



Mountview Road School

Counselor's Corner: January 2021

Character Education Theme of the Month is:

CARING



On behalf of all staff at MTV, we'd like to wish all of our parents, guardians and students a Happy New Year!

2020 proved to be quite the year to say the least, and it seems to be spilling into 2021. Please read below for tips on how to talk to your children about today's current events!

1. Find Out What Your Child Already Knows

Ask your kids questions to see if they know about a current event. For school-age kids and teens, you can ask what they have heard at school or on social media. Consider your child's age and development and follow your child's lead. If your child doesn't seem interested in an event or doesn't want to talk about it at the moment, don't push.

2. Answer Questions Honestly and Briefly

Tell the truth with facts, not opinion, and share only as much as your child needs to know. Try to calm any fears and help kids feel safe. Listen carefully and focus on what your kids ask so you can help them cope with their fears. An adult's willingness to listen sends a powerful message. If your child asks a question that stumps you, say you'll find out. Or use age-appropriate websites to spend time together looking for an answer.

3. Help Kids Feel in Control

Encourage your child to talk. If your child is afraid about what's going on, ask about it. Even when kids can't control an event — like a natural disaster — it can help them to share their fears with you. Urge teens to look beyond a news story. Ask why they think an outlet featured a frightening or disturbing story. Was it to boost ratings and clicks or because the story was truly newsworthy? In this way, a scary story can be turned into a discussion about the role and mission of the news.

Teach your children to be prepared, not panicked. For example, if the news is about a natural disaster, make a family plan for what you might do. If an illness is spreading, talk about ways to protect yourself and others.

Put news stories in context. Broaden the discussion from a specific news item about a difficult event to a larger conversation. Use it as a way to talk about helping, cooperation, and the ways that people cope with hardship.

4. Limit Exposure to the News

Decide what and how much news is appropriate for your child. Think about how old your kids are and how mature they are. Encourage them to take breaks from following the news, especially when the topics are difficult. Keep tabs on the amount of difficult news your child hears. Notice how often you discuss the news in front of your kids. Turn off the TV so the news is not playing in the background all day.

Watch the news with your child and talk about it and set limits.

Turn off a story if you think it's not appropriate for your child. It's OK to tell your kids that you don't want them to have constant exposure and to set ground rules on device and social media use.

5. Keep the Conversation Going

Talk about current events with your child often. Help kids think through stories they hear — good and bad. Ask questions like: "What do you think about these events?" or "How do you think these things happen?" With these types of questions, you can encourage conversation about non-news topics.



Did you know: Nearly one-third of children feel **unimportant** when their parents use their cell phones during conversations, TV watching, playing outside and meal times.

(Read more here:

<https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/health-and-families/features/child-phone-distracting-screen-time-parenting-a9306556.html>)

Important January Dates/Events!

- **January 15:** Early Dismissal - No Virtual Afternoon
- **January 18:** School's Closed for Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day
- **January 20:** 3rd Grade Inview Testing

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