

# A Letter from Mrs. Schosek

Dear Parents/Guardians,

This month, I visited your child's class to teach them about worry. Though some children experience worry more than others, it's certainly a feeling they have all experienced to some degree before. One of the biggest things to understand about worry is that it is often tied to negative thinking. Worry is an emotion that we experience when we **think** something bad is going to happen. Of course, negative self-talk is a difficult concept for young children to grasp, so I often liken negative thinking to a "thought bully". A bully is someone who tells you mean, scary, or sad things to try to make you feel bad. A "thought bully" is similar - a voice in your head that tells you bad things are going to happen. That thought bully voice then makes you feel sad, scared, and worried.

How do we deal with a thought bully? We deal with them in similar ways we encourage children to deal with a real bully:

1. Most importantly, tell a grown up about the bully! (Talk about your thoughts/feelings with a trusted adult).
2. Say, "stop!" (When you notice the thought bully voice, say "stop!" in your head).
3. Walk away/Ignore (Find something to do to distract yourself. Color a picture, read a book, do a puzzle, listen to music, start to play!)
4. Don't believe what it says! (Remember, what a bully says is often not true. Thought bullies are the same and we can work on challenging the message the bully is giving us by saying to ourselves, "I know that's not true!")

Finally, I explained to the students that worry, although an uncomfortable feeling at times, in small amounts can be helpful in that it helps us follow rules, make safe and responsible choices, and try our best. However, when worry becomes too big or makes it hard for us to cope, it's important to recognize we have an unhelpful thought bully that needs to be addressed with the help of a grown up.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns, and as always, thank you for all that you do!

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