

5th Grade Guidance Curriculum

Mrs. Moynihan (School Counselor Grades 5 & 8)

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the 5th grade guidance class. My name is Mrs. Moynihan and I will be meeting with your child once a week throughout the school year. I am also your child's school counselor and will be during their four years of middle school. I have been at Gilford Middle School for 13 years, I have 3 children (a Junior in High School, a 5th grader and a 2nd grader). Many of the concerns about your child entering middle school are concerns that I share too. The abyss of middle school, the increase in use of technology, the move towards independence and all the other possible issues that may arise. Please feel free to contact me with any questions you may have.

Below you will see an outline of the topics we will be discussing throughout the year with your child.

Friendships

Friendships begin to change throughout middle school. These times can be very difficult for your child trying to figure out where he/she fits in. In this unit we do activities that have us looking for qualities that we would like to see in a friendship and how we should reflect those qualities ourselves. We practice getting to know someone we don't usually "hang out" with and discuss that sometimes you actually have to get to know someone before you can tell if someone has those qualities.

Self-esteem

Here we define self-esteem and talk about what the consequence of what low self-esteem could be. How everyone has strengths and weaknesses, including your

favorite professional athlete or singer. We do activities that get us to look to our strengths to make us feel good and our weaknesses as challenges to improve on.

Kindness

In this unit do activities that show us how little, simple things we do can make a world of difference for other people (and how we feel about ourselves too!). Being kind will make their grade, as whole, a better grade to be in. That they are not longer Mrs. So-and So's class but they are the class of 2023 and many of them will be graduating with one another. The kinder they are to one another the better their school experiences will be.

Tolerance

This is one of my favorite units. Here we do activities that have us reflecting on how if everyone was the same our world would be dull. That often times we find things “weird” or wrong even if we don't understand them. If we take time to understand something that we find is uncomfortable it may make it easier to be tolerant of it. We Watch two movies in this unit, “I Have Tourette's but Tourette's Doesn't Have Me” and “I Can Do This but I Can't Do That”. Both of these movies are documentary style movies on students who either struggle with Tourette's or with a Learning Disability. The children in these movies talk about how difficult it is to go through school being different and how it feels when other students make fun of them. The movie actually refers to Learning Disabilities as “Learning Differences”- which is my preferred term. Students will also be asked to present on a topic they feel is misunderstood. In the past I have had kids present topics like Traumatic Brain Injury, Lupus, their personal religions, ADHD, and so many other interesting topics.

Cyber Safety and Cyber Netiquette

There is a whole new world out there that most our students parents did not grow up in! I remember someone saying something to the effect of, “The internet is like a knife. It can be very useful but you could get hurt if you do not use it properly.” We will be doing activities that encourage us to discuss what is safe and what is not safe on the internet. That not everything may be as it seems and that we should always use the internet with caution, particularly when communication with others. We will discuss

cyberbullying and ways to help if someone is being bullied online- ways that will keep them out of it if they are uncomfortable intervening in public.

Stress

What does a 5th grader even have to be stressed about? Just kidding! Their lives are jam packed and managing all their activities can be very stressful (not just on them either!). Friendships are difficult, teachers, homework, sibling and family as well as things that are not all the time but very hard to handle in the moment (a pet passing away, a car accident, etc.). We do activities that have us reflect on what happens if we don't learn to reduce our stress, and if stress is always bad. What are positive ways we can reduce stress.

Careers

It's never too early to start thinking about careers! I relate it to having several bowls of cereal in front of you and as the years go on you eliminate the cereals that you don't like or that are not good for you. In this unit we do a personality inventory and see what jobs would be suited for different personality types, we have parents...YES YOU, come in and discuss their career paths and how they ended up in the field they are in today. Lastly, they do a final career research project and presentation on the career of their choice. They will research the personality traits that are suited for each career, the years of education needed to do the job, what they would be doing on a day-to-day basis in the job they chose, what the future outlook of their job would be and any interesting facts they may have learned.

*** Although I do not specifically run a bullying curriculum, anti-bullying is threaded through the class in almost all units with the exception of Careers. Studies show that an empathetic school is a low bully school and that is what is reiterated through my curriculum. So, whether we are discussing friendships, self-esteem, tolerance, stress, etc. we are reminding ourselves during discussions that it is important to try to see what it is like to be in the other person's shoes when we say hurtful or do things.