

Bearing down on bullies



- Carmine Marinelli, 24 hours

STUDENTS FROM KILLARNEY secondary get some bear-size support for today's Anti-Bullying campaign from Vancouver Canadians mascot Bob Brown Bear. Sporting a pink "Stop Bullying" T-Shirt, Bob is spreading the anti-bullying word.

Taking a stand against bullying

B.C. has its work cut out if it wants to catch the rest of the world on bullying prevention.

Even with increased awareness of today's official Anti-Bullying Day, bullying expert Dr. Brenda Morrison says we lag behind.

"When you look at the stats, we're not doing very well," said Morrison, a SFU professor.

A recent World Health Organization study has Canada at the back of the pack, ranking 27th out of 35 countries when it comes to reports of bullying and victimization.

"That's not something to be proud of."

The problem, Morrison said, is parents and schools traditionally deal with bullying in terms of punishments, such as detentions, instead of delving into the social reasons for bullying.

Lisa Pedrini, manager of social responsibility and diversity at the Vancouver School Board, says programs are in place to address the underlying culture but added change takes time.

"We're working on creating social behaviours that make bullying unacceptable," she said. "If you look at something like CounterAttack, it took 20 years for drinking and driving to get there."

That's where awareness campaigns such as today's Pink T-Shirt Day play a major role.

"[The event] raises awareness and gets people talking about bullying," said Carolyn Tuckwell, executive director of the Boys and Girls Club of Greater Vancouver. "People aren't willing to allow this to continue."

- Matt Kieltyka, 24 hours