

## **Lesson: Non-Verbal Communication and Appropriate Body Language at School**

**Grades:** 3-5

**Objective:** Students will be able to recognize and enact positive, appropriate body gestures at school, and understand that some gestures and body language shared with each other at school are inappropriate and unsafe.

### **Health Education Standards:**

2 - Analyze the influence of family, peers, culture, media, technology, and other factors on health behaviors

4 - Demonstrate the ability to use interpersonal communication skills to enhance health and avoid or reduce health risk

5 - Demonstrate the ability to use decision-making skills to enhance health and safety

### **Warm-Up Activity: Character Walks – 4 minutes**

Traveling in a large circle, students will hear the name of an animal or character and try to move silently as that animal or character would. Example: Monkey – students would position themselves like a monkey and travel around the circle without making any sounds.

Recap: How did you know what to do for each of these? *Sample responses: I've seen a monkey, I've watched a show with a monkey, I saw other kids doing it*

### **Activity 2: Charades – 12 minutes**

In small groups students will take turns drawing a card and silently acting the emotion or gesture. Students on another team will guess the gesture. If the group guesses accurately, they get 1 point and it is their turn to act.

*Sample cards: I feel surprised, I am angry, I'm doing great, "Great job" to a teammate (high five or fist bump), dislike of a food, I like you (hug), I feel sad, I won the game, I lost the game, scolding, come here, go over there, biking signals: turn right, biking signals: turn left, biking signals: stop, thank you, "after you" (letting someone else go first), I don't know, I'm confused*

Recap: What did all of these gestures have in common? *They are all appropriate gestures to signal a meaning. They do not make people feel uncomfortable, unsafe, or confused. As a culture we use many of these signals in a positive way to reinforce what we want to say. 80% of our communication is non-verbal.*

### **Activity 3: Non-Verbal Communication Tag – 6 minutes**

The goal of the game is to trade places with another player without getting tagged. No one may speak or make noise during the game.

Students create 1 large circle. 1 tagger is selected to be in the center. People in the circle discreetly signal to another player (that is at least 2 players away) and arrange to trade places.

While trading places, the tagger can move around the circle and tag people. Players can move as many times as they would like, and must move at least once.

#### **Activity 4: Lesson – 8 minutes**

East Side is experiencing some students doing inappropriate gestures at school, and it makes others feel unsafe and uncomfortable. As we learned in the activities today, sometimes we learn gestures from other students and will do them... even if we don't know what they mean.

Many children have access to TV, phones, YouTube, etc. and end up seeing content that is strictly meant for adults. We cannot bring those things to school, because we are safe, respectful, and responsible students.

There are times when the rules at home may be different from the rules at school. We might be allowed to wrestle with a friend in the backyard at home, and at school that is against the rules so that we all feel safe and respected. Piggy back rides at home may be allowed, and are not allowed at school. Finger guns with your friends at the park may be OK with your family, but is a gesture of violence at school and not allowed.

Acting out the positive gestures that we practiced in charades are all great examples of what we **can** do.

When students walk down the hallway at school, we walk calmly and confidently with our heads held high and we are proud of who we are. We do not fling body parts around and act like a silly animal or do something we saw on adult TV – because that is disrespectful and unsafe.

Just like when we have learned about safe touches or “okay and not okay” touches, signaling or gesturing private parts is always not okay at school.

If you are not sure what something means, or question if you think it's OK or not, you can ask an adult at home, or ask a teacher if it is OK at school.

Let's remember that being respectful means being polite, thoughtful, and helpful. Being responsible means that we do the right thing. Not doing what my classmates are doing, or what peer pressure suggests we should do, but the feeling in your belly about right and wrong. Being safe means that our body is in control, we keep our bodies to ourselves, and we follow the rules so that no one gets hurt.