

June 2, 2008

Dear Parents,

The 2007 – 2008 school year is quickly coming to a close. It seems like only yesterday we were greeting our students in August. This is one of the busiest times of the school year. It is important that students realize the year has not ended yet. There are many activities going on at this time of year and we want our students to be able to participate in any of the “end of the year” activities we have planned for them. We need to work together to keep them focused so that they can successfully complete this school year and move on to the next year.

Please be aware of the following information to help you plan for June and the end of the school year:

- **6th Grade Parents:** As per state law, all students entering the seventh grade must be properly immunized. All students entering the seventh grade next year (2008-2009) must have their vaccinations up to date before the start of the school year. **Students who are not immunized will not be allowed to attend school until they are immunized.** Students entering 7th grade are required to have the following immunizations:
 - TD Booster
 - 4 doses of Polio vaccine (must have one after the age of 4)
 - 2 doses of MMR
 - One dose of Varicella Vaccine or documented history of chickenpox disease
 - (A documented Physical exam is also required)

- **8th Grade Dance:** Saturday, June 14th, 7:00 – 10:00 P.M. This is an opportunity for all of our eighth graders to celebrate as a class.

- **Awards Assemblies:** Our annual culminating event to celebrate the achievements of our students will be held during the school day on Tuesday, June 17th. The 6th grade Awards Assembly is scheduled to take place at 8:00 A.M. and the 7th and 8th grade Awards Assembly is scheduled to take place at 9:00 A.M. in the place in the school auditoria. **All students will receive their Report Cards on Tuesday.**

June 17th. It is important that students fulfill all obligations (return books, pay back borrowed money, etc.) prior to June 17th in order to receive their Report Cards.

- **PTO Fundraisers:** Tuesday, June 17th – shop at **Barnes and Noble** and/or **UNO Chicago Grill** at the Smithfield Commons and a percentage of your purchase will be donated to our PTO. It's a great opportunity to get books from the Summer Reading Lists and stop for dinner on the way home! See the attached coupons.

Again, we have much to do as the school year comes to a close. Let's work together with a positive attitude to ensure our students' successful transitions into the next school year. We wish our 8th Grade students happiness and success as they enter the next phase of their academic careers, Ponaganset High School's Class of 2012!

Finally, I would like to say thank you for your continued support this year. Mrs. Ragno, the faculty, the staff and I are very proud of our middle school and its past accomplishments. We have settled nicely in to our beautiful, new school building, a building favorable to educating middle level students. We look forward to bringing about changes that will enable us to enter a new era of accomplishments and students' successes as we move forward in our new school building. Enjoy the summer holiday!

Sincerely,

Patricia Marcotte
Principal



Summer Tips to Keep You and Your Family Safe

According to the Consumer Products Safety Commission, while summer can mean more fun, it also means more trips to the emergency room for many Americans. Here are some of the Commission's summer safety tips:

- Always wear a helmet and other safety gear when biking, skating, and skateboarding, and also when riding scooters, all-terrain vehicles, and horses. Studies have shown that bicycle helmets reduce the risk of injury by 85 percent.
- Prevent swimming pool tragedies by placing barriers completely around your pool to prevent access. Use door and pool alarms. Closely supervise your child when he or she is around or in your pool.
- Never bring a charcoal grill indoors. Burning charcoal produces carbon monoxide, which can be deadly.
- When cooking out on a gas grill, check the air tubes to ensure there are no blockages from insects, spiders, or food grease. Check hoses to make sure they are in good shape. Check for cracking, brittleness, holes, and leaks. Make sure there are no sharp bends in the tubes. If you detect a leak, immediately turn off the gas and do not attempt to light the grill until it has been fixed.
- Make sure your playground area is safe. Most playground accidents are from falls, so make sure the surface is soft; use at least nine inches of wood chips or mulch. Concrete, asphalt, or packed dirt surfaces are too hard and can cause injury.
- Allow only one person at a time on a trampoline. Do not allow somersaults. Use a shock-absorbing pad to cover the springs, and place the trampoline away from structures and other play areas. Children under 6 years old should not be allowed to use a full-size trampoline.
- Warn children not to allow a game of hide-n-seek to become deadly. Make sure they cannot get into any old cedar chests, latch-type freezers or refrigerators, iceboxes in campers, clothes dyers, or picnic coolers. Childproof all old appliances and warn children not to play inside them.
- Install window guards to prevent children from falling out of open windows, or install window stops that permit windows to open no more than four inches. Keep furniture away from windows to discourage children from climbing near them.
- If you're mowing your lawn and children enter the area, turn the mower off. If your lawn slopes and you're mowing with a push mower, mow across the slope, never up and down. With a riding

mower, drive up and down the slope, not across. Never carry children on a riding mower.



Facing Bullies

School's over, but summer doesn't necessarily mean a vacation from bullies. According to the National Crime Prevention Council, 6 out of 10 American teenagers see bullying in school at least once a day. When school is out, these same bullies are at the swimming pool, on the ball fields, or hanging out on street corners.

Barbara Coloroso, author of *The Bully, the Bullied, and the Bystander* says parents should teach kids three things: how to defend themselves with words, to go places in twos or threes, and to walk away from a fight.

Raising a Reader

Summer reading programs are geared to getting kids to read just because it's fun. Parents should check with their local libraries to see what programs are offered to encourage the love of books and reading. Some reading programs give awards at the end of the program, and some include an adult summer reading program, too, so you can participate along with your kids.

The following tips may help you develop the love of reading in your children:

- 📖 Start sharing books with your children as soon as they are born, and keep reading with them throughout their teen years.
- 📖 Make a time and place for reading in your home.
- 📖 Take advantage of driving time, waiting time, and so forth to talk about books with your children.
- 📖 Set a good example. Read books and make sure your kids see you doing it.
- 📖 Allow your children to select the books they want to read. Take note of their interests, and help them find other books on the topics they love.
- 📖 Give books as presents.
- 📖 Buddy up with the librarians at your children's school and at the local public library.
- 📖 Bring audio books to listen to in the car when you take trips.
- 📖 On camping trips and family vacations, have fun evenings of storytelling.
- 📖 Find programs that encourage your children to explore their interests.
- 📖 Register your children for their own library cards.

--Adapted from the American Library Association's website.



Keeping Your Kids Healthy

One in four Americans is overweight. That number is true for kids too. To help your children develop good health habits, try the following ideas:

- Make family exercise outings a regular and mandatory activity. Take a family bike trip. Play a game of touch football. Go swimming or just run a race in the yard or park.
- Encourage hobbies. Most kids complain about being bored. Keep your kids engaged. Playing a musical instrument, taking karate lessons, playing on a sports team, or even just going to the library can be a good thing.
- Let children run. Many of the activities kids want to do are sedentary. You may need to encourage or enforce periods of physical activity. Surfing the Internet and playing computer games won't help your children keep physically fit. Encourage them to play tag, Frisbee, kick the can-- anything that keeps them moving.

- Don't put children on a diet. Instead, serve healthy meals and snacks. Pack children's lunches so they aren't tempted to fill up on chips or candy bars. --Adapted from www.health.family.org.

Family Meals Establish Lifelong Habits

Eating together establishes good habits later in life, researchers at the University of Minnesota say. In a recent study, more than 1,500 participants were surveyed once during high school, then again when they were 20 years old. Participants were asked questions about how often they ate with their families, how much they liked sitting down to dinner with family and friends, if they had a tendency to eat and run, and how often they ate breakfast, lunch, and dinner.

The researchers say that those who ate meals with families as adolescents were more likely to eat fruits and vegetables and drank fewer soft drinks as young adults. The frequency of family meals during adolescence also predicted eating meals with family more frequently as adults. Those who experienced more family meals were more likely to have higher intakes of key nutrients, such as potassium, calcium, and magnesium.

The researchers say the results show that structured meal time with family is associated with improved diet quality for young adults. Families should be encouraged to eat meals together as often as possible, they say.

The results were originally published in the journal of the American Dietetic Association.