

Social & Emotional Learning and Bullying Prevention

Children come to school to be learners, explorers, and community members. Their learning is often about developing academic skills; math, writing, reading, science. A child's ability to learn is influenced by their social-emotional skills, their understanding of self and others that allows them to act and interact in ways that are safe and show empathy and care for others. Our staff continually spends time discussing the importance of social-emotional learning for each of our students, knowing the importance of this area for our children's growth as learners and community members.

When students are able to regulate their emotions, thoughts, and behaviors, they will be more successful in the school setting. The ability to self-regulate facilitates positive participation in learning activities and healthy relations with peers and adults. As a school, we are spending time each week engaging children in short lessons focused on social-emotional learning and development. These lessons are reinforced through various classroom routines.

The Second Step program for Kindergarten through Grade 5 is a universal, classroom-based program designed to increase school success and decrease challenging behaviors, by promoting social-emotional competence and self-regulation.

This curriculum has four units of lessons, focusing on **skills for learning, empathy, emotion management, and problem solving**. The resource provides developmentally appropriate lessons intended to teach the skills and behaviors that strengthen a child's ability to learn, feel empathy, manage their emotions, and effectively solve problems. Equipping students with the skills taught in Second Step creates a safer, more respectful learning environment and promotes school success for all. Research shows that socially and emotionally competent children feel more connected to school and to their peers, thus creating a healthy, safe, and respectful school climate.

At RCPS, we use this definition to help our students understand what bullying means:

Bullying is intentional, targeted, and repeated negative actions where there is a real or perceived power imbalance between students. These negative actions typically include physical contact, words, exclusion, gestures, name calling, rumors, teasing or intimidation. Cyberbullying occurs when electronic communications are employed to perform above actions.

Through these classroom lessons, we are teaching our students how to **recognize, report** and **refuse** bullying. Students will also learn how to be a **supportive bystander** and **cyberbullying** in grades 4 and 5.

We know that children are learning how to work, learn and play in large groups, small groups and one on one situations in the classroom and during recess. When conflicts between students happen, we take a problem solving approach and work on restoring and repairing relationships when someone has been harmed. We work with students as soon as possible when something happens, so we can reset for the day and move forward with learning and being a positive member of our community.

For more information on Second Steps, visit

<https://www.secondstep.org/bullying-prevention#resources-for-families-section>