October 15, 2021

Dear MJ Parent(s)/Guardian(s),

It is required that all school districts designate the week beginning with the third Monday in October as School Violence Awareness Week. This year the dates are October 18th-22nd. According to N.J.S.A. 18A:36-5.1: The week of School Violence Awareness Week affords a great opportunity for districts and schools to bring staff, students, parents, and law enforcement together to be active participants in the important work of violence prevention and school safety. With schools returning to full in-person learning this year, this week also presents the opportunity to address new challenges that may have arisen or been identified during the last 18 months.

Each day next week, students will be participating in activities presented by their classroom teachers. These activities and discussions will focus on the social emotional competency of self-management; the ability to effectively cope with our emotions and control our thoughts and behaviors.

Throughout the first month of school, classroom rules and expectations have been established and children have been reminded that "We Take Care of One Another at Monmouth Junction School." Next week, all students will also participate in a class discussion about South Brunswick’s Acceptable Behavior Agreement, which outlines our behavioral expectations designed to promote a safe, welcoming, caring and inclusive learning environment for all students. After reviewing it, classroom teachers will print out the ABA and have all students sign off on it in school. Please take time at home as well to review this behavior agreement with your child(ren) as of course your assistance is greatly appreciated and needed. Click below for links to Acceptable Behavior Agreements:

K-2 ABA
Grade 3-5 ABA

If you would like to continue these discussions at home, here are some suggested conversation starters and activities:

1. Discuss some coping strategies that your child(ren) can use when they have strong emotions.

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2. Play Freeze Dance as a family. Put some music on, dance and stop the music periodically. Ask your child, "Why is it sometimes hard to stop our bodies?" Let them be in charge of the music to see if the adults can stop when the music stops.

3. At the end of the week, ask your child(ren) to share what they have learned about the concept and skills of self-management.

4. Have your child(ren) write, list or draw a few ways that they can help take care of themselves and others in your family.

5. Discuss some things that your child(ren) can do with your family to help take care of one another. Have children think about small acts of kindness, something they can do or say, to make someone else’s day better!

As Monmouth Junction’s School Counselor and Anti-Bullying Specialist, I am providing you with links to resources related to bullying as well as crisis resources should you need them at any time. I am here to support you and your child. As always, feel free to reach out to me with any questions or concerns.

- Mrs. Scaglia's Website for Parents
- Crisis Resources
- Bullying Resources for Parents

Warmly,
Mrs. Lynne Scaglia, LCSW
MJ Counselor

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