



# BACK TO SCHOOL

## Students must accept responsibility for their success

When students walk through the front doors of secondary school this Fall, whether for the first time as a grade 9 student or returning for another year in a higher grade, they are there to do more than learn.

While students are at school to acquire an education, they also have the opportunity to mature. They must learn to accept responsibility for themselves to prepare themselves to be successful in adult life. Parents and teachers cannot make a student successful. The student must accept the responsibility for succeeding.

As parents, there are many ways to help your child become a well rounded, confident student. Graham Shaw, Guidance Counsellor at Elmvale District High School encourages parents to take an active part in their child's education. Attend parents' night and meet your child's teachers. Establish contact between the home and school.

Shaw adds that sometimes there is a problem in a student's home, such as a family break-up that teachers aren't aware of. Students react to emotional crises such as this in different ways, and if teachers aren't made aware of any existing problem they have no way of really knowing why a student's behavior has changed.

By sharing any information concerning your child with the school, teachers are able to assess the situation and deal with it accordingly. Parents' night is also an opportunity for teachers to discuss with you

any problems your child may be having that you aren't aware of.

If you are concerned about anything regarding your child and school, Shaw says, "Don't wait until Parents' Night to discuss the problem, call the school anytime. Talk to teachers, the principal or guidance counsellor and solve the problem at the start."

Every school has an activity hour, whether at lunch or after school for clubs and sports. The teachers are there if students need extra help.

"Kids should go out of their way to seek help," says Shaw. "Don't let the problem get away from you, because a missed concept can be learned over a period of time, but is more complex to understand a week before exams."

Teachers are often busy helping with sports or other school activities, but no teacher will refuse to help a student who needs and asks for extra help. Students must learn to take responsibility for themselves and ask for help if it is needed.

Encourage your child to be involved in extra-curricular activities, but not to over-extend themselves. Part-time jobs are fine provided they are not interfering with school work.

Every high school student has homework. Parents should be concerned if students aren't bringing any work home. Even if there is no assigned homework, students should be reviewing their day's notes or previewing their text books for the next day's lesson.

Being prepared also means

arriving at each class with paper, pencils and pens. Make sure your child has the necessary school supplies beforehand. As adults, we know our jobs can't be done without the proper tools.

"Students," says Shaw, "should approach school as if it were their job. This is what they are, students."

Students who arrive on time with the proper supplies generally have a better attitude towards succeeding. Shaw points out students involved in extra school activities such as Student's

Council and school plays seem to be ones who do well and succeed.

It is important for students to set goals for themselves and strive to achieve them. Most grade 9 students do not know which career they wish to pursue. For these students, it is important that they at least set a goal of graduating from grade 12 or 13. At this time a new goal can be set.

"People who have goals tend to succeed more so than those that don't," says Shaw.

It is important to encourage your child to explore all op-

tions to them in terms of a job. Children in a rural area are not exposed to all jobs and many don't realize what is available to them. E.D.H.S. has a computer printout that lists 6,700 different Ontario jobs. Your child has more choices for a career than he or she even dreamed of.

Years ago many young women wished to finish high school and then get married. An admirable choice for the times, but with today's society changing it is important for young women to acquire skills that can support them or con-

tribute to family earnings.

Encourage your child to embrace a wide variety of experiences with summer jobs. A student who works at the same type of job throughout high school may not have acquired enough experience when they apply for a full-time job in a different field.

As parents, you have a responsibility to your child and this includes helping them in every way. By showing an active interest in the student this encourages them to do better and feel good about themselves.

## Latch-key kids need extra safety rules

If you work or are not at home when your child comes home from school there are a few extra safety rules both

you and your child should discuss. Today's society has labelled these children latch-key kids.

Tell your child to never open the door when home alone. Should someone come to the door who refuses to leave or tries to force their way into the house, tell your child to phone the police or operator right away and tell them what is happening. When the police car arrives make sure your child sees the car as well as the officer. If your door has a safety chain, have your child only open the door as far as the chain permits to look at the officer's identification. If you have a babysitter watching your kids make sure only the babysitter opens the door.

When the phone rings children should never say they are home alone, even if it is only for a short period of time. Teach them to say their parents are busy and can't come to the phone. Explain to your child this is not really the truth, but can't be considered

a lie when it concerns their safety. Impress upon them to never give strangers any information.

If you are working and cannot be home when your child arrives home from school it is a good idea to call periodically to make sure everything is all right.

Remind your child the fastest way to get help is to call the operator and tell her what is happening. Tell your child to stay on the phone and not to hang up until the operator has reached the person they need to talk to. Make sure your child does not hang up until they have understood any instructions given.

Every child should know their home address and phone number.


Finally, try to leave snacks in the refrigerator already made up ahead of time so your child does not have to use the stove.



### Stocking up

Students will need plenty of school supplies and now is the time to stock up. This selection from a local supply store includes everything your child will need when they return to class this fall.


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