

Greetings Falcons,

Happy Wellness Wednesday!

October was first declared as National Bullying Prevention Month in 2006. Since then, October has been a time to acknowledge that bullying has devastating effects on kids and teens such as school avoidance, loss of self-esteem, increased anxiety, and depression. Bullying can occur in multiple ways. It can be verbal, physical, through social exclusion, or via digital sources like email, texts, or social media. Unlike mutual teasing or fighting, bullying occurs when one person or a group of people is perceived as being more powerful than another and takes advantage of that power through repeated physical or emotional assaults, threats of harm, intimidation, or by purposefully excluding a person from a valued social group. Being bullied can severely affect the person's self-image, social interactions, and school performance and can lead to mental health problems such as depression, anxiety, and substance use, and even suicidal thoughts and behaviors.

It's aggressive, mean, and potentially life-threatening. Bullying comes in many forms, none of which are acceptable. According to a recent federal survey, nearly 20 percent of U.S. high school students reported being bullied on school property within the past year. Fifteen percent reported cyberbullying.

October's National Bullying Prevention Month reminds us that students, parents, teachers, counselors, and school administrators all play a role. Positive change comes as we begin to emphasize respect and inclusion on campuses across the country.

This month I encourage you to be aware of how we treat one another on this campus. Where do you notice inclusion and kindness? Where do you not? What do you do when you observe bullying? What do you not do? We all play a part in creating and maintaining an environment of safety. What do you want your part to be?

This week's affirmation:

“Be the change you wish to see in the world.”

-Mahatma Gandhi

Take care and be well,
Ms. McDougall