



Burlington Township Middle School at Springside

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Dear Parents/Guardians:

As we begin our school year with customary Back to School Nights, we also share information directly with our students in class meetings. These meetings occur each quarter, and their purpose is to reinforce school procedures, address any issues that require correction, and to share information about exciting programs. This year our first quarter meeting was held on Friday, September 9, 2011. Each grade level assembled separately, and they were addressed by our administrative team.

The key areas of discussion included procedures for cell phone use, lunchroom procedures, how to handle bus concerns, seasonal dress code issues, tips for managing movement in the hallways, and locker tips. We also discussed the consequences and the possibility of loss of privileges for not adhering to our disciplinary code of conduct. You have already received a letter outlining loss of privilege information. At the meeting we stressed that what we value at BTMSaS is an environment of mutual respect. We ask that students respect each other and all the adults that enter our building each day. In turn, we promise that we will address any concerns students have if they feel they have not been treated with respect by anyone in our school community.

We also shared important information about our character development program at BTMSaS. We call our program *Spotlight*. Through this program, we promote an understanding and practice of positive character traits. We will be having grade level kick-off assemblies to introduce students to our Spotlight initiatives for the year during the school day on September 28.

Today we shared an important message with the students and impressed upon them that we are non-tolerant of any form of harassment, intimidation, or bullying (HIB). We explained that state laws regarding harassment, intimidation, and bullying have become stricter as of September 1, 2011. The law now specifically outlines procedures for reporting and investigating all HIB allegations. The law also provides very specific guidelines about consequences for those who have been identified in actions that are clearly described as harassment, intimidation, and bullying. Any staff, student, or parent who suspects that an act of harassment, intimidation, or bullying may have occurred or may be on-going should report their concerns to the building principal or one of the vice principals. All allegations will be thoroughly investigated by our Anti-bullying Specialist, Mrs. Tara Winkelspecht, (609-699-4021, Ext. 4002).

In support of keeping our school bully-free, we will begin delivering anti-bullying lessons to our students on September 19. All students will participate in a series of five lessons over a period of weeks. These lessons will be presented throughout the curriculum. The lessons thoroughly address topics related to harassment, intimidation, and bullying and make students particularly aware of the definition of bullying, how to handle situations when a student may be a victim of bullying, and the role and responsibility of the bystander when bullying occurs. Beyond these five lessons, we will reinforce their messages in periodic follow-up activities throughout the year, and we will continue to reinforce our own procedures for the reporting and handling of HIB incidents.

Information about our school and district policies and procedures can be found on our electronic *Student Handbook*. We expect that our handbook will be available on our school webpage no later than September 13. You will be able to go to www.burltwpsch.org and click on our school's picture. Then you will find a link for the handbook listed. Policies that are summarized in the handbook can be read in their entirety on the district homepage. If you do not have Internet access or would like a hard copy of the document, please contact the main office, and a copy will be sent home.

At this time we would like to remind you that information was sent home on the first day of school about club opportunities that will begin as early as September 19. Although the due date for the return of club requests was Friday, September 9, we are still accepting these forms throughout next week. Students who returned the forms on time will be entered into our registration system first; however, there may still be available seats in many clubs.

We will continue to inform our students about important issues throughout the year during our class meeting format.

We look forward to working with you and your child this year.

Sincerely,

Larry T. Penny
Principal

Regina Haley
Vice Principal

Laura Sivon
Vice Principal