

Greetings!

The Humanities classes have learned about Mental Health Literacy, Social Emotional Learning (SEL) and practicing mindfulness. We had our Student Well-being Coach, Mrs. Nolin, visit our class to introduce the concept and we did a few mindfulness activities. Mindfulness is a scientifically based approach to developing focused attention and emotional regulation. It means paying attention in the present moment to our thoughts, feelings, or surrounding environment. For the sake of simplicity, we can define it as noticing what is happening right now. It also includes the intentional nurturing of positive states of mind such as empathy and kindness. Teachers have found over the years that sharing mindfulness/SEL with students helps to encourage more skillful interactions and reactions and supports learning readiness. We will be using resources from our School Board, School Mental Health Ontario, the Ontario Curriculum and Mindful Schools.org.

Studies find that learning mindfulness/SEL benefits students in terms of improved attention, emotional regulation, behaviour in school, empathy and understanding of others, social skills, reduced test anxiety, and stress. Mindfulness allows for a pause during which thoughtful responses can replace impulsive reactions. Some examples of how we will use Mental Health Literacy and mindfulness in our class are noticing and naming our feelings during specific exercises, using mindfulness of breathing before test taking to calm anxiety and improve focus, or pausing when feeling frustrated or impatient.

Click the link to School Mental Health Ontario <https://smho-smso.ca/covid-19/parents-and-families/> to learn more about Social Emotion Learning (SEL) and/or to try some of the tips for talking to teens and recognizing if your child is struggling with mental health from the Parent Poster: <https://smho-smso.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Info-sheet-noticing-concerns.pdf>

Thanks! If you have any questions about our Well-Being practices do not hesitate to contact me. I am happy to be in touch with you.

Mindfully Yours,
Mrs. B. O'Neil, Mrs. M. O'Neil, Ms. Martini and Mrs. Nolin