

**COOK COUGARS**

May 11, 2020



**NEWSLETTER**

**Message from the Administration:**

This week's newsletter highlights *Social Awareness*. Social Awareness is when we empathize with others and appreciate their perspectives. We are welcoming and inclusive, and practise and encourage people's sense of safety and belonging. We recognize that there are acceptable ways of behaving both socially and ethically. We have been practising a lot of Social Awareness over the past six weeks as we keep ourselves and others' safe by staying inside, washing our hands, and by social distancing when we go outside.

There is also social awareness required when you use social media. We encourage you to review the suggestions in this newsletter with your children if you have not already regarding social responsibility when using their devices.

**Reminder:** Friday, May 15<sup>th</sup> is a Professional Development Day. There will only be four days of online learning activities sent home in the learning plans this week. Teachers will be participating in virtual professional learning sessions on various topics. Also, Monday, May 18<sup>th</sup> is Victoria Day. Have a wonderful long weekend!

**What is SEL?**

**SEL** is the process through which children and adults understand and manage emotions, set and achieve goals, *feel and show empathy for others*, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions (CASEL.org).



**This week's SEL focus is *Social Awareness*...**

When we have *Social Awareness*, we empathize with others and appreciate their perspectives. We are welcoming and inclusive, and practise and encourage people's sense of safety and belonging. We recognize that there are acceptable ways of behaving both socially and ethically. And we can accurately interpret situations and cues of how others may feel.

**How do we practise Social Awareness?**

**~Source: Confident Parents, Confident Kids**

- **Listen for Understanding** - when someone comes to us with a problem, listen first for understanding. Taking the time to truly make sense of what that person is feeling and thinking can result in a much richer dialogue between the two of you. Instead of rushing to fix, offer respect by actively listening. When we allow space for people to sit with their problems or feelings, this can help them manage their own stress and create their own best solutions.

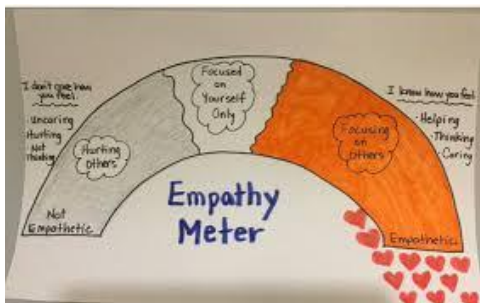
- **Accept and Empathize** - people in our lives need to feel accepted at all times; they need to be treated and viewed as essential. Especially during times of strain, people need to hear not just once, but often, that regardless, they matter and their feelings matter. Showing empathy to our friends, family and children involves putting ourselves into 'their shoes' and responding compassionately towards them as if their experiences are our experiences. Being present, actively listening, accepting and empathizing with others are all crucial for establishing positive relationships. Practising these prosocial ways of interacting lead to increased social awareness and better connections with all the people in our lives.



## EMPATHY - HOW DO WE GROW IT?

Research shows that babies younger than 18 months are already able to try to comfort a parent. Parents who promote and model empathy raise more empathetic kids who have more empathetic outlook. To cultivate empathy in yourself and your children, you can:

- Spend more time with individuals who are different from you. During this time, it's difficult to meet new people; instead, you can discuss characters in literature or movies - how they feel, and why they act and behave the ways they do in the stories.
- Encourage your kids to find a social cause that they care about. Visit [World's Largest Lesson](#) or [Do Something](#) with your kids and research and choose something that is doable for them. Even the task of talking about and planning what they can do are great ways to help them develop empathy.



"At many times throughout their lives, children will feel the world has turned topsy-turvy. It's not the ever-present smile that will help them feel secure. It's knowing that love can hold many feelings, including sadness, and that they can count on the people they love to be with them until the world turns right side up again."

- Fred Rogers

## Managing Life Smartly ~ Marc Brackett

**Be a preventionist...** We can take actions that make it more likely we'll end up in a situation that might give rise to anxiety. So –

- Don't surround yourself with people who make you anxious
- Do surround yourself with people who are calming
- Don't check social media or watch the news all day
- Do stay informed.

Consider your **best self** each morning. **How do you want to be seen, talked about, and experienced?**

## RESPONSIBILITY ON SOCIAL MEDIA

As we physically distance ourselves from friends and families, our main connections with them are done through technology, web-based platforms or social media. We, along with our children, are logging many more hours on the internet than ever.

To ensure that you and your children are practising responsible social media use, take a look at these guidelines. Before posting, **THINK** about how your post will impact your digital community:

- **T** - is it **True**
- **H** - is it **Helpful**
- **I** - is it **Inspiring** or is it **Illegal**
- **N** - is it **Necessary**
- **K** - is it **Kind**



Another code to abide by is, "*If you can't say it to someone face to face, you shouldn't be saying it to them over the internet or on social media.*" Modeling and practising responsible social media behaviour lead to safety for you and your children.