

Dear Riverview Families,

As social-emotional growth is one of the important mission driven focuses at Riverview, we wanted to take the time to send out our Boundary Curriculum. This curriculum is taught by our staff each year to ensure students understand, respect, and maintain appropriate social and physical boundaries. Relationship building is an integral part of life and in order to students to thrive and succeed, staff help to build meaningful social relationships. Please help us to be proactive by reading and reviewing this curriculum with your son/daughter prior to the start of the School Year. It will be reinforced once students arrive and throughout their time here as needed. Feel free to reach out with any questions regarding this curriculum to Michelle Mendes, Clinical Coordinator (mmendes@riverviewschool.org), Nancy Hopkins, Director of Admissions (nhopkins@riverviewschool.org), or Deanna White, Assistant Head of School and Director of Residential Life (dwhite@riverviewschool.org).

Lesson 1: Advocating for self, others, in the community

Students were taught that advocacy is asking for help as a way to get their needs met. Advocacy means speaking up for yourself, asking for what you need. The students defined advocacy in their own words and also gave examples of when they advocated.

Examples could be situations in which a student asked a teacher to repeat something they didn't understand, a student letting a dorm staff know that they would rather go to the beach instead of the movies when given a choice, a student letting a friend know that they are texting too much, etc. During the lesson, students were taught to advocate for themselves when they needed help, space, or when something was bothering them. Students were taught to advocate for others when they see something unsafe or see that someone isn't able to talk for themselves. In addition, students identified who they could seek out help from and how.

Ways to reinforce the lesson at home include having open conversations about what advocacy means to everyone in the family and examples of when members of the family advocated. Also, discussion of why advocacy and letting others know of your needs is important. Role playing a situation in which advocacy is displayed is also a helpful way to practice.

Lesson 2: Privacy and boundaries in the dorm

The lesson focused on privacy and boundaries in the dorm, which included bedroom and visitation guidelines. To summarize, we emphasized getting dressed privately, always keeping one's private parts (where a bathing suit covers) covered in front of others, and how to ask for privacy. We also discussed having friends over to visit and guidelines that respect personal space (boundaries) and privacy. For example, visiting in the common rooms, or if they want to hang out with friends in their bedrooms to ask staff permission first, keep doors open, and that their bed is always their own space, not a space to be shared with friends.

Many students want to help each other out which is great, and we use this conversation starter as way to talk about helpfulness versus crossing a boundary. For example, it can be helpful to let staff know a dorm mate is asking for assistance with their laundry, but it would be crossing a boundary to go into the shower to assist someone who was asking for help with shampooing their hair.

We also talk about how the dorm can sometimes feel like home but that it is different and we have boundaries in terms of respecting personal space, keeping clothes on, and

physical contact. We keep these conversations and lessons going throughout the year, individually and in groups.

Some ways to reinforce at home include: maintaining similar boundaries, such as asking family members to knock prior to entering a closed door, keeping the bathroom door shut when showering, and wearing bathrobes when leaving the bathroom. In addition, establishing and reviewing guidelines for common areas and bedrooms when friends are visiting is important.

Lesson 3: Shared spaces

Students were taught about sharing space in the many community spaces at Riverview. Being kind, calm, and respectful in these shared spaces helps everyone feel welcomed and safe. The students talked about rules for each of these common areas. Below are examples of some of the rules discussed:

Common area: use of inside voices, phone calls should not be made in this area, keeping food out of this area.

TV and computer: the computer is for everyone to share, ask staff before using, stay on appropriate sites, limit use time so that others can use.

Kitchen/dining area: limit the number of students in the kitchen when appliances are being used, common food is for everyone, clean up after yourself, use proper manners.

Staff office: this is not a shared space, this is for staff; knock and ask before entering, students should not sit on staff's bed.

Field/track/swings: ask for permission before going out on field, use respectful language when out on field, no roughhousing or wrestling, limit your time on the swings so others can use.

Wellness center: ask for permission to go to wellness, call to make sure it is open, wear appropriate clothing, if you are listening to music while exercising, use your headphones.

Dining hall: once in the dining hall, voices should be lowered, hats and coats should be removed when you enter the dining hall, when you get up from your seat, push your chair in, no cell phones or electronic devices should be used.

Bus/vans: use respectful language, no roughhousing, no eating or drinking in the vehicles, phone calls should not be made on buses or vans.

Ways to reinforce this lesson at home include; discussing family rules for common areas in your home. Have family members take turns discussing what rule is most important to them and why. In addition, conversations about what kind of rules are in place in others' homes are important.