

SEL at Woodside

What?

Social Emotional Learning (SEL) has officially landed at Woodside. Our teachers have always devoted time and energy to our student's social and emotional development. The SEL program is intended to enhance our current efforts and to augment the excellent academic experience at WES.

SEL will help us to reinforce key elements of our school's mission statement:

"Woodside School provides children from preschool through eighth grade a nurturing yet challenging school environment consistent with Woodside's cohesive, small town character. In collaboration with parents, we will instill in our students a love of learning, respect and compassion for others, and a global, multicultural awareness."

Woodside's SEL curriculum is designed to develop and strengthen **five core competencies** through a spiraling curriculum that is customized for the needs of each age group:

- Handling emotions so they facilitate rather than interfere with the task at hand
- Delaying gratification to pursue goals
- Persevering in the face of set backs
- Recognizing feelings as they occur
- Having a realistic assessment of one's own ability and values
- Developing a well-grounded sense of self-confidence
- Sensing what others are feeling
- Being able to take their perspective
- Appreciating and interacting positively with diverse groups

SEL Core Competencies



- Handling emotions in relationships effectively
- Establishing and maintaining healthy and rewarding relationships based on cooperation
- Negotiating solutions to conflicts
- Seeking help when needed
- Accurately assessing risks
- Making decisions based on a consideration of all relevant factors and the likely consequence of alternative courses of actions
- Respecting others
- Taking personal responsibility for one's decisions

Why?

Multiple studies have determined that social and emotional learning can have a **direct impact on improving academic achievement, school climate, students' resiliency, long-term emotional health and classroom management.** It can help to create the classroom and school-wide environment that enables children to be able to focus even more on learning.

As described by the non-profit, Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning:

"SEL helps students become good communicators, cooperative members of a team, effective leaders, and caring, concerned members of their communities. It teaches them how to set and achieve goals and how to persist in the face of challenges. These are precisely the skills that today's employers consider important for the workforce of the future." <http://casel.org/why-it-matters/benefits-of-sel/meta-analysis/>

Who?

Classroom teachers, administrators, office staff, para-educators and families are all stakeholders in SEL who be reinforcing its lessons. Buddies (i.e. older students paired with younger students) will also support the program.

Janice Toben and Rush Sabiston-Frank will be providing consultation, staff training and parent education. Janice has almost 30 years of experience designing and implementing SEL programs in K-8 schools. She led the SEL program at the Nueva School and has consulted for Sacred Heart, The Carey School, Jordan Middle School, Sonoma Country Day, Seattle Country Day, The Dalton School in NY and others. Rush brings fifteen years of social work and counseling experience to her work in SEL. Rush has added many facets to the curriculum such as the interface between SEL and media literacy, body image and gender issues, nutrition and psychological research on forgiveness. Rush is an enthusiastic facilitator of the Open Session for students in grades 5-8.

How?

SEL lessons are delivered through classroom meetings and are woven into daily activities. SEL teaches “tools” for handling every day challenges and aims to give students a sense of efficacy and resilience. SEL provides common vocabulary for all school personnel and for families to reinforce outside of the school setting. Curriculum spirals throughout the K-5 experience and deepens through each year.

In the elementary school, Dr. Peterson is providing lessons that teach foundational tools of SEL (e.g. Cooling Off, I Messages, Personal Boundaries, etc.). SEL lessons are also delivered by teachers through ‘morning meetings’, writer’s workshop, art projects, physical education, library activities, and basic classroom management strategies. Support during recess and lunch time will also help to reinforce newly learned skills. Please check your classroom newsletters for details at your grade level.

In the middle school, Dr. Peterson has been working on SEL through the advisory program, presenting tools such as “Assertive Voice” and “Reflective Listening.” The Open Session format allows for student driven discussion and problem solving by creating “collective wisdom” and practice in providing one another with support and advice.

K-8 teachers will be expanding their expertise regarding SEL tools at **monthly staff meetings** and **teacher training days in December** led by Janice Toben and Rush Sabiston-Frank.

School Site Council has created an annual goal to help guide and track our SEL efforts and to support school-wide communication about the program.

When?

We have already started to roll out SEL and are excited to see the enthusiasm from our faculty, families, and students.

Two parent education nights are planned:

- **Tuesday, November 29th at 7pm: SEL Overview with Janice Toben, “It’s Fundamental and Developmental”**
- **Wednesday, February 8th at 7pm: The “Open Session” (intended for 4th – 8th grade parents)**

This will be a multi-year effort for full implementation and we appreciate your support and participation.

Questions?

Please contact Beth Polito or Katherine Peterson with questions.