



WELCOME TO MIDDLE SCHOOL!

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# Bruins in the Middle

Office of Middle School Counseling Services



## From the Director of Student Services

Today parents are increasingly aware of the greater amount of stress that impacts on their children. While we dealt with issues such as disappointing our parents, keeping up grades, and finding a group in which to feel comfortable, our children are dealing with more complex situations such as adapting to a rapidly changing social environment greatly impacted by the internet, readiness to take a high school credit course in middle school, beginning a high school GPA in middle school, and increased high-stakes standardized testing. The good news is that your child can learn the resiliency skills to survive and thrive despite these stressful challenges. Below are some ways you can help your child develop these skills

- **Reinforce empathy and help your child keep perspective.** When your child is a victim of the shifting social alliances that form in middle school, help him or her understand that other children may be feeling just as lonely and confused, and help him or her see beyond the current situation - alliances that shift one way may shift back again the next week in



Help your student to cope with stress

middle school. Also, encourage your child to reach out to those who seem to be experiencing difficulties in the social environment. Remind your child that a kind word or smile doesn't take much time, but can make a world of difference to a fellow student.

- **Tell your child that you appreciate the person he or she is—their honesty, sense of humor, respect for others, etc.** Letting them know the character traits you appreciate will help them develop a positive self concept. As American writer and philosopher, Ralph Waldo Emerson, wrote in the mid 1800's—"The true test of civilization is not the census, nor the size of cities, nor the crops - no, but the kind of man the country turns out." While we certainly want to develop our

children's cognitive skills, we also want to develop strength of character and a moral compass in our children so they will be able to weather life's adversities and make ethical choices.

- **Listen to your child when they are feeling discouraged.** Being silent may be the greatest gift you can give to your child and yourself. It will give your child the gift of your complete presence in his/her life. While you are listening, try to put the fears you experienced as an adolescent out of the way and truly concentrate on what your child's concerns are. After listening, reflect to your child what your understanding is. This alone may be all your child needs. If not, ask your child what they feel would be helpful in the present situation

If your child is experiencing stress as the school year progresses, please contact me or your child's counselor to discuss the situation and see what steps can be taken to decrease the stress in your child's life.

**Mary Bresser, Director of Student Services**

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### Quick Tips for Success

- Make appointments so that your child doesn't miss core classes.
- Sign-up for parent view access to Blackboard 24/7.
- Ask about big projects before they are due.
- Keep in touch with teachers via email.

## Cyber Bullying

Every fall, the counselors present lessons to all middle school students about Sexual Harassment and Bullying. This year, counselors were in 7th and 8th grade classrooms during the month of October. Students were taught how to identify a bully and steps they can take to prevent being a victim. Students were also taught how to self-check to be sure that they aren't unknowingly contributing to these issues at Lake Braddock. They were also taught that regardless of the intention behind the

act, it is the perception of the target that determines whether or not bullying has taken place.

In recent years, counselors have also had to address "cyber-bullying." With so many students regularly using sites like My Space and Face Book, counselors are regularly faced with students in crisis as a direct result of inappropriate use of technology. It is far too easy for students to anonymously bully others while in the comfort of their homes. With the "face" of bullying changing so

rapidly, parents need to be aware of how critical it is to be educated about the risks involved in using technology for social interaction.



Electronic messages can hurt just as much as the spoken word.

## Strategies to protect your children from Cyber Bullying

School officials can educate students about bullying, but parents remain on the front line protecting their children. Here are some strategies parents can implement:

- Learn about the new technologies. If you are unfamiliar with the Internet, now is the time to start surfing the Web. Learn the many ways that children can bully electronically, through IMs, e-mails, blogs (Web logs that are online diaries), and videos that are downloaded from camcorders or picture phones.
- Talk about values. The technology may have changed, but kindness and decency should still be top priorities for everyone.
- Guard passwords. A bully can use another child's screen name to send out offensive e-mails. Tell your child not to share passwords with friends and to change passwords frequently.
- Talk to your child if you believe he is the victim of a bully. Oftentimes a child being tormented by a cyber bully will be too embarrassed to tell a parent or

### National Bullying Prevention Awareness Week October 5-11

teacher. Make sure your child knows he's not to blame for being targeted and that he should report any incident to you or an adult at school.

- Keep copies. Having documentation of the cyber bullying will strengthen your case if you need to report it to school or other authorities. Do not delete the original e-mail, even after you have printed it out. There may be something in the original [e-mail] header that would lead to the source..
- Even if cyber bullying happens outside of school, the repercussions spill over into the classroom. Computer etiquette skills should be reinforced.
- Stress the Internet's impact. An e-mail sent to one child can be forwarded to hundreds. Old e-mails and IMs may re-surface and get even a well-meaning child in trouble. Encourage your child to think before clicking.



An e-mail sent to one child can be forwarded to hundreds over the internet.

Tips edited from: Charlene Giannetti and Margaret Sagarese are coauthors of several books for parents of young adolescents, including *The Roller-Coaster Years: Raising Your Child Through the Maddening Yet Magical Middle School Years*; *Cliques: 8 Steps to Help Your Child Survive the Social Jungle*; and *What Are You Doing In There? Balancing Your Need to Know with Your Adolescent's Need to Grow*.

# MentorWorks

Lake Braddock, along with PTSA volunteers, sponsors the **MentorWorks** program at our school. The purpose is to foster committed relationships between caring, responsible adults (mentors) and young people (mentees) via one-on-one mentoring on school premises. Through these mentoring relationships, students can improve their self-esteem, remain properly focused, learn life skills, and become positively connected to the larger community.

## Becoming a Mentor

A mentor is someone who, along with parents, provides young people with support, counsel, friendship, reinforcement and constructive example. Mentors are good listeners, people who care, people who want to help young people bring out strengths that are already there. The time commitment is 30 minutes/week for the school year.



To become a mentor or mentee call Michelle Birkenstock at 703-426-1134

## Becoming a Mentee

All children can benefit from positive role models. However, some children need mentors more than others. Students are recommended by teachers, counselors or parents and are screened to ensure that they want a mentor. They can meet with their mentor during lunch or after school. Having a mentor has proven to be a positive experience for many students.

# FAQs for Parents

- If your student becomes ill during the school day, they should ask their teacher for a clinic pass. At the clinic they will be allowed to call a parent or someone listed on their emergency care card. They should not call their parents from their cell phone, or leave campus without signing-out from either the clinic or their subschool office.
- Students are not allowed to use their cell phones during the school day. If



they need to use a phone, they should go to their sub school office and ask to use the courtesy phone.

- If a student forgets an important item that is needed during the school day (lunch, musical instrument), parents may bring the item to the sub school office. **Students should pick up delivered items from their sub school secretary.**

If you are delivering forgotten items on a regular basis, you might want to get tips on fostering responsibility from your student's counselor.

**The Sub School Secretaries are your best friends!**

- **Subschool 1-8th: Mrs. Malkin**
- **Subschool 2-7th: Mrs. Barber**

# Transportation Services Emergency Phone Number

As a parent, we know that your number one concern is your child's safety. We also know that it is frustrating—or even frightening—when you need to call someone for information about your student's whereabouts after school hours and the phones are not being answered. To help, if your child has

not yet returned home on the expected bus and you can not get in touch with him or her, the **FCPS school security office, at 703-764-2400**, can be called to contact transportation staff members after 5 p.m., who will work to determine when your child should arrive at their bus stop. Before 5

p.m., please contact the main office at 703-426-1000 or transportation at 703-329-3600



**What do I do when my student doesn't arrive home on the bus?**

## WELCOME TO MIDDLE SCHOOL!

Lake Braddock Middle  
School Guidance  
9200 Burke Lake Road  
Burke, Virginia 22015

### Important Numbers!

Main Office: 703-426-1000  
Attendance: 703-426-1186  
Clinic: 703-426-1010  
Guidance: 703-426-1030  
Subschool 1 (Grade 8): 703-426-1110  
Subschool 2 (Grade 7): 703-426-1120

We're on the web!  
[www.fcps.edu/LakeBraddockSS](http://www.fcps.edu/LakeBraddockSS)

### IMPORTANT DATES:

2-Hour Early Release, November 26  
Thanksgiving Holiday, November 27-28  
7th Grade Career Guidance Lessons, December 8-12  
8th Grade Career Guidance Lessons, December 15-19  
2nd Quarter Interim Reports Mailed, December 18  
2nd Quarter Report Cards Mailed, February 2  
High School Curriculum Night, February 2  
Course Selection Sheets Due (Rising 9th Grade), February 9  
Rising 8th Grade Curriculum Night, February 9  
Course Selection Sheets Due (Rising 8th Grade), February 13  
English Writing SOL Tests (Grade 8), March 2-6  
SOL Tests (Grade 7 & 8), May 18-June 15

## Office of Middle School Counseling Services

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