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**JAMES IRWIN CHARTER HIGH SCHOOL**

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**NEWSLETTER**

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**THE ROOTS OF RESPONSIBILITY -- A NOTE FROM THE PRINCIPAL**

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Do you ever like to mess with your teenager by hiding their stuff where they can't find it? Like putting their shoes in the closet, their jeans in the drawer, their books in their backpack? Teaching responsibility seems to be an unending lesson. As parents, we sense our child's growing pains and search for identity and independence, but we realize that choices come with consequences and even innocent mischief has a price to pay.

In July of 2021, Psychology Today proposed the use of a freedom contract between parents and adolescents. Its tenets are as follows:

- **Believability:** "You give us adequate and accurate information."
- **Predictability:** "You keep your promises and agreements."
- **Accountability:** "You take care of business at home, at school, and elsewhere."
- **Mutuality:** "You live on two-way terms, doing for us like we do for you."
- **Availability:** "You are willing to discuss our concerns when they arise."
- **Civility:** "You communicate with courtesy, caring, and respect."

An agreement like this promotes stronger communication, a better awareness of how actions affect others, and ultimately how personal responsibility builds integrity. The roots of responsibility lead to the wings of independence."



# ATTENDANCE MATTERS

September is Attendance Awareness Month, so we'd like to take this opportunity to remind our community about the importance of regular school attendance. Did you know students should miss no more than 9 days of school each year to stay engaged, successful and on track to graduation? Studies show that there is a direct link between regular attendance and students being successful in school. Missing 10%, or 2 days a month, over the course of the school year, can negatively affect a student's academic success. By 9th grade, attendance is a better predictor of graduation rates than 8th grade test scores.


## TIPS TO PRIORITIZE ATTENDANCE

- Talk about the importance of showing up to school every day.
- Help your teen maintain daily routines, such as finishing homework and getting a good night's sleep.
- Try not to schedule dental and medical appointments during the school day.
- If your teens must stay home because they are sick, make sure they have asked teachers for resources and materials to make up for the missed learning time in the classroom.

## TRACKING ATTENDANCE


One of the resources we encourage students and families to use is the attendance tracker shown below. Often we don't realize how many days of school we've missed simply because our lives get busy and time moves so fast. The tracker is meant to be a physical reminder to stay in the "green". Students who stay in the green have the best chance for academic achievement and success. We look forward to celebrating our students' excellent attendance this year! If you'd like a hard copy of the attendance tracker, there will be copies available in the HS front office.

### Absences Add Up!



Mark an "X" or write the date in a box each time you miss school, excused or not excused.

### When Do Absences Become a Problem?



- Chronic Absence  
18 or more days
- Warning Signs  
10 to 17 days
- Satisfactory  
9 or fewer Absences

On Track										Warning								Chronic Danger!							
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25



# MANAGING STRESS

In our fast-paced world, it's crucial to recognize the signs of stress in our high school students and provide the necessary support to help them navigate these challenging times. Adolescence can be a tumultuous phase, marked by academic pressures, social dynamics, and personal growth. As parents, you are already attuned to changes in behavior, mood swings, or other key indicators of underlying stress. Engaging in open and empathetic conversations with our teenagers can create a safe space for them to share their concerns. Encouraging healthy outlets such as physical activity, hobbies, or creative pursuits can help alleviate stress. Moreover, setting realistic expectations and fostering a balanced approach to academics and extracurricular activities can reduce undue pressure. By working together as a supportive community, we can equip our teenagers with the tools they need to manage stress, promoting their overall well-being and success both in and out of the classroom.

Talking to teenagers about their stress requires sensitivity, understanding, and effective communication. Your love for your students, and your desire to be there for them is the most important thing, and you are already doing a great job!

## TIPS FOR TALKING ABOUT STRESS AND RESOURCES FOR PARENTS

- **Choose the Right Time and Place:** Find a quiet and comfortable environment where both you and your teenager can have an uninterrupted conversation.
- **Be a Good Listener:** Let your teenager express themselves without interruption.
- **Empathize and avoid judgement**
- **Ask Open-ended Questions:** Instead of asking yes/no questions, inquire about how they're feeling, what's been on their mind, or if there's something bothering them.
- **Share your own experiences and also respect their perspective.**
- **Provide Reassurance:** Let them know that you're there to support them and that seeking help is a sign of strength, not weakness.
- **Reach out to the school's counseling department** for advice on how to support your teenager's mental health.
- **Brainstorm Solutions Together:** Collaborate on strategies to manage stress, like time management techniques or relaxation exercises. This involvement can empower them.
- **Encourage Healthy Habits:** Highlight the importance of adequate sleep, regular physical activity, and a balanced diet in managing stress.





# IMPORTANT DATE REMINDERS

September & October

## Testing

- All juniors will take the NMSQT/PSAT on Wednesday, October 11th.
- All seniors will take the ACT on Tuesday, October 17th.
- Students should report to the gym by 7:45am.
- Students will be released to go home after testing (usually around noon).

## P/T Conferences

Conferences are on Thursday, September 28th from 12pm to 7pm.

- Students are released at 11:05.
- Email teachers to schedule a conference or sign up in the front office.

## Count Week

October Count Day is Monday, October 2nd. All students present please!

- We will have Spirit Week October 2nd through the 6th.
- Picture retakes are on October 6th.



## Homecoming Week

- Thursday, October 12th is a staff data day. Students will be released at 11:05.
- Friday, October 13th is a staff day -- no students in school.
- Friday, October 13th -- Homecoming Dance in the gym from 7pm to 11pm.
- Monday, October 16th -- No School.