

ISLANDER MIDDLE SCHOOL COUNSELOR CONNECTION

TRIMESTER 1



SEPTEMBER 2024

WELCOME TO THE
2024-2025
SCHOOL YEAR!

MEET THE IMS COUNSELING TEAM:



(From Left): Harry Brown,
Janet Goldstein, Jayna Dash,
Cara Graham, Dru Klein

MEET YOUR COUNSELORS, AT ISLANDER MIDDLE SCHOOL!

The Islander Middle School Counseling Team includes three Mercer Island School District (MISD) counselors and two Mercer Island Youth and Family Services (MIYFS) school-based mental health counselors.

We are excited to be here to support you and your student(s) through their middle school experience. Please don't hesitate to reach out to us if we can be of assistance in any way. As always, we look forward to partnering with you! We wish you an awesome year!

COUNSELOR NAME	CASELOAD	EMAIL	PHONE
Dru Klein	Last names A-G	dru.klein@mercerislandschools.org	206-230-6153
Janet Goldstein	Last names H-O	janet.goldstein@mercerislandschools.org	206-275-5958
Jayna Dash	Last names P-Z	jayna.dash@mercerislandschools.org	206-230-6098
Harry Brown	MIYFS Counselor	harry.brown@mercerislandschools.org	206-230-6154
Cara Graham	MIYFS Counselor	cara.graham@mercerislandschools.org	206-230-6272



MERCER ISLAND
YOUTH & FAMILY SERVICES

WHAT DO SCHOOL COUNSELORS DO?

Middle School is an exciting, yet sometimes challenging time for students and their parents. It is a time of growth and change, which has an impact on academics, as well as students' physical and emotional development. Fortunately, our IMS counseling team is here to help and support all students and their families! Some of the concerns we can help with include what is listed below, but please know that this is far from an exhaustive list.

Academic Support

- Counselors help students work with their teachers when there is an issue or concern.
- Counselors meet with students to problem solve when they are struggling to turn in assignments, to take assessments without excessive stress and/or to communicate more productively with their teacher(s).
- Counselors schedule meetings with parents to collaborate and offer support.
- Counselors organize parent/teacher conferences and facilitate constructive discussions between teachers and parents in the meetings.
- Counselors help students and families with executive functioning (aka organizational) skills support.
- Counselors track attendance and help support students and their families with any issues that may arise as barriers from participating in school.

Social Emotional Support

- Counselors meet 1:1 with students for any reason.
- Counselors support students with issues of stress, anxiety, depression, friendship concerns, family issues etc.
- Counselors run small groups covering many different topics and issues, varying from year to year.
- Counselors partner with teachers to teach classroom lessons that are timely and related to classroom content.
- Counselors meet with students and families and make referrals to resources and counseling outside of IMS.
- Counselors offer school wide programs (including lessons and SBIRT) that allow students to discreetly communicate if/when they are having challenges and need support.

****We love to help, so please do not hesitate to let us know if there is anything we can do to make your experience at IMS a positive one!****

Look for the Counselor Connection newsletter every trimester!
Check out the website for past issues with helpful tips and articles, too!

<https://ims.mercerislandschools.org/academicsprograms/counseling-services>

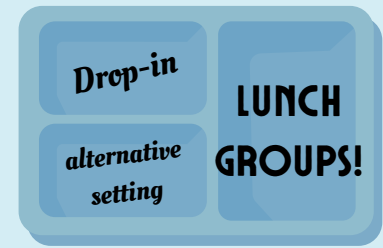
SUPPORTING MENTALLY HEALTHY STUDENTS

In recognition of Suicide Awareness month, we wanted our school community to be aware of our efforts to support students in being mentally healthy.

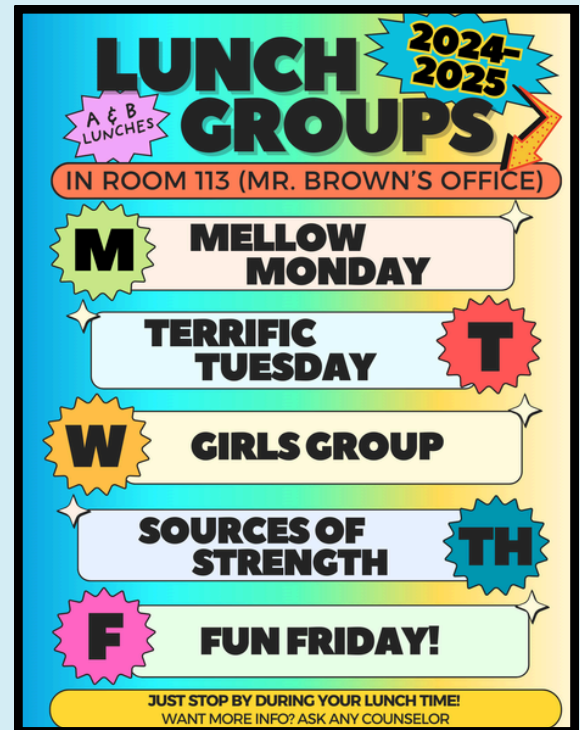
- All students can participate in our **Sources of Strength** club and events. The program's mission is to share messages of *Hope, Help and Strength* to support students in accessing positive activities and resources to increase their resiliency.
- The “**Screening, Brief Intervention, and Referral to Treatment**” (SBIRT) Survey is offered in 7th grade. The SBIRT program is a broad mental health screening and support process used to identify students in need of mental health intervention and connect them to resources.
- Our counseling team provides a specific **training for parents titled: “Signs of Suicide.”** This training focuses on recognizing the warning signs of suicide and how to support your student and possibly their friends.
- Our 6th graders will have lessons in their health class on recognizing and managing strong emotions in a counselor-led lesson, “**We All Have Mental Health.**” The focus is on practicing good mental practices and help seeking.
- In 7th grade health we also partner with our IMS teachers to share a lesson on “**Skills for Being Mentally Healthy.**” In addition, students will participate in “Depression Awareness Level II” lessons from *Erika's Lighthouse*.
- Our 8th graders will be visited by IMS counselors providing lessons on **healthy relationships** and steps they can take to access support as needed.



If you would like more information about these lessons, contact any member of our counseling team.



Is your child looking to meet friends, play games, and have fun?
Or maybe your student prefers a smaller setting for eating lunch?
Then they can check out the Counselor-led lunch groups!



PHONE POLICY UPDATE

We wanted to share some positive news regarding our recently implemented no cell phone policy at school. We are seeing a noticeable improvement in student engagement, both in their learning and in their interactions with one another. The absence of phones has reduced distractions, allowing students to focus better on lessons and participate more actively in discussions. By minimizing reliance on devices, we are fostering a more connected and supportive school community. Thank you for your ongoing support!