



Introduction to SEL

TRAILS Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) Curriculum

Dear Parents and Caregivers,

We know that middle school students are facing increasingly demanding academic, athletic, and social pressures which can affect their mood, relationships, ability to cope with stress, and academic performance. Morenci MS/HS has partnered with the University of Michigan TRAILS program to help your student develop skills demonstrated to increase resiliency and ability to cope with stress, improve academic achievement, decrease behavior problems, and help students better navigate strong emotions and build healthy relationships. These skills are called social and emotional skills. Throughout the school year, students will be engaging in Social and emotional learning (SEL) 1-2 times per month in their classrooms.

Throughout the school year, alongside their academic learning, your student will be working to build the following SEL competencies:

1. **Self-Awareness:** The ability to notice what is happening inside of us including our thoughts, feelings, and urges to act
2. **Self-Management:** The ability to manage strong thoughts and feelings, to choose helpful behaviors, and to act in ways that show respect to ourselves and others
3. **Social Awareness:** The ability to infer what others are thinking and feeling, even if it is different from our own thoughts and feelings, and to respond in ways that are empathetic, respectful, and inclusive
4. **Relationship Skills:** The ability to initiate and maintain relationships; define healthy relationships; and to interact effectively with others including communicating clearly and navigating conflict skillfully
5. **Responsible Decision-Making:** The ability to approach problems and decisions using a model to brainstorm, evaluate, and select helpful behavior choices and the ability to set and achieve goals using personal values as a guide

Students will work to develop awareness that their **thoughts, feelings, and behaviors are all connected**. They will learn skills to improve control over unhelpful thoughts, feelings, and behaviors in order to cope more effectively with stress, reach goals, and build healthy relationships.

In the next **month** your student will begin SEL lessons. Students will start with an introduction to [Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs](#), which shows us that we have different types of needs, including physical needs and safety, love and belonging, and self-esteem, and in order to meet our needs at the top, we first have to meet our needs at the bottom. We are more vulnerable to negative emotions when we are tired, hungry, thirsty, misusing substances, or feeling unsafe. If your family is having difficulty meeting your basic needs, please reach out so we can try to help. In order to successfully navigate relationships, manage emotions, and engage in academic learning, it is important to have basic physical needs addressed.

Try this activity with your student at home!

- When your student is feeling strong emotions, encourage them to think about if they have met all of their basic needs. If not, have them choose at least one activity to meet their needs (such as getting some physical activity, drinking water, having a healthy snack, etc.) and reflect on whether or not that helps with their strong emotions.

Your support is incredibly important. Discussing and practicing SEL skills at home will help your student strengthen these valuable skills!



You will continue receive communication about social and emotional learning throughout the school year. Each letter will contain information about the topics and lessons students are learning along with ideas for continued practice at home.

Please feel free to reach out if you have any additional questions.

Sincerely,

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