

Early Childhood- Phase 1 Letter

Date

Dear Families,

This year, our staff will be implementing RULER, an approach to social and emotional learning that focuses emotional intelligence. RULER helps students, and the adults in their lives, to learn about and manage their emotions. This is important for success in nearly every aspect of our lives—for attention, memory, and learning, for making and keeping friends, for healthy decision-making, and for our overall wellbeing. You can learn more about RULER and why emotions matter in early childhood in the [brochure](#) and [article](#) that are attached.

Adult learning is a core component of the RULER approach, and we will spend this year building our own skills of emotional intelligence and creating opportunities for you to learn too. Once we have become proficient with the RULER skills and tools, we will begin introducing RULER in the classroom.

In adopting RULER, we hope to strengthen our skills of emotional intelligence, to build a stronger community, and prepare our students in their transition to kindergarten and beyond. We would love for you to be part of a conversation with families and staff to learn more about this work. We encourage you to join an upcoming workshop that gives an overview of RULER for Families.

Presentation/Workshop:

- Dates
- Times
- Location
- Facilitators' name and positions
- Additional information that may boost participation (i.e., refreshments, child care, giveaways)

We are excited to work together to build our emotional intelligence skills.

Sincerely,

Director

Elementary- Phase 1 Letter

Date

Dear Families,

As part of our ongoing efforts to continue to provide the most impactful experiences for the children and families we serve, we have committed to implementing RULER, an evidence-based approach to social and emotional learning developed at the Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence. RULER is also an acronym for the skills of emotional intelligence: Recognizing emotions, Understanding emotions, Labeling emotions, Expressing emotions, and Regulating emotions. Research from the field of emotion science finds that children who understand and manage their feelings make more responsible decisions, have stronger relationships, and perform better in school.

Beginning this fall, teachers, school leaders and staff members in our school will be learning how we can use the skills of emotional *intelligence* to reach our goals and support our students in doing the same. We will practice the skills first ourselves, so that we have developed our own abilities, become more emotionally intelligent educators and leaders, and ready to teach the RULER tools and model the skills for the students. Once we're ready, we will roll it out with the students in the classrooms with the goal of integrating these mindsets and practices throughout our school. [Include a comment about your general timeline for student implementation and when you expect to introduce RULER to students]

As we learn more about RULER, we'd like to do that in partnership with you. We will be extending opportunities for **parents and caregivers** to learn more about RULER throughout the year. Please join an upcoming workshop that provides an excellent overview of RULER for families of elementary school students.

Presentation/Workshop:

- Dates
- Times
- Location
- Facilitators' name and positions
- Additional information that may boost participation (i.e., refreshments, child care, give-aways)

When schools and families partner around these goals, students feel supported and reap the benefits. I look forward to learning and growing together this year.

Sincerely,

Principal

Middle School-Phase 1 Letter

Date

Dear Families,

Beginning this fall, teachers, school leaders and staff members in our school community will be learning about how we can use emotions to reach our goals. We have committed to implementing RULER, an evidence-based approach to social and emotional learning developed at the Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence. RULER is also an acronym for the skills of emotional intelligence: Recognizing emotions, Understanding emotions, Labeling emotions, Expressing emotions, and Regulating emotions. Research from the field of emotion science finds that children who understand and manage their feelings make more responsible decisions, have stronger relationships, and perform better in school.

We will practice the skills first ourselves, so that we have developed our own abilities, become more emotionally intelligent educators and leaders, and ready to teach the RULER tools and model the skills for the students. Once we're ready, we will roll it out with the students in the classrooms with the goal of integrating these mindsets and practices throughout our school. [Include a comment about your general timeline for student implementation and when you expect to introduce RULER to students] We feel committed to teaching middle schoolers to manage emotions in their everyday lives and navigate their social and academic demands successfully.

As we learn more about the skills of emotional intelligence, we'd like to do that in partnership with you. As such, we will be extending opportunities for **parents and caregivers** to learn more about RULER throughout the year. We encourage you to join an upcoming workshop that provides an excellent overview of RULER for families of middle school students.

Overview Presentation and Workshops:

- Dates
- Times
- Location
- Facilitators' name and positions
- Additional information that may boost participation (i.e., refreshments, child care, give-aways)

When schools and families partner around these goals, middle school students feel supported and reap the benefits. I look forward to learning and growing together this year.

Sincerely,

Principal

High School-Phase 1 Letter

Date

Dear Families,

Research shows that understanding and effectively managing our emotions predicts important life outcomes such as greater health and wellbeing, better decision making, higher quality relationships and better performance academically and in the workplace. Beginning this fall, teachers, school leaders and staff members in our school community will be learning about how we can use the skills of emotional intelligence to reach our goals. Emotional intelligence is about awareness of emotions, understanding how emotions influence us, and using this information to make wiser decisions.

We will be using RULER, an evidence-based approach to social and emotional learning developed at the Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence. RULER is an acronym for the skills of emotional intelligence: recognizing, understanding, labeling, expressing and regulating emotions. To learn more about why emotions matter, visit here www.rulerapproach.org.

Our approach will be to begin with the adults because in order to teach these skills effectively, we have to use them ourselves. Next, students will begin using RULER in their classrooms through infusing conversations about emotions into content areas as well as through lessons in [name the class that lessons will be taught through ex. Health, Advisory, Wellness, etc.]. [Include a comment about your general timeline for student implementation.]

There will be opportunities for **parents and caregivers** to learn more about RULER throughout the year. We encourage you to join an upcoming workshop that provides an excellent overview of RULER for families of high school students.

Overview Presentation and Workshops:

- Dates
- Times
- Location
- Facilitators' name and positions
- Additional information that may boost participation (i.e., refreshments, child care, give-aways)

When schools and families share goals for educating teens in academics and social and emotional skills, and partner around these goals, teens feel supported and reap the benefits. We look forward to learning and growing together this year.

Sincerely,

Principal

Sample Language for School to Home Communication

We have compiled a list of frequently asked questions and sample responses that you can use in conversations with families or in letters or emails that you send home. It also may be helpful to direct parents to the [Family Engagement page on rulerapproach.org](https://www.rulerapproach.org), where there are several videos on why emotions matter, emotional intelligence, and the RULER skills.

What is SEL?

- **Social and emotional learning (SEL)** is the process through which children and adults understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions.
- In other words, social and emotional learning is how children learn about feelings in themselves and others and how to manage those feelings so that they can have positive relationships and make good choices.
- Decades of research have shown that social, emotional and academic development are deeply intertwined in the brain and in behavior.

What is Emotional Intelligence?

- “**Emotional intelligence** is the ability to monitor one’s own and others’ feelings, to discriminate among them, and to use this information to guide one’s thinking and action.” SALOVEY & MAYER, 1990; MAYER & SALOVEY, 1997
- Emotional intelligence means being able to identify and understand your own emotions, understand and empathize with another person’s feelings, and respond to emotions in ways that help us achieve our goals, collaborate with others, and show empathy.
- Emotions affect nearly every aspect of our lives: our attention, memory and learning, decision-making, relationships, health and well-being, creativity, and overall performance. Emotional Intelligence involves being “smart” about your emotions.

What is RULER?

- RULER is an evidenced based approach to social and emotional learning (SEL) and is an acronym for the building blocks of emotional intelligence:
 - **Recognizing** emotions in oneself and others
 - **Understanding** the causes of emotions and how they influence our thoughts, actions and decisions
 - **Labeling** emotions with a specific feeling words
 - **Expressing** emotions skillfully based on who we are with, where we are, and what we are doing
 - **Regulating** emotions using effective strategies that help us achieve our goals

Why RULER? How do these sets of skills help in life?

- Research shows that RULER skills help people of all ages to use emotions wisely, opening opportunities for us to succeed in work, at school, and in life.
- Most parents and caregivers would say that they want their children to develop the skills and mindsets needed to build a solid foundation for a productive life. Skills such as respect, responsible decision making, resilience in challenging situations, problem-solving, empathy, collaboration, and self-management all form a solid foundation for continued personal growth, healthy relationships, well-being, and academic achievement.
- Emotional Intelligence is the foundation for children and adolescents to develop the abilities to be successful in school, college, the community, and the workplace.

How does RULER work in the school?

- Adult Personal and Professional Awareness:
 - RULER begins with teachers, school leaders and staff members in our school community learning and practicing the skills of emotional intelligence. We begin with the adults because in order to teach and model these skills effectively, we have to use them ourselves. Once the personal and professional development phase is completed, teachers will begin sharing RULER in their classrooms.
 - RULER helps students, teachers, school staff, and families, develop the principles and tools of emotional intelligence. We begin with the adults in the school community learning and practicing these skills so that they can be role models for students. As we practice and improve our skills, we can see the positive effects that emotional intelligence has on our relationships in our families, friendships and workplace. The more we use the skills of emotional intelligence in our daily life, the easier it will be for us to model them for our students.