

Parents to Parents Comments on 8th Grade Year “In-Between”

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

By the 8th grade, students are generally comfortable with the routine and demands of the Burroughs environment. Since formal grades are not given until the 9th grade and finals are not yet a part of the program, some students will develop the attitude that grades “don't matter” at this level. It is important for the students to realize that continued hard work and achievement are still necessary to be well prepared for the next level.

- Some students will let their schoolwork slide as other concerns take precedence.
- Body image becomes increasingly important. Sometimes it is necessary to speak with young teens about the messages they may be sending from their choice of dress.
- Development of eating disorders may be an increasing concern. Early warning signs include too much talk about dieting, calories, and clothing size.

These early teen years include an increased use of the internet for schoolwork and social reasons

- This method of communication is very useful, but your child will often be sent unsolicited e-mails inappropriate for this age
- For additional information and resources visit Parents.The Anti-Drug website www.antidrug.com
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Eighth graders exhibit an increasing desire for independence and privacy.

- Respect these desires, but continued attention to your child's activities is necessary.
- Parents should continue to monitor closely where and with whom their children are spending their time.

The Social Scene

- Friendships and groups formed in the 7th grade may change and social circles open up.
- Some “group dating” may occur.
- Sleepovers continue to be a popular activity, but parents may want to place limits on these due to excessive fatigue that often ensues. Kids this age need 9-10 hours of sleep a night and many use the weekends to catch up on much needed rest.
- Socializing is often centered around malls and movie theaters. Once inside the theater, some kids have attended R-rated movies without the approval of their parents.
- It is possible for eighth graders to be exposed to situations where drinking and smoking are occurring or be invited to un-supervised parties.
- Parents may need to help their child organize appropriate social activities.
- A curfew of 10:30 p.m. for 8th 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.

The Events

Compared to the 7th grade, the 8th grade formal social calendar may seem relatively quiet. However, there are a number of organized social activities at Burroughs during the school year.

- Pep rally/bonfire in the fall, which is a school-wide event
- 8th Grade Games Night in November
- 7th/8th grade dances are held in the fall and in the spring. These events are chaperoned by volunteer parents and faculty.
- School plays, the Dance Show, and sporting events at Burroughs and other schools all provide healthy ways for students to interact with each other.

Non-Burroughs Activities

- Rock concerts attract teens at this age, but the crowds may be overwhelming. An adult chaperone is encouraged.
- Several other schools sponsor mixers, which give the children an opportunity to meet students from other schools. All of these events provide opportunities to network with other parents to ensure that all activities are safe, fun, and healthy for our kids.