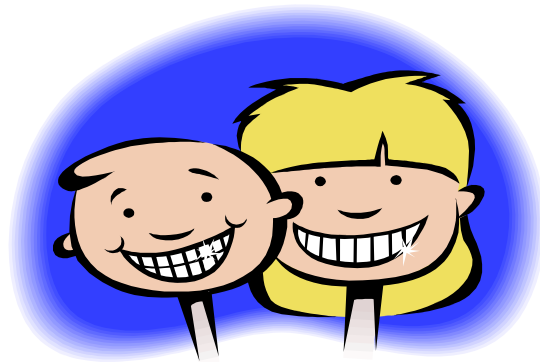


What is character education?

“Character education is a deliberate effort to cultivate good character (Thomas Lickona, 2005).”

Thomas Lickona, Ph.D., is a developmental psychologist who is considered to one of the leading experts in the field of character education. He has authored several books, lectured around the world, conducted research on the moral growth of children.





Background to our current program

In May of 2005, Mr. Larry Kessler, Superintendent of Schools, asked the community via a survey to review our character education programs. One hundred and sixty eight families at Fairview Elementary School responded to the survey as did a large number from the Middle School and the High School. At the same time, Mr. Kessler formed a Character Education Committee to set a direction for a District-Wide Character Education Program utilizing the survey results and current research.

The committee suggested that Fairview School District adopt two character pillars for each of the seasons that school is in session: Fall, Winter and Spring. Respect and Responsibility to be highlighted in the Fall, Caring and Citizenship in the Winter, and Fairness and Trustworthiness in the Spring.



RESPECT
& RESPONSIBILITY



CARING
& CITIZENSHIP



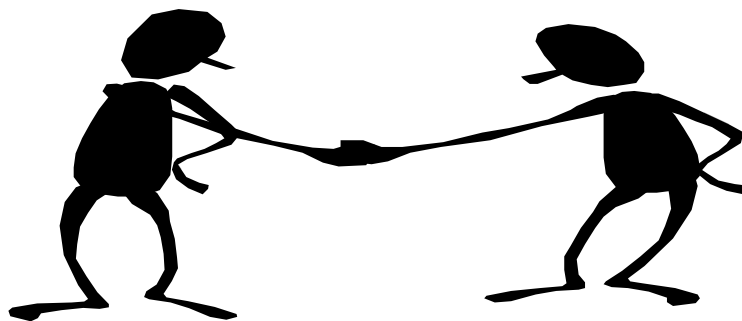
FAIRNESS
& TRUSTWORTHINESS

Additionally, the Fairview Elementary School is part of an accreditation process through Middle States called, Accreditation for Growth. The FES staff and the FES Accreditation for Growth Planning Committee have made social and emotional growth one of our three school-wide objectives. Fairview Elementary School was awarded full accreditation status by the Middle States commission in 2006-2007. In order to maintain our accreditation status, we continue to work towards meeting our three objectives through action plans and yearly review by our planning team.

School-Wide Conflict Model

In the months of September and October, the conflict model is taught or reviewed with all Fairview Elementary students. Our conflict model encourages students to attempt to solve conflicts or problems they may be having with others through a peaceful process. Students in Grades 1-4 are asked to use the following six steps when a conflict happens:

STOP
ASK QUESTIONS
TELL HOW YOU FEEL
LISTEN
THINK OF IDEAS
COMPROMISE



Tips from the classroom conflict lessons:

Stop – This is an important step because it gives a person a chance to calm down before he or she does anything else or says anything else that might make the conflict worse. The students are given suggestions such as: take deep breaths, count to ten, and walk away.

Ask Questions - Students are encouraged to look the person in the eye, address the person by his or her name, and to remember to use manners. Additionally, the concepts of personal space, body language, and tone of voice are discussed.

Tell how you Feel - We remind the students that it is important not to attack the person, “You make me feel so _____,” but to attack the problem by using “I statements,” “I feel _____ when _____.”

Listen - We often see students who are unable to resolve conflicts because, “I tried to solve the conflict, but he/she won’t listen to me.” Each person involved in the conflict must be given ample opportunity to speak and feel as if his or her feelings and questions have been shared.

Think of Ideas - It is “OK” to tell another person that an idea does not work for you. We remind the students that sometimes it takes several suggestions to find an idea that will work for all those involved in a conflict.

Compromise - When both sides decided what is fair, it is called a compromise.

Kindergarten Conflict Model

Kindergarten students use a modified version of the six-step model:

Step 1 – Stop

Step 2 – Ask questions

Step 3 – Compromise

The same teaching tips are shared with our kindergarten students.



Grade level lesson highlights....

Grade 1

Tattling or Telling?

The Grade 1 students met Twokey when he came in from recess to the Large Group Assembly room to tell the students about another student who would not give him a turn on the swing. Mrs. Jensen and Mrs. Tanenbaum explained to Twokey that he was tattling and that tattling is not a way to “Be a Good Friend.” We shared a video with the Grade 1 students and Twokey that taught the following four questions to determine if it is tattling or telling:

Is someone being hurt?

Is it dangerous?

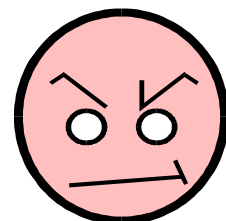
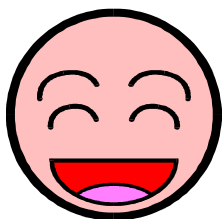
Am I telling to get someone in trouble?

Can I solve this myself?

A great tip from this lesson included the suggestion to remind a friend, classmate, sister/brother, and etc. of the rule rather than tattling. We told the Grade 1 students that we would visit classrooms during the first week of October to teach all six steps to the conflict model-a great way to solve a problem by yourself (not tattling).

Grade 2

In the Grade 2 classrooms, the focus was on the third step of “Tell how you feel.” We asked the students to be actors and actresses by modeling a feeling word on their faces for signs they each completed. Every student was randomly given a sheet of paper with a feeling word on it such as mad, sad, lonely, worried, etc. and asked to write about a time he or she felt that way. The photographs were then glued to each student’s feeling sign. We hope that our friends at FES enjoy the signs and learn some new feeling words to add to their vocabularies for solving conflicts.



Grade 3

In the Grade 3 classrooms, our focus was on the fourth step of “Listen.” During this lesson, we watched a great video on listening that explained how we use not only our ears to be a good listener, but also our eyes and our brains. The students completed two interactive activities during this video. Ask them to “test” you on the tricky listening test. The message in this video and lesson was that to be a better learner and a good friend, listening is a really important skill.

Be a better listener....

- Day One Sit up straight
Look at the speaker

- Day Two Concentrate on what your brain is thinking
as you listen.

If you catch yourself daydreaming, stop and
get your brain back on track.

- Day Three Concentrate on how people say things:
Look at their faces and at their body
language.



Sticks and Stones.... Effects of hurtful words

Mrs. Tanenbaum, school nurse, and Mrs. Jensen, school counselor, visited all the Grade 3 rooms for a lesson on the hurtful effects of disrespectful words (name calling, exclusion, rude remarks, boasting, etc.). First, the students watched a 12-minute video entitled, *Sticks and Stones*, which examined the hurtful effects of name-calling.

Second, the students participated in a paper ripping activity. The students were asked to rip their papers in half when they recalled a time they were hurt by words. We presented several hurtful word scenarios to the students and asked them to continue ripping their papers if the situation was applicable. Then, the students had to attempt to reconstruct their papers using glue sticks.

Finally, we used the paper ripping exercise to explain that emotional wounds are very difficult to heal. While it is easy to put a band-aide on a physical wound, it is not as easy to “cure” emotional pain. We emphasized the importance of using respectful language and concluded that *“Sticks and Stones may break your bones, word can also hurt you.”*

Grade 4

After the Grade 4 students met with Dr. Horn to discuss our school rules- Be Respectful, Be Responsible, and Be a Good Fried, we reviewed the importance of the first step of the conflict model, “STOP.” It was discussed with the Grade 4 students, that many conflicts at this grade level could be prevented or solved by remembering this step. We find that as students get older they continue to say and do things that make a conflict situation worse, for example, name calling, yelling, etc., that can be avoided by using the first step-STOP.



