

Responsive Classroom

The King Open School has a school wide commitment to the philosophy, techniques, and practices of *The Responsive Classroom*®- an approach based upon seven basic beliefs or principles. At the King Open this is implemented through classroom structures and practices you may hear about from your children and their teachers such as The Buddy Room, Take a Break, and Morning Meeting. We feel strongly that the more our families understand this philosophy, the better equipped you'll be to support your children in navigating these mechanisms.

The following is taken in part from "The First Six Weeks of School" by Paula Denton and Roxann Kriete (NEFC, 2000), both of whom are associated with the Northeast Foundation for Children (NEFC), designer of *The Responsive Classroom*®.

The Seven Principles of *Responsive Classroom*®

- 1. The social curriculum is as important as the academic curriculum.**
- 2. How children learn is as important as what children learn.**
- 3. The greatest cognitive growth occurs through social interaction.**
- 4. There is a set of social skills that children need to be successful academically and socially.** These skills form the simple acronym CARES – *cooperation, assertion, responsibility, empathy, and self-control* – and is taught in an integrated fashion throughout the school day.
- 5. Knowing the children we teach is as important as knowing the content we teach.**
- 6. Knowing the parents of the children we teach is as important as knowing the children..**
- 7. Teachers and administrators must model the social and academic skills they wish to teach their children.**

It is essential for your children to arrive at school on time to partake in Morning Meeting, a facet of Responsive Classrooms. Morning Meeting is where the tone for the day is set and is an important way to mark the transition from home to school.

Classroom rules are generated through consensus and when classroom rules and expectations are not met, the Responsive Classroom philosophy is to have students "Take a Break" – sometimes in another classroom, referred to as a "Buddy Room." Neither of these are a time out. They are simply an opportunity for students to regain self-control. Reparations, apologies, and debriefing can be an additional aspect of remediation a problem but are separate processes. Being asked to take a break is a routine redirection in the service of teaching students how to use tools to calm themselves down and re-focus in order to rejoin the group.

You will hear things like "I had to go to the buddy room today" from time to time, this language will become familiar. Please feel free to contact your child's teacher for more information if anything you hear from your child is unfamiliar or confusing.