

Ruppel Academie Francaise

October 2020 Newsletter

As I hope many of you have noticed, things have finally settled down a bit! October is a big month for us, so please read the information below carefully.

- 1) **School Safety Topics:** During October we cover many safety related topics including: intruder drills, anti-bullying, fire safety, and anti-drug.
 - Dr. Randall, our school counselor, will conduct anti-bullying sessions throughout the month of October with 1st-4th graders. Anti-bully topics will focus primarily on kindness, building appropriate and meaningful relationships, and how to handle social conflict.
 - We ask that parents in particular help us limit the use of the term “bully,” which is too often used inappropriately. When a child mentions bullying, it should refer to a case of victimization in which one party clearly has “power” and the other is being repeatedly victimized. Cases such as these are taken seriously and a full investigation will be conducted according to state and JP policy.
 - More information about the Jefferson Parish Anti-Bully policy can be found in the policy book linked to the Ruppel Family Information Google Classroom or the JP website.
 - We discussed “lock down” intruder procedures this week as you saw in my email on September 29. Please refer to that email for more information.

- 2) **Halloween:** We are doing a “Scare Away Drugs” costume dress down on October 30 at no charge. A flyer will go home soon. We will have some fun around Halloween, but we are not having parties and celebrations. Parents are NOT to send goodie bags of candy or other treats for Halloween.

- 3) **Policy Reminders & Updates:**
 - As per the Ruppel handbook, hair color should be a natural color. Pink, purple, green, etc. are not natural colors. If your child has a hair color that is not allowed, please fix it immediately.
 - Filled water bottles should be brought to school daily. No other substance other than water should be in the bottle. I’m happy to announce that the district recently installed touchless bottle fillers that we will be able to let students use.

- 4) **Benchmark testing** will be conducted October 12-23. These tests will count as tests grades for 1st-2nd ELA and math and 3rd - 4th ELA, math, science, and S/S. The teachers will share more specific test dates. These are check-in assessments that will cover material that was already taught.

- 5) **Interim reports** will go home with students in K-4th grade on Thursday, October 1. One copy of the interim report should be signed and returned to the homeroom teacher.

Navigating your child’s social world:

- Children will do things that often sound “mean” when being described by another child. As adults, we need to teach empathy by reserving judgement.

- Children are rarely simply mean. Children often act on emotions like anger or fear and are more often than not just impulsive.
- Children who do things that appear to be “mean” often have an entirely different perspective. For example, a child who takes another child’s toy most often just likes the toy and doesn’t understand the appropriate social behaviors within a community.
- Children often repeat inappropriate behaviors even after adults have intervened because they have not developed impulse control.
- When a child is unkind for whatever reason, the situation needs to be addressed. However, addressing a situation does not necessarily require punishment depending on the specifics of what happened and on the age of the child. All of these scenarios require adults to intervene and to teach children the better way to handle a situation and to make amends.
- Adults often do more harm than good when they label other children as “mean” or “bad.”
- Teach your child to use words, “I do not like it when you take my crayon while I’m using it. Please ask me next time.”
- Adults at home and at school need to model recognizing emotions, using words to describe needs and wants, demonstrating empathy, and recognizing mistakes and making amends. At home, describe your feelings and how you handle them.
- Do not “grill” your child about every detail of every social interaction. Of course, parents should ask general, open-ended questions about the child’s day, but do not ask leading questions. By showing interest, your child will develop the confidence to bring concerns to your attention. Also, parents who have frequent conversations will notice patterns that may be concerning.

“How was your day?”

“How did you feel today?”

“What happened today that made you feel excited?”

“What was the best thing about your day?”

“Who did you play with today and what did you play?”

“What is one new thing that you learned today?”

“What was one thing that was hard about today?”

If your child tells you about something another child did:

- Start by reassuring your child that you are listening, and that you want to help. Sometimes that is all a parent needs to do because parents cannot solve every problem. Sometimes children just need to know that they have a safe place to share feelings.
- Always encourage your child to think of multiple perspectives even when another child did something unkind. Every child will make a mistake eventually and this teaches children to treat others with compassion as they would want to be treated.
- Remind your child to seek the help of an adult if they try to use their words and the other child does not listen.
- Alert a teacher or school administrator if there is a pattern of behavior that concerns you.