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# THE AMBERLY ADVANTAGE

*A School Community Dedicated to Providing a Nurturing and Challenging Learning Environment for All.*

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## **Parent's Guide for Helping Children Succeed in School**

*From: loveandlogic.com*

- ✓ Love and Logic parents remember that parents can't teach for teachers and teachers can't parent for parents. Remember that teachers and parents can't learn for kids no matter how much we love them.
- ✓ Show the same amount of love for your children regardless of their success in school. Show sadness rather than anger when they have trouble at school.
- ✓ Expect your children to do their share of the chores at home.
- ✓ Spend some time each day talking with excitement about your work and your day. They will want to imitate you and will soon begin to talk about school and their day with excitement.
- ✓ Take turns reading to each other every day.
- ✓ Have your children teach you something they have learned at school. Do this once per week.

✓ Encourage your children to do things that "charge their batteries." Encourage them to try many different activities as a way of discovering interests and talents. Remind them that they will build their careers around their talents, not around their weaknesses.

✓ Provide a time and place for homework. Expect that they will study. Allow them to study either by writing the assignments or thinking hard about them for a reasonable amount of time.

✓ Support the teacher: Don't fight with children over the homework. Don't fight with the teachers over the grade or consequence. Tell your children that you will love them regardless of their grades or the number of years it takes to complete each grade.

✓ Don't pay your children for good grades and don't punish for bad grades. Be excited about the good grades and sad for the children about their bad grades.

✓ Have your children bring home papers. Look at the right answers instead of the wrong ones. Don't correct the wrong answers—leave this for the teacher.

✓ Expect this Love and Logic program to take about one year before you see good results. Remember that children who have a hard time at school need to get away from it for a while each day. More homework and problems at home about school won't help. Don't complain to teachers that they should give this child more homework. Use this program instead and you will see amazing results in one year. Fight with your children and their teachers about homework and the problem will still be there in years to come.

*There is a Love and Logic Workshop for parents and educators in Grand Rapids on Monday, November 23<sup>rd</sup> from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. If you are interested, information is available on the information rack outside of the Amberly Office.*

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## Who Can Student Information Be Shared With?



The confidentiality of student information is of high importance at Amberly Elementary School. All schools across the country are mandated to follow the guidelines of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). Outlined below is a quick review of information parents/guardians should know regarding FERPA rules and regulations.

- ★ School districts must give full rights with regard to pupil records to either parent unless there is a court order or other legally binding document relating to custody that specifically revokes these rights.
- ★ A parent who does not have physical custody will be assumed to have retained legal custody unless a court order is provided to the school showing that legal custody has been revoked.
- ★ A parent with legal custody maintains a right to meet with and discuss student progress with school staff.
- ★ A stepparent or grandparent has no legal independent rights to student records unless the stepparent or grandparent is the legal guardian. ***Teachers will not be able to share verbally or in writing student progress information with a stepparent or grandparent unless a release of information is signed annually and placed in the student's records.***
- ★ ***A parent with legal custody may release student records to a stepparent via a release of information form.*** This allows school staff to have direct contact with the stepparent regarding student progress.
- ★ A parent/guardian with legal custody must sign a release of information for any school staff member to complete forms regarding or to discuss student progress with any outside agency. ***Teachers will not be able to share information regarding student progress with tutors, counselors, doctors, etc. unless a release of information is signed annually and placed in the student's records.***

## Help Keep Amberly Safe!

The Amberly school grounds have experienced vandalism over the summer and since school has started. This includes damage to playground equipment, benches, screens and the roof. The majority of this vandalism has occurred during weekend and evening hours. ***We are asking parents/guardians and neighbors to immediately contact the Portage Police if they observe any suspicious activity occurring on the Amberly school grounds.*** This is especially true of individuals on the school roof – skateboarding and or jumping into the courtyard area, along with inappropriate activities occurring in the Amberly Woods. **Again, contact the Portage Police Department at 329-4567 if you witness any suspicious activity on school grounds.** Thank you!

## Portage Community Center Offers Free Tutoring



The Portage Community Center offers a free tutoring program to students in grades K-12. PCC utilizes volunteer tutors who include professionals from the community, students from local colleges, as well as high performing high schoolers. To enroll, contact Tia for elementary school tutoring or Ruth for middle and high school tutoring at the Portage Community Center, 323-1942, to receive further information.

### 2009-10 Report Card Send Home Dates

Report cards will be sent home with students on the following dates:

- 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter: Monday, November 16<sup>th</sup>
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter: Friday, February 12<sup>th</sup>
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter: Friday, April 30<sup>th</sup>
- 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter: Mailed out from the office on Friday, June 18<sup>th</sup>

## Volunteers: Background Checks, Badges and Confidentiality

- All regular volunteers working directly with children must have a criminal background check. Forms and letters for this to occur are available from Linda Dunphy in the office. This background check must be done annually for any regular volunteer working directly with children.
- All regular volunteers should also have a “Volunteer Badge” made for them to pick up in the office each time they work in the school. A form is available in the office for volunteers to complete to have the badge made with their name. Please complete this form in the office, if you are a regular volunteer without a name badge.
- Volunteers are also reminded that information regarding student behavior or progress observed while volunteering in our school is confidential and should not be shared with outside individuals. Just as you wouldn't want parents discussing your student's behaviors or academics with others, they don't want you discussing theirs.
- Please be assured Amberly teachers are well aware of the needs of the many students in their classrooms. Due to strict confidentiality rules and regulations, teachers are not able to discuss specific interventions that are in place for a child and/or a child's ability/disability with volunteers.

*Volunteers are greatly appreciated and a valuable resource to the Amberly Elementary School Community! Your assistance is greatly appreciated by both students and staff! Thank you for being willing to so generously give of your time!*



## No Latex Balloons At Amberly

It is estimated that between 8,800 and 53,000 Michigan school children could have or develop latex sensitivity. Allergic reactions to latex can range from mild to life-threatening. Amberly currently has students who are allergic to latex. Because of this and the increased incidence in latex sensitivity, ***NO latex balloons are allowed in the school building.*** Non-latex gloves & Band-Aids are used in our health room.

### Birthday Invites & Deliveries

***The staff of Amberly Elementary School request that students NOT hand-out party invitations at school.*** Disappointment students may feel about not being invited to a party, causes a disruption to the educational environment. Invitations to parties should be made outside of the school environment. ***We also request deliveries of flowers or balloons not be made at school.*** These deliveries to students often turn into a distraction to the learning process. Consequently, balloons and flowers will not be delivered to classrooms and will remain in the office until the end of the school day for the student to pick up.

### Weapon Free School Zone

All parents/guardians should be fully aware and review district policy 5360, Weapon Free School Zone, listed on page 14 of the Elementary Handbook. The policy states, “the Board shall permanently expel a student from attending school in the District, if the student possesses a weapon in a weapon free school zone or commits arson in a District building or on District grounds.” Weapons include a firearm, gun, revolver, pistol, dagger, stiletto, knife, pocketknife, iron bar or brass knuckles.

### Cell Phones, Toys, Gameboys & iPods

Students are not to bring cell phones, toys, Game Boys, iPods or other electronic devices to school. These can be expensive and the school can not be responsible for items lost. Toys & games brought from home also create controversy in regards to who may touch or play with the item. We have invested in new playground equipment, balls, sidewalk chalk, etc. and indoor recess games for all students to use and share. Except for special “show and tell” times approved by the teacher, students are not to bring toys or electronic devices to school.

## **Stranger/Danger Assembly** **Tuesday, October 27<sup>th</sup>!**

With more of our students walking to school and the recent news of attempted abductions, APT wants to be proactive in providing students skills to protect themselves. On Tuesday, October 27<sup>th</sup>, Rick Allen will be presenting two Stranger/Danger assemblies to our students. Rick hails from Ohio and has been presenting his "Stranger Danger" talk to children all over the Midwest. He incorporates magic along with important info that children find entertaining, yet meaningful. Parents/guardians are invited to attend this assembly with their child. The presentation schedule is:

**1:00 p.m. - Y5 - 2<sup>nd</sup>**

**2:00 pm. - 3<sup>rd</sup> - 5<sup>th</sup>**



## **Portage Elementary** **Ski Club**

All Amberly families are invited to join Ski Club. ***Fourth and Fifth graders may ride the ski club bus to Timber Ridge on Thursday nights beginning in January.*** Discounted passes are available to all Amberly families. The passes can be used for discounted rentals any time Timber Ridge is open during the entire season and are a great deal! Use it once and it will have paid for itself. If you are interested in Ski Club, please attend one of the informational meetings being held at 6:30 p.m. on Monday, October 26<sup>th</sup>, in the Lake Center cafeteria, Thursday, October 29<sup>th</sup> in the Central El cafeteria **OR Wednesday, November 4<sup>th</sup> in the Amberly cafeteria.** Bring medical information, emergency numbers and your checkbook. For further information contact Chris Gilbert via email at [cgilbert@portageps.org](mailto:cgilbert@portageps.org) or Ginger Foster at [gfooster@portageps.org](mailto:gfooster@portageps.org)



## **October** **Birthday Celebrations**

Students with birthdays during the month of October will enjoy an ice cream sundae cup with Mrs. Daoust on Wednesday, October 28<sup>th</sup>. Students will have a choice of a vanilla, chocolate or strawberry ice cream sundae cups. There are no nuts in the sundae cups – just ice cream and flavored syrup. ***If your child has food sensitivities to any ingredients that may be found in any of the ice cream cups, please contact the office so a substitute treat can be provided.*** If your family does not celebrate birthdays, please also inform the office and an invitation will not be sent to your child.



## **Picture Retake Day** **Wednesday, November 4<sup>th</sup>**

Picture Retakes will occur the morning of Wednesday, Nov. 4<sup>th</sup>. Students who missed the initial picture day will have photos taken on this date. In addition, parents /guardians who are not pleased with the first photos of their child they received, should send the total picture packet back to school with their child on retake day and their child's photo will be retaken. Students who have pictures taken on Retake Day will have their photo in class composites which will be delivered prior to Winter Break.

## **Halloween Parade: October 30<sup>th</sup>!**

On Friday, October 30<sup>th</sup> at 9:15 a.m. the annual Halloween Parade will be held on the Amberly School Grounds. Starting with Young Fives and Kindergarten, students will exit the front entry doors, walk along the front sidewalk to the sidewalk along the south parking lot, to the playground area and in the side gym door, then to the classrooms.

**For student and spectator safety, the front parking lot will be closed from 9 to 9:45 a.m. on Oct. 30<sup>th</sup>. If you need to depart prior to 9:45 a.m., please park in the south parking lot.**

***Families are encouraged to assemble along the parade route and capture photo/video memories as students walk by. To avoid hallway congestion, we ask that families not wait in the main lobby or hallways as classes prepare for and return from the parade. In addition, the very short assembly in the gym following the parade is for **STUDENTS AND STAFF ONLY**. Space does not allow families and friends to attend.***

Teachers will schedule classroom parties after the parade at a time that is least disruptive to the educational environment. **Students are not to bring any look-alike or toy weapons as part of their costume or dress in a manner depicting or promoting violent themes. No blood, dressing as the opposite sex with anatomical props, or bare midriffs will be allowed.** *If you question the appropriateness of your child's costume, please contact Mary Daoust, Principal, prior to sending your child to school in the costume.*

## ***A Salute to Veterans***

### **Third Grade Concert**

**November 10<sup>th</sup> – 7 p.m.**



Amberly third graders will present a musical salute to all veterans who have served our country on Tuesday, November 10<sup>th</sup>, at 7 p.m. The concert will consist of traditional songs recognizing the great country we live in. **We are asking our third grade students to invite a veteran to the concert along with family members and friends. Veterans who attend are encouraged to wear military uniforms.** This special patriotic performances will take place in the Amberly gym. *Please mark your calendars for Tuesday, November 10<sup>th</sup> and join us for A Salute to Veterans!*

## **APT Family Skate Night November 12<sup>th</sup>!**

The first APT Family Skate Night will occur on Thursday, November 12<sup>th</sup> from 6:30 – 8:30 at Great Skate on Portage Road. Admission is \$4.50 and includes the rental of quad skates (4 wheels). In-line skates are available for an additional \$3. All Amberly families are welcome to attend. If moms or dads choose to be a spectator for the night, they will be free.



## **Community Sharing November 9<sup>th</sup>–13<sup>th</sup>**

Community Sharing will occur during the week of November 9<sup>th</sup> – 13<sup>th</sup>. This is an annual food drive in which Amberly families are asked to give something back to those in need. Students are asked to bring non-perishable food to their classroom during the week of 11/9-11/13 to be donated to the Portage Community Outreach Center. Thank you for helping those in need!

## Upcoming No School Days

- Tuesday, November 6<sup>th</sup>  
*No School Students - Teacher Record Day*
- Wednesday, Thursday & Friday,  
November 25<sup>th</sup>, 26<sup>th</sup> & 27<sup>th</sup>  
*Thanksgiving Break – No School*
- *Monday, November 30 –*  
*School Resumes*
- Winter Break – December 21<sup>st</sup> through  
January 1<sup>st</sup>



## **HAT Day Friday Nov. 20<sup>th</sup>**



Student Council is sponsoring Hat Day on Friday, November 20<sup>th</sup>! Students may wear hats to and in school all day! A donation of \$1 per student is requested to wear a hat with proceeds going to purchase winter hats and mittens for the Peace House in Kalamazoo. The Peace House is located in Kalamazoo's Eastside Neighborhood and is focused on serving those in need.



## **APT Movie Night: *UP!***

Movie Night at Amberly is Friday, Nov. 20<sup>th</sup>. Showing that evening will be the newly released Disney Pixar movie *UP*. Doors will open at 6 p.m. for student check-in, *UP* will begin at 6:30 p.m. in the gym and students should be picked up by 8:30 p.m. **This event is for current Amberly students only.** Admittance also requires a completed admittance slip and parent sign in and sign out of students. A \$5 donation per student is requested. Please see the flyer that came home if Friday Folders for further information.

## **Media Coverage/Student Images in Publications**

From time to time we will invite local media (newspaper and television) in our school to cover events and activities. This is done in an effort to make the public aware of the outstanding learning and positive activities that occur at Amberly. We will also be adding photos of students at work and play to our Amberly website. Please know Portage Public School is very sensitive to pupil privacy and strictly monitors all situations in which any student images are used in publications. In addition, students' images will not be identified on any of the school district websites

## **Request to Stay Indoors for Recess**

We believe that except on rare occasions, if a child is well enough to be in school they are well enough to go outside and enjoy recess. In addition, an adult must always be present to supervise a child staying in for recess, which takes away from staff lunch times and office staff duties. Therefore, a note from a physician stating the child is to remain indoors for recess is required for a child to be individually supervised during recess time. Thank you for understanding and cooperation with this matter.

## **Delivery of Messages To Students**

In an effort to provide the least disruptive learning environment for students and teachers, messages regarding changes in end of the day routines, after school information and/or other communication, will be given to students at 3:30 p.m. each school day. Office staff will not disrupt classes on a case by case basis, but instead will hold messages until 3:30 p.m. and ask for students to come to the office to receive them at the end of the school day. **Parents/guardians are reminded to contact the school office with information that needs to be given to students prior to 3:30 p.m.** *Attempts to exchange information with students after this time can result in confusion, mistakes and possible unsafe situations for all involved – students, teachers, bus drivers and parents.*

*We ask that parents/guardians take time to review student after school plans with children prior to departure to school and to avoid calling the school office with reminders or changes in routines unless it is an emergency.*

## ***Portage Public Schools Notice of Non-discrimination***

Portage Public Schools does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin or ancestry, age, sex, marital status or handicap in the admission to, access to, participation in, benefits of, or employment in its programs or activities as provided by district policy and in compliance with Federal and State statutes.

The employees below have been designated to coordinate the District's efforts to comply with the regulations implementing Title VI, Title IX, and Section 504/ADA.

### **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:**

- **Your school counselor** –Marcia Elliot
- **Your school principal** – Mary Daoust
- **Title IX Coordinator**  
Tom Zahrt, Manager, SPHR  
8111 S. Westnedge  
Portage, Michigan 49009
- **Section 504 Coordinator**  
Gail Van Daff (269) 323-5012
- **Employment** - (269) 323-5152  
Tom Zahrt, Manager SPHR
- **Special Education** - (269) 323- 5012  
Gail Van Daff, Director

Any person may also contact the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Education,

