

HOW TO INCORPORATE CONSENT THROUGHOUT THE YEAR

Consent is often discussed solely in relation to sexual activities and through a legal lens, when in reality consent is necessary in many of our interpersonal interactions. There are many ways you can teach, model and implement consent throughout the year, in a variety of subjects and settings.

- Set a classroom rule such as “My body belongs to me,” meaning that everyone gets to decide what happens to their bodies and when
- Lead discussions about personal space or “personal bubbles,” and the importance of respecting others need for space (physical and emotional)
- Help students understand that they deserve control over their own body and be an approachable adult - let them know they can talk to you if they feel uncomfortable
- Ensure students are asking for permission before touching others or participating in activities. Questions such as “May I shake your hand?” “May I give you a hug?” “Do you want to be my partner for this project?”
- Facilitate opportunities to practice assertiveness and saying no to peers. You could use a scenario such as: Jonah asks Rico if he can copy Rico’s homework. Rico feels bad because he knows Jonah has a lot of homework to catch up on, but he doesn’t think he should let Jonah copy his. How can Rico say no to Jonah?
- Practice how to hear a no and respond. You could use a scenario such as: Sam asks Amir if he can come over after school. Amir says no, he has too much homework. Should Sam get angry? Should she be offended that Amir doesn’t want to hang out with her? Should she respond with understanding and wish him luck on his homework?
- When possible, allow for group decision making around activities and games, allow people to share their ideas, feelings and interests