

# RESOURCES/TIPS FOR PARENTS

## **1. ENCOURAGE SELF-ADVOCACY**

Self-advocacy is one of the most important skills your student will learn over the next few years. Speaking up for themselves and knowing how to ask for what they need is a critical, lifelong skill. Your student can only learn it if you make an intentional effort to back away and let him or her step up to the plate.

## **2. ALLOW YOUR STUDENT TO STRUGGLE**

This one is always hard for parents, and for good reasons. However, we all know that the greatest lessons in life come from learning from our mistakes, and if our goal is to raise children to become strong, independent adults, we need to learn to let them stumble.

## **3. ENCOURAGE POSITIVE RISK-TAKING.**

Middle school is the perfect time to try new things and becoming comfortable with taking positive risks is another critical skill in teen development. Some ideas for middle school risk-taking include:

- Try a new sport/music class.
- Join a club.
- Expand your circle of friends.

## **4. KEEP YOUR COMMUNICATION AND CONNECTION STRONG.**

Even with all this new independence, your student still needs you. Your student will most certainly start pushing you away, but rest assured he or she is craving connection. Some new twists on connecting at this age:

- Find some new, creative ways to ask how your teen's day was. Encourage him or her to tell you fun stories from the day, not just list the details about homework and grades.
- Become involved in your teen's social media. If you allow your teen to have social media accounts, use the apps as one more opportunity to engage with him or her. Send funny quotes you found, "like" pictures and videos, ask about celebrities your child is following. Engaging via social media gives you the double bonus of connecting and monitoring activity all at once.
- Carve out time to spend together. Coffee dates, movie nights, watching your favorite show together—make one-on-one time a priority. Your preteen is never, ever too old for that. I promise!

## **5. ATTEND BACK-TO-SCHOOL NIGHT AND PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES**

### **6. VISIT THE SCHOOL AND ITS WEBSITE - [www.pcsb.org/dunedin-mS](http://www.pcsb.org/dunedin-mS)**

On the school website, you can find information about: the school calendar, contacting school staff, special events like dances and class trips, testing dates, sign-up information and schedules for sports, clubs, other extracurricular activities, and grades and homework assignments (FOCUS and CANVAS). FOCUS and CANVAS are used for continual communication with parents regarding student progress.

## **7. SUPPORT HOMEWORK EXPECTATIONS**

During the middle school years, homework gets a bit more intense and the time spent will probably be longer than during the elementary years, usually a total of 1 to 2 hours each day. Sit down with your child regularly to talk about class loads and make sure they're balanced. It is also beneficial to set a specific start time for homework each day/night. Helping preteens establish a homework schedule and consistent homework routine sends a message that academics are a priority. Furthermore, having a designated space for students to complete assignments is highly encouraged as it generally results in better productivity.

## **8. SEND YOUR CHILD READY TO LEARN**

Help them to remember to bring pencils and paper each day, along with all other necessary materials.

### **9. INSTILL ORGANIZATIONAL SKILLS**

No one is born with great organizational skills — they must be learned and practiced. Being organized is a key to success in middle school, where most students first encounter multiple teachers and classrooms daily, and where some students are participating in extracurricular or after-school activities for the first time.

### **10. GET INVOLVED**

*Parents can get involved by:*

- chaperoning field trips, dances, and events
- attending school board meetings
- joining the school's parent-teacher group
- giving a talk for Great American Teach-in
- attending school concerts, plays, and athletic events

## **WEBSITES WITH HELPFUL INFORMATION RELATED TO GIFTEDNESS**

National Association for Gifted Children - <https://www.nagc.org/resources-publications/resources-parents>

NAGC TIPS SHEETS - <https://www.nagc.org/resources-publications/resources-parents/parent-tip-sheets>

Hoagies for Parents (blog) - <https://www.hoagiesgifted.org/parents.htm>

Pinellas County Parent Resources - <https://www.pcsb.org/Page/3305>