



Manalapan-Englishtown Regional School District

Guidance Handbook

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Philosophy

The philosophy of the School Counseling Program of Manalapan-Englishtown Regional Schools focuses on the individual student. All students are accepted as unique individuals of worth having personal, social, and educational needs.

We believe that schools have enormous potential for helping students develop the knowledge and skills they need to be socially and emotionally healthy leading to their academic success. Social and emotional learning (SEL) is the process through which children and adults understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions.

The emphasis of the guidance and counseling program is to maximize the potential of all students through a comprehensive developmental approach. The counselor works with all students within the educational framework of the district. Through individual, small and large group guidance and counseling settings, coordination and consultation with the family, school and community resources, the counselor works to assist the students in becoming healthy and effective human beings.

Possible Small Group Topics

Changing Families/Banana Splits: Half of all children in the United States will experience the end of their parents' marriage. This group offers an opportunity for children to process their emotions and deal with the changes in their lives. The group setting helps to normalize feelings that students may have, see that they are not alone in their experiences, and allows them to support one another from a place of empathy.

Depending upon the age and make-up of the group, some topics may include:

- being part of a family, despite divorce;
- reasons parents marry and divorce;
- handling changes;
- two houses;
- feelings;
- being the messenger;
- grieving loss and reducing self-blame;
- dating/stepparenting; and
- happy marriages.

Stress Less/Anxiety: Anxiety disorders in children and adolescents are prevalent and are often precursors to psychiatric disorders in later adolescence and adulthood including additional subsequent anxiety disorders, major depression, substance abuse, and suicide attempts. This group offers an opportunity for children to learn how their body experiences stress/anxiety and teaches strategies for how to regulate.



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Depending upon the age and make-up of the group, some topics may include:

- identifying and naming worries;
- identifying how the body experiences worry;
- differentiating between the sizes of problems and expected reactions;
- calming strategies;
- things in/out of self control;
- feelings;
- self-talk;
- using calming strategies in school/home; and
- art activities (e.g., calming jars, mandalas, worry boxes, worry warriors).

Social Skills/Friendship/Kids Talk: Social skills are an “academic enabler,” and students with more developed social skills are more successful in the classroom. Poor social competence has the potential to lead to many negative outcomes, including academic failure and the experience of rejection by adults and peers.

Depending upon the age and make-up of the group, some topics may include:

- Superflex;
- identifying emotions;
- recognizing others’ emotions and responding appropriately;
- Characteristics of a friend;
- effective communication with friends (e.g., staying on topic, listening);
- understanding social cues and personal space;
- managing conflict;
- sharing/taking turns; and
- dealing with losing/making mistakes.

Superflex: Michelle Garcia Winner’s Superflex and Wee Thinkers curriculum provides more intense training in social skills for students who may be significantly impaired in social thinking and problem solving. The program is complex and parts of it may be utilized within a group format.

Depending upon the age and make-up of the group, some topics may include:

- becoming a social detective;
- recognizing how the brain works;
- learning to understand and identify social thinking characters and team of unthinkables;
- recognizing how others view you; and
- strategies to defeat the unthinkables.

Bereavement/Healing Hearts: The death of a loved one is a highly stressful life event for bereaved children. Studies have shown an increased risk of mental ill-health and psychosocial problems among affected children in both school and life. This group offers an opportunity for children to process their emotions and deal with the changes in their lives. The group setting helps to normalize the feelings that students may have, see that they are not alone in their experiences, and allows them to support one another from a place of empathy.



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Depending upon the age and make-up of the group, some topics may include:

- learning about death, terminology;
- discussing the death, funeral/memorial service;
- identifying and coping with feelings;
- identifying and coping with changes;
- remembering the loved one;
- stress relievers;
- art activities and letter writing; and
- discussing positives in life.

Impulse Control/Stop, Think GO!: Multiple studies show that children who can control their impulses have better critical thinking skills to solve problems, tolerate frustrations and engage appropriately with their peers.

Depending upon the age and make-up of the group, some topics may include:

- Superflex;
- Zones of Regulation;
- making choices;
- Stop, Think, Go! strategy and three magic thinking questions;
- understanding emotions;
- recognizing how others view you;
- calming tools & strategies;
- similarity of anxiety and anger;
- I-messages/speaking my feelings; and
- art activities.

Self-Regulation/In the Zone: Being able to effectively regulate one's emotions is correlated with increased performance in social relationships and executive functioning. This group teaches the various aspects of the zones of regulation so that students may improve their ability to self-regulate.

Depending upon the age and make-up of the group, some topics may include:

- recognizing and identifying feelings;
- identifying and understanding the four Zones of Regulation;
- making a connection between feelings and the corresponding zone;
- identifying triggers that move you out of the green zone;
- strategies for returning to the green zone from each of the other zones; and
- asking for help to regulate by identifying the current zone and what may be helpful to return to the green.

Self-Esteem/I am Awesome: There is evidence that shows a correlation between self-esteem and achievement. Low self-esteem can lessen a student's desire to learn, ability to focus, and their willingness to take risks. It can also lead to bullying behavior or social withdrawal.

Depending upon the age and make-up of the group, some topics may include:

- emotions;
- positive self-talk;



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- bucket filling, helping others;
- srt activities;
- peer helping;
- identifying and owning personal strengths; and
- giving and receiving compliments.

Possible Large Group Activities - Kindergarten

Whole Body Listening: Creating an understanding of the importance of listening with your whole body and how each body part “listens.” Students will discuss why this is important for learning and within their social relationships.

Feelings: Students will engage in a discussion about feelings, specifically that all feelings are valid, everyone has them, and that they serve an important role in letting us know what we are experiencing. Focus may be on identifying what feelings look like on ourselves and others and learning how to express feelings in a socially appropriate way that allows needs to be met.

Zones of Regulation: Students will be presented with an overview of the four zones of regulation and will learn how different feelings correspond to the different zones. Students will discuss how to implement strategies to keep them in the green zone, which is ideal for learning.

Self Control: Using a variety of teaching tools, students may learn techniques to control their emotions. Focus may be on tattling versus telling, keeping hands and feet to ourselves, and calming strategies. Mindfulness and breathing techniques may be introduced and modeled.

Cooperative Learning: Students will understand the importance of teamwork. Focus may be on using your words when you become frustrated with another person.

Understanding and Accepting Differences: Students will understand that we all have differences but that inside we are all the same. Focus may be on identifying physical characteristics and common likes and dislikes.

Character Education Development: Students will be introduced to various prosocial character traits. They may engage in building-wide or classroom-based activities to reinforce their understanding of these traits. Some examples at the kindergarten level include being giving, being kind, and being respectful.

Anti-Bullying: At the kindergarten level, teaching students to be inclusive and kind to one another can proactively reduce incidences of bullying.



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Possible Large Group Activities - Grade 1

Whole Body Listening: Students may review the concept that listening with your whole body is important. Focus may be on learning how to give and receive I-messages.

Feelings: Students may review the concept that all feelings are valid. Focus may be on understanding how your feelings can impact others.

Self Control: Students may review the techniques taught to control emotions. Focus may continue to be on tattling versus telling, keeping hands and feet to ourselves, and calming strategies.

Cooperative Learning: Students may review the concept of the importance of teamwork. Focus may continue to be on using your words when you become frustrated with another person. In addition, other concepts such as turn taking, sharing and problem solving strategies may be taught.

Understanding and Accepting Differences: Students may review the concept similarities versus differences. Focus continues to be on physical characteristics versus similarities.

Possible Large Group Activities - Grade 2

Respectful Behaviors: Students may review I-messages as a technique for keeping respectful. Other conflict resolution strategies may be explained. Focus may be on taking responsibility for your own actions and creating a respectful school community.

Conflict Resolution: Students may review I-messages as a technique for problem solving. Focus may be on identifying the behaviors of the bully, victim, and bystander. Other conflict resolution strategies may be explained.

Friendship: Students may review the techniques taught to control emotions. Focus may be on behaviors that can help attract friends versus behaviors that can cause the loss of friends.

Cooperative Learning: Students may review the concept of the importance of teamwork. Focus may continue to be on using your words when you become frustrated with another person. In addition, the concept of solving problems without adult intervention may be emphasized.

Respecting Differences: Students may review the concept that we all have differences but that inside we are all the same. Focus may be on understanding cultural differences as well as accepting others whose interests and abilities may differ from our own.



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Possible Large Group Activities - Grade 3

Respectful Behaviors: Students may review I-messages as a technique for keeping respectful. Other conflict resolution strategies may be explained. Focus may be on using inappropriate language to describe others.

Conflict Resolution: Students may review or identify the behaviors of the bully, victim, and bystander. Other conflict resolution strategies may be explained. There may be an introduction of cyberbullying and safe ways to report conflict.

Friendship: Students may review the techniques taught to control emotions. Focus may be on behaviors that can help attract friends versus behaviors that can cause the loss of friends.

Cooperative Learning: Students may review the concept of the importance of teamwork. Focus may continue to be on using your words when becoming frustrated with another person. In addition, the concept of solving problems without adult intervention may be emphasized.

Respecting Differences: Students may review the concept of individual differences and similarities. Focus may be on understanding cultural differences as well as accepting others whose interests and abilities may differ from our own.

Possible Large Group Activities - Grade 4

Respectful Behaviors: Students may review I-messages and use of inappropriate language to describe others. Focus may be on empathy, respectful dialogue and reacting appropriately in conflict.

Conflict Resolution: Students may review all types of bullying and safe ways to report conflict. Focus may be on social problem solving (e.g., exclusion, inclusion, social media).

Cooperative Learning: Students may review problem solving without adult intervention. The focus may be on group dynamics and how to get along with diverse populations.

Respecting Differences: Students may review cultural differences as well as accepting others whose interests and abilities may differ from our own. The focus may be on discussing bias and prejudice.

Careers: Students may investigate how school is directly related to future career choices. They will start an individual e-portfolio with the counselor.



Possible Large Group Activities - Grade 5

Respectful Behaviors: Students may discuss the meaning of self-respect and respect for others. Focus may be on empathy, respectful dialogue and reacting appropriately in conflict.

Conflict Resolution: Students may review all types of bullying and safe ways to report conflict. Focus may be on social problem solving (e.g., exclusion, inclusion, social media).

Cooperative Learning: Students may review problem solving without adult intervention may be discussed. Focus may be on how to work with other types of students.

Respecting Differences: Students may review how differences enrich our society. Focus may be on discussing stereotypes, and inclusion in all its forms.

Careers: Students may continue to investigate how school is directly related to future career choices. They will adjust their individual e-portfolio with the counselor.

Suggested Resources

Websites

- Howard B. Wigglebottom
<https://wedolisten.org/books-and-lessons/book/Howard+B.+Wigglebottom+Learns+to+Listen>
- Secondstep.org <https://www.secondstep.org/>
- Daniel Tiger's Life Little Lessons <https://pbskids.org/learn/lifes-little-lessons/>
- Social Thinking Series <https://www.socialthinking.com/>
- The Zones of Regulation <http://www.zonesofregulation.com/index.html>

Presentations

- Zones of Regulation
https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1wJ0-2KwJeDB_UGdftZfexIIvqZBslMZeGOinXUayw2A/edit
- Counselors Faculty Meetings SEL
<https://drive.google.com/drive/u/0/folders/1Clxj9dFrVKzX3EhX2ysxUiFtvQH7NbY>
- Superflex
chrome-extension://bpmcpldpdmajfigpchkicefoigmkfalcv/views/app.html



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Other Possible Roles

- Anti-Bullying Specialist
- School Safety Committee
- RTI Behavioral Interventionist
- Problem Solving Committee Member
- Character Education
- Crisis Team
- Community Resources (e.g., food, shelter, holiday gifts)
- Homeless Liaison
- Home Instruction
- Handle with Care
- Standardized Testing Assistance