

Developing Connections at the Elementary Level

With the addition of three new middle school counselors this school year, elementary students are also benefiting from the increased focus on mental health. The counselors are providing guidance lessons to third, fourth and fifth grade students throughout the district.

Some of the topics covered at the elementary level include bullying, coping skills, transition, conflict management, internet safety, college/career readiness, self-regulation and self-esteem.

Overall, the goal of the guidance department is to help students achieve a belief in the development of the whole self, including a healthy balance of mental, social-emotional and physical well-being. They also foster a confidence in students' ability to succeed and a sense of belonging in the school environment. Encouraging a positive attitude toward learning, the counselors help students to use their abilities to their fullest to achieve high-quality results and outcomes.

2020-2021 KINDERGARTEN REGISTRATION INFORMATION

If you have not yet enrolled your kindergarten-eligible child (children who will reach their fifth birthday on or before Dec. 1, 2020), please contact the Central Registration office at 631-382-2024. The registration office is in the Joseph M. Barton Building, 26 New York Avenue, Smithtown. Office hours are Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

It is not necessary to bring your child to registration. Please note that children who are not registered for kindergarten will be unable to attend the kindergarten orientation program.

Parents must bring the following information with them at the time of registration:

1. Proof of your child's age.
2. Your own photo ID, such as a driver's license or passport.
3. A record from a physician with all inoculations listed with a doctor's signature or stamp.
4. Proof of residency.
5. Proof of custody or guardianship.



TRANSPORTATION NOTICE FOR PRIVATE AND PAROCHIAL STUDENTS



Any returning students who have no changes from last year may fill out the form on the district's website at www.smithtown.k12.ny.us and mail it as directed on the application before the April 1, 2020, deadline.

All newly registering students or any returning students who have changes to their school or address will need to register in person with the Smithtown Central School District to be considered for transportation, receive textbooks and/or other educational services.

To meet the April 1, 2020, transportation application deadline, registration for new private and parochial students is taking place at the Joseph M. Barton Building, 26 New York Avenue, Smithtown. Registration will be held Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding transportation, please call the transportation department at 631-382-4100. Should you have questions regarding registration, necessary documentation or any other concerns, please call the central registration office at 631-382-2024.

Where to Go: A Resource Guide

There's a wealth of resources available for both students and their families in need. Below is a listing of just some of the help available:

Mental Health/Substance Use Crisis Resources

- Suffolk County Mobile Response Team and DASH (Diagnostic, Assessment and Stabilization Hub): Open 24/7 for children/adults in mental health/substance use crisis. 90 Adams Avenue, Hauppauge or 631-952-3333.
- Children's Crisis Respite: Short-term residential care for children during a mental health crisis, 631-370-1701.
- Comprehensive Psychiatric Emergency Program (CPEP) at Stony Brook Hospital: 631-444-6050.
- Crisis Text Line: Text "HOME" to 741-741.
- LICADD Substance Abuse 24/7 Hotline: 631-979-1700.
- Response Crisis Center: 24/7 crisis support, 631-751-7500.

Additional Crisis Resources

- NYS Child Protective Services Hotline: 1-800-342-3720.
- Suffolk County Adult Protective Services: 631-854-3195.
- Suffolk County Department of Social Services Emergency Services After Hours Hotline: 631-854-9100.
- VIBS Domestic Violence, Sexual Assault 24/7 Hotline: 631-360-3606.
- Suffolk County Department of Community Mental Hygiene: 631-853-8500.

If you are seeking general information, referrals, advocacy or self-help, please visit www.smithtown.k12.ny.us/district/wellness for additional resources.



SMITHTOWN CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

DIGEST

PRIORITIZING MENTAL HEALTH

Smithtown Central School District is committed to the social and emotional well-being of its student body and staff members. During the past several years, the district has made a commitment to educate the student as a whole, focusing not just on academics but on wellness and mental health in particular.

In 2017, the district formed a Wellness Committee consisting of administrators, faculty, Board of Education members, students, parents and community members.

"The Wellness Committee's mission is to foster an informed and caring community that supports students' mental, physical, social, and emotional well-being," said Jennifer Bradshaw, assistant superintendent for curriculum and instruction. "Our goal is to help students reach their full potential by living a balanced, joyful life." For example, the district is partnering with St. Charles Hospital and St. Catherine of Siena Medical Center by working with their community outreach manager, a sleep expert and a sports physical therapist.

The district also understands the importance of preventive work. This school year, they have expanded the wellness support personnel to include more social workers and elementary school counselors. At the secondary level,

an intensive support team of a dedicated social worker, counselor and psychologist assists identified high school students in need.

Mental health topics are now mandatory in the secondary health curriculum. The seventh grade lessons focus on self-confidence, self-care, self-expression and bullying. In eighth grade, the curriculum hones in on stress, signs of struggling, mental health and depression and how to get help. Students in grades 7 and 10 also participate in Challenge Day each year. The Challenge Day program is designed to build compassion using social-emotional techniques. Students and adults work together in different trust-building exercises throughout the day that help both parties generate a positive change using empathy and compassion. The goal of the Challenge Day program is to build community, promote acceptance and embrace positive peer support.

At the elementary level, the district focuses on helping students develop the social-emotional skills to feel their best emotionally and learn how to regulate their emotions and behaviors so that they can do their personal best in all areas. Many of the elementary schools have wellness rooms and sensory paths. Wellness rooms help students to relax, unwind,

depress and share thoughts, feelings and ideas in a safe and nonjudgmental space. Sensory paths (see the QR code for a video on Smithtown Elementary's pathway) help to strengthen and develop connection pathways in the brain and are beneficial in assisting students with emotional regulation.

Each elementary school has a social-emotional learning building specialist. The specialist shares SEL strategies with faculty at meetings, demonstrating in the classroom and holding collegial circles to help teachers develop their own understanding of self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills and responsible decision-making. They help teach students and faculty breathing strategies, brain breaks and energizers, which are embedded into the students' and teachers' day and daily practice. Staff members have the opportunity to engage in SEL-based training activities during staff development days.

In addition to student support, the district works to support the needs of its parents. For example, the district hosts an annual Parent University with activities that give parents coping strategies and tools for managing areas such as student stress, mental health and addiction identification, and mindfulness.

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Smithtown Wellness Committee is to promote and support initiatives that encourage the development of lifelong healthy lifestyle habits, such as:

- Raise awareness about the impact of having a healthy mind and body.
- Encourage habits in all aspects of wellness.
- Empower individuals to make informed decisions about their social, emotional and physical health.
- Empower individuals to model and promote wellness.
- Provide the resources to meet wellness goals.
- Give students the knowledge and ability necessary to create and maintain a safe and healthy environment.
- Give students the understanding and skills necessary to manage their personal and community resources.



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SCHOOL & COMMUNITY DIGEST

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Smithtown Central School District does not discriminate on the basis of handicaps or on the basis of sex, race, or ethnic background in the educational programs or activities which it operates.

What Does *Mindfulness* Mean to You?



Accompsett Elementary's Mindfulness Club meets weekly to develop their own mindful practices by meditating, doing gentle yoga poses, making stress balls and calming glitter bottles, painting rocks, coloring and much more. The students also work on encouraging other students by creating interactive bulletin boards featuring mindfulness strategies, such as meditation, breathing techniques, desk stretches, journaling, guided imagery and muscle relaxation.

Mills Pond Elementary School students enjoy meditation and deep breathing techniques. The students learn how meditation can help them to manage stress, feelings and emotions.



"Mindfulness means to be open-minded, calm and to get all of the distractions out of your head. This will help you relax and be present."
 -Stefano Cippitelli, fifth grade, Accompsett Elementary School



East senior Alexis Albert started a community mental health awareness campaign this year called Breathe. She brought it to the district this November, which now is Teen Mental Health Awareness Month in Suffolk County, as a way to destigmatize mental health disorders.

"If you think to yourself, how can I be a better person and how can I achieve my goals this year? Without having a resolution, you can think of one word to focus on throughout your day. I have learned that whenever you might not have the best mindset, or are just not there yet, you should work on how to achieve what you're going for. You can't give up no matter how long it may take."
 -Charlie Darrohn, eighth grade, Great Hollow Middle School



Nesaquake Middle School's sensory room is designed as a calming, relaxing and safe place for its students. Whether they need to step away from the classroom for a few minutes or find a peaceful place to gather their thoughts, the room helps to support their mental health by allowing them to regroup or refresh throughout the day.

"I believe mindfulness is a way of living. Mindfulness is not only acknowledging your thoughts and emotions but also accepting them as they are."
 -Julia Glavas, 12th grade, High School West

"Mindfulness means being calm and compassionate. You have to remember to breathe."
 -Phoenix Saravia, kindergarten, St. James Elementary School

"I think being mindful of others is important. Mindfulness is important because you can be aware of how other people are feeling and their emotions so you can be a supportive friend if they need one."
 -Justine Basile, fourth grade, Dogwood Elementary School



"Wellness means taking care of myself, my body and my brain. I do this by staying on track in and out of school. I like staying positive even if my day is not going as planned. I always like to stay calm."
 -Myles Cotten, fourth grade, Mills Pond Elementary School

"For me, my mind is like an elevator: each new floor yields marvels of imagination and knowledge. The uppermost floors conceal wonders shrouded in mystery. Mental health is the cable: my school, my family, my friends, and everyone who's ever believed in me form a love stronger than any steel. So I don't worry about falling because with that kind of support, all I have to do is press a button and the world is at my fingertips."
 -Anabelle Kreitzman, eighth grade, Accompsett Middle School

"Mindfulness is to be aware of people's feelings and beliefs even if we don't see eye to eye on things. I was always taught to be mindful of others no matter the color, height, weight, gender or religion. There should always be a level of respect for one another."
 -Mya Woodall, fifth grade, Mt. Pleasant Elementary School



Tackan Elementary School has a Character Education/Citizenship Club for its fourth and fifth grade students. In addition to working on students' character development, the club conducts community service and spreads kindness, such as this recent appreciation day to recognize the unsung heroes of its school community.

Mt. Pleasant Elementary School third grade teacher Mrs. Rapp has a very special morning greeting for all her students. They get to choose a way to greet their teacher and start their day with a smile each morning: a high-five, a dance, a hug, a fist-pump, a handbake or a smile.