at our school. An important part of this program involves ongoing professional development for staff in order to learn the most effective ways of dealing with the issue of bullying, and time for staff to meet and discuss implementation of the program in our school. Although our school had a limited amount of bullying issues, any amount is too many. We utilize this program as a basis for positive relationships and the idea that VES is a family. Our school is a great place to be, with students who are empathetic and caring toward one another. We are proud of their efforts and the friendly atmosphere that has been established by all.

Strategies for implementation:

- A.** We will implement the Dare to Care Anti-Bullying curriculum within our classrooms. Lessons will be taught by the homeroom teachers, and reinforced through activities in our multi-grade Dare to Care groups and semi-monthly assemblies.
- B.** We will have Lisa Dixon-Wells come to our school to reinforce the program and its salient points with our students. Lisa, along with her partner and Dare to Care program cofounder Dwayne Peace, will be at our school every second year to do an intensive one day session with our grade five and six students. In response to the research that has found that the peak years for bullying are between grades 5 – 8, the Dare to Care program has created another student day specifically designed for that age group. Take the T.I.M.E. is a combination of assembly style presentations, small group

activities, games and larger group discussions. Through the carefully designed progression of activities, students will be better able to understand the damage that bullying, cliques, peer pressure, racism, and oppression can cause in individuals and communities. As well, because the goal of the Dare to Care program is to mobilize the silent majority of students into action, the Take The T.I.M.E. Day provides several forums for students to talk about their fears and why they remain silent during bullying situations. Throughout the student day, participants will discover that there is strength in numbers and that they truly do have the power to make significant changes in their school climate. Through the process of the student day, students, teachers, and parents will be shown how to shift the imbalance of power to create the school of their dreams.

- C.** Lisa will also work with our staff to help us focus our energies in the right direction and work effectively with bullies, bullied students and the silent majority. Lisa will do a half day professional development session for our teaching staff on the same day, focusing on the latest research about anti-bullying strategies and how to further our work in this area.
- D.** We will hold semi-monthly assemblies to review Dare to Care philosophy and important skills and strategies, and to do re-energizing activities to keep our forward momentum.
- E.** We will meet monthly in our multi-grade Dare to Care groups to do special activities and skill building lessons. The purpose of these multi-grade groups is to have students build relationships with other students and staff members, and to increase empathy and understanding among different ages of students.
- F.** At staff meetings, members of the school's Dare to Care committee will bring new ideas, research and issues to the staff for discussion and consideration. We will talk about how to continue Dare to Care lessons in our classrooms and

in the school as a whole, as well as how to move forward in our progress.