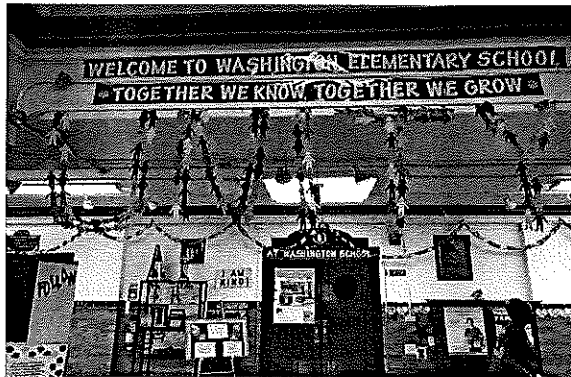


Washington School Counseling Newsletter



Do what's right,
not what's easy.

MRS. MARANO (908) 851-4432

Counseling Corner

What's Happening Around Our School

We had a great start to our 2018-2019 school year. Students and staff participated in Alex's Lemonade Stand at Back to School Night and the "Heart of Gold" project in which we raised over \$800. The funds were donated to WHIP Pediatric Cancer Center. In the first week of October, all of our students and staff

participated in the Week of Respect Activities. Students and staff signed a "Respect Starts With You" banner that is displayed in the front hallway. The "Follow the Golden Rule" bulletin board is in the main hallway, and "Keys to Respect & Kindness" bulletin board is on the 2nd floor. Throughout the first and second floor are quotes of kindness and

inspiration on the walls that each class created. The "NED Show" Growth Mindset assembly was presented to grades K-4. Also, in October, we also celebrated School Violence Week, Red Ribbon Week, and Unity Day. For each of these weeks, students completed activities which are displayed in and outside the classrooms.

November/December Important Dates:

- November 5th-November 21st: Student's Change Hunger Food Collection
- November 6, 8 and 9: Election Day & Teacher's Convention
- November 13: World Kindness Day
- November 21-December 9 : Scholastic Book Club Pajama and Book Drive
- November 24-25: Thanksgiving Recess
- December 1-21: Random Acts of Kindness Calendar

How to Talk About Lockdown Drills

So your child comes home anxious about a lockdown drill they had in school. How should you discuss this with him/her? Drills such as lockdowns, shelters in place, and evacuations help students know what to do in an emergency. Explain to your child that their teacher and principal want to keep everyone in the school safe. That's why the school holds drills to prepare the children for situations like intruders, fires, tornadoes, or earthquakes. Reassure your child that while it's scary to think about emergencies, having a plan can make your child feel more in control. Ask your child to discuss other ways we stay safe, such as wearing a seat belt in the car, looking both ways before crossing the street, or going indoors during a thunderstorm. They will realize that they know how to do a lot of things that help to protect themselves and how to think and react to an emergency. If your child has anxiety about these drills, speak to the

teacher about it so the teacher is aware and can help. Unfortunately, school emergency drills will be a way of life from now on. The most important thing to remember is that you know your child better than anyone else. You can do more to ease her anxiety if you plan ahead and talk about school drills often. Here are some other tips:

1. **Remain calm.** Drills can trigger fear and anxiety in parents, and children are quite good at picking up emotions and nonverbal cues. If they see you anxious, then they will believe they should be too. So, talk with your child in a calm and assured manner.
2. **Listen more than talk.** By listening and asking open-ended questions, you will get a better sense of their

thoughts, feelings, and questions.

3. **Discuss how practice keeps them safe.** Examples of day-to-day safety procedures help us so that we know what to do in various situations, while emphasizing the likelihood of something happening is quite small.
4. **Use age appropriate language.** Children are concrete thinkers and don't understand abstract concepts. Younger children need brief simple information while older children are more likely to ask questions about their safety. It's ok to talk about school safety efforts by school and local officials.
5. **Encourage telling an adult.** Talk with your child about the importance, no matter what, of telling an adult if they see or hear anyone talking about hurting themselves or others. This helps build confidence that we can all contribute to keeping each other safe.

How Do I Stand In Your Shoes?

Understanding how another person feels or "standing in their shoes" is an important social skill for children to learn. The ability to have empathy for others will help them interact and respond to others appropriately. Two ways for a child to understand how another person feels are to:

- ♦ think of a time when they had the same experience and remember how they felt
- ♦ imagine how they might feel in the same situation.

It is important for children to remember that not everyone will feel the same way in the same situation and that nonverbal cues can help us understand how a person might be feeling. You can encourage your child to build empathy skills by:

- **Reading books together:** Books provide great examples for children to practice empathy. Ask your child how he thinks the child who has no one to play with in one story is feeling or why the little girl in another story might be smiling. Tell your child how you'd feel if you were one of those characters. Ask how they would feel or react in a specific situation. These discussions will help your child learn about other people's emotions and relate them to his own.
- **Setting an example:** Acts of kindness and charity are an excellent way to teach your child empathy. Bring him along when you're taking a meal to a sick neighbor or a friend with a new baby. Let him help you pack the bag of clothes to take to the local charity.
- **Recognizing their actions:** Begin to give names to behaviors so that your child can realize the impact of their actions. Say, "Oh, you're being so kind. You made me feel great" when your child went out of their way to help you. This will help them learn that responsiveness to other people's feelings is recognized and valued. Also, don't be afraid to point out when your child being less than caring. Try saying, "It made your brother really sad when you hit him. What could you do to help him feel better?"



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