



A major tenet of the mission of St. Andrew's Episcopal School has always been to create a learning environment in which all of our children can develop their full potential in terms of intellectual understanding, athletic prowess, and moral and spiritual character. We have fostered this mission with a dynamic curriculum, an inclusive physical education program, daily chapel and our strong commitment to community service. The successful St. Andrew's student is a scholar-athlete-servant: one who is intellectually, emotionally, physically and spiritually balanced. We have achieved increasingly positive results in nurturing this "whole child" by integrating social and emotional learning (SEL) into our curriculum.

The St. Andrew's SEL program is based on the understanding that (1) many different kinds of problem behaviors are caused by the same or similar risk factors, and (2) the best learning emerges from supportive relationships that make learning both challenging and meaningful. Ours is a multi-year, integrated program that begins in the Lower School and continues through all grades, incorporating effective classroom instruction, student engagement in positive activities in and out of the classroom, and broad parent and community involvement in program planning, implementation and evaluation. We are confident that this is the most effective approach to bolster our students' strengths and prevent problems such as violence, drug use or dropping out.

*“Many times I am asked, what do I want for our graduates at St. Andrew’s School? I say most of all I wish for our graduates to be good. I want them to treat others fairly, to give themselves to causes that bring betterment to other people. I want them to live out the life of faith that we talk about in chapel.*

*“I believe that the SEL program at St. Andrew’s School has helped our students become what I wish for them. Through SEL they have become more self aware, and more aware of the feelings and the needs of others. Thus they are more able to live a life for others and a life that makes our school, our community and our world better.”*

*— Lucy C. Nazro, Head of School*

## HOW DOES ST. ANDREW'S DEFINE SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING?



At St. Andrew's, social and emotional learning refers to knowledge, habits, skills and ideals that are at the heart of a child's academic, personal, social, spiritual and civic development and are necessary for success in both school and life. This type of learning enables individuals to recognize and manage emotions, care for others, make responsible decisions, establish and maintain positive relationships, and handle challenging situations. Research has shown that competent young people—those who are most likely to succeed academically and in their personal and civic lives—are socially and emotionally competent, with strong personal and interpersonal skills. They know their strengths and are optimistic about their futures. They are able to set and achieve goals and solve problems effectively. They show concern, empathy and respect for others, appreciate diversity and make positive contributions to their communities.

*“In community time, we have talked about the ‘behavior’ car and have learned about our ‘wheels.’ We can control our ‘front wheels,’ which govern our thoughts and actions, however it is harder to control our ‘back wheels,’ which regulate our feelings and physiological responses. We talked a great deal about being the one to steer the wheel, instead of letting something else ‘drive our car’—be it food, another person, a situation, etc. I think it may have been a help to other kids; I know it was for me! I hope we can continue to discuss things in these terms.”*

*—Mary Kay Sexton, 5th grade teacher*

# WHAT ARE THE ESSENTIAL SEL SKILLS TAUGHT AT ST. ANDREW'S?



At St. Andrews, we believe that in order to have an effective SEL program, we must begin teaching social and emotional skills in first grade and continue teaching them through high school. We strive to develop five core competencies in students:

## **Self-Awareness**

Identifying and understanding what we are feeling in the moment is perhaps the most difficult to master of all SEL skills. At St. Andrew's, we teach our children a vocabulary to help them name their feelings and understand the reasons and circumstances that cause them.

## **Social Awareness**

The ability of a person to identify and understand what others are feeling is equally as important as learning to understand one's own feelings. The key to emotional literacy is being able to recognize and deal with your own feelings, as well as with the feelings of another person, while being able to differentiate between the two.

*“We’ve been very impressed by how well the teachers in the grades preceding us have prepared the children to effectively participate in community time. They know how to listen to one another and to be respectful and cooperative. They really value their community time and look forward to coming together each day. For example, one child used the time to apologize for being so bossy over the past two years. Another talked about his concern for his mother, who had been ill. The children are being taught to articulate their thoughts and feelings in positive ways. What a valuable lesson!”*

*—Margaret Sauer, 4th grade teacher*

## **Self-Management**

The self-management skill teaches children to handle their emotions in a way that facilitates, rather than interferes with, the task at hand; to delay gratification in order to pursue long-term goals; and to persevere in the face of setbacks and frustrations.

## **Relationship Skills**

Handling emotions effectively is key to perhaps the most rewarding dimension of life—being part of healthy, rewarding relationships. Any good relationship, regardless of its nature—classmates, friends, teacher-classmate, employer-employee, or spousal—is dependent on a number of skills. These include mutual respect, cooperation, resistance to inappropriate social pressures, conflict negotiation, and the courage and tenacity to be honest.

## **Responsible Decision-making**

We can empower our children throughout every phase and aspect of their lives by teaching them in their formative years, step by step, how to make good decisions and how to be accountable for those decisions.

*“This year in the 2nd grade, we worked on an integrated unit studying the Great Barrier Reef, where the students took on identities of fictional marine scientists. They constructed models of the reef and worked together on creating an underwater sea laboratory. The children worked cooperatively to solve the fictional problems of working and living together. The adoption of character identities allowed them to try a variety of problem-solving methods and group leadership skills in a non-threatening manner. They were able to take on character behaviors and to understand that it was their character’s behavior, not their own, so they felt free to try alternatives without fear or criticism. The children learned about their roles very seriously, while still having fun, and learned about working as a team.”*

*—Jennifer Woodruff, 2nd grade teacher*

# HOW DO STUDENTS AT ST. ANDREW'S ACQUIRE THE ESSENTIAL SEL SKILLS?



Students at St. Andrew's achieve competency in social and emotional skills through aspects of the school curriculum, such as chapel and ethics classes, as well as through programs instituted with particular social and emotional learning goals in mind, such as the Middle and Upper School Advisories. The range of opportunities includes:

**Chapel Themes.** In daily chapel, where we address moral and spiritual development, themes such as fairness, responsibility and citizenship are introduced and then used as a basis for school-wide discussions.

**Community Service.** The Community Service program is integral to all divisions: Lower, Middle and Upper School. Student involvement reinforces good citizenship and community awareness through service to the school and community.

**Community Time.** Each class in the Lower School has a designated "connection time" when the class sits in a circle and may discuss the current chapel theme, work on selected SEL skills, problem-solve or share personal concerns.

*“SEL is a wonderful gift that we are giving our students at St. Andrew’s. It is such an important and necessary part of the educational process. It has been a joy to watch the children implement the strategies and skills learned during community time. During this time, we also work to develop a positive classroom community where the children care for one another, really know one another, and feel they belong. The children learn to celebrate one another’s diversity while maintaining their individuality.”*

*—Ann-Marie Veletsos, 1st grade teacher*

**Classroom.** Teachers layer SEL skills into established curriculums, such as group work in math, journaling and peer editing of stories written by students for class.

**Ethics.** Led by our School Counselor, Lower School classes read stories and discuss dilemmas, taking different perspectives into consideration. The discussions are tailored to the specific age group, and the time also is used to talk about particular issues and needs that may arise.

**After-School and Lunch Groups.** Also led by our School Counselor, volunteer after-school groups in the 4th grade and lunch groups in the 5th grade discuss whatever topics may arise. For example, some talks have centered on put-downs, cliques or individuals' differences with teachers.

**Mentor Programs.** This character-building program gives St. Andrew's 5th and 6th graders an opportunity to serve as mentors for younger students while employing and developing SEL skills.

**Self-management.** As part of the discipline program, students are taught a collaborative problem-solving process that focuses on resolving conflicts, taking responsibility for their actions, and making amends for their mistakes.

**31st Street Campus Honor Code.** Students and faculty worked together to develop an honor code for the 31st Street campus called the "Crusader Creed," which states: "As members of the St. Andrew's community, we will be responsible, respectful, honest and fair to make our school an enjoyable and safe place to learn."

**Middle School Advisory Program.** School Advisors serve as mentors and advocates for 7th and 8th grade students in twice-weekly meetings where they engage in discussions addressing key issues such as social cruelty, peer pressure, competition, and drug and alcohol awareness.

**Upper School Health and Wellness Program.** This program addresses deliberate social and emotional education in the school community, as well as a focused commitment to the psychological needs of the individual student. The many facets of this program include an advisory program, educational opportunities and Human Development Classes.

**Upper School Honor Code.** Students and faculty developed an honor code embodying the mission and purpose of the Upper School. At the beginning of each school year, students and faculty sign the code, signifying their commitment. It states: "As a member of the St. Andrew's Episcopal School community, I accept personal responsibility for my actions and their impact on other members of the community. At all times, I will exhibit academic integrity, cultivate a safe and respectful environment, and encourage all others to do the same."

*“St. Andrew’s is such a dynamic, caring community. It’s a place where we strive to help students and adults alike feel connected, respected and valued. This doesn’t ‘just happen.’ We devote time and effort to this endeavor through a myriad of social and emotional learning opportunities. Our teachers are purposeful and creative in their planning and implementation of these opportunities. Strong academic achievement, happy and confident students, involved parents, and high teacher morale are just a few of the positive outcomes we enjoy from our commitment to SEL.”*

*—Sharon Wilson, Lower School Head*

## ARE ST. ANDREW'S FACULTY TRAINED IN SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING PROGRAMS?



At St. Andrew's, we view attending the social and emotional needs of our students to be among our highest educational priorities. Thus, the St. Andrew's model not only focuses on students, but also seeks to foster SEL skills among its faculty. The following list indicates the range of ways that faculty attain and maintain their SEL fluency.

**CSEE Summer Institute.** Over the past four years, we have sent more than 40 administrators and teachers to receive training at the Center for Social and Emotional Education (CSEE) Summer Institute in New York.

**In-Service Training.** SEL is a component of our In-Service Training, in which we cover such topics as "How to Integrate SEL into the Classroom," "Self-Management: a Discipline System" and "How to Communicate Most Productively With Parents."

*“When working with students in after-school, it has been refreshing to use a different language and reasoning process when sorting out our differences. They understand more clearly that there are two sides to a situation. Instead of being just an arbitrator, I can be a mediator, asking the students to sit down and come up with a solution to their situation.”*

*—Pam Craig, Beyond the Classroom Director*

**SEL Liaison Team.** Teachers representing each grade in the Lower School comprise an SEL Liaison Team that meets regularly to address, brainstorm and find solutions for teachers' concerns.

**Faculty Commitment to SEL.** The ability to attend to the social and emotional needs of students is an important consideration when hiring new teachers and staff.

**SEL Curriculum Development.** Our teachers are drafting SEL curriculum based on their training and experiences.

**Wing Meetings.** The faculty addresses SEL training and methodology in faculty and wing meetings.

*“The St. Andrew’s parent peer groups have provided our school community an opportunity for meaningful dialogue and peer education, and an intimate venue for exchanging ideas and experiences on a variety of topics. In many ways, the parent peer groups parallel our children’s social and emotional learning, broadening perspectives and building empathy within our community as we share challenges and successes in our common goal of raising happy, well-adjusted children.”*

*—Mary G. Yancy, Parent*

# ARE PARENTS INVOLVED IN SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING AT ST. ANDREW'S?



Parents enjoy a variety of opportunities to engage in the implementation of social and emotional learning at St. Andrew's. Through activities listed below, they also gain an understanding of how SEL is integrated into other schools and communities across the nation.

**Book Discussion Groups.** Parents and faculty gather regularly for informal book discussions. In the past, we have focused on *Emotional Intelligence*, by Daniel Goleman; *Blessing of the Skinned Knee*, by Wendy Mogel; *Best Friends, Worst Enemies: Understanding the Social Lives of Children*, by Michael Thompson; *Queen Bees and Wannabes: Helping Your Daughter Survive Cliques, Gossip, Boyfriends and other Realities of Adolescence*, by Rosalind Wiseman; and *The Optimistic Child: Proven Program to Safeguard Children from Depression and Build Lifelong Resistance* by Martin Seligman, Ph.D.

**Parent Peer Group Meetings.** Parents meet to share ideas and support around issues relating to parental challenges. Topics covered in past meetings have included friendship, responsibility, time management, Internet use, navigating peer relationships, civility among middle school children and transition.

*“The SEL Program at St. Andrew’s has reduced a lot of the early teenage angst that’s legendary in middle school. It teaches the kids how to trust their peers through non-threatening discussions about topics and issues that really matter.*

*“It is hard to penetrate the protective shell most teenagers have created for themselves. The SEL Program gives them the opportunity to lower their guard for a little bit only to realize that clear, trusting communication with their friends creates common ground, reduces stress and begins a pattern of behavior that is to the benefit of all.”*

*—Jim and Cathy Heck, Parents*

**Speakers' Series.** St. Andrew's Speakers' Series has featured such notables as Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist Laura Sessions Stepp, author of *Our Last, Best Shot: Guiding Our Children Through Early Adolescence*; Rosalind Wiseman, author of *Queen Bees and Wannabes*; Edward M. Hallowell, author of *The Childhood Roots of Adult Happiness: Five Steps to Help Kids Create and Sustain Lifelong Joy*; Michael Thompson, author of *Raising Cain* and *Best Friends, Worst Enemies*; Mel Levine, author of *A Mind at a Time*; and other authors, including Jane Healey, Madeline Swift and Adele Faber.

**Brown Bag Lunch.** Parents meet during the lunch hour to listen to a variety of speakers, including teacher panels and parent experts, on subjects such as nutrition, the discipline system, how much pressure to put on your children, the SAS math program and the SEL Initiative.

**Division Head Gatherings.** St. Andrew's Division Heads host parents several times during the school year at teas, where matters particular to the division are discussed, and parents are given the opportunity to ask questions and express concerns.

*“Everyone has noticed the wonderful, positive atmosphere in our school. The children take such good care of each other. They are open to differences and have developed the ability to learn from each other’s strengths. This feeling also pervades the faculty and continues to make St. Andrew’s a terrific place to teach and learn.”*

*—Colleen Lynch, 4th grade teacher*

## WHAT ARE THE LONG-TERM GOALS OF THE SEL PROGRAM AT ST. ANDREW'S?



Becoming socially and emotionally literate helps bring success to every part of our students' lives—setting classroom goals; persevering in the face of frustration or setbacks; handling peer pressure; being able to say "no" when it comes to tobacco, alcohol or drugs; or standing tall when being bullied. St. Andrew's SEL program is linked to developmental milestones, and helps students cope with ongoing life events and individual circumstances.

Will our children know how to handle their emotions in the face of life's transitions and crises? Will they feel confident enough to ask for adult help? Do they feel connected and able to care about the feelings and perspectives of others, as well as their own?

Whether or not our children have the social and emotional intelligence they need to lead healthy, happy, rewarding lives is not happenstance—it can be learned. SEL provides the tools our children need to have control over their emotions, so their inner feelings do not sabotage their abilities to succeed in becoming knowledgeable, responsible, caring students who are engaged fully in their schools and communities.

*“In the beginning, we spend time team building and learning self-management skills. Once the kids have learned these skills, there is a huge pay-off in terms of self-managing behaviors in the classroom and time management of academics.”*

*—Pam Lawder, 6th grade teacher*

At St. Andrew's, we truly believe in each child's unlimited potential. It is our firm conviction that by making our children feel safe, connected and nurtured, we can free them to become the people they are meant to be.



## St. Andrew's Mission

The mission of St. Andrew's Episcopal School is to provide an enriched academic program within a Christian environment emphasizing the fulfillment of each student's potential.

St. Andrew's seeks students of character and intelligence from diverse ethnic, racial and socioeconomic backgrounds, and maintains a scholarship program to support that diversity.

The school strives to help young people achieve their potential not only in intellectual understanding but also in esthetic sensitivity, physical well-being, athletic prowess and moral decisiveness so that they may lead productive, responsible lives, not only for themselves, but also for their community.

