



RAM Pride

# MT VERNON TWP HIGH SCHOOL

<http://www.mvths.org>

## FRESHMAN ACADEMY NEWSLETTER

Volume 3, Issue 2  
December 21, 2011

### Peaceful Conflict Resolution

- \* Respect the right to disagree.
- \* Express your real concerns.
- \* Share common goals and interests.
- \* Open yourself to different points of view.
- \* Listen carefully to all proposals.
- \* Understand the major issues involved.
- \* Think about probable alternatives.
- \* Imagine several possible alternative solutions.
- \* Offer reasonable compromises.
- \* Negotiate mutually fair cooperative agreements.

-Robert E. Valett

### MT VERNON TWP HIGH SCHOOL

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**Parents  
make  
the  
difference.**

“Nothing in the world is more dangerous than sincere ignorance and conscientious stupidity”

- Martin Luther King Jr.

### Check out grades on Skyward

Grades can be accessed via the internet. A Username and Password are required to use Skyward Family Access. A Username and Password were given to guardians at registration. If you do not have one, please come to the school's CTE office in F building to pick up a User Name and Password Request Form.

### MVTHS Mission Statement

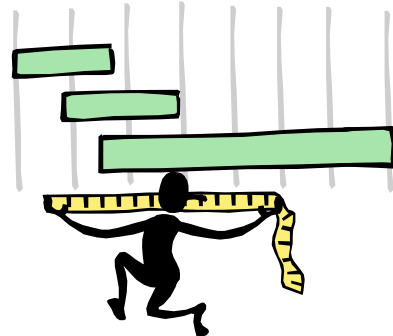
Mt. Vernon Township High School is a community including students, parents, staff, and citizens. The mission is to provide challenging educational and social experiences that will create in all students lifelong learning and responsible citizenship in a diverse and changing world.

## MAKE CLEAR RULES!

*Discuss the consequences of breaking rules. Research shows that teens are less likely to use drugs if their parents set clear rules about not doing so. Set rules for the basic daily activities so teens will follow the rules about drugs.*

*Here are some tips on these rules:*

- Set clear rules in advance to the consequences of breaking them. You will have to be consistent and not make any threats you will not carry out. Never let a broken rule go without punishment. The punishment does not need to be harsh but it does need to be effective, such as taking away privileges.



- The rules must be consistently enforced every time a teen breaks the rules.
- Punishment should be mild, not severe.
- Set a curfew and enforce it strictly but make exceptions for special occasions.

- Have your teen call in at regular times when they're away from home or school.
- Talk to any parents that are hosting a party. Make sure adult supervision is enforced by stopping by to say hello.
- Make sure your teen knows he/she can call you at any time to be picked up from a party that drugs are in use. Talk to your teen about it afterwards.
- Listen to your instincts. If something doesn't seem right, don't be afraid to intervene.

Source: The National Youth Anti-Drug Media Campaign's Behavior Change Expert Panel.

## TALK WITH YOUR TEEN

Family communication becomes more challenging with busy days and stressful schedules. Add to this the presence of teenagers who are experiencing their own dilemmas and needs for independence. Parents are then left with the challenge of keeping the peace, setting limits, and trying to establish positive relations with their teens.

Here are some ways parents can break down barriers and open up the lines of communication:

*Listen – let teens know you are willing to listen without making judgments. Try to hear their point of view even if there is a difference of opinion. Showing interest in their feelings and opinions helps to build trust and mutual respect.*

*Keep the door open on difficult subjects. Give straightforward feedback on important issues such as drinking or sex. Don't let your own discomfort get in the way. If you don't know an answer, tell them you will find one, as teens can pay a high price for the wrong information.*

*Try not to overreact. If you brace yourself for the worst and expect trouble, you may react harshly the first time your teen steps out of line or challenges your authority. Let your teens make mistakes and accept the consequences, and be available to help when needed.*

*Be accessible and use questions sparingly. Try to find a happy medium between showing interest and needing to know everything they are thinking.*

*Set up family meetings – use them to get input on family rules and consequences for breaking them. Brainstorm together and try to solve problems. Teens may appreciate having a voice in family decisions.*

*Keep your sense of humor – take time to relax and have fun with your teens. Give praise and show them positive ways to manage stress.*

As in most other relationships, it is unrealistic to expect complete harmony between parents and teens. Making the effort to communicate and show respect, while also providing supervision and guidance, can do wonders for building family relationships during the teen years and beyond. Source:

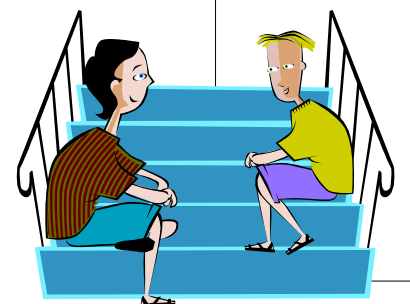
[www.pmhm.com/articles.htm](http://www.pmhm.com/articles.htm)

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### Special points of interest:

- Talk with your Teen
- Backpacks
- Peer Pressure
- Abusive Relationships
- Drug-Free Kids
- Questions to Ask your Teen
- Making Clear Rules



# BACKPACKS—PACK IT AND WEAR IT RIGHT

Parents can help teens with their backpacks to avoid health problems. Carrying too much in a backpack and wearing it the wrong way can lead to pain. The symptoms are aching back, aching shoulders, weakened muscles, tingling arms, and stooped posture.

- Help your teen avoid these problems by packing the backpack lightly. Your teen should never carry over 10-20% of their body weight. If your teen's backpack is too heavy, they should carry some of the items or leave books at home

that they might not need that day. Load the heaviest books closest to the teens back and organize them so they don't move around. Consider a book bag on wheels.

- If your teen wears the backpack too tight over one shoulder, it can cause curving of



the spine. The backpack should have well padded shoulders. The straps should fit snug to the teens back. When the backpack is loose it pulls the teen backwards and strains the muscles. It would be good to wear a waist belt if the backpack has one. The backpack should never be more than four inches below the waist.

Source: [pediatricsabout.com](http://pediatricsabout.com) & Crossroads Hospital

## PEER PRESSURE

Teens are almost always confronted at some time or another by friends with bad ideas. They will test the limits you have set for your teen and get them in trouble. In this case, your teen will probably regret

*The best way to prepare your teen to succeed against bad choices is to "role play."*

those decisions later. It's harder to say "No thanks, I have to go now" to a friend whose approval means a lot to him or her. Even "good kids" can occasionally ask for friends to skip class or lie about why they were out together so late. It's even worse

if a friend encourages them to try tobacco, alcohol, or drugs. The consequences for these are more serious. The best way to prepare your teen to overcome these perils is to role play. Practice scenarios in advance so your teen will have them at the tip of their tongue. Teens can then assert their independence while making it clear that they are rejecting the choices, not their friends.

## CONTACTS

Principal Freshman Academy  
 Julie Holmes \_\_\_\_\_ 246-5751  
 Administrative Secretary  
 Tammy Hendricks \_\_\_\_\_ 246-5752  
 Guidance Counselor  
 Sarah Watts \_\_\_\_\_ 246-5904  
 Social Workers  
 Lyndsay Moore \_\_\_\_\_ 246-5825  
 Christine Renth \_\_\_\_\_ 246-5830  
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 Jeremy Mays (English) \_\_\_\_\_ 246-5704  
 Holly McKay (Math) \_\_\_\_\_ 246-5703  
 Scott Gamber (Social Studies) 246-5701  
 Diane Todd (Science) \_\_\_\_\_ 246-5721

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 Erin Livengood (English) \_\_\_\_\_ 246-5713  
 Nikki Prost (Math) \_\_\_\_\_ 246-5710  
 Tracie Shackles (Science) \_\_\_\_\_ 246-5719  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Team M  
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 Michael Kinkade (English) \_\_\_\_\_ 246-5715  
 Ryan Goodisky (Social Studies) 246-5714  
 Paula Pulley (Math) \_\_\_\_\_ 246-5711  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Team S  
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 Brandon Martin (English) \_\_\_\_\_ 246-5705  
 Travis McCollum (Science) \_\_\_\_\_ 246-5717  
 Jessica Pilson (Social Studies) \_ 246-5706

\_\_\_\_\_ Support Class  
 Lee Ann Ferguson (Math) \_\_\_\_\_ 244-9647  
 Melanie Norman (Reading) \_\_\_\_\_ 246-5408

**School Website**  
[www.mvths.org](http://www.mvths.org)  
**Visit**  
[www.illinoisparents.org](http://www.illinoisparents.org)



# TEN WARNING SIGNS OF AN ABUSIVE RELATIONSHIP

Here are some signs to look for that might mean your teen is in trouble and needs your help:

1. When your teen and boy/girl friend are together, he/she calls him/her names or puts him/her down in front of other people.
2. He/She acts extremely jealous when he/she talks to other boys/girls, even when it's completely innocent.
3. He/She apologizes for his/her behavior and makes excuses for him/her.
4. He/She frequently cancels plans at the last minute for reasons that sound untrue.
5. He/She is always checking up on him/her, calling or paging him/her, and demanding to know where he/she has been and who he/she has been with.
6. You've seen him/her lose his/her temper, maybe even break or hit things when he/she is mad.
7. He/She seems worried about upsetting him/her or making him/her angry.
8. He/She is giving up things that used to be important to him/her, such as spending time with friends or other activities, and is becoming more and more isolated.
9. Him/Her weight, appearance or grades have changed dramatically.
10. He/She has injuries he/she can't explain, or the explanations he/she gives don't make sense.

Call the National Domestic Violence Hotline at 1-800-799-SAFE

Source: [www.loveisnotabuse.com](http://www.loveisnotabuse.com)



## TIPS FOR KEEPING KIDS DRUG-FREE

- Let your child know that marijuana use is unacceptable. Set limits with clear consequences for breaking them.
- Praise and reward good behavior.
- Learn about alcohol, tobacco, marijuana and other drug use and talk to kids about these substances and their harmful health, social, learning, and mental effects on young users.
- Know where your teens will be and

*Unsupervised time is a gateway to a young person's first-time use of marijuana, alcohol, and cigarettes.*

what they will be doing during unsupervised time.

- Make sure you know your teen's friends and their parents. Stay in touch with the adult supervisors of your child (camp counselors, coach-

es, employers) and have them inform you of any changes in your teen.

- Get teens involved in after-school and summer activities.
- Spend time together as a family regularly.
- Always have an open door. Make sure you ask how your teen's day was.

Source: White House Office of National Drug Control Policy

## PARENTS ASK ONE QUESTION, ACHIEVEMENT GOES UP

We encourage you to ask your child at least one question that can not be answered with a yes or no about school. Do this on a daily basis. When children see that you care about their schoolwork, they soon reflect that concern.

Here are some suggested questions:

- What did you do in math class today? Can you show me one of the problems you solved.
- Tell me an interesting fact you learned in history.

- Would you read me a little of the book you are reading in your English class? Do you have to write a report on this book?

Source: Sandra Bresnick, "Increasing Parent Involvement in the Classroom: The Importance of Establishing Home-School Connections"

Parent or Guardian:

**Interested in more ways to take part in the success of your child?**

## **Join the MVTHS Family Partnership Association.**

Our key mission is to promote an environment at school where teachers and administrators can do their best work and our students can do their best learning. We are committed to setting the foundation to create a welcoming environment for students and families. We're always eager to find more great people, like you, to help us meet this goal.

We don't expect a huge time commitment from volunteers. An hour can be a big help to our group and the school, and we have positions and tasks to fit all schedules and interests. Just let us know whether a program, event, or activity interests you and when you might be free to help (You don't even have to come to the school or attend a meeting to be involved, although we'd really like to meet you personally!). There will be quarterly meetings if you would like to join us as well.

Research shows that students whose parents are involved in their education have better grades and fewer discipline problems. Involvement at the school also makes it easier to establish friendships with teachers and other parents. We promise that the time you give our group and the school will be worth your while—and fun!

Together, we can make a difference at our school!

Please fill out the enclosed orange card and return it to Julie Holmes, Principal Freshman Academy in room 214 G building. The card can also be mailed to: MVTHS Attention: Ms. Holmes, 320 S. 7<sup>th</sup>, Mt. Vernon, IL 62864.

Ms. Holmes can be contacted at [jholmes@mvths.org](mailto:jholmes@mvths.org) or by phone 618-246-5751 if you have any questions or if you would like to join the MVTHS Family Partnership Association by email or phone.