

Guidance News - December, 2018

Happy December! I hope that you are enjoying the change of season. During the month of November, we discussed bullying behavior in the classrooms. The students enjoyed exploring the topic and had lots of good ideas on how to deal with it when they saw it happening. We discussed the importance of being an upstander instead of a bystander. A bystander watches what is happening when bullying occurs, but an upstander does something about it to stop the bullying or make others aware who can help to stop it.



In grades 1 and 2 we read several books, discussed different ideas to stop bullying, and talked about which ones may be more effective than others. We also talked about ways to be an upstander and they wrote down ideas of different things they could do if they saw someone being bullied. We touched on the power of groups and how it can be helpful to get several students to stand up to the bully together and not leave it up to just one student. Second grade students also talked about how not to get hooked by teasing and swim as a free fish. Ask them how they plan to avoid the hooks! Finally, we began talking about cyberbullying and what that means. We talked about ways that can happen and what to do if someone starts cyberbullying them or a friend.



In third grade, we focused on the power that words can have, both in person and online. We did some activities, talked about the impact that words can have on others, how easily things can be misunderstood and how rumors can spread. Finally, we discussed how easily things can be misinterpreted over technology (text messages, emails, etc.) because we can't hear the person's tone of voice, see their facial expression or body language. We also discussed cyberbullying, what it looks like, and what to do if they or someone they know is being bullied.

Fourth grade students read a series of books that look at bullying through the perspective of the victim, the bystander/upstander, and the bully. It gave them a unique look at what each person may be thinking and experiencing that they may not have pondered before. We did activities after each lesson to emphasize the theme that was discussed in each book.

In Kindergarten, we talked about how to be a good listener, what it means to be responsible, and how to decide if you are telling to inform or tattle on someone. The students got to do some more pages in their BERKL book, which they seem to really be enjoying!

This month I am attaching a parent tip sheet called, "Evaluating Websites". When I went into classrooms, even students as young as 1st grade said they had been online. It is important for students to learn about how to evaluate websites so that they are able to filter all of the information that is available and find good, reliable information. The article suggests several helpful questions to ask when evaluating a website. If you have any questions, please let me know.



I hope you have a wonderful December and restful winter break!

Jean Freund
School Counselor



Common Sense on Evaluating Websites

What's the Issue?

The internet is bursting with information. Some of it's correct, some of it's questionable, and some of it is just plain wrong. The internet is typically the first place young people look when they begin researching a report or are searching for information on their favorite topic. As you know, not everything they find on the web can be trusted. And skills they learn about research in elementary school will provide them a foundation for their future.

Why Does It Matter?

Anyone can publish on the internet, so not all sites are equally trustworthy. Teens have the ability to be skeptical, but younger children tend to believe what they read and accept it as the truth. When children find sources online that aren't of high quality, they may use incorrect information, get only part of the story, and worst of all, miss the opportunity to learn.

When children use a website for their research, they should make sure it's worthy of their trust. Fortunately, there are ways to evaluate the trustworthiness of a site. Along with choosing sites with good design and at the right reading level, kids should evaluate the substance and content of the material.

common sense says

Ask questions to evaluate the trustworthiness of sites. You can help your child evaluate the quality of a website with a little detective work.

- *Who wrote this?* Check to make sure the author or organization is credible by looking at their title, expertise, and background.
- *What is the source of the information?* Does the site come from a well-known organization or news source?
- *How does this compare to other information?* When evaluating websites it's important to look at multiple sites so you can compare information.
- *When was this updated?* Has the site been updated recently? If not, move on. What is the site linked to? Was the site linked from another webpage that you trust? If so, that's a good sign.
- *Are advertisers targeting you?* Help your kids notice when advertisers are trying to get their attention as they search. Teach your kids to question what the ads are saying.