

Dear Parents,

I am excited that the 2010-11 school year at Falls Church High School is nearly underway. I look forward to seeing your children next week!

I would like to take this opportunity to highlight and reinforce important information that I believe will help you and the staff at FCHS work together on behalf of your child this coming year. Many of these points involve parent responsibilities:

- If you drive your child to school in the morning, please proceed to the END of the drop off zone in front of the school. You will NOT be permitted to drop off your child at the beginning of the driveway or in the middle. We have clearly marked the area that is the “kiss and ride.” Security staff will be posted outside moving parent traffic. We expect you to comply and to understand that it is important to drop your child off safely – and quickly. We have several hundred cars that come through the front of the school in a 15 minute window. When you stop at the top of the driveway, you actually serve to back up traffic on Jaguar Trail. When you stop in the middle, you actually block assigned parking spaces and prevent security cameras from recording the front of the school. Please drive all the way to the end of the driveway. Do not let your children out until you reach the end of the driveway. Then, exit the campus quickly and safely.
- Just as an FYI, the gates behind the school by the cafeteria and auto tech classes are pulled and locked from 8 a.m. to 1:30 pm. The gate at Jack’s Lane is permanently closed and is not open at all.
- Please do not call the main office to leave personal messages for your children, unless it is an emergency. We do not have the staff to deliver individual messages. Also, please do not make a habit of calling your children on their personal cell phones. They are not supposed to have their phones out from 7:15 a.m. until 2:05 p.m.
- Please do not bring commercially prepared food for your children at lunchtime. Students who have food brought to them from McDonalds, etc. will not be permitted to take the food into the cafeteria.
- Please remind your children that if they leave campus before dismissal, they will be disciplined for skipping class. Students are not allowed to leave campus and return, unless accompanied by a parent for a legitimate purpose. Students who leave school without permission and return to school grounds are subject to search by school officials.
- Please review our attendance procedures. Parents only have 48 hours to excuse an absence. Parents may only excuse 10 absences per year, after which absences may only

be excused by documentation from a medical practitioner. I have asked my administrative staff, including the Truancy Officer that serves my school, to actively pursue students who do not come to school or get to class on time. Prosecution of both parents and students for truancy is a possible outcome for chronic offenders of the attendance policy.

- Lastly, please talk to your students about bringing expensive electronic devices with them to school. We cannot investigate stolen IPODS, phones, etc. because of the lack of manpower and a shift in security prioritization. Students may bring personal computers, but should register the serial number with our security personnel. Students who bring their personal computer to school must abide by the FCPS Acceptable Use Policy while using their computer at FCHS. High school is the perfect time to teach children about taking precautions to protect their property and knowing their surroundings.
- On behalf of the administrative team who provide security for evening events at school, I am requesting that all parents retrieving their children from school be as prompt as possible. We tell the kids to call home as soon as an event is over because we know that large groups of kids “waiting” compromise supervision and security.

Please feel free to call me any time about any concerns you might have. I hope you will be involved at school through the PTSA or booster organizations. I also hope to see you at Jaguar Kick Off on Thursday, September 2 and at Back to School Night on September 23. Please make sure you check the website regularly and that we have a current email address for you.

Best wishes for a great year,

Cathy Benner, Principal