As a result of a grant we received from Bully Stoppers in 2015, Saint Martin of Tours was able to partner with NIRODAH to deliver the Respect Ambassadors Program – ‘CYBERWISE’ to the Year 5 students. This ‘CYBERWISE’ project was underpinned by the concept that the antidote to bullying is compassion which provides opportunities for students to demonstrate “random acts of online kindness.” The understandings from this program is that it is cool to be kind, safe, and fair, at the same time acknowledging peer pressure and “coolness” for students.

At Saint Martin of Tours we recognise that values inform attitudes, and attitudes inform behaviours. We realise that we need to convince students that the right values are paramount in cyberbullying, because while teachers can police behaviour, students whose minds have not changed can continue to perpetuate bullying behaviours online and in other cyber environments. The active bystander approach encouraged through this program reinforces our action plan of strengthening and promoting safety.

Students have been working across the three Grade 5 classes in Team’s to explore an aspect of online bullying. Opportunities have allowed students to see that assisting people online is “cool” and therefore encouraging them to intervene before problems arise. Bystander education was applied to bullying in the cyber world with greater student intervention into cyberbullying. Students’ empathy towards others was extended, by trying to understand the state of mind of children who bully, by asking and answering questions like, “Are bullies in a happy state of mind?” and “How do people who feel compassion towards others act towards others?”

All students in Grade 5 will be presenting their findings of their Student Team at a ‘Family Expo’ on Thursday September 8th between 7pm and 8.00pm in the School Hall (GECCO). Amongst the presentations there will be interactive activities run by the students. The students are very proud of their achievements and are presenting their findings to their parents so that they can see and hear it first-hand.