SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING

At Saint Martin of Tours all children from Prep-Grade 6 are involved in a Social and emotional Learning Program called Bounce Back. ‘Social and emotional learning (SEL) is the process of acquiring the skills to recognise and manage emotions, develop caring and concern for others, make responsible decisions, establish positive relationships, and handle challenging situations effectively.’

Our Term 2 topic for the next few weeks is, ‘Courage.’

Parent Information: Courage

Fear is a normal human response to situations that might harm us. Fear motivates us to check out whether or not the situation really is as dangerous as it seems and then, if it is, to take action to protect ourselves. Everyone feels scared at times. However we don’t necessarily fear the same things as other people. Some people feel scared about riding on a roller coaster but others really enjoy it. But the same people who don’t fear going on a roller coaster might feel very nervous when they have to give a speech. Courage means facing fear and not being overwhelmed by it. We need courage if we experience misfortune. We also need courage to face some of the ‘everyday’ challenges in our lives such as learning a new skill or sorting out friendship issues.

Key points to communicate to your child about being brave

Everyone feels scared sometimes.

Some people pretend they never feel scared but everyone does. Different things scare different people. One person might feel nervous about learning to dive but not about acting on stage. For someone else it might be the opposite.

We all need to use a lot of ‘everyday courage’ in our lives.

Everyday courage is shown when you try to do something that is ordinary that still makes you feel a bit nervous such as giving a talk to the class, trying out for a part in a play, sleeping over at a friend’s house or going to camp.

Weigh up the advantages and disadvantages of trying to be a hero.

A hero is someone who puts himself/herself at risk to protect the safety and wellbeing of another. It is very rare for someone your age to be in a situation where heroism is required. If you are, think carefully before you act as you might not have enough skill to do it and you could get badly hurt or make things worse. Consider calling 000 or ask an adult to help. You can be a hero in smaller ways (e.g. by standing up for someone who is being mistreated at school).

There’s a big difference between courage and being foolhardy.

Being foolhardy means being stupid and doing a risky and scary thing (e.g. jumping from a tree branch into a river) just to show off or because people are daring you to do it. If you do something really dangerous, the best you will get are bragging rights and the worst you might get is serious injury or death.

What can you do to help your child to be brave?

• Talk about when you have felt scared and what you did to overcome your fears and be brave. Give examples of times in your life of when you tackled your fears and ‘had a go’ at something that was difficult. Stress how pleased you felt afterwards.
• Discuss the gains that being brave can bring (e.g. self-respect, confidence, skills).
• Look for examples of courage, heroism and foolhardiness in the media and discuss them with your child to help them to understand the differences between courage, heroism and foolhardiness.
• Encourage your child to have the courage to do what they believe is ‘the right thing’ even if others don’t agree with them.
• Remind your child about the things that took courage for them to do when they were little but now seem easy to them. Explain that things that take courage for them to do now will seem easier and less scary as they get older.
• Stress that throughout life there will always be new challenges that will require courage. Facing our fears is one of the ways we become stronger.