

Parents to Parents Comments on Freshman Year **“Welcome to High School”**

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

The primary focus of many 9th graders is socializing with their peers. Whether it is with one friend or a group of twenty, freshmen are focused on gathering -- at school, at sports events, at plays, on the Internet and telephone, at movies and at each other’s homes.

- 9th graders prefer that parents become less visible, but the parental role is no less important than in younger years.
- Parents are still the prime source of transportation and finances, and are entrusted to oversee a high school scene that is both exciting and complicated.

During the school week, instant messaging and social networking sites, such as Facebook, become a constant distraction from homework.

- Parents should monitor Internet usage, use filters, or situate the computer in a busy household area. For more information and resources visit Parents.The Anti-Drug website www.antidrug.com.
- The Internet also offers access to web sites you may find inappropriate for your child. More likely than not, these sites are shared in jest or for the shock value, but they may introduce unsettling and very confusing aspects of the world of sex, drugs and violence.

The freshman year typically brings an influx of driving permits and some early drivers.

- Be sure to set guidelines for your child both as a driver and as a passenger.
- Part of the driving experience typically includes increased cell phone usage. It is important to discuss safe usage of cell phones with your child.

The Social Scene

The social scene takes on a new tone in 9th grade.

- Sleep-overs provide extended hours with less supervision and greater opportunity to experiment with alcohol, marijuana, cigarettes, or sites on the Web.
- Parties, in general, tend to be coed, and, in coed settings, inhibitions may be lowered.
- Some teens are tempted to take risks with alcohol, drugs and sex.
- Gatherings can include upperclassmen, and their presence can raise pressure to experiment.
- Dating upperclassmen potentially places 9th graders in difficult situations. Dating more than one grade level up is discouraged by most adolescent specialists.

Your best course of action is to be proactive:

- Be home for all parties and sleep-overs.
- Telephone host parents to assure they will be home.
- Periodically circulate during a party, inside and outside.
- Casually oversee backpacks and lock liquor cabinets.
- Get to know your teen’s friends and their parents.
- A curfew of 11:30 p.m. for 9th and 10th 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.

(over)

Events

There are a number of organized social activities at Burroughs during the school year.

- Late summer Drey Land Plus for new students, and the academically rigorous Biology Drey Land in the spring are overnight school-sponsored activities that are well supervised.
- The Winter Dance for JBS freshmen is chaperoned by parents. The dress is casual and the teens are welcome to bring a friend if they choose.
- Freshmen participate in school plays and sometimes attend the “after parties” which are frequented by upperclassmen.
- Sporting events offer many opportunities for freshmen to gather. Parents should carefully monitor post-game parties as they can be large, and the 9th grader may be dependent upon older students for rides.
- JBS freshmen are not allowed to attend either the Blue and Gold Dance or the Prom.
- Stay firm on age-appropriate curfews for your 9th grader even if (and especially when) older students have later curfews.

JBS Family Network 2007-2008