

# Revisions and Additions to the Caring School Community Program

By Peter Brunn | Categories: Social-Emotional Learning

Now that *Caring School Community* (2nd edition) has been in schools for a while, we have had the opportunity to visit classrooms, meet with school leadership teams, and receive feedback from teachers and school leaders. After listening carefully to these key stakeholders and doing a careful review of the program, we have decided to make a revision to one Topic Week and create a new Topic Week in grades 6–8 of the program, and add a class meeting for all grades.

## Revisions to the Girl-Boy Friendships Topic Week

Middle school teachers do important work helping students navigate issues around identity, gender, and relationships. *Caring School Community's* topic week on Girl-Boy Friendships was designed as one tool teachers might use to help students explore these topics. It was clear, however, that one of the week's lessons as originally designed was not working and needed to be revised. The lesson in question instructed students to self-select into binary groups. While a teacher note suggested that if this was an issue the teacher could modify the activity, we felt that teachers needed much more support, and as written, the instruction was not appropriate for students.

The revised lesson eliminates asking students to self-select into binary groups. It still does the important work of addressing the stereotyping of boys and girls and helps students navigate these relationships, but it is now more inclusive.

## New Topic Week—Gender Inclusivity

In our discussions with schools about revising the Girl-Boy Friendships Topic Week, it became clear that teachers also needed support helping students discuss and navigate issues of gender inclusivity. Teachers and leaders asked for specific tools to help in addressing gender stereotyping and the limitations thereof, as well as the problem of bullying due to gender. We wanted to provide a healthy way to explore these issues and provide concrete strategies to support students in responding to bullying or teasing when it occurs.

The new Topic Week Gender Inclusivity is written for grades 6–8 and, like other Topic Weeks, can be used at the teacher's discretion.

## What This Means for Schools

Both the revised Girl-Boy Friendships Topic Week and the new Gender Inclusivity Topic Week are available on the CCC Learning Hub and the Learning Portal. They also appear in the digital *Teacher's Manuals* in Access Pro.

We are currently reprinting grade 6 of *Caring School Community* with the revised and new Topic Weeks. Due to our printing schedules, we will be reprinting grades 7 and 8 with this new content at a later date.

## Addition Across the Grades

As we are well aware, many of our students are faced with violence and tragedy in their communities and in the news. To address this, we are offering a class meeting titled "Responding to Tragedy in a Caring School Community" as a support for difficult discussions. The

meeting agenda is accompanied by guidelines broken down by grade level.

“Responding to Tragedy in a Caring School Community” is available on the CCC Learning Hub and the Learning Portal.