



Cobra Monthly



March 2018

Principal's Message

Dear Albany Middle School Families,

Our handout from the parent education night on navigating the online world with your middle schooler is on our website under the Parent/Guardian tab. Here is an abbreviated version.

Navigating the Online World with your Middle Schooler

1. Students need help establishing parameters around phone use. Establish hours/times that are off-limits for phones that include homework, meals, and bedtime.
2. Consider social media as an extension of your child's social life. Stay in touch and supervise their use of social media.
3. Have a designated "docking" area for phones to be during off-limit times. This place should be where your child won't hear/see incoming messages, especially at night.
4. Help your child to learn etiquette around texting. They need to understand the times for texting and what is better left for a phone conversation or an in-person discussion.
5. Familiarize yourself with social platforms so you have an idea how each works.
6. If you don't currently allow your children to use social media, it's a good idea to let them know at what age they can start so they are not tempted to set up an account secretly.
7. Many kids can underestimate how easily accessible their information is and can forget that others are watching their activity. Stress the permanence of social media.
8. Check your child's privacy settings. Make sure that only friends can send snaps and that all accounts are private.
9. Be concrete with your child. Ask them to show you how they are going to use it (phone, social media, etc.) and show you how they would lose the privilege if misused.
10. Keeping lines of communication open is crucial. Ask your child to talk to you if something makes them uncomfortable.
11. If you allow your student to create social media accounts, consider adding them as a Friend or following their account or looking on their phones on their accounts regularly.
12. Last but not least, be a good example with social media and cell phone use as your children consider you a role model.

Sincerely,

Deborah Brill, Principal

Club Corner: Domino Domination & Diversity Gay Straight Alliance

Domino Domination is run by Mr. Mann on Thursdays. Bring your lunch and learn to play the greatest game ever invented! Dominoes combines math strategies and good old-fashioned luck. If you already know how to play, feel free to come and help your teammates learn. See you there!

DGSA is a club for students interested in supporting diversity and the LGBTQ community here at AMS. The club meets on Mondays at lunch and has planned campus-wide events such as Mix It Up at Lunch Day and Transgender Awareness Week. See Ms. Leslie-Hayes or Ms. Richardson with questions.



AMS Spotlight: ELA & History Department

The English Language Arts/History Department equips students with the writing, research, and critical thinking skills needed for academic success and the historical and societal understanding needed to be aware and engaged citizens. In 6th grade, students focus on writing across the curriculum as they respond to literature, improve their argumentative writing, and hone in their research skills. Particular attention is paid to note taking and creating presentations. The 7th grade delves deeper into the writing genres of expository, argumentative, and narrative, as well as enhances students' research writing. In 8th grade, students develop their writing and researching skills while reading a repertoire of diverse voices in literature that help students grapple with current events. The year culminates in the i-Search, a 10-week project on the topic of the student's choice. The project includes research phase, a paper-writing phase, and the presentation of the multi-genre portfolio.

The history curriculum begins with the ancient world in 6th grade and leads up to World War I in the 8th grade. In the 6th grade, students begin with learning about early humans and end with ancient Rome. They focus on learning about the people, places, and events that shape cultures. In addition, they identify the common themes and elements throughout human societies. In 7th grade students continue to analyze cultures and societies beginning with the Medieval era and ending with the age of Colonialism. One of the focal points of 7th grade is studying the rise and fall of empires. 8th grade picks up with Colonialism and then takes students through the development of the United States, with a particular emphasis on the impact of slavery on the past and present of our country. The 8th grade department works to bring forth the voices of marginalized and oppressed groups.

- The AMS ELA/History Team

Restorative Practices @ AMS

For restorative practices to be truly meaningful and effective in repairing harm, both adults and students must be able to name their emotions and identify with those of others. As parents and community members, you have a powerful opportunity to help develop your student's ability to name and empathize with emotions. One way you can support their growth is through using affective statements and questions in your daily conversations. Here are a few examples you can model:

- ✓ I am proud to see/hear...
- ✓ I am touched that you...
- ✓ I am worried about/by/to hear...
- ✓ I am upset that...
- ✓ What did you think/feel when...?
- ✓ What have your thought/felt since...?

This three-step process can also be helpful when using affective statements:

1. Self-awareness: identify what you are feeling or how you are impacted
2. Separate the doer from the deed: identify the specific action or behavior that you are responding to
3. Bring step 1 and 2 together in an expression of your feeling or how you are impacted by a specific behavior or action you are reinforcing or redirecting.

-David Haupert
Vice Principal

