



Helena Bryn-McLeod
School Counsellor
Salmo Elementary School

Dear parents and guardians,

My name is Helena and I have been in the role of counsellor since March. I have loved getting to know your kids individually and in the classroom. I've had the opportunity to meet some of you and I look forward to meeting more of you come September!

I have been supporting the students at Salmo Elementary with social emotional skills, problem solving, and self-esteem development. For some, this means learning to feel more positively about themselves. For some this means developing communication skills that enable them to enjoy their friendships more. For others, this means understanding the different parts of the brain and getting to know their anxiety through a lens of fight-flight-freeze-fawn. Some want to become more familiar with emotions, big and small. And overall, for everyone, social emotional skills are a pathway to a richer, healthier, and more satisfying life as they learn to understand their own identities and develop their unique strengths. Each of them has a story to tell.

This letter is both a celebration of everything the kids have learned in the past couple months - which has been amazing to watch - and a resource for the summer. Below are some themes and links to follow that may help support you and your kiddo/s during July and August.

Ongoing Social Emotional Learning

Self-development can keep happening over the summer! Along with the activities, peers, and family connections that these kiddos have, I encourage them to continue developing positive relationships with themselves.

All ages: [15+ Ideas for Social Emotional Summer Learning - The Pathway 2 Success](#)

Primary: [4 Fun Summer Activities to Build Social Emotional Skills](#)

Intermediate: [How to Continue Social-Emotional Learning in Summer - TeachHUB](#)

Electronics

Some youths are greatly impacted by the amount of time they spend on screens. There is a relatively new challenge that kids face due to an increase in screen time, which has been shown to lower self-control, increase anxiety, make sleeping more difficult, decrease tolerance, and make moods feel more intense. If you feel like your child may struggle with any of these issues, it may be worth checking it out: [Electronic screen syndrome: what parents should know](#)

Here are some digital media tips (source: Harvard Medical School):

- ✚ Beware of digital media distraction. Half of all kids and three-quarters of parents feel the other is distracted when talking to each other.
- ✚ Have regular sit-downs, screen-free meals with your children.
- ✚ Put down your device. Be present with others. Observe the world around you. *Let your mind wander.*
- ✚ Avoid blue light-emitting screen use before bedtime.
- ✚ Play online games with your children rather than forbidding them. Learn how to play from them and, as you play, help them think about what they're seeing and doing on screen.
- ✚ Help your children plan how to spend their time, focusing on important and favorite activities to avoid sliding into the screen abyss.

Mindfulness & Identity

There is a very sweet narration that helps kids understand some of the big feelings they have inside, and how they can start to use mindfulness to practice patience with those feelings. If you haven't seen it yet, I recommend the video [The Story of the Two Wolves | The Kid Should See This](#). Some students have worked with this concept in class.

Additionally, this video can help kids get insights into how other young people their age are feeling about their feelings! :) [PBS KIDS Talk About | FEELINGS & EMOTIONS! | PBS KIDS](#). I recommend all the PBS Kids videos if you are interested in subscribing on YouTube. They talk about determination, courage, bravery, self-confidence, etc.

CBC Kids "Small Talk" also does short episodes on different themes like "mistakes", "fears", "goodness", and "fairness". Here is one on "differences" [Small Talk | Differences | CBC Kids](#).

If you need to reach out for any other support or resources, I will be available all summer and happy to connect. You can reach me at helena.bryn-mcleod@sd8.bc.ca. Thank you and take good care. Have a great summer!

Warmest regards,



Helena Bryn-McLeod

THE FIVE AGREEMENTS
By Don Miguel Ruiz, Don Jose Ruiz, and Janet Mills

ONE
Be impeccable with your word.
Say what you mean with integrity. Your word is a force.

TWO
Don't take anything personally.
Be immune to the opinions and actions of others. Because nothing is personal.

THREE
Don't make assumptions.
Assumptions prevent you from discovering the truth. Communicate clearly to avoid misunderstandings.

FOUR
Always do your best.
You are going to break the other 3 agreements, when you do that, remind yourself to always do your best without being judgmental.

FIVE
Be skeptical, but learn to listen.
Do not take anything at its face value. Ask yourself if it is the real truth. Listen to what's there between the lines.

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