

# CALEDONIA-MUMFORD CENTRAL SCHOOL

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Dear Caledonia-Mumford families,

In light of many of the difficult yet important conversations that are happening at a national and local level, we are reminded at Caledonia-Mumford CSD that our responsibility as leaders and educators rests with providing a safe and equitable education and school environment for all students. As stated in a recent publication of the National Association of School Psychologists, in regards to Social Justice: *“Positive educational and social outcomes for all children and youth are possible only in a society—and schools within it—that guarantees equitable treatment to all people, regardless of race, class, culture, language, gender, gender identity, religion, sexual orientation, nationality, citizenship, ability, and other dimensions of difference.”*

In alignment with the Caledonia-Mumford CSD mission, vision, and core values, we aim to create a supportive space for all students and families. As our mission statement reads: *“The Caledonia-Mumford Central School District, in collaboration with our community, takes pride in providing safe, comprehensive and rigorous educational experiences, in order for all students to graduate as ethical, responsible, lifelong learners, who are college and career ready.”*

While this is just the beginning of a school-wide process to learn and grow, we commit to continued examination of the work that we do to ensure we are providing an educational experience that is equitable and inclusive for all students. As a Student Support Team and Administrative Team, we would like to begin by providing you with information on how to have these meaningful and healthy conversations with your children. As questions arise within your family, we offer you the following information to support your conversations ([adapted from the Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence](#)):

- Remember that it is never too late to start this conversation and you do not have to get it right the first time. It is also never too early to start this conversation. With young kids, talk about justice in terms of kindness and meanness, fairness and unfairness.
- It’s okay not to know something. Learn alongside your kids. Say, “I don’t know the answer to that, but let’s find out!”
- Start with self-awareness. We can examine our own thoughts, words, and actions, and how they are received, as well as what we know and what we do not know. Uncovering our own unconscious biases and prejudices does not mean you are bad, it means you have the courage to be honest.
- Set an example. If you hear someone say something racist, speak up. Your children will follow your lead. Notice inequality and read about the history of discrimination that underlies it. As the adults in

their lives, we can look at every interaction with our children and our students as an opportunity to teach empathy, compassion, and hope, and to work toward positive change and meaningful connections.

- Really listen. When we listen with our whole selves, we must be willing to be patient, to be surprised, to learn something new. Honor all feelings. Explain that we have emotions for a reason, and naming what we feel also helps us manage what we feel.
- Discuss the challenges. Talking to our children and students about a range of challenging topics, can help prepare them for life's challenges, and actually foster resilience. When we have conversations about challenging topics, young people learn that they can come to us, and that we are comfortable discussing uncomfortable topics. Exploring challenging topics can foster empathy by helping them understand other people's life experiences better. It will also build intimacy and trust in your family, make your kids more resilient, more empathetic, and better friends.

Resources on the topics of race and social justice are provided below.

### **Primary Grades:**

These books help young children learn that it is ok to be different:

[Mixed by Arree Chung](#)

[Same Difference by Calida Rawles](#)

[All the Colors We Are: The Story of How We Get Our](#)

[Skin Color by Katie Kissinger](#)

### **Intermediate Grades:**

These books help to increase acceptance of diversity and inclusion:

[The Reflection in Me by Marc Colagiovanni](#)

[The Sandwich Swap by Queen Rania Al Abdullah and Kelly DiPucchio](#)

[A Kid's Book About Racism by Jelani Memory](#)

### **Middle and High School Grades:**

[Talking to Children After Racial Incidents](#)

[Center for Parent and Teen Communication](#)

### **Additional Resources:**

[Talking with Children about Racism](#)

[Parent Toolkit](#)

[Talking about Kids about Discrimination](#)

[Racism and Violence: How to help kids handle the news](#)

We understand that right now our students are looking to the adults in their lives to give them a sense of hope and security. None of us have all the answers, but together we can make a difference. If you need any assistance or additional resources, please contact our student support personnel listed below.

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