



## Introduction to SEL

TRAILS Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) Curriculum

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Dear Parents and Caregivers,

High school students face demanding academic, athletic, and social pressures that can affect their moods, relationships, academic performance, and ability to cope with stress. GLHS has partnered with the TRAILS program to help your student learn social and emotional skills: skills that will improve their ability to navigate common stressors, manage strong emotions, choose helpful behaviors, and successfully build and maintain relationships. **Social and emotional learning (SEL) has been shown to improve academic achievement, decrease behavior problems, and increase resiliency.**

Throughout the school year, your student will be learning skills to develop the following social and emotional competencies alongside their academic work:

1. **Self-Awareness:** The ability to notice what is happening inside us; including our thoughts, feelings, and urges to act
2. **Self-Management:** The ability to manage strong thoughts and feelings, to choose helpful behaviors, and to act in ways that show respect to ourselves and others
3. **Social Awareness:** The ability to understand the thoughts and feelings of others, even if they are different from our own; and to respond in ways that are empathetic, respectful, and inclusive
4. **Relationship Skills:** The ability to define, initiate and maintain healthy relationships and interact effectively with others by communicating clearly and navigating conflict skillfully
5. **Responsible Decision-Making:** The ability to rationally approach problems and decisions, choose helpful behaviors, and set and achieve goals using personal values as a guide

Students will work to develop the awareness that their **thoughts, feelings, and behaviors are all connected**. They will learn skills to respond to unhelpful thoughts, regulate strong feelings, and choose behaviors that will help them cope more effectively with stress, reach their goals, and develop healthy relationships.

In the next 5 months, your student will be formally introduced to SEL and will begin SEL lessons and skill practice, starting by identifying their own strengths and areas for growth. *Your support and partnership are incredibly important. Discussing SEL skills and lessons at home can help your student practice and strengthen these valuable skills!*

***To begin practicing SEL with your student, try this activity at home:***

Discuss with your student the strengths and areas for growth they identified in themselves during their first SEL lesson in class (see [Strengths Bingo](#) for reference). Partner with your student to work on their identified area of growth. For example, if your student identified a desire to grow in the area of “*doing things that are scary to me*,” challenge them to choose a task that will foster this specific skill.

You will receive communications related to SEL throughout the school year. Each letter will contain information about the skills students are learning, along with ideas for practice at home. We thank you in advance for your partnership as we work to cultivate our students’ social and emotional skills!

Please feel free to reach out if you have any additional questions.

Sincerely,  
**Gwenda Kelly**