

# Guidance & Counseling Program NEWSLETTER

November-December  
2008  
PARENTS' EDITION



**Happy Holidays!!!**  
As your School Counselor, my job is to provide support to students, parents, teachers, administrators, and staff as we all work together to provide the best learning environment for your children.

## CHARACTER EDUCATION TRAIT OF THE MONTH:

**-November:  
KINDNESS**

**-December:  
HONESTY**

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## **BULLYING PREVENTION AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION**

At WMES we pay special attention to assist students in developing social skills such as treating each other with respect, getting along, and resolving conflicts in peaceful ways.

During the months of November and December, upper grades students will be taking surveys on the topic of bullying and all 2nd-5th grade students will be reviewing conflict-resolution and bullying-prevention strategies.

All teachers are making emphasis on the character traits of kindness and honesty. They are infusing in their lesson plans activities geared to help students to work in cooperation, talking with each other when they have a problem, doing random acts of

kindness, and recognizing classmates who are kind to others.

Conflict resolution is an important skill that helps children handle disagreements at school and at home. Children need to learn to recognize and manage their emotions, practice positive assertion, responsible decision making and problem solving.

Parents can reinforce the use of the following strategies to solve conflicts peacefully:

- Take a deep breath
- Count to 10
- Talk it over
- Take turns
- Apologize
- Compromise
- Ask for help
- Share
- Postpone
- Avoid
- Use humor
- Chance (toss a coin, draw straw)

## **BULLYING PREVENTION: WHAT PARENTS CAN DO...**

• Teach your children anti-bullying strategies. These might include methods for getting the bully on their side, assertiveness skills, using humor and conflict-management skills.

• Help your children build a social safety network and encourage them to travel via the buddy system.

• Communicate your concerns about supervision, monitoring and consequences for bullying to your children's school.

• Make sure interactions among all

family members are appropriate. One of the ways children learn to be bullies or victims is through their own family experiences.

*Information by John and Rita Sommers-Flanagan, counselor educators at the University of Montana, co-authors of "Tough Kids, Cool Counseling."*

*More information at:* National Youth Violence Prevention Resource Center  
[www.safeyouth.org/scripts/teens/bullyi ng.asp](http://www.safeyouth.org/scripts/teens/bullyi ng.asp)



*“Each day of our  
lives we make  
deposits in the  
memory banks of  
our children.”  
~Charles R.  
Swindoll*

## DEVELOPING CHARACTER: KINDNESS

**Kindness** includes being sympathetic, helpful, compassionate, benevolent, agreeable and gentle toward people and other living things, e.g., **helping a fellow student who has been injured.**

Being kind and having empathy are powerful deterrents of aggression. Parents can communicate with children using language that assist

in shaping character. The words we use have great power to discourage or inspire. Focus on the positive to acknowledge behavior that is compassionate: “That was a kind thing to do.” Use the language of virtues to help make the child aware of a wrong decision: “What would have happened if you had used your kindness?”

## DEVELOPING CHARACTER: HONESTY

**Honesty** involves dealing truthfully with people, being sincere, not deceiving them or stealing from them, not cheating or lying, e.g., **doing one's own work when taking a test or working on an individual assignment.**

Parents can help their children to be honest individuals by stressing the importance of building the trust of

others, telling the truth, working on their own tasks (not copying from others), and accepting responsibility for their actions. Children are in the process of learning right from wrong...Keep in mind that children might lie out of fear of consequences, to try to compensate for self-perceived deficiencies, or as a way to cope with poor self-esteem.

## REPORT CARDS TIME!!!

In the month of November you will be receiving the first report card of the year. You already received a progress report and learned how your child was doing academically in some subject areas. However, this first report card is the one that tells you about all subject areas academic, effort and conduct grades.

It is very important that you pay close

attention to the report card. Here are some tips to handle Report Card Time: 1) Ask your child to explain you about his/her grades. 2) Suggest that he/she begins with the grades that he/she feels most proud about (ask how he was able to do well in those classes). 3. Ask him if he would like to change any grade for the next report card and what would he need to do to achieve his goals.

## Conflict Resolution and Character Development

It is frequent that siblings may engage in conflicts that seem endless and can bring turmoil to family relationships.

When handling a conflict between siblings it pays to focus on restorative justice instead of punitive justice. Children respond well to consequences that are

educational. The adult may act as a mentor and ask each child:

-*What happened?* -*Who was hurt (including the perpetrator)?*  
-*What do you need? (to each)*  
-*What amends can be made?* -*What do you need to make it right for \_\_\_\_\_?* -*Now let's practice being \_\_\_\_\_ (e.g. kind, cooperative, caring, patient) for the rest of the day.*