Windermere Preparatory School
Lower School Student Services / Counseling

The Comprehensive School Counseling Program in the Lower School is in place to assist students in their academic journey. The program is organized and implemented by licensed school counselors and child development specialists in collaboration with teachers and administrators. It addresses student development in academic achievement, as well as personal/social skills. The Comprehensive School Counseling Program focuses on activities and services in five areas:

- Social and Emotional Skills Curriculum
- Individual Planning
- Responsive Services
- System Support
- Student Advocacy

Research shows that emotional well-being and social competence provide a strong foundation for brain development and emerging cognitive abilities. It is to this end that the Lower School provides a developmentally sequenced Social and Emotional Skills Curriculum to help students master these skills. The lower school utilizes a variety of resources in our SEL Program to help students develop social and emotional skills such as empathy, emotion management and problem solving. In addition to group classroom instruction, a monthly character trait is integrated within the early childhood classrooms through a variety of teaching modalities. Both programs focus on the acquisition and strengthening of prosocial behaviors, strong self-esteem, and the capacity to make wise choices for a well-rounded life.

Academic Support Needs

School Counselors work collaboratively with teachers and parents to facilitate support for students' academic growth. Some students will require additional educational resources, such as the support of Occupational Therapists, Speech Language Therapists, Literacy Specialists and Tutors. School Counselors collaborate

with service providers and teachers throughout the year to support academic growth. School Counselors also provide referral resources for these needs, as well as when students require further investigation through a Psychoeducational Evaluation. Counselors create and monitor subsequent Accommodation Plans for students with diagnosed mild to moderate learning disabilities.

Mindfulness is a part of our social/emotional wellness program and begins with our youngest students continuing through fifth grade. Systematic practices such as focused breathing, and mind body connection increases mental clarity, encourages clear communication with peer groups and reduces stress and anxiety. Students are able to utilize these techniques to self-regulate when overwhelmed with strong emotions. Mindfulness elevates the wellness of the entire school community by equipping children with the skills they need to navigate through their social, emotional world. These taught skills offer the students an opportunity for lifelong wellness, higher achievement and compassionate, purposeful living.

Reading with Pets: Research shows that interaction with trained therapy dogs improves children's reading and communication skills. Additionally, participating students build self-esteem, improve confidence and develop greater social skills. Many schools and libraries across the country have utilized similar programs with great success. Our partnership is with the Alliance of Therapy Dogs. These animals have been trained and tested for health, safety, appropriate skills and temperament. The dogs work with people in a variety of settings, including hospitals, nursing homes, libraries and airports throughout the United States. Therapy dogs visit the classroom throughout the year and work with a small group of students each week. Parent permission is required for students to participate. The animals do not enter the classroom if there are students with allergies present.