

August 19, 2009



Dear Mid-School Parent,

Welcome to our St. Charles mid-school experience! Take a deep breath, sit back, and get ready to enjoy the “roller coaster” ride of a lifetime (metaphorically speaking).

Our mid-school day is filled with academic challenges, opportunities to be your very best and many emotional highs and lows as students encounter new experiences. The goal of each of us is to allow the students to practice responsibility and master self-discipline in all areas of life: spiritual, intellectual and social. St. Charles provides a safe environment, where your child feels comfortable to try even if they are not successful the first time. Additionally, this type of environment allows your child to make many of those mistakes young teens tend to make. The key is to learn from those mistakes and make better choices the next time.

The roller coaster can travel at the speed of light or as slow as a turtle. My advice is that you help your child slow down to a speed somewhere in the middle and cruise through the school year.

How do you do this?

- 1) Trust us with your child’s learning
- 2) Support our policies and decisions
- 3) Cut those apron strings
- 4) Allow your child to be upset and work through challenges and issues
- 5) Talk to your child daily,
- 6) Beware of “snake pits”
- 7) Contact Ms. Harrison if you have any questions or concerns – remember unless your child is in eminent danger – allow at least 24 hours before you call. Many things take care of themselves. What was so important one moment is not important later.

The first step is that you trust us with your child’s learning. The teachers assigned to facilitate the education of your child have a cumulative 166 years working with 11-14 year-olds. 88 percent of the teachers have a Master’s Degree and all of our core subject teachers have a Master’s. Their enthusiasm for learning and expertise in their subjects provide the opportunity for your child to have the very best

experience if you and your child let allow it. Believe in us—we know how to teach academics and how to help you continue to develop your child’s character and love for God.

My mantra has always been the golden rule. “treat others as you would want to be treated.” Additionally, I insist on a high degree of integrity. This includes honesty, taking responsibility for their error in judgment, i.e., disrespect, cheating, plagiarism, etc. The building of character is of paramount importance as we read about the lack of integrity of business, political and other such leaders in the news. Your child may make poor decisions on occasion. That is okay. My request is that as your child hits a bump in their road, that you support our policy. Isn’t it better to make mistakes here rather than in high school where consequences are so much more traumatic? The best reason for getting into trouble is the opportunity for learning and making better choices the next time.

This is the year that you need to cut those apron strings! This means – give your child the opportunity to chart their own course, take responsibility for their assignments and build their self-esteem. Self-esteem comes from being able to do things on your own and making good decisions. If your child gets in the car at the end of the day and is upset, listen to them and have them work it out in their own mind. The tendency is to jump in and solve their problems for them. By listening to them and asking good questions, not giving advice or fixing the problem, you provide your child the opportunity to work out solutions. Help your child work through this process and they can learn to deal with each situation the best way.

Cutting the apron strings does not mean ignoring your child, you still need to check those planners to see that homework is neat, complete and turned in on time. Talk to your child daily! Ask about their friends, what they are learning, how they are changing, their hopes and dreams. Your student will have eight different teachers and because our mid-school is large, I expect each student to take the responsibility of making up work, turning in projects on time and completing daily work. **Our first conference is on October 9, 2009. At this time, your child will be able to tell you detail the progress he/she is making.**

One issue of concern is the proliferation of technology. While this can be good, often our students fall into bad habits and get into trouble. Cell phone, texting, camera phones, computer phones, and phones in general can be a real “snake pit” for your child. Always be aware and check their phones and what they text – discuss with them the necessity of always being above board when communicating with friends. Too often, I have seen students get caught up in this and end up writing the wrong thing to the wrong person. Please be vigilant and protect your child.

Finally, Ms. Harrison is in charge of the middle school. If you have any questions and concerns, please fell free to call her. If your child is having trouble adapting to school or friends, she can be most helpful. However, it has been my experience that if your child is upset when they get in the car, talk it out with them, do not park and charge into the school to see her – give it at least 24 hours unless your child is in eminent danger. Often times, things take care of themselves or your child missed something, which will become clear to him/her tomorrow.

I hope this letter helps as you begin the new year. I encourage you to ride the roller coaster at medium speed, let your child be independent but always check, ask your student about their academic day as well as their social life. These years can be fun and exciting, but remember there will be ups and downs. That’s the joy of life and learning.

Principal B.J. Rossow-Deming