

Hutchinson Middle School

Guidelines for Success – Be Respectful, Be Responsible, Be Safe, and Excel

HMS Parents,

I would like to say thank you for a great start to the 2015-2016 school year. It has been a pleasure to get back to our vital work of helping our middle school students become college and career ready. Our school's mission is:

Students will graduate with the knowledge, skills, and behaviors to be college and career ready.

HMS staff is working very hard to prepare students for a rigorous high school curriculum. Two of our strategic actions are to:

- 1. Teach literacy across the curriculum, and**
- 2. Teach, model and reinforce positive behaviors.**

Our first HMS Site Council meeting will be on Wednesday, September 30th at 4:30 p.m. at HMS 8. Our agenda will include details on our school mission and strategic actions as well as how parents can get involved in the process.

I look forward to continuing the momentum of our great start. Please feel free to contact me if you have questions or need information.

Sincerely,

David T. Patterson, Principal
620-615-4706

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Twitter - @HMS_DT

Facebook – www.facebook.com/hutchmiddle

Parent – Teacher Conferences

Parent-Teacher Conferences will be held on Tuesday, October 6th, 5:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m., and October 8th, 8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. We highly encourage your participation. If you would like to visit with a teacher about concerns before conferences, please feel free to call or email teacher's directly via Skyward. If you need help navigating Skyward, please let us know.

Middle Years – Working Together for School Success

Attached with each monthly principal's newsletter you will find the Middle Years publication. This is great information for parents in working with their middle school children. Please take time to read the articles provided. These articles have great advice and tips and can serve as great conversation starters for family dialogue.

Final Friday

Our school-wide recognition and extra help system includes one day each month called Final Friday. Students who have earned A's, B's, and C's will be dismissed to the gymnasium for the final 40 minutes of the school day at the end of each month. Students with D's and F's will remain in Advisement/Seminar for extra help. Students may also visit with specific teachers during this time for extra help and guidance. We hope to see more and more students in the gym each month. Please encourage your student to work hard and get extra help throughout the month.

HMS 7 Final Friday – September 25th

HMS 8 Final Friday – September 30th (yes, not always on Friday 😊)

Gear Up – Homework Club

Extra help is also provided once per week at each building. Help will be provided as well as encouragement and guidance. Please encourage your child to attend if they need extra help with academics.

HMS 7 Gear Up – Tuesdays, 3:30 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

HMS 8 Gear Up – Thursdays, 3:30 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Bullying Prevention

Starting each school year brings with it some issues in regard to bullying. As with all bullying behavior, we teach all students (victim, perpetrator, and bystander(s)), to STOP, WALK, and TALK. It is vital for students to talk to a trusted adult whenever they feel they are being bullied. We also ask bystanders to not spread rumors about bullying behavior. Perpetrators often continue the negative behavior because they receive attention and encouragement from their peers. The more we STOP, WALK, and TALK, the better we can eliminate this type of behavior. You will find an attachment to this newsletter with our district policy and plans for bullying prevention.

STOP – verbally tell student to stop, or raise hand while walking away from situation

WALK – when feeling bullied, walk away

TALK – visit with a trusted adult and report what is going on

Sometimes students feel that reporting bullying will make the situation worse. Please understand that we work very hard to help and can make a positive difference.

Chromebooks

Chromebooks have been an outstanding addition to our curriculum. Students will need to know how to navigate in a "Google World" in order to be ready for high school, college, and the workplace. Online classes are almost as necessary as attending a brick and mortar institution at the post-secondary level. We have had very little damage to machines so far. Please encourage your student to be safe and responsible when operating and carrying their device. I encourage you to get a Google account and have your child "share" documents and assignments for your input and encouragement. This is a great way to get involved and work with your student.

For more information on Google in the classroom, please visit:

<https://support.google.com/edu/classroom/answer/6020279?hl=en>

United Way

Thank you to the over 100 students and staff that participated in the United Way Community Work Day on August 29th. Our friends at United Way tell us that HMS participation increases donations by over \$50,000 each year. We are very proud of our students for their "community" mindset and willingness to give up a Saturday for helping give back to Hutchinson. Thank you!

HMS Site Council

Site council is open to all parents. We will have an agenda each month covering our "key priorities" as well as be available to answer questions.

Upcoming Site Council Dates:

September 30th @ HMS 8

October 28th @ HMS 7

November 18th @ HMS 8

December 16th @ HMS 7

All meetings begin at 4:30 p.m.

Additional Notes:

- Please do not drop-off and pick-up students in bus lanes before and after school.
- Students may begin arriving to school after 7:15 a.m.
- Breakfast is served at 7:25 a.m. each morning.
- Bus Shuttles depart at 7:35 a.m. each morning for students.

September 2015

Middle Years

Working Together for School Success



Short Stops

I'm hopeful that...

Students who feel hopeful about the future tend to be more motivated and earn better grades. To foster hopefulness in your child, suggest that she write down her dreams for the near and distant future (making the lacrosse team, becoming a chef). She can start working toward them by setting goals for herself.

A day in the life

What do 24 hours look like in your home? Throughout one day, let your tween shoot video clips of family members enjoying a meal, laughing together, or walking the dog. Or he might take photos of these moments and make a slide show. Watch his creation together—he'll practice presentation skills and spend time with family.

Safe after school

Now that your child is in middle school, you may wonder whether she can stay home alone after school. Check your state law or guidelines, and consider your tween's maturity level. If she is going to be home without you, be sure she knows what to do (call or text you, start homework) and what not to do (use the stove, chat online).

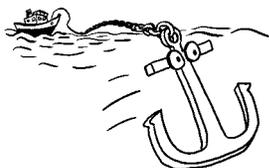
Worth quoting

"Think for yourself, and let others enjoy the privilege of doing so, too."
Voltaire

Just for fun

Q: What do you throw out when you use it and take back when you don't need it?

A: An anchor.



Focused and ready to learn

Does your child like the idea of being his own boss? Tell him congratulations—he has a job! Managing his schoolwork is his responsibility, and he's in charge. Here are ways he can stay focused on this important role.

In class

It's a good idea for your tween to keep only what he needs on his desk. If he's allowed to pick his seat, he might choose a spot close to the teacher and away from windows, doors, and kids who like to talk a lot. And if he uses a laptop or tablet for classwork, he should close non-academic apps and windows so he's not tempted to play a game or check social media sites.

Study time

When your middle grader studies, he can use strategies to avoid interruptions. For example, he could hang up a "Do Not Disturb" sign, ask you to keep his siblings occupied, or go work at the library. Have him put electronics in another room when he's not using them to study. Also, he should pay attention to how he works and consider ways to focus better. If he tends to fidget, he



might walk around or squeeze a stress ball while he reads.

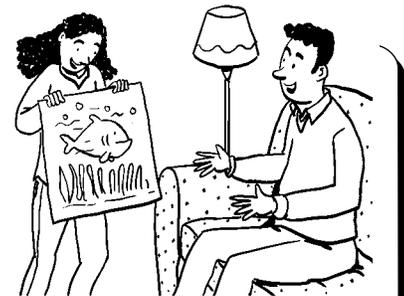
Everyday planning

To keep schoolwork front and center, encourage your child to record assignment deadlines in an agenda book or on a calendar as soon as he gets them. He can add commitments like practices and meetings, too. Then, he should review his plan each week to see what's coming up and make adjustments as needed. 👍

School: A hot topic

One of the best ways to support your tween's education is to make it a regular topic of conversation. Try these ideas:

- Let your child teach you something she's learning. If she tells you about the Lewis and Clark expedition, for instance, have her trace the explorers' route on a map for you.
- Think of questions that lead to more than one-word answers. *Examples:* "What was the most surprising thing you learned today?" or "What were the other kids' speeches about?"
- Focus on her favorites—she may have more to say about the things she enjoys most. So if she loves art, let her show you her latest painting or sculpture and describe the technique she used. 👍



Engineer that!

If your middle schooler is creative and likes to solve problems or help people, engineering could be the perfect career for her. Suggest that she tinker with engineering projects like these to see what she thinks:

- Let your tween try her hand at engineering a contraption to move a marble across a room—the way *automotive engineers* work on designing cars to move people. Like an engineer, she should design, test, and redesign until she's satisfied with her model.
- Using drinking straws and other household materials, can your middle schooler build a “hand” that could type keys on



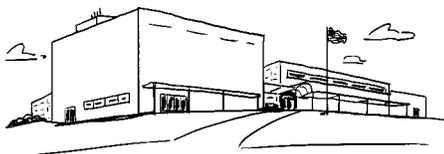
a computer for someone with a physical disability? Maybe she'd like to be a *bio-medical engineer*—they invent devices to help people with disabilities or other health concerns.

- A *packaging engineer* creates packing materials for products. Encourage your child to

build the strongest box possible out of a single sheet of paper. She could test (and retest) it by filling it with pennies. The more pennies her box can hold, the stronger it is. 🍷

Q & A **Say no to skipping class**
Q Last year, my son skipped class a few times. How can I make sure he doesn't do it again this year?

A Skipping class can become a habit and is even a risk factor for dropping out of high school. Kids skip for a variety of reasons, such as struggling in school, being bullied, or experiencing peer pressure.



Talk to your son about why he skipped and how to make this year different. Offer help for any problems he's having, and tell him he can always talk to you, his teachers, or the school counselor.

Then, remind him of the consequences he experienced for skipping class last year, such as detention or zeroes for assignments. And let him know you expect him to be in school all day, every day this year unless he has an excused absence. 🍷

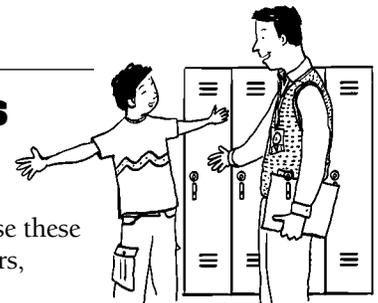
OUR PURPOSE

To provide busy parents with practical ideas that promote school success, parent involvement, and more effective parenting.

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Build good relationships

Whether in school now or in the workplace later, your tween will need to get along with people in authority. Encourage him to use these “people skills” when working with his teachers, coaches, or club advisors.



Listen well. Your middle grader should pay close attention when adults give directions. Being a good listener will help him know what he needs to do to follow through—a key way to build trust in any relationship.

Have perspective. Help your child see things from an adult's point of view. Maybe the teacher assigned him a project partner he's not happy with. Suggest that he consider why. (Perhaps the teacher hoped he would be a nice role model for the other student.)

Be cooperative. Focusing on the greater good can help your middle grader be a team player. Maybe he wants to run sound and lights for the school play, but the advisor asks him to make publicity posters. Changing gears will show he's willing to help—and teach him to be adaptable. 🍷

Parent to Parent Walking tall

My daughter Marley started feeling insecure about her looks when she began middle school. She complained that other girls were thinner or prettier. I remembered feeling the same way at her age, so I asked my mother to remind me how we handled it.

My mom said she helped me put my energy into looking and feeling my best instead of comparing myself to others. She had some nice suggestions for my daughter.

Marley has acne, like I did, so we shopped for skin care

products and found one that's helping. And we looked through her closet for outfits she feels good in. For example, she's more comfortable wearing skirts and dresses when she pairs them with colorful leggings. Finally, I suggested

that she use a journal to write about her strengths and the accomplishments she's proud of.

I know the middle school years can be a long haul. But I think Marley is feeling a little better about herself, and I hope that will continue. 🍷



USD 308 Bullying Prevention - Staff Plan

The following documents were created to support teachers to identify bullying:

1. Definition of Bullying
2. Bullying Assessment Flow Chart
3. Suspect Bullying Questions
4. Bullying Procedural Plan

Definition of bullying as per USD 308 parent/student handbook:

“Bullying” means any intentional gesture or any intentional written, verbal, electronic or physical act or threat by any student, staff member or parent towards a student or by any student, staff member or parent towards a staff member that is sufficiently severe, persistent or pervasive that it creates an intimidating, threatening or abusive educational environment that a reasonable person, under the circumstance know or should know will have the effect of:

- (i) harming a student, staff members, whether physically or mentally; or
- (ii) damaging the property of a student, staff member or third party; or
- (iii) subjecting or placing a student staff member or third party in reasonable fear of harm; or
- (iv) subjecting or placing a student staff member or third party in reasonable fear of damage to their property.

Flow Chart Source: Dr. Dewey Cornell, Youth Violence Project, University of Virginia

Bullying Assessment Flow Chart

For USD 308 Staff

Teachers interview students individually involved in the incident.

What happened between you? How did it start? Did you tell him/her to stop? Is there anything you did that might have contributed to this happening?

Was this possibly a crime?

Was there use of a weapon, serious threat of injury, stalking, kidnapping or detention, loss of property or damage to property?

Yes

Report to Principal

Principals will review questions and confirm the incident

Contact the police

Notify parents so they can be present during investigation. Let them investigate and decide whether a crime has occurred.

Notify parents

Let parents of the targeted student know that you have contacted the police.

No

Was the act intentional?

Was there a gesture, written, verbal or electronic communication; physical act; or threat that was done intentionally?

No

Not bullying

Consider another infraction.

Yes

Did the act create an intimidating, threatening or abusive school environment?

Physical aggression such as hitting, shoving or threatening injury; verbal aggression such as teasing or name-calling; social aggression such as spreading rumors and shunning. Was the aggressor dominant over the other? Was one side outnumbered?

No

Not bullying

Could be a fight or some other infraction.

Yes

Was the act severe, persistent or pervasive?

Has there been more than one incident or did the aggressor fail to stop when asked?

No

Not bullying

Consider another infraction. Would be bullying if behavior continues.

Yes

Respond to bullying.

1. Correction or discipline (discipline matrix) aggressor for bullying, based on the seriousness and persistence of the behavior.
2. Educate and counsel all students, including bystanders, about bullying.
3. Ask all students, "What could you do that would keep this from happening again?"
4. Ask all students, "Would you let me know if anything like this happens again?"
5. Monitor and follow-up on any type of bullying situation.
6. Refer to "Suspect Bullying" document

USD 308 Bullying Procedural Plan – Staff

School Districts take the welfare of students seriously. Any time a school system employee has reasonable cause to believe that a student is involved in bully/victim behavior, the following responsibilities and procedures should be considered.

1. Each year the principal should arrange for the staff to be **briefed on bully/victim behaviors**.
2. If a student reports a bully/victim incident, a school official should **intervene immediately** to prevent additional bullying. Remember, **address it as bullying behavior**. It is better to over-react than under-react. Do not dismiss the behavior as tattling if the student reporting is trying to keep another student safe. Also, do not tell the person being bullied to stand up to the person bullying. Research states that the person being bullied is chosen because of perceived weakness so standing up may cause the condition to worsen.
3. When intervening, describe specifics of bullying behavior; refer to posted class rules and natural and logical consequences for bullying.
4. After separating the students, **engage the victim first** and reassure him /her that bullying behavior will not be tolerated. Direct the person being bullied to share what's happening and how he/she feels about it. Ask him/her to log any future bully/victim situations for the purpose of providing documentation. Reassure the person being bullied that all possible steps will be taken to prevent a reoccurrence. Involve the victim in a peer support group, orienting new students, natural helpers, or cooperative learning groups.
5. Then, **confront the perpetrator(s) and give immediate corrections** for his/her behavior (i.e. isolating the perpetrator from the rest of the class, alternative recess, removing the student from the classroom.) Do not bring the parties together to apologize nor offer mediation. A power imbalance may result in an intimidating situation and fear for the person being bullied.
6. If more than one perpetrator is involved in the bullying incident, **talk with each of the perpetrators separately** beginning with the lead perpetrator. If appropriate, read aloud the bullying incidence report that the person being bullied wrote. Use a no nonsense, direct style. Reinforce that there will be additional consequences if bullying continues. Expect the perpetrator to minimize and deny his/her actions. Remember to state the future behavior that you expect the perpetrator(s) to model and express confidence in his/her ability. If the perpetrator continues bullying despite efforts by the school personnel, he/she (and not the victim) should be separated or removed to another setting. The consequences should set the tone for future occurrences. In many instances, the student responding defensively to bullying is perceived as the student who initiated the conflict.

7. When a student is reported for bullying, a staff member observing the bullying behavior should consult with administration and other teachers, as well as staff, to get a wider reading on the problem, and to alert other adults to the bullying behavior. Begin collecting data on incidents and what intervention have been used

8. Inform the parents of the bully/victim behavior as quickly as possible. A call home the same day is preferable, followed by an appointment at school for the parents, if deemed necessary. Better results are obtained when parents are involved early in a bully/victim situation, before patterns are entrenched and extremely serious. **The parents and school officials should be involved in designing a creative plan of action**, whenever possible. It is recommended, however, not to bring the conflicting parties together.

In summary, when someone reports being bullied, the following skills are suggested:

- a. be a good listener and demonstrate active listening;
- b. restate what the student is saying (*So, you're saying that . . .*);
- c. ask how the student is feeling (*How do you feel about the bullying?*);
- d. ask specifics about the type of bullying and location;
- e. ask if the bullying is Persistent, Intentional, and Intimidating;
- f. ask how long it has been a pattern of behavior;
- g. ask who had been involved in the bullying and identify any witnesses;
- h. keep the report confidential;
- i. enter the offense in Skyward
- j. confide in other adults about the bullying behavior;
- k. develop an adequate safety plan and observe hotspots for the bullying;
- l. check in daily with the person being bullied and person bullying;
- m. ask the perpetrator to complete a reflection form

Source: WagePeaceToday.com – Dr. Michael R. Carpenter Consulting
Nationally Certified Olweus Bullying Prevention Program Trainer