

Guidance Guide

The Role as a Guidance Counselor

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This academic year I have noticed a significant shift in my role as guidance counselor. Because last year was my first year at Erie Day School, I spent a lot of my time observing and assessing the needs of our children and school community. Because this time was more reflective, I was able to spend time writing articles based on the trends I was seeing with our students and publish articles on a regular basis. Although many parents knew who I was based on my articles, I noticed that there were too many students who were not aware of my presence on campus. As a result, I decided to dive in this year and make my presence known.

My other intention behind making my presence known this academic year has been to build emotional safety. Just like people like to do business with people they like, know and trust, I knew that a student would be uncomfortable seeing the guidance counselor with a concern if they did not feel “safe” with me.

One of the ways I have made my presence known this year has been to have lunch with Lower School students when I am here (Middle School students were too embarrassed to sit with me at lunch!). It has given me an opportunity to connect with students seated at my table and also to scan the room for any concerns. In the fall, I took advantage of this venue to read to the students during Children’s Grief Awareness Week. It was a great way to reintroduce myself, share an important topic and reiterate the role I play at EDS. When the weather has been nice and time has allowed I have attended recess for the whole school. Again this has given me an opportunity to observe dynamics and interact with the all of the students. Instead of waiting for a students to be referred to me or come in on their own, I decided this year to visit certain classrooms on a regular basis. There has been some wonderful collaboration between myself and several teachers. Whether I am reading a book, introducing relaxation

methods or working with time management, I am attempting to build connections.

For example, in Grade 4, we start our time together with a “check in.” This is an opportunity for the students to self-reflect and share (or not share) how their day is going. One student decided to change “check in” to “chicken.” This humor has carried on and has lightened the mood when I am in their presence and now instead of being greeted in the lunchroom with a “hello,” I have students smile and flap their arms.

There are a lot of smiles during snack time when the Grade 6 students join me in my lovely small office. It is always a thrill to have these fun (and loud!) students packed in anxiously awaiting their turn to share. So whether I am roaming the halls, chaperoning the ski bus or attending an Erie Day School function, I am always looking for ways to connect with the students despite only being here two days a week. My initial intention has been paying off.

Now that the children are feeling more comfortable with me, I am getting more requests to see me privately. It is in these moments that I can offer support and assess the situation to see if your child would benefit from services in the community. We will all struggle emotionally at some point in our lives and if I can create a positive impression connected to the helping field, it is my hope that

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your children will be comfortable to reach out and receive help when that time comes.

Although I miss writing the articles as I did last year and educating the parent community, this year has been very productive and interactive. It is an honor to serve your children and be part of the Erie Day School Community. If you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to contact me by phone or email.

Erie Day School Motto

May I live each day being mindful of the goodness that surrounds me.

May I always stretch my mind and heart so that I live my life in wisdom and love.

May I be a loyal friend to others and willingly help those in need, and may I always honor and respect the earth of which I am a part.



Erie Day School

Learning today, leading tomorrow.

Erie Day School
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If you have any questions, comments or additions to the *Guidance Guide*, or know someone that should be included on the email distribution list, please contact Allison Parr-Plasha at 814-452-4273 or via email at aplasha@eriedayschool.com

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