



Dear Families

Welcome Back. We hope you have all had time to relax and spend some quality time with one another. Whether that be a holiday in the sun, some time on the ski slopes, or enjoying the beautiful sites and weather we have had right here in our own backyard. As we venture into our final term of the school year the Blueridge staff will be working together to focus on teaching students how to be more mindful and improve their self-regulation skills using the MindUP curriculum. Broadly defined, mindful attention centers on conscious awareness of the present moment by focusing our attention and controlling our breath, we can learn to reduce stress and optimize the leaning capacity of the brain. The use of these practices in MindUP is informed by leading-edge research in the fields of developmental cognitive neuroscience, mindfulness training, social and emotional leaning (SEL) and positive psychology. In particular, MindUP pursues objectives roughly parallel to those of the five-point framework of competencies laid out in the work of the Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning. (CASEL) a not-for-profit organization at the forefront in efforts to advance the science-and evidence-based practice of social and emotional learning.

These areas of competency are:

Self-Awareness

Assessing our feelings, interests, values and strengths, maintaining self-confidence

Self-Management

Regulating emotions to handle stress, control impulses and persevere in overcoming obstacles

Social-Awareness

Understanding different perspectives and empathizing with others; recognizing and appreciating similarities and differences; using family, school and community resources effectively.

Relationship Skills

Maintaining healthy relationships based on cooperation, resisting inappropriate social pressure, preventing, managing and resolving interpersonal conflicts; seeking help when needed.

Responsible Decision Making

Using a variety of considerations including ethical, academic and community-related standards to make choices and decisions.

Mindfulness will be introduced to the students through our announcements first thing in the morning. “Mindfulness Monday”. Teachers are encouraged to follow up by teaching a MindUP lesson throughout the week. This initiative connects with our school plan goal – *To foster the social emotional competency in our school community*. An overview of what the students will be learning with some conversation questions will be sent home each Monday. We encourage you to discuss with your child what being mindful means to them and maybe practice together. Being Mindful helps us all.

We look forward to welcoming everyone back on Monday, April 1st – no fooling.

Sincerely,

Susan Teegen

Bridget O’Brien-Kopacek

Principal

Vice-Principal