

Martial answer to stop bullying

DEBORAH JOHNSTON

IF your child is the target of bullying in the playground, Hoshin Jutsu martial arts may hold the answer.

Bullying has become a huge issue for children and can often make their school life miserable.

However, by learning a set of coping strategies, your child can take back his or her power and stem the tide of emotional and physical abuse.

Rose Smith, a senior instructor at Hoshin Jutsu, said the classes not only taught self-defence but built self-confidence, good citizenship and promoted respect for others.

"We get a lot of positive feedback from parents and children. The best tools for kids are verbal skills – learning how to use words effectively," she said.

She said learning jujutsu to physically defend yourself was just part of the solution.

The school uses "the traffic light system", whereby children practise talking their way out of a situation before resorting to a physical response.

They are taught to think red, yellow, green for stages of the conflict.

The red light is where the child asks the bully to stop.

If this fails he is in the yellow-light zone and should try to remove himself from the situation.

Finally, if all else fails the child can move to the green light and defend himself – which means escaping with professionalism, never violence.



Takahiro Iwata and Adam Lorimer during a Hoshin Jutsu martial arts class.

Photo: AMY JEA

Name: Hoshin Jutsu Martial Arts Centre

Owners: Geoff and Rose Smith

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The buzz: Martial arts for children and adults that aims to improve your life on many levels

"It's all about learning the correct responses to make the bully back off."

All the instructors at Hoshin have trained at the Children's Hospital Institute of Sports Medicine at Westmead and are dedicated to the total wellbeing of all the students.

As well as self-defence, classes include a cardiotherapy warm-up, games and a "mat chat", where children have the opportunity to discuss issues that are bothering them.

Not just for children, the Hoshin Jutsu Martial Arts Centre has many programs for adults as well and offers many social activities such as fire walks, picnics and sunrise seminars at the beach.

It's also a great way to meet new people.