

EASTHAMPTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

WHITE BROOK MIDDLE SCHOOL



Meredith Balise, Principal
Jill Pasquini-Torchia, Assistant Principal

200 Park Street
Easthampton, MA 01027
(413) 529-1530 TEL
(413) 529-1534 FAX
e-mail: mbalise@epsd.us
jpasquini-torchia@epsd.us
website: www.epsd.us

October 1, 2018

Dear Families of White Brook Middle School Students:

Our open house is scheduled for Wednesday, October 10, 2018 from 6:00-7:30. Your presence at White Brook for the many activities that occur throughout the year demonstrates interest in your child's education and your commitment to his or her success in school. We are still looking for school council members for 2018-2019 school year. This group meets approximately every other month at 5:30 p.m. The first meeting is October 16th. If you are interested, please contact the school.

The Virtues Project inspires educators to create safe, caring, and high performing learning communities. Our teachers speak the language of virtues to acknowledge, guide, correct and thank our students and one another. Recognizing the virtues in daily challenges helps us to become lifelong learners open to the lessons of character. The purpose of this project is to help develop a culture of character and create a learning environment that is safe and happy for everyone. Our virtues pick this month is **COURTESY**. Courtesy is being polite and having good manners. When you speak and act courteously, you give others a feeling of being valued and respected. Greet people pleasantly. Bring courtesy home. Your family needs it most of all. Courtesy helps life to go smoothly (The Virtues Project, 2002).

Parents, students, and schools are often worried about bullying. It is a problem and cause for concern, but may not be as widespread as many think because the term bullying is often used as an umbrella to describe all kinds of behavior—from a rude comment to a conflict between two people to a one-time physical altercation. In the U.S., 22% of students age 12-18 report being bullied at school and 28% of young people will experience cyberbullying over the course of their lifetime. It is important to distinguish bullying from other unkind, mean and harmful behavior. Calling someone a name or pushing someone once, being rude or having an argument with someone is not bullying. These behaviors will be addressed, but may have different consequences and/or interventions, which is why the distinction is critical. Bullying may often involve repeated actions or threats, a power imbalance, and the intention to cause harm. Many bullying incidents can be described as identity-based, which is any form of bullying related to characteristics that are part of a person's identity or perceived identity group, such as race, religion, disability, immigration status, sexual orientation, gender identity, physical appearance, etc.

As one would expect, most bullying takes place when and where adults are not around and as students get older, they do not report bullying to adults. Therefore, it is especially important to

A great place to learn and grow.

help young people learn how to be an ally, which includes supporting targets, not participating, telling aggressors to stop, informing a trusted adult, not judging people, and getting to know them as well as being an ally online. Here are some questions that you as parents can use to discuss this important topic with your middle schooler:

- Do you know what bullying is? How is it different from mean behavior? Is someone engaging in bullying just because they are mean to you?
- Have you ever experienced mean behavior? What about bullying? Can you tell me more about it?
- Have you ever been mean to someone else? Do you think you have bullied someone before? Please explain.
- What do students do when they see bullying take place in school? What do you do? (ADL.org)

Please note that October 3, 18, 19 are half days of school for students with 11:30 dismissal. Parent / teacher conferences are scheduled for the 18th and 19th. Our first school improvement council meeting is October 16th at 5:30 p.m. in the guidance suite. The first meeting of the Band Boosters will be on Wednesday, October 3, 2018 in the WBMS Library at 7:00 p.m. All band parents are welcome to attend. If you have any questions Band Boosters can be reached at easthamptonbandboosters@gmail.com. School is closed on Monday the 8th for Columbus Day. Friday, October 26, 2018 is our first Friday Fun Dance. The Grade 5/6 dance is 5:30-7:15 and the Grade 7/8 dance is 7:30-9:15. The cost is \$5.00 per student. Pizza and other refreshments are sold during the dance.

This is a reminder that the school start time is five minutes earlier this year. Students must arrive by 8:15 a.m. every day. It is crucial that students arrive to school on time so that important instructional time is not missed. If you are dropping off a student by car in the morning, please let students out of the car on the end of the parking lot by the building. Students should not cut through the parked cars. Also, as you can imagine, some of our students have become pre-occupied with cell phones. We have reviewed the rules with our students. Cell phones must be kept off and in lockers while in school. We ask that you reinforce this rule with your child at home. We anticipate your partnership, support, and collaboration in providing the most successful school year for your child. We look forward to working with you toward this end. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact the school.

Sincerely,
Meredith Balise
Principal

Jill Pasquini-Torchia
Assistant Principal

A Virtues Pick

COURTESY

Courtesy is being polite and having good manners. When you speak and act courteously, you give others a feeling of being valued and respected. Greet people pleasantly. Bring courtesy home. Your family needs it most of all. Courtesy helps life to go smoothly (The Virtues Project, 2002).

You are practicing **COURTESY** when you:

- Remember manners
- Treat parents, teachers, and other students politely
- Think about how your actions affect others
- Eat, speak, and move graciously
- Make requests instead of demands
- Greet people with a smile

A great place to learn and grow.