

# Sellwood Weekly News

## 11-18-2015



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**Mark Your  
Calendar**

### SCHOOL NEWS

#### **This Week**

From Your Administration

11/19 - PEAK Play  
"The Sound of  
Music", 7 pm

Greetings Sellwood Families,

This has been a tragic week all over the world and we know it is tough explaining these horrific acts to our students. I found this article below in Time which I think is very helpful, and thought I would pass it on. In my experience, the younger students seem to have more questions but even for adults, we struggle to understand how these things can happen. There is advice on how to talk to children of all ages so I hope you find this article helpful. Thank you and please let us know if we can assist you in any way. Thank you for all you do for our students and our school.

Brian & Marylyn

#### **Next Week**

11/26 - No School

11/27 - No School

#### **Plan Ahead**

12/3 - Band Winter  
Concert, 7 pm

12/10 - Marimba  
Winter Concert, 7  
pm

12/15 -

#### **"Don't dismiss their fears, but be reassuring"**

When terrible events happen, such as the attacks on Paris, parents' immediate instinct is to shield their children from them. While this is perfectly natural, particularly as parents

Westmoreland  
Pizzicato  
Fundraiser

12/16 - Late  
Opening, 11:05  
am

12/18 - All School  
Celebration, 2:45  
pm

12/21 - 1/1 - No  
School

1/18 - No School

[Sellwood Calendar](#)

[PPS Calendar \(pick  
language\)](#)

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are probably having difficulty wrapping their heads around the events too, it may not always be the best approach, according to experts.

"Don't delay telling your children," says Harold Koplewicz, President of the Child Mind Institute. "It's very likely that your child will hear about what happened, and it's best that it comes from you so that you are able to answer any questions, convey the facts, and set the emotional tone."

Figuring out what your child has learned and answering any questions they have in terms they can understand is usually the best approach. "By initiating this dialogue, and allowing and encouraging your children to express their feelings, you can help them build healthy coping skills that will serve them well in the future," says Koplewicz.

It's important to try and stay calm as you talk through the events. Children pick up their cues from their parents so if you act anxious they will be anxious.

Trust your instincts too. Kids vary in levels of anxiety, and vulnerability. You know your kid and what they can handle better than anyone.

Here's an age by age guide to keeping the discussion developmentally appropriate.

For pre-school kids: This is the only age which experts recommend trying to avoid the subject a little. Children younger than five tend to confuse facts with fears, says Koplewicz, so limiting access to news and watching what you say is advisable. Answer questions, but carefully. "Remember, you don't have to give them more details than they ask for."

For elementary school aged kids, most psychologists suggest letting the young ones lead the way. "If the kids are aware of what happened, a parent's discussion should be focused on the child's well-being," says psychologist Paul Coleman, author of *Finding Peace When Your Heart Is in Pieces*. "The details of who, what, when, and why should guide the discussion to the child's deeper (perhaps unstated) concerns."

You do not need to delve into details like the exact number of people who died or that the attacks were co-ordinated, and try not to be overly dramatic or use frightening words, says Coleman. "If you are very upset and they notice, reassure them you will be fine but you are just sad at the news."

But don't avoid or disregard your kids' questions either; older children (aged 6 to 11) are comforted by facts. "For kids this age, knowledge can be empowering and helps relieve anxiety," says Koplewicz.

Try not to dismiss their fears as foolish, although therapists say it's fine to point out that events like these are rare and

unlikely to happen to the kids. Their fears are natural. Children at this age are egocentric and believe that any bad thing that happens anywhere is heading their way. "Then let your children know that they are safe and loved," advises Coleman. You can gently point out, with some degree of honesty, that such attacks are very rare, that the bad guys have been caught and the chances of such an attack happening to them are quite slim.

For middle school aged kids: Don't assume, just because your kids are a little older now, that you know how they feel. Ask them if they've heard about the attacks and what they think. Psychologists suggest that being able to answer all their questions is not as key as just being around to help them absorb the news somewhere they feel safe.

"Answer their questions simply," says Coleman, "and reassure them that they are safe and that adults are working hard to prevent things like this from happening again." Kids at this age see things in terms of good guys and bad guys. They might be interested in more of the details, but experts still advise keeping those to a minimum.

And don't panic if they seem blasé or indifferent about the attacks; all kids process scary information differently.

"Children react to disturbing events in different ways," says Koplewicz. "Some might want to spend extra time with friends and relatives; some might want to spend more time alone. It's important to let your child know that it is normal to express things in different ways—for example, a person may feel sad but not cry."

Encourage them to talk and express any fears, especially if they have been involved in any other scary or violent incidents recently. If appropriate, experts say, you might like to review any safety plans you have with them, if your home has fire escapes or if you have a gathering place in case of emergency.

For high school kids, who are probably reading a lot about the events on social media, and hearing about it from their friends, it might be worth explaining in a bit more detail what we know and what we don't. These are complex issues and not likely to be solved soon, so they may as well be thinking about issues they will be facing in the years to come.

"It's very typical for teens to say they don't want to talk," says Koplewicz. "Try to start a conversation while you are doing an activity together, so that the conversation does not feel too intense or confrontational."

Experts also recommend that while it's great to radiate calm, it's also helpful to share your own feelings on the issue, as part of keeping the discussion going.

"Reassurances that they won't ever get hurt or lose

someone in a terrorist attack will not be believed," says Coleman. "Speak to them in terms of probabilities." And by all means talk to them about what to do in the case of an emergency, where they should go if they can't get home or who they should call if they can't reach you. Finally, when the time comes, therapists say this is a good opportunity to talk to high school kids about violence, and its effects and other ways to solve problems or have your voice heard.

If kids are still afraid after your reassurances, Coleman has a handy acronym of things to do: SAFE

S: Search for hidden questions or fears. Ask what else is on their mind about what happened, what their friends say about it and what their biggest worry is right now. "The goal is to not assume your child is okay because it would make you-the parent-more at ease to believe that is so," he says. "Some children may not speak up about their fears or may be unable to articulate them without a parent's willingness to ask questions."

A: Act. Keep routines going-homework, bedtime rituals and so on- because they're reassuring and distracting. "It is a good time to have them do kind things for others," says Coleman. Little things like helping an elderly neighbor, or opening a door for a stranger reminds them that there are kindnesses in this world. This reduces the sense of helplessness.

F: Feel feelings. "Let them know their feelings make sense," says Coleman. "Saying 'There is nothing to worry about,' teaches them that you may not be the person to speak to about their fears." Let them talk it out and show that you understand.

E: Ease Minds. After you're sure they've talked through their fears, you can assure them of their safety. "Reassure them that there are good people trying to help others and prevent future attacks," says Coleman.

The No. 1 thing most experts agree on is that your child needs is your time. "The best thing you can do as a parent is be available," says Koplewicz. "Just spending time with him and reassuring him that an event like this is unusual can make a huge difference."

### **BEFORE AND AFTER SCHOOL PICK UP AND DROP OFF**

When dropping off or picking up your student, please be especially cautious right now because of all the sewer construction occurring throughout the neighborhood. We

have a lot of students who walk and bike to school, and six buses that are generally coming or going at these times. In addition, the school parking lot has arrows that specifically show the entrance and exit into and out of the lot. These driveways are not a place to stop and block the flow of traffic, even for a minute. Please help us and plan to arrive early when picking up your student so you are not holding up traffic or putting students' or adults' lives in danger.

We appreciate your support in this matter and hope things will continue to improve. Thank you



**Annual Sellwood MS Shirt Sale -**  
**Deadline this Friday!**

This is a reminder to get your t-shirt/hoody orders in by this Friday, November 20th!

Stop by the Sellwood MS office to see the soft sample tees and hoodies. Additional order forms in the office make it easy for you to complete your order and submit your payment all at once! Chest measurements on the order form make it easy for you to order the perfect size!

Or you can download the order form [here](#). Please return it, fully completed with check made payable to Sellwood PTA, to the Sellwood MS office. (Distribution will be the week before winter break.) **Deadline: This Friday, November 20th 4pm**

Questions? Contact Kate Houston at [katemhouston@gmail.com](mailto:katemhouston@gmail.com) (Please note, youth hoodies [by law](#) do not come with drawstrings.)

The Sellwood PTA not only helps support the library, band, marimba, PIL Athletics, and PEAK enrichment programs, but it also works to coordinate many generous programs like Meals on Wheels, School Celebrations, the Community

Parade, and Staff Appreciation.



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# SELLWOOD

**Middle School**

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## FOUNDATION

The Foundation's annual Fall Ask campaign is in full swing. Every household should have received a informational donation letter in their mailboxes (I'm talkin' old school "snail mail"! ). If you did not receive a letter, let me know. Please consider giving today!!

Questions? Contact Stacey  
Lovett [lovettstacey@hotmail.com](mailto:lovettstacey@hotmail.com)

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### PEAK

The PEAK Fall Session will end on November 25th. The Winter Session will begin the week of November 30th and go until February 26, 2016. The PEAK Fall Play, THE SOUND OF MUSIC, will be presented on Thursday, November 19th, at 3:00pm for the Sellwood Students and in the evening the same day at 7:00pm for family and the Sellwood Community. Tickets will be on sale at the door: Families-\$10.00; Adults \$3.00; Students-\$2.00. The play will be in the Big Gym.

There are openings in: PEAK Chess, PEAK Homework Club, National Geographic Bee, PEAK Computer Class and try outs for the Spring PEAK Play will be on February 18, 2016. The green Winter PEAK Booklets are in the

office and on the PEAK Door-Room 214. You can also download the PEAK Registration Form at the Sellwood Scholl Site with the link to PEAK.

If you have any comments or questions contact Rose Mary Price, Sellwood PEAK [Coordinator.rprice@pps.net](mailto:Coordinator.rprice@pps.net).

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## PIL Athletics

### **Wrestling:**

We have a new coordinator! I'm pleased to introduce Robert Stearns, who also works up at Pioneer (a PPS school). You can contact Robert with questions or concerns at [rstearns@pps.net](mailto:rstearns@pps.net). We will hold a parent meeting for wrestling parents on Monday, November 16 after practice, from 5:45-6:00. Forms and fees were due November 9. Please turn any late forms or fees to the office only (not to your coach at practice). Forms are available on the website (below). The last day to join the team is December 8. The commitment is three practices a week (M, Tu, Th from 4:00-5:45) and roughly one meet a week. To join wrestling you must turn in:

1. registration form
2. emergency contact form
3. physical (every other year, contact the coordinator to see if it's still on file)
4. insurance form (on the website, unique to wrestling)
- 5, fee

### **Basketball:**

November practice schedules are out and teams are set! The seventh grade girls team will practice Mondays and Thursdays from 6:00-7:30. This team is coached by our own Kasey Bond! Our sixth grade team will be coached by a seasoned vet of the game, Yolanda McCowan, and they will practice Tuesday and Wednesday from 6:00-7:30. Practice times will change for December through February as we work around game schedules.

### **Cross country:**

What a successful season! Thank you, parents and athletes, for a great time. I've never seen a group of

students work SO hard and have such a good time!

[www.ClevelandClusterAthletics.weebly.com](http://www.ClevelandClusterAthletics.weebly.com)

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## **COMMUNITY NEWS**

### **Llewellyn Handmade Holiday Market**

The 9th Annual Llewellyn Holiday Market is coming Saturday November 21st from 10:00 am - 5:00 pm. Come start your holiday shopping and enjoy a concert put on by The Sellwood Middle School Marimba Band from 1:00 - 2:00.

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ENews copy must be submitted to Catherine Cleveland by email at: [crleveland@pobox.com](mailto:crleveland@pobox.com) ENews goes out on Wednesday. Items must be submitted by the prior Monday at 5 pm to be included.

"Portland Public Schools is an equal opportunity employer and recognizes the diversity and worth of all individuals and groups and their roles in society. It is the policy of the Portland Public Schools Board of Education that there will be no discrimination or harassment of individuals or groups on the grounds of age, color, creed, disability, marital status, national origin, race, religion, sex or sexual orientation in any educational programs, activities or employment. "