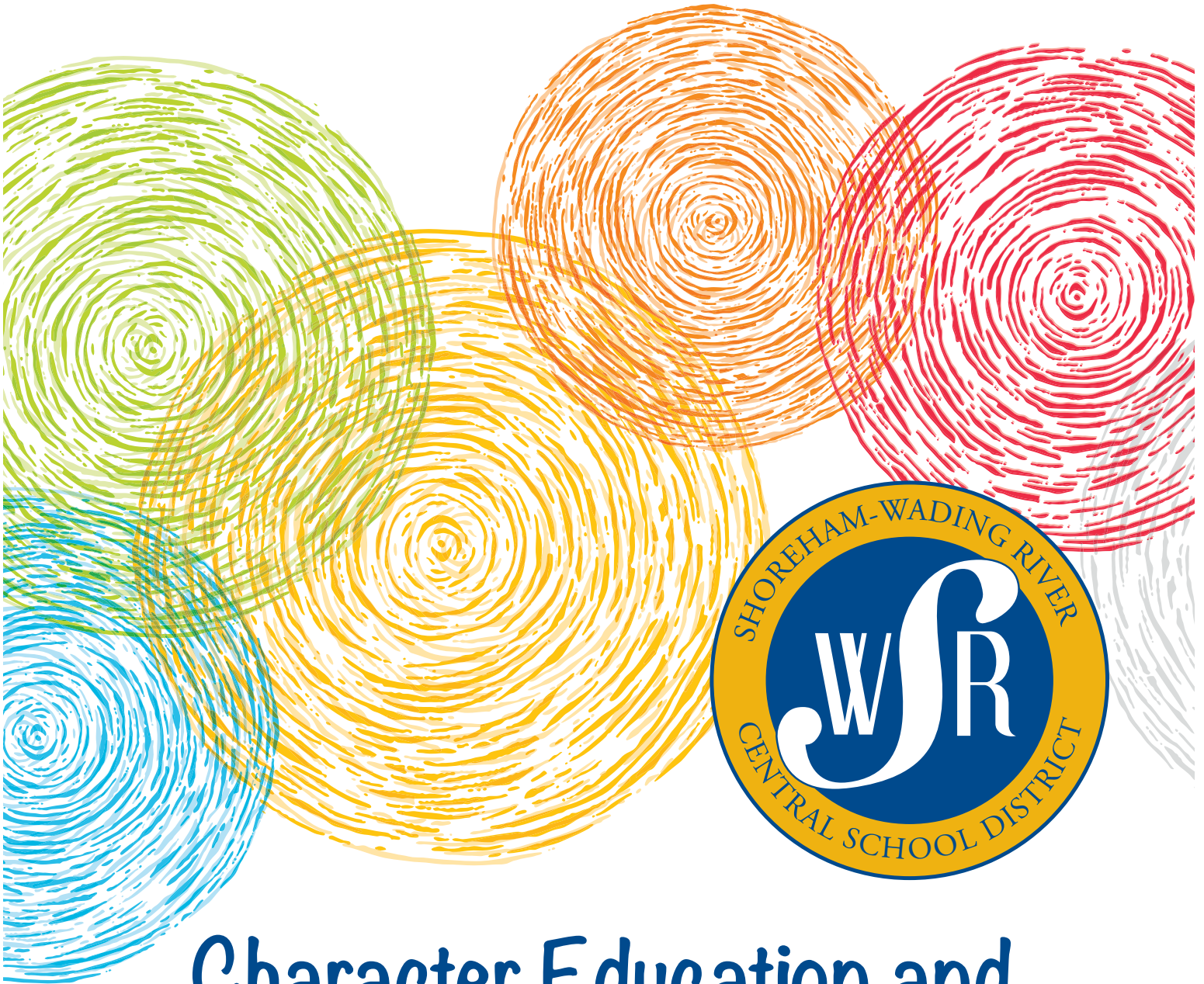


# Shoreham-Wading River CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT



## Character Education and Social-Emotional Learning:

ACTIVITIES AND PROGRAMS  
FOR THE WHOLE CHILD

2024-2025

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[www.swrschools.org](http://www.swrschools.org)

# WHAT IS SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL LEARNING?

Social-emotional learning is the process through which children and adults acquire and effectively apply the knowledge, attitudes and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions.

## WHAT IS EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE?

Emotional intelligence is the ability to identify and manage your own emotions and the emotions of others. It is generally said to include three skills:

1. Emotional awareness, including the ability to identify your own emotions and those of others.
2. The ability to harness emotions and apply them to tasks like thinking and problem-solving.
3. The ability to manage emotions, including the ability to regulate your own emotions, and the ability to cheer up or calm down another person.

## WHAT IS THE DISTRICT'S K-12 SEL CONTINUUM?

The common thread between the District's mission and philosophy of SEL, or social-emotional learning, in all schools is the focus on educating the whole child. Throughout the District's four school buildings, staff members focus on positive, responsible and healthy decision-making. Students are encouraged to form positive peer relationships, participate in effective conflict resolution and are held to high standards of academic and social responsibility and accountability. At the secondary level, the advisory programs serve as a catalyst to further promote these goals. Additionally, the development of emotional intelligence, self-awareness, self-management, self-respect, self-confidence and independence are highly supported.

## WILDCATS WITH CHARACTER

As part of the SWR's SEL continuum, the District incorporated a new social-emotional wellness and character education initiative this year. The goal is to teach and celebrate good character and social-emotional well-being across all school settings. Each month will focus on a theme. This year's themes include respect, kindness, gratitude, responsibility, perseverance, integrity, compassion, acceptance, resilience and collaboration.

## EXTENDED ACCESS TO SEL SUPPORT

To better accommodate students in need of access to social and emotional support services, the District, through a collaboration with the North Shore Youth Council, has extended counseling hours twice per week at both the Middle School and High School.

## REPORT-IT App

Throughout our schools, a Report-it App is available for students and staff to anonymously communicate concerns, issues or incidents with school officials and the District's security partners. The confidential platform is another way that the District continues to ensure that our buildings are safe and secure and our school community is a place for our students to learn and thrive.

# SHOREHAM-WADING RIVER HIGH SCHOOL (GRADES 9-12)

The High School curriculum incorporates character education and social-emotional wellness through Wildcats with Character to provide students with the knowledge and the life skills that they need upon graduation. To help cultivate good decision-making among the young adults, the school provides regular assemblies and a number of programs aimed at creating a safe environment for all students and promoting valuable life principles.

## Contacts:

**Mary Ann Benz,**  
School Psychologist;  
**Peter D'Elena,**  
School Psychologist;  
**Fallon Moscicki,**  
School Psychologist;  
**Jaclyn Anci,**  
Social Worker

**ACT NOW** Theater and Natural Helper students present vignettes that illustrate warning signs of depression and suicidal ideation/behavior. The student actors provide their peers with examples of appropriate and inappropriate ways to address the student(s) in need in each scenario. Afterward, the Natural Helper Senior Trainers, with a counselor, debrief in small groups.

**COMMUNITY OUTREACH PROGRAMS** Several clubs at the high school have students participate in community service drives throughout the year.

**COMPASSION WITHOUT BORDERS** Leadership conference run by Suffolk County Principals Association at different high schools each year.

**GRADE-LEVEL DASA PROGRAMS** The Dignity for All Students Act recognizes that safe and supportive learning environments can increase student attendance and improve academic achievement. Staff and students continuously strive to create an environment free of bullying, discrimination and/or harassment.

**HAPPINESS BAGS PROJECT** Students collect hats, gloves and gift cards for a local homeless shelter. They make "happiness bags" to be delivered before the holiday season.

**HEALTH CURRICULUM** As part of the health curriculum for all sophomores, depression and mental illness are addressed.

**THE HOLIDAY PROJECT** is hosted every December. This program brings the school community together to assist members of the local community in need during the holiday season.

**HOME BASE** serves multiple purposes. First and foremost, it allows for each student to be connected with an adult for the four years they are in high school. These relationships are essential in preventative steps when students show any signs of struggle (academic, social, emotional, physical). Home Base also allows for administration to work with students in smaller settings on SEL goals.

**NATURAL HELPERS** is a peer-helping program, used nationwide, that serves high school students who want to strengthen their communication and helping skills to better support others and provide service to their schools and communities.

**THE NEXUS PROGRAM** provides students with opportunities to interact with members of the larger community and gain real-world experiences. These experiences, such as regularly scheduled trips to the Long Island State Veterans Home in Stony Brook, help students build greater levels of compassion and understanding for what members of their community have experienced in their lives.

**POSITIVITY WEEK** is led by the Gay-Straight Alliance Club and is designed to focus on the physical and mental health and well-being of all members of the school community. Students participate in random acts of kindness and other activities that help build student awareness and compassion for all community members.

**SAFE DRIVING PROGRAM** is a hands-on demonstration of the dangers of distracted driving, featuring victims of distracted driving.

**SEL MENTOR PROGRAM** cultivates the connection between students and teachers to foster a positive learning environment for students who have demonstrated poor academic achievement, a high rate of absenteeism and difficulty engaging with the school community.

**SPEAKER SERIES** focuses on a range of important and relevant topics, including the dangers of drug use, bullying, positive peer relationships, social media, and tolerance and diversity.

**SUICIDE AWARENESS** Recognizing the difficulties teenagers face on a daily basis, the High School provides specific programs that focus on suicide awareness.



# PRODELL MIDDLE SCHOOL (GRADES 6-8)

Throughout middle school adolescents begin to make strong connections between the character education they learned in elementary school and the real world. Knowing this, the Middle School makes every effort to encourage and promote good character and emphasize the importance of taking care of oneself. The curriculum is designed to meet the physical, social and emotional needs of middle school students and address the challenges they face, including peer pressure, substance abuse and bullying.

## Contacts:

**Doreen Armstrong,  
School Psychologist;  
Mary Ann Benz,  
School Psychologist;  
Andrea Monz,  
Social Worker;  
Fallon Moscicki,  
School Psychologist**

**ADVISORY PROGRAM** The Middle School advisory program is designed to strengthen connectedness at the middle school level. An adult adviser meets regularly during the school day with a group of students to provide academic and social-emotional mentorship and support, to create personalization within the school and to facilitate a small peer community of learners.

**BODY IMAGE/EATING DISORDER PRESENTATIONS** The Middle School social worker presents to seventh grade girls during physical education classes on body image and eating disorders. The discussion includes how social media influences self-esteem and body image. An outside presenter talks to eighth grade students in health classes about eating disorders, body image and how to identify a problem to help a friend/peer.

**CYBERBULLYING/INTERNET SAFETY ASSEMBLIES** Members of the Suffolk County Police Department or related organizations speak with all students in grades 6-8 in assemblies on cyberbullying/internet safety. Discussions include current trends in social media, internet use, ways to identify online dangers and staying safe from online predators.

## CHARACTER EDUCATION ASSEMBLIES

This presentation teaches one how to be more compassionate and open-minded with people who are different by moving past our unfounded assumptions about other groups and backgrounds. The common themes of the presentations are:

- Empathy.
- Acceptance.
- Being Inclusive.
- The Importance of Diversity.
- Working Together for the Common Good of the School.
- Be Your Best Self.

The themes and messages in this assembly program can easily be used to further classroom discussions and help bridge concepts in schoolwide respect and kindness programs.

**EMPOWERING MINDS** To further support the needs of all students, the District is continuously working to strengthen character education, social skills, coping skills and intervention support systems. Empowering Minds lessons will be implemented on healthy ways to deal with problems, self-esteem, healthy choices and friendship, as well as concrete strategies for students to utilize to deal with negative emotions through breathing exercises, reflection and classroom community conversations.

## STARTING THE DAY ON A HIGH NOTE

At the beginning of a school day, we play motivational songs for students to dance their way into the school day. This helps to establish a productive day for students and staff and start the day on a positive note.

**FOOD DRIVES** The annual Thanksgiving Food Drive is for Shoreham-Wading River's community members in need and helps to teach students about giving, helping and being thankful. The school social worker works with the High School social worker, Student Council members collect food and advisories decorate food baskets with turkey gift cards and other nonperishable donations that are assembled and delivered before Thanksgiving. Remaining food items are donated to local food pantries.

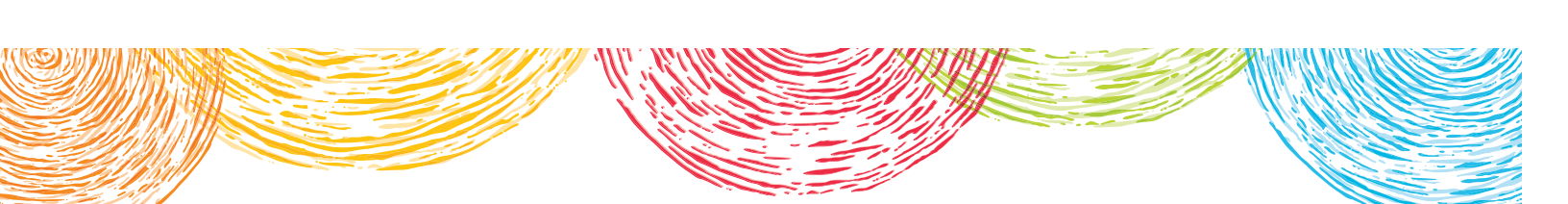
## GRADE 5-6 ARTICULATION

A Middle School guidance counselor and psychologist meet with Wading River School's fifth grade teachers and the school psychologist to discuss all fifth grade students transitioning to the Middle School.

## GRADE 5 JUNE ORIENTATION TO THE MIDDLE SCHOOL

In June, fifth graders visit the Middle School. The day begins with an assembly led by school administrators and guidance counselors before students tour the building, led by Middle





School students. While the program is coordinated by the guidance department, it is run totally by student volunteers. They lead the tours and the entertainment!

**HOLIDAY GIFT PROJECT** The gift project provides gifts for students and their families who are in need. This is completely anonymous and collaboratively accomplished with the High School social worker. Students work together to help families in need by collecting gifts/items to support them throughout the holiday season.

**LEADERSHIP CLUB** Leadership Club helps students identify various leadership styles while developing individual/group projects and programs that seek to unite our community and enhance our school environment. Students interested in leading fifth grade orientation must be members of this club.

**MENTAL HEALTH STAFF  
ARTICULATION GRADE 8&9**

**TRANSITIONING** The mental health teams for the Middle School and High School meet to discuss at-risk students who will transition to the High School.

**RED RIBBON WEEK** helps to present a visible commitment to living a safe, healthy and drug-free life. The campaign is designed to create awareness concerning the problems related to bullying, the use of tobacco/vaping, alcohol and other drugs and to support the decision to live a healthy lifestyle. Student Council officers make daily announcements providing reminders of the daily themes. Resources, education pamphlets and posters on tobacco/vaping, alcohol and various drugs are visual reminders for students. The Middle School social worker collaborates with the health teachers to create a weeklong theme about prevention, education and making good choices in life. Members of the

Suffolk County Police Department or related organizations provide grade-appropriate assemblies on vaping and gateway drugs. Guest speakers present to all grades on the dangers of the tobacco and vaping epidemic and visit eighth grade health classes to share personal stories about addiction and recovery, which has a powerful impact on the students in truly understanding how addiction begins.

**STUDENT COUNCIL** Students who wish to be active members of Prodell's middle school community are encouraged to join. The purpose of the club is to inspire and empower students to make positive contributions to the school and its student body. Topics we discuss include school spirit, character building and bullying prevention. Student Council is dedicated to developing leadership skills in its members while enhancing co-curricular life at Prodell. Members of Student Council work hard to address the needs of our students.

**SPEAK LIFE VIDEO** is a comprehensive bullying program addressing key issues including bullying, cyberbullying, teen pressure, teen suicide, poor self-image, the struggles to fit in and the silent suffering of the forgotten. Video gives a glimpse into the lives of students and their public personas and private struggles. Things are not always as they seem. This production gives a voice to the silent outcast, challenging every student to STAND, SPEAK and DEFEND. Even one voice can create change!

**SUICIDE PREVENTION/EDUCATION** Signs of Suicide is an eighth grade prevention program which empowers students to recognize the warning signs of suicide and how they can respond to friends at risk by utilizing the ACT approach:

- A** Acknowledge there is a problem.
- C** Let them know you care.
- T** Tell a trusted adult.

Through discussion and activities, students are empowered to identify the Sources of Strength (personal protective factors) that they already have in their lives and how they can draw upon them in challenging times to build resiliency.

**UNITY DAY** Celebrated on the third Wednesday in October every year, this is a day to show unity for kindness, acceptance and inclusion. On this day, students and staff are encouraged to wear orange to send a visible message that no child should ever experience bullying. This day also consists of community building and bullying prevention activities for students.

**WELCOME BACK ASSEMBLIES** are grade-level assemblies held at the beginning of each school year led by administrators and guidance counselors. They cover topics such as Code of Conduct, school drills, Report-It App, Dignity for All Students Act, clubs and extracurricular activities, the Wildcats with Character program, and student rights in terms of bullying, cyberbullying and hostile environments.

**WELLNESS WEEK** A wellness week is held to encourage and celebrate a healthy lifestyle. Guest presenters and staff members engage the students in fun and informative activities throughout the week that focus on exercise, nutrition, mental-health self-care and general well-being.

# ELEMENTARY (GRADES K-5)



## Contact:

**Madeleine Everhart,  
School Psychologist,  
Miller Avenue School.**

Within the walls of Miller Avenue School and Wading River School, students are continuously educated on the attributes of good character and citizenship through numerous positive reinforcement initiatives. While deepening their understanding of the pillars of character, students are introduced to additional activities and programs that promote SEL. Special assemblies, food drives and charitable projects are spearheaded by caring staff members and encourage compassion and empathy among the students.

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**ANGEL TAGS** This Salvation Army program is an annual mainstay at the elementary levels and encourages community members to become involved by providing specific toys or clothing to local children in need.

**BOOK OF THE MONTH** Students participate in a “book of the month” initiative where they read together and discuss books related to character education, along with a lesson involving a social-emotional component (e.g., building friendships, understanding your own special gifts/talents).

**BUCKET FILLERS** To help students at Miller Avenue School understand that words and actions can make a difference, both schools sponsor the Be a Bucket Filler program. Depending on their grade level, students read Carol McCloud’s

“Have You Filled a Bucket Today?” “Fill a Bucket: A Guide to Daily Happiness for Young Children,” “Bucket Filling from A to Z: The Key to Being Happy” or Tom Rath’s “How Full Is Your Bucket?” Once completed, students work as a group to brainstorm various “bucket filling” and “bucket dipping” behaviors.

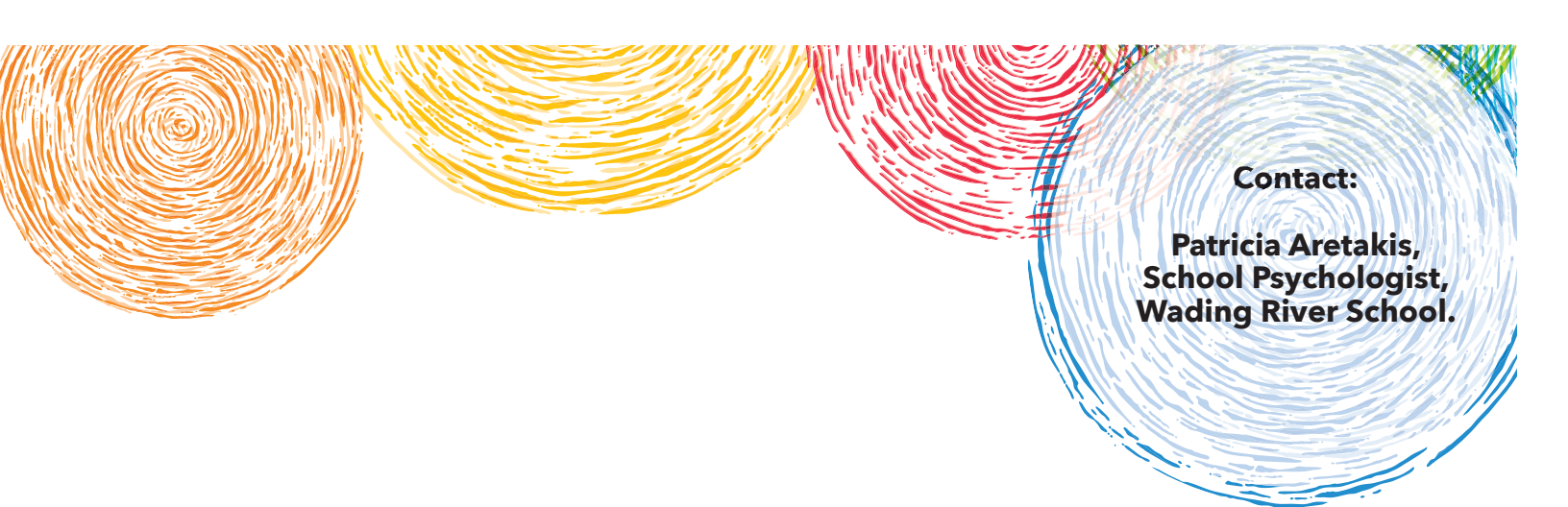
**BUDDY BENCH** A student may use the Buddy Bench to signal that he or she is looking for someone to play with. Students are encouraged to include anyone who is sitting on the bench in games or conversation.

**CHARACTER COUNTS** Students participate in the worldwide Character Counts Week celebration and learn about the “pillars of character,” including caring, fairness, respect, responsibility, trustworthiness and citizenship. Each of the pillars is discussed

within the classroom and students are encouraged to wear colors that represent each pillar.

**CLASSROOM PRACTICES** are infused directly through whole-class lessons, individual or small-group conversations, the reading of related literature, designing projects and finding ways to help others. Empowering Minds and supporting lessons assist in the generalization of social-emotional skills.

**EMPOWERING MINDS** is a cooperative learning program taught to all K-5 students by classroom teachers, school psychologists, physical education teachers and building principals. Working together as a classroom community, students identify their feelings and learn how to manage their responses. They take responsibility for their actions and gain practical skills they will use proactively



**Contact:**

**Patricia Aretakis,  
School Psychologist,  
Wading River School.**

throughout their lives. The program includes lessons on healthy ways to deal with challenges, self-esteem, positive choices and friendships, as well as concrete strategies such as breathing exercises, reflection and classroom conversations that students can use to deal with troubling emotions. Teachers are also able to reinforce the concepts and skills throughout the school year with age-appropriate, short, supplemental activities which are engaging and meaningful additions to the districtwide SEL lessons. These activities are cultivated and connected to the monthly Wildcats with Character trait by a subcommittee of mental health staff and teachers.

**PLAY PALS** Elementary students with disabilities and general education students are paired to do activities together. The purpose of the club is to introduce inclusion and awareness at an early age by educating younger students about students with a variety of educational needs. The goal is for students to grow a mutual understanding and respect for their peers with disabilities and other learning needs. Students learn to communicate, play and socialize

with peers.

**PROJECT ADVENTURE** Students are exposed to character education and teambuilding skills through physical activity. The club introduces students to teamwork, cooperation, communication, leadership, problem-solving, character skills and sportsmanship.

**PROMOTION OF POSITIVE BEHAVIORS** In classroom lessons and activities, children learn to understand their emotions and the emotions of others and learn ways to support one another in making healthy choices. Problem-solving, positive self-talk and the knowledge that they can always go to an adult should they or a friend be in need of help are also consistently encouraged. Staff members also stress coping and social skills, including how to develop interpersonal friendships.

**STUDENT COUNCIL** The Student Council provides service to the community. Student Council gives students the opportunity to develop leadership by organizing and carrying out school activities and service projects.

**TRANSITION AND ORIENTATION**

This process includes kindergarten and third grade orientations. Kindergartners have an opportunity to visit Miller Avenue in August. Incoming third graders are provided a tour of Wading River School and enjoy a performance by fourth and fifth graders for a smooth transition.

**WELCOME AMBASSADORS**

At Wading River, Welcome Ambassadors help run the morning announcements that include a helpful message connected with the daily lives of children along with the saying, "We started our day with something to think about -- let's make it a great day!"



# RESOURCES BEYOND OUR SCHOOLS

## Alternative for Youth (AFY)

This program is considered a pre-PINS diversion program that is the first place that parents should call for help with children under the age of 18 who exhibit a pattern of incorrigible behaviors (runaways, curfew violations, etc.) in the home. If eligible, families are referred to an agency that provides in-home services beginning within 24-48 hours. A variety of services, including case management for up to one year, can be accessed through this program. All cases are screened by the probation department and referred to the designated program agency. The program provides linkages to services for substance abuse treatment, anger management, mentoring, individual and family counseling, mental health evaluations and more. AFY starts with immediate, home-based crisis intervention by a case manager to stabilize the family crisis, implement a Family Intervention Plan and link the family with community resources. Because many adolescents need someone closer to their age to guide them in the right direction, AFY has peer specialists who engage youth in positive recreational and educational activities, including both one-on-one and group activities. For young women, the H.E.R.S. (Helping Each other Reach Success) peer group focuses on making healthy choices. For young men, the Boys to Men group focuses on building strong character to improve life skills. AFY also conducts training sessions to empower parents to better handle their family's specialized issues and needs. Screening unit: (631) 853-7889

## American Foundation for Suicide Prevention

[www.afsp.org](http://www.afsp.org)  
The American Foundation for Suicide Prevention is the leading national organization exclusively dedicated to understanding and preventing suicide through research, education and advocacy, and to reaching out to people with mental disorders and those impacted by suicide. 988

## Children's Single Point of Access (C-SPOA)

<https://www.suffolkcountyny.gov>  
If your child needs more intensive mental health services than outpatient therapy alone, Children's Single Point of Access can help. Preventative, intensive and residential services are available through a network of agencies in Suffolk County. (631) 853-8513

## Diagnostic, Assessment and Stabilization Hub (DASH)

DASH is a 24/7 voluntary program for individuals in a crisis situation who are

feeling overwhelmed due to substance use, mental illness and/or other life stressors. The program features a team of licensed professional experts who will conduct an assessment, develop a safety plan and, if necessary, recommend outpatient services or a higher level of care. DASH also features a crisis hotline providing telephone triage, clinical assessments and therapeutic support. Hotline: 631-952-3333

## Family Service League

[FSL-li.org](http://FSL-li.org)  
With over 60 social service programs in more than 20 locations and a committed staff and support personnel of approximately 700, Family Service League serves Long Island's most vulnerable citizens. From seniors seeking companionship and purpose and the homeless seeking shelter and nourishment to those suffering from addiction and mental illness and families working hard to stay together, FSL will continue to help neighbors when they need it most. 631-427-3700

## Long Island Crisis Center

[longislandcrisiscenter.org](http://longislandcrisiscenter.org)  
The Long Island Crisis Center provides free, high-quality, confidential and nonjudgmental programs and services to support and empower Long Islanders at critical times in their lives 24 hours a day, seven days a week. (516) 679-1111

## Mather Hospital

[www.matherhospital.org](http://www.matherhospital.org)  
Mather offers a continuum of inpatient and outpatient behavioral health services for both adolescents and adults. It is the only acute care hospital in Suffolk County with an adolescent psychiatric unit and an adolescent partial hospitalization program. (631) 476-2775

## Mobile Crisis Unit

Team members will make home and/or community visit(s) to assess the situation. If indicated, they can provide short-term therapy, make a referral to a community agency or make arrangements for hospitalization. Workers will remain assigned to the case until the person is linked with an appropriate service or agency. (631) 952-3333

## National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

[suicidepreventionlifeline.org](http://suicidepreventionlifeline.org)  
The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline is a national network of local crisis centers that provides free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, seven days a week. (800) 273-8255

## North Shore Youth Council

[www.nsync.com](http://www.nsync.com)  
North Shore Youth Council serves as a prevention model for the North Shore communities in developing antiviolence, drug and alcohol-free projects. This not-for-profit agency is dedicated to helping youth and families cope in today's changing world. Now offering on-site mental health services on the SWRHS campus. (631) 744-0207

## Outreach Teen Alcohol and Drug Outpatient Treatment

Outreach's outpatient services treat teen drug abuse through three fundamental counseling approaches – individual, group and family. They carefully select from support services such as vocational counseling and sober social field trips to enhance the program's impact. Sessions address drug use, co-occurring problems and life skills deficits. (631) 286-0700

## Response of Suffolk County

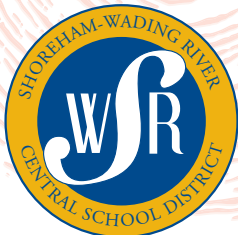
[www.responsehotline.org](http://www.responsehotline.org)  
Response of Suffolk County's mission is to provide callers in crisis or in need of support with unconditional acceptance, compassion and respect to lower anxiety and facilitate the coping skills they already have. The organization also helps callers capitalize on their strengths in the prevention of self-destructive behaviors or suicide, provides referrals and information about community programs and resources and works to heighten public awareness of suicide prevention through community education, outreach and training. (631) 751-7500  
Conexion  
(631) 751-7423  
Lunes a Viernes, 5-10 p.m.

## South Oaks

[www.south-oaks.org](http://www.south-oaks.org)  
The South Oaks Child and Adolescent Center of Excellence has extensive experience treating a diverse mix of acute behavioral, emotional and substance abuse problems (including co-occurring disorders). (631) 608-5610

## Stony Brook Hospital CPEP

[www.stonybrookmedicine.edu/patientcare/cpep](http://www.stonybrookmedicine.edu/patientcare/cpep)  
This Comprehensive Psychiatric Emergency Program provides emergency psychiatric services to people in urgent need of psychiatric evaluation 24 hours a day, seven days a week. (631) 444-6050



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