**Kia ora tatou from the Counsellors.**

This Friday (22nd May) is Pink Shirt Day

From the NZ Mental Health Foundation:

Pink Shirt Day is about working together to prevent or stop bullying by celebrating people's difference and promoting positive relationships.

Pink Shirt Day began in Nova Scotia, Canada in 2007. A group of students decided to defend a kid who was bullied for wearing a pink shirt. In a show of solidarity, many of his peers turned up to school the next day wearing pink shirts, and Pink Shirt Day was born. By wearing a pink shirt, or a **pink wrist band**, people identify themselves as an ally. Wearing pink is a way of showing those being bullied that there are many people around who care.

At JPC we are strongly committed to standing together against bullying and hope that all will support this worthy cause. From today, students will be selling pink wrist bands which may be worn throughout the week. As we have just had a mufti day to fundraise for the Nepalese people following the recent earthquakes**, student involvement this year will be limited to the wearing of wristbands and stickers, no shirts this year**. However, keep an eye out for staff members on Friday looking stunning in pink!

This Week’s focus – Anti-bullying

Bullying itself is an issue that invites a strong emotional reaction and it is helpful to keep in mind that what we stand against is the **bullying behaviour,** not the child involved. When it is your own child being targeted it is easy to vilify the culprit, but actually most cases of bullying occur within friendship groups and children often hope to restore friendship once the bullying has stopped. For this reason it is really helpful for parents to keep calm and focus on stopping the problem behaviour rather belittling or maligning individuals. Even the worst “bullies” have been good, kind and loyal friends at other times.

We thought it might be helpful for our wider school community to hear about some of what we do within counselling and as part of our wider pastoral care, to stand against bullying and in support of friendship.

**Bullying Surveys**

Later this term, students from all year levels will be asked to complete a non-identifying survey about any experiences they have had this year around bullying at school. They are invited to name any students, including themselves, who they think are the targets of bullying. Also, any students they have noticed who are bullying others. The results of the survey are collated and the counsellors and year level deans speak individually with every child named. At JPC we believe it is important that all students have the opportunity to contribute to a safe and inclusive school and we have found this an effective and non-threatening way for all student voices to be heard.

**Under Cover Anti-Bullying Teams (UCABT)**

UCABTs have been used with great success in support of students who have felt excluded and “picked on” by others. Counsellors work alongside the child on the receiving end of bullying, to put in place a team of influential “undercover supporters” within the child’s class. Students report that this makes an immediate and profound difference to their sense of belonging and happiness. It’s also wonderful to see the learning that happens for those on the support team, with values and skills learned, following them throughout their time at school.

A large part of what we do as counsellors is around relational work with students and we appreciate your input as parents, caregivers and whanau. If you have a concern that your child is being bullied or is bullying others, please don’t hesitate to contact us at school.

Na mihi nui kia koe,

Nancy Macmillan and Neil Carter.