

Weekly Eagle News – Middle School

Hello Middle School Community,

As we enter the home stretch of the school year, it is a good time to reflect on how we can finish the school year strong. This can be challenging as our time and attention turns to the calendar full of events, activities, and the quickly approaching last day of school. It is easy to slide into “survival mode” and neglect to hold students accountable for even basic expectations. This reminder is just as much for me and our teachers as it is for parents and students, and I appreciate your partnership as we finish the year well.

One way you can help support a strong finish for our students is to be the first line of defense enforcing dress code. We have seen an increasing number of t-shirts and sweatshirts of secular bands/artists. There are also too many girls wearing leggings with tops that are too short and too many boys wearing sweats to school and hats in the building. I would also appreciate your help in reminding your students that gum chewing is not allowed at school and after one warning, students will receive a detention. Finally, please review our cell phone policy which every RCMS family has agreed to support. Too many students are keeping their phones in their backpack and not turning it in at the beginning of the day.

The end of the school year can also be a challenging time for students to navigate the social dynamics of middle school. Little annoyances in a friendship can develop into significant conflicts as patience wears thin. Navigating these conflicts in middle school relationships is extra challenging because their brains are not fully developed yet. Additionally, I have not yet met a middle schooler who enjoys being held accountable for their mistakes. They will lie, deflect, and blame others much more quickly than accepting responsibility for their words and actions.

We are working hard to establish a culture where students hold one another accountable, but unfortunately, when a student is held accountable by a peer, sometimes they can respond with bullying behavior like ostracizing them or labelling them “a snitch”. This is one of the big current issues in our middle school culture that I wish I could end immediately. Students put up with all sorts of misbehaviors and mistreatment out of fear of the perceived social ramifications if they speak up and do what is right. As a faculty, we are absolutely committed to holding students accountable for these types of bullying behaviors, but we cannot help if we are not aware that it is going on.

Thank you for your support in these areas and please spend some time talking about them with your students. Perhaps these topics provide an opportunity for them to open up about their school experience in a way they have not before. Asking specific questions might help avoid the typical exchange of “how was your day?” and “Fine”, which is all too common in many households.

News and notes:

- The [71st Annual Holland Festival](#) is coming up on Saturday, May 4th. This beloved tradition is a fun day of community with game booths, inflatables, petting zoo, food, olliebollen (Dutch donuts), student and Dutch dance performances and silent and live auctions. This is one of three annual events that raise funds for our need-based tuition assistance fund. **The school asks RCMS families to please support this event in three ways:**
 1. Volunteer one hour at the festival – [signup online](#) before April 15 and be entered to win \$2,500 RCS tuition drawing. See [website](#) for rules and information.
 2. Donate \$10 to the Middle School electronic auction item - our goal is to raise enough to donate a nice electronic item like an iPad, Apple Watch, or electric scooter to the live auction. Donations can be made [online](#).
 3. Donate an auction item for use in the live or silent auction by April 26 – drop off your donation in the front office anytime. No donation is too small! We have a team of parents ready to make themed auction baskets with the donations the school receives. [Click here](#) if you're looking for donation ideas.

Thank you for helping to make this special event a success!

- This Friday (April 12) is a big day for RCMS. Students will participate in one of our school's best traditions – Friendship Games! Drop off is at the normal time, but we have a minimum day, so our pickup time is 12:15. It will be a normal Friday dismissal with 8th graders picked up at the Upper school (which is in session until their normal time) and sibling pick-up at lower school as well.
- The Middle School Dance is also this Friday from 6-9 PM on our MS Basketball court. There will be a taco truck, drinks, and dessert. We will also have some interactive games and inflatables. All are free with the price of admission. This is more of a dress-up dance, but school dress code does still apply!
- David Stan Update: Please continue to be in prayer for 8th Grader David Stan. Praise the Lord! David's treatment in Texas was successful (according to doctors, miraculously so!) and he is back home and Lord willing, will start a bone marrow transplant at the end of April. The transplant process will involve some extremely strong chemotherapy and a very tenuous recovery for his immune system. Please continue to pray for David and his family and if you feel so led, you can support them financially [here](#). Also, David's dad, Emil is a Sergeant with the Riverside County Sheriff's Department and their hockey team is putting on a charity hockey game for David in conjunction with Coachella Valley Firebirds. Click [here](#) for details and to purchase tickets.
- Tharros House will be hosting a "Week of Kindness" starting April 15. One aspect of this will be a fundraising "Change War" House competition which will raise money for David Stan and his family. Each house will have a bucket out front during drop off. Any coins in the bucket count positively for that house and any checks or paper money count negatively against that house. It is a fun way to earn house points and to put all that loose change (and cash!) towards an amazing cause!
- 6th Grade Families – please check your email for details about a field trip to the San Bernardino County Museum on April 17. A permission slip will go out early this week and we will need parents to help drive and chaperone. Please email Ms. Lam if you have any questions.
- Reminder: sibling Pickup at Lower School – Middle school students are **not** allowed to check out their siblings at the lower school gate and may not walk down Kansas street to meet their cars waiting in the line. MS students must stay on the east side of Kansas Street with the middle school teachers on duty and wait for their car to pull up on that side of the street.

Key Dates:

- April 12: Friendship Games (minimum day for LS/MS only, MS dismissal 12:15 PM)
- April 12: Middle School Spring Dance 6-9 PM
- April 15: Parent Society Meeting – Hear updates from all principals and meet new Lower school principal Chris Winters
- April 26: Forum Festival/Knott's Berry Farm (7th-8th Band and Choir, MS Jazz Band)
- May 4 – Holland Festival
- May 22: 8th Grade Promotion – 4 PM at the University of Redlands Chapel

Have a fantastic week,

Matt Wiers
MS Principal