

Northeast Elementary School

Mental Health Team Newsletter

December, 2022



Team Introductions

- **Michael Gaudio, School Psychologist** (Full Time) Thrilled to be working with so many awesome students and connecting with families!
Fun fact: I teach the drumline at Sacred Heart University, and I can do the Rubik's Cube!
- **Tiffany Leija-Wheeler, School Psychologist** (Tuesday-Thursday) So excited to be part of the Northeast team.
Fun fact: I have lived in six different states and just recently found a love for paddle tennis.
- **Rachael Weir, School Social Worker** (Full Time) I love getting to know all of the awesome students and families that are a part of the Northeast community!
Fun Fact: I love reading and am a big fan of the Ferguson Library in Stamford!
- **Tracey Morris Prisco, School Social Worker** (Tuesday-Thursday) I am so excited to be a part of this amazing Northeast community.
Fun fact: I am a long distance runner and my favorite time to run is at 5:00 am. I love the peace & quiet of the early morning.

The mental health team wanted to create an informative pamphlet for parents and guardians that gives some insight to the goals of the school and some tips and suggestions to support the development of the students at home and in the community. We have included some useful resources that may be beneficial to your child's growth socially, academically, and creatively.

For future newsletters, we will send out a survey in which parents can highlight specific areas of interest in the mental health field. We will pool our knowledge and share it with you next time!



Rise and Shine!



Northeast is continuing the SHINE PBIS system!

PBIS stands for **Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports**. Basically, this is a program used to draw attention to expected behavior, boost a sense of community, and reward our students for being respectful, helpful, inclusive, and safe. It is a positive system in which individual students or entire classes are recognized for the good things they do in the school building.

Students earn SHINE tickets for their class as a whole, and when they earn 25 tickets, they earn a reward established with the teacher. Students are further recognized in monthly drawings, when all tickets in the school are collected and several random winners are selected! The more tickets you earn, the higher the chance that you get recognized by the principal and highlighted on the announcement board!

So, what kinds of behaviors can earn SHINE tickets? Luckily, there's an acronym for that:

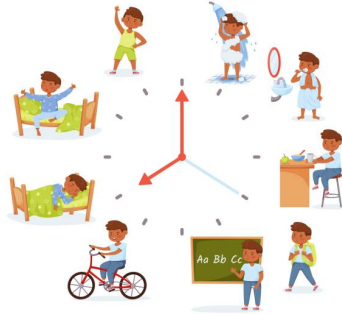
- **Show** respect and compassion
- **Help** others
- **Include** others
- **Never** give up
- **Ensure** safety

Our long term goal is to see the students displaying these positive behaviors at home too! How can you support these positive behaviors at home? Here are some ways to encourage your student outside of school:

- **Give Praise Immediately** when you see them doing something positive
- **Encourage Good Manners** towards parents/guardians, siblings, relatives, and others
- **Define Clear Expectations** of what acceptable behavior looks like
- **Provide Opportunities** to practice how to use good behaviors
- **Saying "Hello" and Introducing Yourself**
- **Complimenting students for trying something new / trying their best**



The Importance of Structure and Routine At School and Home



Predictability and consistency allow children (and adults!) to feel safe and comfortable, as they know what to expect. When students are in school at Northeast, they benefit from a predictable and consistent routine - they know what to expect when they enter the building, as they go to their classroom and put away their backpack, listen to morning announcements, have designated learning time for each subject, enjoy recess and lunch at the same time each day, and know the classroom rules.

Not only does structure and routine help children to feel comfortable, the consistency also allows them to work towards independence! Children will learn what to do in the moment based upon the history of consistent routines. This also allows teachers to spend less time providing directions and more time instructing!

Having a predictable and consistent structure and routine at home can benefit your entire household! When children know what to expect at home, they can start working towards independence. Here are some tips for creating structure and routine within your home:

- Morning routine (brush teeth, get dressed, wait for bus)
- Consistent meal times
- Homework time - setting aside a certain amount of time each day to do homework
- Play time - after homework, set aside time for play
- Family quality time - set aside a certain day/time to spend time doing something as a family
- Bed time/night time routine (shower, brush teeth, read before bed, bed at a specific time)
- Consistent and reinforced rules - same consequences (for not okay behaviors) and positive praise (for sharing, kindness, apologizing - reinforce these behaviors)

It is beneficial to create checklists or visuals to show your student the steps in their routine!

Learn more about creating structure and routine:

<https://www.cdc.gov/parents/essentials/structure/building.html>

Navigating the World of Technology, Sleep, and your Child.



Some helpful hints for you to try:

- Create rules for the **amount of time** your child is allowed to use technology. The rules may differ based on weekday or weekend schedules, and it is best to create something predictable (30-minutes per day of “screen time”).
- Limit children’s screen time the hour before bedtime. Instead, offer **other quiet activities** such as reading a book together, building with Legos/blocks, playing with cars/dolls, drawing/coloring.
- Try utilizing “**Night Shift**” modes or similar settings on your devices. These settings reduce the amount of blue light emitted, which can be detrimental to sleep cycles. You can set these to turn on automatically in the evenings.
- **Turn off all electronic media devices at bedtime**, and charge them in a central location outside bedrooms.
- Make sure to **remove all electronic media from your child or teen’s bedroom**, including TVs, video games, computers, tablets and cell phones. Studies have shown when kids have it in their room they are always aware of it, which impacts their ability to achieve restful sleep.

Technology is not going anywhere so instead have your family strive for a balance. Every family is different so find what works right for your family and remain consistent.

Stamford After School Programs



Did you know that Stamford Public Schools provides transportation directly from Northeast school to all of the programs listed below?

- 1. Boys & Girls Club** – (203)-323-3547 - The Boys and Girls Club of Stamford provides a full service after school program for children ages K-12.
Includes: Swim, art, dance, soccer, a variety of sports, homework help, piano lessons, music, and STEM (for older children)
- 2. The JCC** – (203)-487-0974 -Kids Place (K-5th)
Includes: Homework help, outdoor recreation, arts & crafts, group games and social time.
- 3. The Stamford YMCA** – (203)-357-7000- Lead Academy - (K-8th)
Includes: Academic enrichment, Homework help, Swim lessons, Ferguson Library trips, Arts & Crafts, Fitness, dance and nutrition classes.
- 4. Star Center - Stamford Recreation** – (203) 977-5723 (K-5)
Includes:Gym time, playground and out- door time, arts and crafts, video game time and homework time.
- 5. Chester Addison Community Center** – (203) 348-6491 (age 5-18)
Includes: after-school enrichment for elementary and middle school students and a specialized program for high-risk teens

Finally, we wanted to leave you with some **fun, cost-effective ideas** to try for kids and families. These are some options that will help strengthen your child's desire to learn, build, be creative, and use their imagination without breaking the bank and without relying too heavily on technology. Try these out during the winter break, and also utilize them throughout the year!

- Painting rocks (or other craft ideas)
- Create a scavenger hunt
- Go outside on a nature walk – everyone gets a bag to put up things they collect. Go home and everyone can share what they found!

- Make dinner together / breakfast for dinner
- Have an indoor picnic
- Declare a “pajama and hot cocoa day”

- Have a Lego family competition – see who “Built It Best”.
- Put a puzzle together
- Indoor hide and seek
- Have a Family game day/night

- Spend some time at the library reading a new book together
- Family movie night-pick a DVD from the library
- Volunteer together

Sincerely,

The Northeast Mental Health Team



NORTHEAST
Elementary School