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**AMESBURY INNOVATION
HIGH SCHOOL**
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Dear AIHS Students, Families, Friends, and Staff,

Greetings to the best school community in the game! I hope that you have all enjoyed a summer of fun, rest, and relaxation. We had a busy summer here at school preparing to welcome our newcomers, hosting impactful summer school sessions, reflecting deeply on the lessons of last year. These summer activities are far more than seasonal chores; they are the critical foundations upon which we build our growth mindset for the upcoming academic year. By identifying specific areas for improvement now, we ensure that AIHS remains a leader in student-centered education. This commitment to excellence starts at our school level and extends to our district leadership.

I spent some time at our Leadership Retreat getting to know our new Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Stephen Zadavec, and I am so excited to be a part of his team and to align with his vision for the District. He comes with a wealth of knowledge and experience, and an incredible openness and desire to embrace the Amesbury community as a whole. He appreciates and supports the unique mission of AIHS, and I am confident that his leadership will serve the best interests of every student in Amesbury.

A few important updates that you will notice for the upcoming school year:

1. I am beyond *thrilled* to announce, again, that Katherine Pena has been hired as our paraprofessional this year! Katherine has been a vital member of this community since she began volunteering with us almost three years ago after listening to our students speak at a School Committee Public Forum. Katherine was inspired by our students, and felt a calling to help - and we are all so glad that she did. Katherine will still be driving the van, but will also take on an inclusion support role in the classroom. Congrats and welcome (again), Katherine!
2. We are evolving the way we deliver Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) to better serve our students. In previous years, SEL was delivered as a quarterly activity. This year, we are moving to a year-long, integrated model for all grade levels. Bethany will be leading one class period per week for each grade, providing consistent Tier 1 SEL support. This shift is strategically significant because Bethany has successfully merged our SEL curriculum with the MyCAP (My Career and Academic Plan) platform. By providing this as a universal "Tier 1 support, we ensure that every student—not just those in crisis—benefits from a holistic approach to growth. This ensures that personal development and academic planning are treated as interconnected components of a student's journey. Thank you, Beth!

3. I have received a few inquiries about required school supplies. Here at AIHS, we work hard to supply our students with the tools that they need to be successful through the use of District resources, fundraising efforts, AEFI grants, the AIHS Foundation, and the generosity of all of YOU. Fortunately, we have been successful through these efforts and are grateful for the tremendous support of our community. For families who wish to purchase personal items to help their students feel comfortable and prepared, we suggest the following:
- Favorite pens and markers
 - A new pair of headphones
 - A drawing pad or sketchbook
 - A reusable water bottle
4. To align with the new Massachusetts Commonwealth recommendations and standards, Amesbury Public Schools, as a District, has adopted a "Bell to Bell" phone free policy. This new policy can be found in our handbook, on page 27. It is summarized in our Handbook Sign-off document as:

Cell Phone & Personal Electronic Device Policy (*NEW*)

In alignment with impending DESE "bell-to-bell" guidelines, AIHS is a **cell phone-free community**. Cell phones are collected at **8:30 AM** and stored in locked locations until **END OF SCHOOL DAY**. Late arrivals and early dismissals must check phones in/out at the Main Office.

- **1st Offense:** Device confiscated; student retrieves before dismissal.
- **2nd Offense:** Device confiscated; parent/guardian must pick up device.
- **3rd Offense:** Device confiscated; parent pick-up required; mandatory Action Plan meeting with administration.

The rationale for this shift is clear: by removing the constant pull of social media feeds, we create a space for students to find engaging content through face-to-face conversations and deeper academic focus. While we recognize this transition may be challenging, we are committed to supporting our students through it, ensuring our school remains a focused and connected environment for everyone.

Preparation Tips:

- **Music:** Students may use their Chromebooks or MP3 players (without internet access) for music.
- **Lunches:** Because students will not have access to their devices for digital payments, please ensure they carry cash or a physical card if they plan to visit local establishments like Vermette's or Pizza Factory during lunch.
- **Communication:** For non-emergency situations, families can reach students via their school email on their Chromebooks.

As I begin my second year as Principal of Amesbury Innovation High School, I am filled with enthusiasm. The lessons I learned last year have prepared me to lead with even greater clarity and purpose. I want to thank you for the opportunity to lead this extraordinary community and for the trust you place in us every day. I remain steadfast in my promise to work tirelessly and relentlessly for the best interests and outcomes of every student at AIHS.

I look forward to seeing you all very soon!

