



IN THE NEWS AT ARMS



Dear Parents/Guardians,

On behalf of all the staff at the middle school we want to thank you for a wonderful start to our school year. Your children came to school ready to learn and eager to be positive, contributing members of our school community. It was wonderful to see so many of you at our team breakfasts. We hope you will always feel welcome to come to school on many more occasions.

Beginning the week of September 10th, late buses will be available on Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays to Amherst, Pelham, Leverett and Shutesbury. The buses will leave the middle school at approximately 4:00. Please remind your child that late buses are available only for students who are staying after school to work with a teacher or for students who are participating in a school club. Information about school clubs will be coming out in a few weeks. Watch the website and our next newsletter for club news.

We look forward to seeing you on Thursday, September 27 for our Open House. This is an evening for parents/guardians to learn more about your child's school experience. You'll have the chance to experience a modified sample of your child's schedule, meet each of the teachers and hear about curriculum, class expectations, and upcoming events. It is also a wonderful opportunity to meet the parents/guardians of your child's classmates. We encourage you to exchange phone numbers with parent/guardians of your child's friends so that you can be in touch with each other about activities in which your child is involved.

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As your child begins to socialize with peers with whom you may not be familiar, it is particularly important for the adults in their lives to be in close communication. Check in with each other. Support each other as you set appropriate limits and boundaries and guidelines for your children. Talk with each other about providing supervision for your children at Friday evening high school football games. (Middle school students will not be admitted to attend night games unless accompanied by an adult) Be in touch with other parents to insure supervision at parties and sleep-overs. Ask questions. Your child needs and benefits from your active presence in their lives.

A few last reminders about the Open House evening. The evening will start promptly at 7:00 in your child's advisory. You will receive a schedule from your child and copies will be available in the lobby that evening. The parking lots fill up quickly, so we encourage you to carpool with friends and neighbors. Although the temptation may be great, PLEASE do not park in the fire lanes.

We'll see you on the 27th!

Fran Ziperstein

Mike Hayes

PRE-PAYMENT OF LUNCH ACCOUNTS

The Middle School lunch program is accepting pre-payment of your student's lunch money. You can send a check or cash in with your student, they can give it to any cashier and it will be applied to their account. You may also mail a check to Ruth Hatt, Cafeteria Manager, 170 Chestnut Street, Amherst. If you have any questions, please call Ms. Hatt at 362-1827.

FREE AND REDUCED LUNCH FORMS

Free and Reduced Lunch Forms are due back to the ARMS office by Friday, September 28. On Monday, October 1, any students who were previously receiving free or reduced lunch and have not returned their form will be removed from the Free and Reduced lunch list in the cafeteria.

ARMS FAMILY SCHOOL PARTNERSHIP MEETING

There will be an open meeting for all parents and guardians of Middle School students. Meetings are held once per month on Wednesday or Thursday evenings.

Wednesday, September 19, 2007

7:00 PM to 8:00 PM

Middle School Library

SUSTAINED SILENT READING

Every Thursday morning students begin their day with Sustained Silent Reading in their advisories. Some classrooms are in need of high interest magazines, books, and comic books, so if you have anything you could donate, we would really appreciate it. There is a box in the main office for contributions. Thanks in advance for your help.

STUDENT INFORMATION

Your child brought home emergency cards and other important material on the first day of school. Please be sure these have been filled out and returned to us at school. It is critical that we have this information available to us so that we can take the

- SCHEDULING and TECHNOLOGY-Mike Hayes
- STUDENT SERVICES and SUPPORT PROGRAMS – Fran Ziperstein
- FACILITIES/BLDG. MANAGEMENT (Custodians, Food Services, Transportation) and PERSONNEL- Fran Ziperstein
- STAFF EVALUATION and SUPERVISION-Fran Ziperstein, Libby Hurley and Mike Hayes
- AFTERSCHOOL CLUBS –Fran Ziperstein

SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETINGS

School Committee meetings are held at 7:00 pm. All meetings of the Amherst and Regional School Committees will be held on Tuesdays in the Amherst High School Library.

Region meetings

September 11, 25; October 9, 23; November 6, 20; December 4, 18; January 8, 22; February 5, 26;
March 11, 25; April 8, 29; May 13, 27; June 10

SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBERS

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CHART FOR "DAY" ROTATION FOR THE MS

As you know, we have a new schedule this year which is built on an 8-day rotation. We have provided a chart at the end of this newsletter showing the days of the rotation for the entire school year.

Internet Safety for Teens

Compiled by Amherst Regional Middle School Counselors

Most of our students come to us with solid values and generally treat other people well. However, all kids can fall into the habit of crude, negative exchanges in chat rooms, blogs, and social-networking sites, and while Instant Messaging, where that type of communication is common. Over time, such habits may have an impact on what kind of people our children grow into. Negative exchanges can escalate quickly, and kids may behave in unexpected, impulsive, and hurtful ways.

Author Parry Aftab (www.aftab.com) notes that cyberbullying can take many forms. It can be a website where children can vote for the ugliest or most unpopular girl/boy in the school. It can involve sending personal information or images to others, sometimes obtained without the teen's knowledge, or posting these on-line for the public to see. Former friends may betray password information, leaving an entire account open for vandalism. Because of the anonymity and indirect electronic contact, children may feel freer to engage in cyberbullying than in direct confrontation with another child.

We often become aware of situations only after the fact, when the hurt feelings, or, in some cases, illegal behaviors, are reported to us at school. The following information is offered to assist parents in monitoring children's internet use, with the hope of avoiding negative and hurtful experiences for kids. We believe that, with guidance and appropriate supervision, our young people can learn to profit from the best uses of technology while avoiding the dangers of misuse.

Following are excerpts from an article entitled, "e-bully" by Camille Jackson, *Teaching Tolerance* magazine, Spring 2006:

Bullying has never been easier. Any child, operating in relative anonymity on the Internet at any time of day or night, can harass and intimidate peers. Wired Safety.org Teen Angels and other experts offer guidance for teachers and schools struggling with cyberbullying. A barrage of derogatory comments blasted 13-year-old Megan (for security and privacy, students' first names only are used) each time she signed on to her computer. The hurtful instant messages came from people the New Jersey middle-school student thought were her friends. They blocked her from their buddy lists, summarily excluding her from the group. Megan eventually learned her "ex-best friend" was behind the nastiness, and Megan ended up switching schools.

A supposed friend also was behind a bullying attack on 11-year-old Max of New York. That "friend" stole Max's password, shared it with others, then wreaked havoc on Max's personal computer account.

TIPS

- See for yourself what it's all about. Ask your child to demonstrate Instant Messaging, or check out a social-networking site.
- Tell children to never share personal information online. E-mail address and cell phone numbers should be guarded.
- Tell children that they should never post pictures of themselves on the internet and let them know that this has seriously harmed other children in the past.
- Limit the amount of time children spend online.
- Monitor contact and teach on-line manners.
- Keep computers in heavy-traffic areas.
- Purchase tracking software that can block inappropriate messages and websites, as well as track online activity.
- Know your children's on-line friends.
- Your child should understand that bullying is never OK.
- Ask your child to report threatening messages.
- Assure bullied children you will not take away the phone or computer.
- Never respond to a bully.
- Print messages if harassment continues.
- Report the situation to the bully's ISP.
- Change your child's email address if necessary.

Sources: Allan Beane, Ph.D., How To Help Your Child Be Bully Free, StopTextBully.com, Nationalcoalition.org, Wiresafety.org, and ARMS Counselors



Bullying has gone high tech as kids, usually between age 9 and 14, use personal computers, cell phones and PDAs (personal digital assistants) to intimidate and manipulate their peers. Bullying behavior can manifest in instant messaging, cell phone text messaging, online gaming, chatrooms, blogs (online journals), and social networking websites. Technology allows cyberbullies to harass their victims after school and on weekends. With children spending hours at a time wired to communication devices, they are increasingly vulnerable to aggressive online behavior. Because the bad behavior occurs off-campus, school districts struggle to identify and punish cyberbullies.

Even the notion of "who started it" becomes complex with cyberbullies. As 13-year-old Victoria of New Jersey pointed out, cyberbullies are often people who have been bullied: "They want to be a different person online because they want to feel stronger about themselves."

More children are affected by cyberbullying than initially thought, with some parents and educators none the wiser. A 2004 study of 1,566 students by i-Safe America, a nonprofit Internet safety group, revealed that nearly 60 percent of 4th- through 8th-graders have had mean or hurtful things said to them online. Nearly a third had been threatened.

Derek Rangel, a parenting consultant and founder of StoppingSchoolViolence.com, said sometimes kids are embarrassed about being bullied and think they can handle it alone. "A lot of kids don't tell parents because that's a double penalty; parents will take away the phone or computer privileges," he said. Rangel urges adults to discuss cyberbullying with children "before it becomes a problem, because then it will be easier to handle."

At first Parry Aftab, a lawyer and cyber crime expert, didn't get it. Why don't kids, as she says, "slowly back away from the computer" when someone sends a nasty message? Then she talked to students in her Wired Safety.org Teen Angels program and realized pre-adolescents struggle socially, and online communities are vital. For these students, the need for friendship, the need to belong, is greater than the risk of being bullied. "In middle school, kids don't get a chance to know who you really are. They are lost in the crowd," Aftab said. "There's a need, and social networking sites are important."

But "social networking," too often, can turn into antisocial bullying. In *Bullying and Harassment, A Legal Guide for Educators*, author Kathleen Conn writes, "because cyberbullies do not have to confront their victims directly, they may feel emboldened and uninhibited, making their messages more vicious than they would be in a personal confrontation."

GLOSSARY

Instant Messaging: Users can see who among their friends is online and send messages and images instantaneously

Buddy List: A list of friends' screen names that a user can instant message by clicking

Chatroom: A public or private space on the Internet where buddies can have lengthy typewritten conversations

ISP: Acronym for 'Internet service provider.' Examples include AOL, Hotmail, Earthlink.

Social Networking websites: A complex web of friends connected online by common interest. Example: MySpace.com, Friendster.com

Blogs: Short for 'weblog,' an online journal that is frequently updated and intended for the general public

CYBERBULLYING WEBSITES

The [Center for Safe and Responsible Internet Use](#) offers effective strategies to help young people behave in a safe, responsible, legal manner when using technology.

Canadian-based [Cyberbullying.org](#) may be the world's first website specifically dedicated to this issue.

[WiredSafety.org](#) provides help, information and education to Internet and mobile device users of all ages.

[StopTextBully.org](#) helps kids, parents and teachers handle "text bullying" -- conducted through personal computers, cell phones and PDAs.

Chart for "Days" in the MS Rotation

Date	ARMS Day	Date	ARMS Day	Date	ARMS Day	Date	ARMS Day
9/17/07	4	11/20/07	8	2/6/08	4	4/16/08	8
9/18/07	5	11/21/07	1	2/7/08	5	4/17/08	1
9/19/07	6	11/26/07	2	2/8/08	6	4/18/08	2
9/20/07	7	11/27/07	3	2/11/08	7	4/28/08	3
9/21/07	8	11/28/07	4	2/12/08	8	4/29/08	4
9/24/07	1	11/29/07	5	2/13/08	1	4/30/08	5
9/25/07	2	12/3/07	6	2/14/08	2	5/1/08	6
9/26/07	3	12/4/07	7	2/15/08	3	5/2/08	7
9/27/07	4	12/5/07	8	2/25/08	4	5/5/08	8
9/28/07	5	12/6/07	1	2/26/08	5	5/6/08	1
10/1/07	6	12/7/07	2	2/27/08	6	5/7/08	2
10/2/07	7	12/10/07	3	2/28/08	7	5/8/08	3
10/3/07	8	12/11/07	4	2/29/08	8	5/9/08	4
10/4/07	1	12/12/07	5	3/3/08	1	5/12/08	5
10/5/07	2	12/13/07	6	3/4/08	2	5/13/08	6
10/9/07	3	12/14/07	7	3/5/08	3	5/14/08	7
10/10/07	4	12/17/07	8	3/6/08	4	5/15/08	8
10/11/07	5	12/18/07	1	3/7/08	5	5/16/08	1
10/12/07	6	12/19/07	2	3/10/08	6	5/19/08	2
10/15/07	7	12/20/07	3	3/11/08	7	5/20/08	3
10/16/07	8	12/21/07	4	3/12/08	8	5/21/08	4
10/17/07	1	1/2/08	5	3/13/08	1	5/22/08	5
10/18/07	2	1/3/08	6	3/14/08	2	5/23/08	6
10/19/07	3	1/4/08	7	3/18/08	3	5/27/08	7
10/22/07	4	1/7/08	8	3/19/08	4	5/28/08	8
10/23/07	5	1/8/08	1	3/20/08	5	5/29/08	1
10/24/07	6	1/9/08	2	3/21/08	6	5/30/08	2
10/25/07	7	1/10/08	3	3/24/08	7	6/2/08	3
10/26/07	8	1/11/08	4	3/25/08	8	6/3/08	4
10/29/07	1	1/14/08	5	3/26/08	1	6/4/08	5
10/30/07	2	1/15/08	6	3/27/08	2	6/5/08	6
10/31/07	3	1/16/08	7	3/28/08	3	6/6/08	7
11/1/07	4	1/17/08	8	3/31/08	4	6/9/08	8
11/2/07	5	1/18/08	1	4/1/08	5	6/10/08	1
11/5/07	6	1/22/08	2	4/2/08	6	6/11/08	2
11/6/07	7	1/23/08	3	4/3/08	7	6/12/08	3
11/7/07	8	1/24/08	4	4/4/08	8	6/13/08	4
11/8/07	1	1/25/08	5	4/7/08	1	6/16/08	5
11/9/07	2	1/29/08	6	4/08/08	2	6/17/08	6
11/13/07	3	1/30/08	7	4/9/08	3	6/18/08	7
11/14/07	4	1/31/08	8	4/10/08	4	6/19/08	8
11/15/07	5	2/1/08	1	4/11/08	5		
11/16/07	6	2/4/08	2	4/14/08	6		
11/19/07	7	2/5/08	3	4/15/08	7		