

McCarthy Community News



October 7, 2013

**McCarthy Middle School is a PAWS-itive
Community!**

We agree to:

- **Be compassionate, supportive and safe**
- **Be responsible, inclusive and respectful**
 - **Put forth our best effort**

Student Advisory October Theme: Making the World a Better Place/ Making a Difference-

Our students have been attending their advisory classes for almost a month at this point. Students are still getting used to the routines associated with advisory. With any group formation, groups go through stages. Students are still feeling it out and may express some awkwardness towards advisory. Groups are becoming more and more comfortable each week. Some groups move through this awkward stage faster than others. So we thank you for acknowledging their feelings and encouraging your children to stick with it. Please realize if you are hearing negative comments, they may be related to the fact they are still coming together as a group. Again we are implementing our student advisory program to promote student-teacher relationships, address general self-esteem and competence beliefs, provide social exchange and peer recognition in a safe environment and address academic and social concerns.

Our ultimate goal is to have every student feel safe and connected with an adult staff member or to school in general. If students feel connected, the chances for success in school increases dramatically. We are committed to creating a safe, comfortable environment for all to thrive. If you have any questions, do not hesitate to contact us.

Activities! Activity cards will be sold at lunches on Tuesday, October 8 and can be bought in the main office through Mrs. Pindara. You can find information on the activities and late bus routes by clicking this link: [Activities Information](#). **PLEASE NOTE:**

1. It is critical you speak to your children regarding which late bus to take. It is NOT the same bus your child takes after school. The 16 regular routes are reduced to 5. Each student needs to be aware of where the bus is during the route and tell the driver where he or she needs to be dropped off. Late buses begin leaving the school soon after 3:45. Some buses (usually Late Buses 7 & 8) leave here at or a little after 4; therefore, some students may not get dropped off until after 4:30.
2. Pick-up after activities (3:45) is different from pick-up immediately at the end of the day (2:40). If you are picking up your child after activities, the designated pick-up area is near the cafeteria on the School Administration side of the building.

McASAP Open on Wednesdays & Thursdays! Need academic help? The McCarthy After School Assistance Program (McASAP) is in its sixth year of existence. The program, which is staffed by teachers and trained student tutors is after school in Room 112 and is geared for students who need specific help. Any student who needs academic assistance is welcome to attend. Activity cards are NOT needed for your child to attend McASAP.

Library is Open on Tuesdays After School- The library will be open on Tuesdays for students who need to do research, do homework, check out books or use computers for school-related assignments. And like McASAP, Activity cards are NOT needed for your child to attend.

Halloween Happenings- Cans for Costumes- Over the past several years, McCarthy school has invited students and staff to wear costumes on Halloween to promote school spirit and the understanding that a learning community should be enjoyable. We will continue this practice on Thursday, October 31st!

A different twist started recently is that since Project 300 is so close to Halloween we thought this might be a great way to tie the two together. We are suggesting that students who want to wear a costume donate a canned good. This is completely optional; however, it's a nice opportunity for students to have a good time and to help others and jump start Project 300 at the same time.

For those students who choose to participate, the following criteria should be followed for a costume:

- It should be comfortable and safe to wear all day.
- It is appropriate for a middle school (same standards as for daily wear- No underwear showing, nothing too short, too tight or too revealing).
- It provides no distraction to the wearer or others in class. Must be easily set aside- nothing to be tripped over.

- Absolutely no weapons in the costume including, but not limited to: guns, swords, blasters, chains and no masks (Student's face should be clearly visible.)
- **Additionally, candy is not to be brought to school on that day and distributed.**

Halloween Reminder: All school rules will be strictly enforced on Halloween. Students are reminded that the day be fun for everyone ONLY if we remember SAFETY FIRST! Costumes... Yes! Candy... NO!

Playground/Parking Lot Update- We are hoping our new playground equipment is delivered this week and hope to have it installed for use soon after. The two projects affecting the back parking lot (turf fields & curbing/sidewalks) are nearing completion as well. Thanks for your cooperation during this time.

Family Fun Night- Please join us the night of Wednesday, October 30th at our Fall Family Fun Night. We will have our scholastic book fair in our library. In the cafeteria, we will be having an ice cream social, hosting a vendor fair and allowing people to sample soups and cookies being sold as part of our fundraising efforts. I hope you can join us sometime between 6-8pm.

Grade 5 & 6 Social and Grade 7 & 8 Dance On October 25- To access information regarding the [grade 5 & 6 Social please click HERE](#). Information regarding the dance will be made on announcements and in the daily bulletin. Tickets will be sold the week of the Social/Dance at lunches. To buy a 5th & 6th grade social ticket, the student must present a completed, [signed permission slip](#). The social is from 2:45 to 4:30. The dance is from 7-9pm.

Box-Tops for Education- Please send us your Box Tops! Have your child bring them in and drop them off in the office! Every little bit helps!

Wellness Policy Update- I would like to remind families that as a district we have updated our Wellness Policy. Please help us adhere to it by NOT sending in birthday cupcakes, cookies, etc. The policy prohibits the practice of sharing homemade food between students. Thanks in advance for helping keep our students safe.

Additionally, please remind your student not to share water bottles, drinks and other food items in order to help us stay healthy.

First Term Mid-Term Grades Have Been Available on the X2 Aspen Family Portal- The first term Mid-Terms will be available October 10 on the X2 Aspen family portal. If you do not have access, feel free to request a hard copy in the main office.

A+ School Rewards Helps Us Help our School- Beginning October 4th and continuing through March 14, 2014, seventh grader Caden Casiello is fundraising for McCarthy Middle School with the A+ School Rewards Program offered by Stop & Shop. For every dollar spent

using the card a point is put into the McCarthy School account the points add up and earn the school money! There's no cost to the shopper. Caden asks the help of students, families and McCarthy Community to get one card number each ASAP. This can be gotten from neighbors, family, friends, teachers etc.. People and customers are happy to support us but we need your help. Caden raised over \$15,000 last year to benefit our children and our school. Please help, it's so easy! If you have any questions, please contact Mr. Casiello at jimkas@yahoo.com. Please spread the word to register cards. \$2.5 million is offered to help schools, so the sooner cards register the more points and money can be earned for any of our school's needs. **To register your card** go to, <http://www.stopandshop.com/aplus> and "Register your card" using McCarthy's School ID 09973 or use [the form on the PTO page of the website](#). Thank you for supporting our school!

Arrival/Dismissal - As you are well aware, **students need to possess and show their bus pass to ride their assigned school bus.** That is true for students who are required to pay and those who are not. Students will not be allowed to ride the bus without their specific bus pass. If you have not received a bus pass (or have lost it), call Central Office immediately, 978-251-5100 x6917 or 6915. Pick-up and drop off is on the tennis court/police department side of the building. Despite the increased volume of cars last year, the drop-off ran smoothly.

Key information to remember-

➤ *Arrival Time-* for students at the McCarthy School is 8:00AM. *There is no supervision* for students before that time. Daycare is available before school at the Parker School. Please contact Community Education at 251-5151. If your child has a before school appointment with a staff member earlier than 8:00 AM, he/she must come through the front door and sign in at the office.

➤ *Dropping off and picking up-* Your children should be dropped off on the Police station side of the building. Please try to have your child packed up and ready to exit your vehicle on the passenger/sidewalk side. Please do not wait until your car pulls up to the door facing the police station. This tends to really back up the traffic flow. Your child can get out of your car at any point between the small gym and the door across from the police station. The door next to the library (not visible from the drop-off road) is also open in the mornings. There should be no drop offs on the administration (left) side of the building. as no one should be entering through the side door of the administration wing at any time. Pick-ups at the end of the school day (2:40) are in the parking lot near the tennis courts/football field. Please note that busses block the driveway next to the school next to the police station during dismissal. If you are arriving close to or after 2:30, you will probably have to enter the pick-up area using the entrance on Old Westford Road. For children's safety, please back into a parking spot before the dismissal time as it is much safer pulling forward out of a parking spot once school is dismissed. Thanks for keeping our children safe.

Contact Us with any Concerns and Feedback- We value your feedback here at McCarthy Middle School. If you have any concerns at all, feel free to contact us. Without hearing your concerns we cannot, work towards a solution. We pride ourselves on being

reflective. My expectation is that everyone- students, staff & administration- must be reflective examining our decisions and actions so that we can learn and grow. Any classroom concerns may be shared with your child's teachers or guidance counselors. Other overarching concerns may be shared with Mrs. Martin (martind@chelmsford.k12.ma.us) or myself (mcpheek@chelmsford.k12.ma.us). Thanks in advance for sharing.

How Can I Help Out? We are often asked by parents and families how they can help out the McCarthy Community. We have a couple of suggestions. One is your time. If you can help PTO by volunteering to help out on some of their school-related activities, that would be great. If you are interested, you can contact PTO at the email address below. Another way to help out would be through donations. In these tough times, families often have difficulty paying for field trips and even school supplies. We try to support families as best we can. We use this money as "financial aid" to help out families in need. If you can give any financial donation to help out, it would be greatly appreciated. Donations can be sent to the Main Office. Checks can be made out to McCarthy Middle School. In the memo line, please indicate "Donation".

District Handbook- Please see the handout from the first day of school referring to the district K-12 student parent handbook. It can be found by clicking here: [Student/Parent Handbook](#).

Visiting Us- We ask that when you come to the office at McCarthy please stop at the second door. There is a sign that reads visitors/sign-in and MAIN OFFICE. All visitors must come directly to the main office upon arrival.

Parent Teacher Organization- our PTO is a wonderful bunch of people that coordinate fundraising and provide support for all school members through the facilitation of parent volunteers. Please join us at our next PTO meeting: **November 6 @ 7:00PM in our library**. All PTO Executive Board members can be reached at: pto.mccarthy@gmail.com

UPCOMING DATES TO NOTE:

October 10	First Term Mid-Term Grades available in X2
October 14	Columbus Day (No school)
October 15	Full-Day Staff Development (No school)
October 25	Grade 5 & 6 Social (2:45-4:30)
	Grade 7 & 8 Dance (7-9pm)
Oct. 28-Nov. 1	Book Fair
October 30	Fall Family Fun Night
November 7	End of Term 1