

The Longhorn Way

Parent Edition No. 18

December 15, 2017

One of the many challenges of raising adolescents is navigating friendships. During adolescent years, kids can experience changes in friendships, loss of friends, and even conflict with friendships. We see a lot of this at school and try to assist students with challenges. These challenges can be complicated but provide lots of learning. As you know, we choose friends according to common interest, common values, personalities, and status. Friends have an important role in an adolescents' life as they begin to exhibit independence and start pulling away from parents to spend more time with friend. Below are a few tips to help parents navigate this bumpy road where no map has been provided.

1. **Spend time listening.** Work on listening without responding. When you respond use statements such as: So you're telling me you feel...(restating their comments). This is honoring their thoughts and opinions, without interjecting with own thoughts and opinions. A good ear is often better than of a great suggestion.
2. **Friends have positive and negative influences on kids.** It is important to discuss peer pressure with your child. Provide them excuses or ways to get out of a problematic situation. Also discuss how to choose friends that complement and provide positive influences.
3. It takes **skills to make and maintain friendships.** It also takes skills to end a friendship. These are often skills they don't naturally have, so they must be taught. These can be the skills that we as adults take for granted.
4. **Let them try to solve the problem.** This will sound like "What do you think you might do about this?" If they can't figure out a solution say, "Would you like to hear a few ideas?"
5. **Limit the amount of time they spend with friends.** Sometimes too much time can be the cause of conflict. Everything in moderation...even friends.
6. **Get to know your child's friends and their parents.** It is important to know who your child is spending time and understand the other families values.

Wonder: Permission slips are due by Tuesday, December 19 in the school store. The permission slip is attached.

Yearbook: There is still time to order a yearbook. Details can be found on the website or on this [Yearbook Order Flyer](#)

PTO: All West Middle students are invited to participate in the Parkway West Middle School Cotillion. The program lasts 4 weeks and will meet on 3/15, 3/22, 4/5 and 4/12 from 6pm to 8pm and costs \$130. Registration forms will be emailed after winter break.

Thanks for sharing your kids with us!

~Annie

Mark Your Calendar

- December 18:** 6th Grade Basketball Tournament @ NE Middle 3:30pm
7th Grade Basketball Tournament @ South Middle 3:30pm
- December 19:** Wonder Permission Slip Due in School Store
Orchestra Winter Concert 7pm
- December 20:** Dress Up Day
8th Grade Basketball Tournament @ West Middle 3:30pm
- December 21:** End of Six Week Grading Period
Early Dismissal @ 12:20pm
No After School Activities
- December 22-January 3: Winter Break**
- January 4:** Classes Resume - All School Field Trip

My best friends are the ones that bring out the best in me.

~Henry Ford