

The Power of Peer Relationships in Student Growth

Student leadership gives children the opportunity to practice vital social and emotional skills, pursue academic and personal goals with confidence, and build positive friendships and relationships. Sanford Harmony Academy's curriculum is built around four focus themes containing strategies to build positive peer relationships—Be Your Best Self, Value Each Other, Learn from Others, and Communicate with Each Other—which align with CASEL core competencies, that will help students become the best leaders and people they can be.



FOCUS THEME 3

Encourage Students to Learn From Each Other

Conflict is a necessary part of life, and it's important to understand why conflicts occur to resolve them.

Key Consideration: There are three approaches to resolving conflict: conflict avoider (like a turtle), conflict controller (like a shark), and solution finder (like an owl).

Reflection Questions

- 1. What are the most common types of conflict that arise among students in our school?
2. How can we incorporate processes to learn the approaches to resolving conflict into our curriculum?

Learning to resolve conflict in an intentional way deepens students' understanding of their own perspectives and the perspectives of others.

The STEP It Up! conflict resolution process helps children learn healthy ways to communicate through conflict with their peers. Students can:

- Stop, think, and cool off;
• Talk it out;
• Evaluate possible solutions; and
• Pick a realistic solution and try it.

FOCUS THEME 4

Build Intentional Opportunities for Peer Communication

Practicing effective communication is a cornerstone of student leadership and growth. Students can learn a range of social skills that support effective communication and help to avoid communication mishaps.

Key Consideration: "Communication Boosters," like listening, supporting, and negotiating, help children get along with and understand each other. Avoiding "Communication Bloopers," like interrupting, ignoring, and withdrawing, improves communication.

Reflection Question

Teaching students to communicate as they work together helps everyone think of new ideas, do things they might not do alone, and listen to others' ideas. What opportunities do we have in our school to encourage collaboration among students?

This Leading Lessons guide is sponsored by Sanford Harmony Academy. Check out their full suite of curricula, program resources, and training programs that focus on SEL at harmony-academy.org. Find no-cost resources, including mini-lessons on each of the focus themes outlined, at mylearningportal.org.



NOTES

Dotted lines for taking notes.

