

Student leaders deal with bullying cases in schools

Sarwat Nasir

DUBAI — A sixth-grade student was left feeling distraught and insecure after being bullied by one of her peers at school, in Dubai. She reported the incident to the student-led anti-bullying committee, who approached the bully and investigated the deed.

This is one of the many cases the student-led committee has handled at the Raffles World Academy in Dubai.

The leaders of the group were speaking at the Global Education Solutions and Supplies (GESS) summit on Tuesday. They touched on topics around why students are better suited to look after bullying cases in schools.

“The other day, I got a report of a sixth-grade girl being bullied because of her pigtails. She felt really insecure about her body image,” the president of the committee, Monica Straehl, told *Khaleej Times*. “So, I talked to her. I asked ‘what makes this more difficult for you and are you struggling with anything right now?’ And she said ‘yes, I’m currently really insecure about my issues. I have issues at home and the bullying is really putting me down. I feel like there’s nowhere I can go.’ I then talked to the bully and he was having some problems as well. He said his parents constantly fight and that he’s having issues dealing with these emotions. He knows it’s an issue but he can’t really stop.”

Straehl believes students can deal with these kinds of cases better as they are “closely related” to the topic and issue.

She said the committee doesn’t have anything against school counsellors and felt they usually aren’t aware of the full story around a bullying case.

“If a student within my age group comes to me, it is a lot easier for me to deal with the case than for counsellor, in my opinion,” she said. “I’m someone who is closer to the age, I’m facing the same hormonal imbalance and I know exactly what kind of situation we are being put through currently.”

“I know how the tests make us feel. Usually, there is a person who is friends with the person who is being bullied. We’re not saying



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Monica Straehl, president of anti-bullying committee, Raffles World Academy

counsellors are bad, we always ask for their advice. But it’s easier for students to lead the community as it’s something closer to our hearts and the counsellor can’t always work through everyone.

“The community we have for the anti-bullying committee is just so large that we’re able to handle a lot more cases at one time.”

Khaleej Times has reported several bullying incidents that have happened in the past, including one where a former Dubai student revealed how she was pushed down a flight of stairs by those who were bullying her.

In another incident, a student was stabbed to death by a teenager. Also, an Emirati bullying victim

had a short film made about his tragic experience, where bullies cut his wrist and called him “dirty blood” for being half-Filipino.

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