

GCS STANDS STRONG TO BE MINDFUL, BE FEARLESS, BE KIND

October 2018

National Bullying Prevention Month

“More than one out of every five (20.8%) students report being bullied” (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2016). Bullying can threaten students’ physical and emotional safety at school and can negatively impact their ability to learn. The best way to address bullying is to stop it before it starts. There are a number of things school staff can do to make schools safer and prevent bullying.

The GCS Character Development Department is highlighting specific steps to guide students through being mindful, being fearless, and being kind. Research states that, “school-based bullying prevention programs decrease bullying by up to 25%” (McCallion & Feder, 2013).





Be Mindful, Character Counts!

“Mindfulness practices help the bully, victim, and any witnesses involved develop a deeper awareness of themselves, resilience, compassion, and a greater ability to regulate their emotional responses.”

Janice Houlihan, mindfulness teacher and Co-Founder of Inner Explorer

Character Counts Week (October 21-27) Focuses on establishing a positive school climate and instilling critical academic, social and emotional skills, as well as core character traits.

Walking Meditation

1. Practice mindfully walking with students by having them walk in a circle.
2. Tell them to take one step, think about feeling their heels on the floor, then their toes. What else are they feeling? Tell them to notice how they breath – are they breathing fast, or slow? Are they breathing in rhythm with their stepping? Are you walking faster than others around you? Slower?
3. Once the students have practiced, give them a phrase or concept to think about as they walk from one place to another.

Debrief: What was it like to pay attention to your steps, your breath? Did other ideas come to mind when you were to focus on the specific phrase/concept? What was it like to come back to the present moment? Did you notice anything interesting or surprising?

Watch Your Mind

1. For 2 minutes, have your students sit in silence to focus on the thoughts that run through their minds for a set amount of time.
2. For 3 minutes, have students think about something that makes them happy, share with a shoulder partner and have a brief discussion about why this thought makes them happy.
3. For 2 minutes, have students to sit in silence and focus on the happy thought they discussed.

Debrief: How was this different than the first two minutes of focusing on your thoughts? How did you feel when you had to control your mind to focus on the happy thoughts? Was it challenging or easy to focus your mind back on the happy thoughts?

Don't Just React To Thoughts. Decide.

1. Have students to think about a time where they thought negatively of someone. Have students ask themselves, “Was this useful, did the negative thought change anything?”, “How would I feel if someone thought that way about me?”
2. Next, ask students, “Did that negative thought trigger you to act out negatively?”, “Were there consequences to your actions?”, “How could you have reacted differently, if you took the time to be mindful of others’ feelings and thought about the possible negative consequences?”

Debrief: We have the power to control our thoughts and actions. Often, we allow other people to control our thoughts and actions. Do you want others to control you? Why is it important to maintain self-control?

October Reminders

Be Fearless and Unite!

“More than half of bullying situations (57%) stop when a peer intervenes on behalf of the student being bullied.”

(Hawkins, Pepler, & Craig, 2001)

Unity Day October 24

This day focuses on safe and supportive schools and communities. On this day everyone can come together – in schools, communities, and online – and send one large ORANGE message of support, hope, and unity to show that we are together against bullying and united for kindness, acceptance and inclusion.

Make A Difference Day October 27

This is one of the largest annual single- days of service nationwide.

Be Kind and Make A Difference!

“Just like a drop of water, our kind acts can ripple out into our school and broader community to make the world a kinder and more caring place. By choosing kindness, we are helping to promote healthy relationships and prevent bullying from happening.”

The Random Acts of Kindness Foundation.
www.randomactsofkindness.org

What is Bullying?

Students will work with a small group to discuss what bullying is and share how they would react in different bullying scenarios.

Stand Up for Others

Encourage students to stand up for others. Engage students in a conversation reflecting on their mindful exercises. Now it's time to be mindful of others. Discuss the following questions with students:

1. How does it feel when someone speaks negatively about you?
2. How does it feel when someone speaks negatively about you and others are listening?
3. How does it feel to watch innocent people get hurt?
4. What can you say to someone who is hurting an innocent person?

Remind students that if they don't feel safe get the help of an adult immediately. Be part of the solution -- not the problem!

Conversations Amongst Peers

Meet with students and discuss how they can change the culture at school. Use the “Who Lives Here” document to lead a classroom and/or school walkabout to recognize how diversity is embraced in the classroom and/or at school. Through this experience, students have an opportunity to change the culture and climate of the school by identifying areas of growth in order to create an environment that is welcoming to all.

Motivational Cards

Students can create cards for their peers during lunch and/or before/after school for school staff and attendance teams to give to students with chronic absences during informal meetings, homework pickup, home visits, and other times as needed.

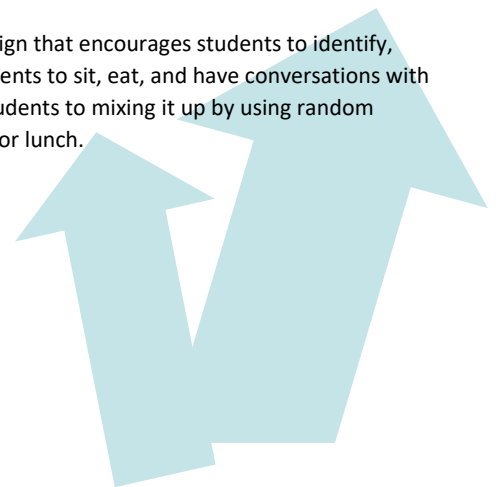
Creating a Kind Community at School

Students will create an action plan on how they can create a kinder community at school. Creating a kind and caring school requires a whole school approach where everyone has a role to play in preventing bullying and promoting positive relationships.

Mix It Up Day – October 31

Mix It Up at Lunch Day is an international campaign that encourages students to identify, question and cross social boundaries. Invite students to sit, eat, and have conversations with peers they typically do not spend time. Guide students to mixing it up by using random selection processes to group students together for lunch.

<https://www.tolerance.org/mix-it-up>



RESOURCES

- Ashoka's Start Empathy Initiative in collaboration with generationOn, generously sponsored by the Hasbro Children's Fund
- Character Counts
- G CS Character Development Department, Global Youth Services Day Publication Teaching Tolerance www.tolerance.org
 - Make a Difference Day
- Mindfulness: 5 Secrets To Making Your Mind Happy <http://www.bakadesuyo.com/2016/01/mindfulness/>
- Pacer's National Bullying Prevention Center
- U .S. Department of Health & Human Services: Stop Bullying Federal Government website <https://www.stopbullying.gov/prevention/at-school/index.html>
- STOMP Out Bullying, 2007 - 2017 www.STOMPOutBullying.org
- The Random Acts of Kindness Foundation. www.randomactsofkindness.org



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