

Parents to Parents Comments on Junior Year **“Increased Freedom and Increased Responsibility”**

The JBS Family Network in conjunction with the JBS Counseling Department hope these guidelines will be helpful as we strive to promote a safe, healthy path during this exciting time in our children’s lives.

The Age/The Environment

Now that many of our teens have been driving for some time and therefore experiencing more freedom, they may continue to pull away from parental restrictions and school authority. Many of our children will test limits about curfews, parties and drinking.

- Eleventh graders yearn for increased independence, but it is important to balance freedom and limits by keeping the lines of communication open and reemphasizing your expectations and values.
- Academic pressures combined with the impending college search process may increase stress.
- Students may try to justify unhealthy activities as a way to relieve this stress. Some of these unhealthy activities are: binge drinking which can lead to alcohol poisoning; use of marijuana and other controlled substances; attempts to break/expand curfew; sexual experimentation; cigarette smoking and restricted eating.

The Social Scene

As parents, we should help our children find healthy ways to cope with perceived growing pressures to succeed and to keep a positive perspective and balance in their lives.

- Parties and informal gatherings continue to be an important part of the social scene.
- Parties may be large and include teens from other schools. Information about these events is communicated quickly via the Internet and cell phones.
- Without careful supervision and planning, any party can lead to alcohol abuse and related problems.
- Guidelines for social activities are outlined in the school Buzz Book, in “Community of Concern,” and in the cover letter. Spontaneous sleep-overs may be a way for children to avoid supervision and curfews, and necessitate parent-to-parent communication. Rock concerts, the temptation to “skip” out of school for lunch and co-ed sleep-overs may be other topics for discussion by families of juniors.
- Set curfews before your child leaves the house. A curfew of 12:00 a.m. for 11th graders is recommended in the Student-Parent Handbook and agreed to by eight private schools. According to the St. Louis County curfew ordinance, children under the age of 17 may not be outside the company of parents Sunday-Thursday 11:00 p.m. – 6:00 a.m. and on Friday and Saturday from 12:00 a.m. – 6:00 a.m.

Spring Break

Eleventh grade parents should begin to think about plans for next year’s spring break. Discuss various alternatives before senior year so that your teen does not succumb to pressure to participate in some of the independent, unchaperoned group trips to various resort locations. Students may want to consider school-sponsored trips with academic or service components.

Events

- The Blue and Gold Dance in the Fall and the Junior/Senior Prom in the Spring are significant events in the junior year.
- The junior class plans and organizes the Prom.
- Be aware of “after parties” for both dances. Your child may urge you to let him/her attend an “after party.” You may wish to verify plans with the host family to get all of the facts surrounding the event. It may be wise to discuss the presence of chaperones and the host’s allowance or tolerance of alcohol consumption.
- The school does not recommend “after parties,” especially following the parent-sponsored post-Prom breakfast which lasts until 3:00 a.m.