

Anchor Bay North

Principal's Corner

James Thiede



IMPORTANT 2025-26 DATES

October 3rd– SAIL THE SHIP Walk-a-thon

October 8th– Starbase begins

October 23rd– Picture retake

November 4th– Election day– No School

November 20th and 21st– Final exams—1/2 days

November 24th-28th– Thanksgiving break-No School

December 1st– 5th– North Pole Santa Shop

December 6th-Anchor Bay Christmas

December 11th– Band concert @ ABHS 7:30pm

December 22nd-January 4th- Christmas Break-no school

October 2025

Start of School Year Update

As principal, I continue to be impressed with how quickly our students have familiarized themselves with our school and daily procedures. We are truly blessed to have the best students in the state! Thank you, parents, for your support and partnership in helping make this transition a smooth one.

I am equally impressed by our teachers and the way they have built a true team to *sail the ship* this year, especially as we welcomed our outstanding new 5th grade teachers. Our community is fortunate to have such dedicated role models and educators working with our children. It has been a great start, and I am excited to see all that we will accomplish together this year!

Elective Rotation Update

We would like to remind families that our school year is organized into 12-week trimesters for core classes and 6-week rotations for elective courses. **The last day of the first elective rotation is Friday, October 10th.** On Monday, October 13th, all students will begin a new elective. **Your son or daughter will be bringing home a schedule that lists their new elective, teacher's name, and room number. These schedules will be delivered during 1st hour on Wednesday, October 8th,** giving students three days to become familiar with where their new elective will be located.

Please note that your child's core classes—including teacher, room, and hour—will not change. Only the elective class will rotate. This system allows students to explore a variety of learning experiences throughout the year while maintaining consistency in their core academics.

Sail the Ship Walk-A-Thon Update

Great news—we set a new record at this year's Sail the Ship Walk-A-Thon, raising over **\$32,000!** This incredible achievement reflects the hard work and dedication of our students, families, and community. Funds from this event will go directly toward supporting students through opportunities such as new classroom technology, enhanced learning materials, field trip experiences, and student enrichment programs.

A huge thank you goes out to our amazing students who participated, our parents who encouraged and supported them, and our community members who generously contributed. It was an awesome event filled with energy, teamwork, and school spirit. We are proud to see what we can accomplish together!

M-STEP & NWEA Results

Students will be bringing home their **NWEA and M-STEP test results** on **Wednesday, October 8th.** Please check with your child that evening to review their reports together.

Middle School Parents

In some Principal's Corner articles, and in future editions, you will find information about Middle School-aged children. The information comes from a newsletter called "Middle School Parents" produced by "The Parent Institute". I hope you find the information insightful.



SEE PAGE 2



October is Anti-Bullying Month

At Anchor Bay NORTH, we are committed to creating a safe, respectful, and inclusive environment where every student feels valued and supported. Stopping bullying is a shared responsibility, and we need your help to ensure our students can thrive both academically and emotionally.

Understanding the Difference: Bullying vs. Being Mean

It's important to recognize that **bullying is not the same as someone being mean once.**

- **Being Mean Once:** A single incident where a student says or does something hurtful. While still taken seriously, it may not be an ongoing pattern.
- **Bullying:** Repeated, intentional behavior meant to harm, intimidate, or control another student, often involving an imbalance of power.

Understanding this distinction helps us address concerns appropriately while ensuring true bullying is taken very seriously.

Why Stopping Bullying Matters

Bullying can have serious consequences on a child's mental and emotional health, as well as their academic performance. Victims may experience anxiety, depression, and loss of confidence, which impacts their ability to learn. Students who engage in bullying also face long-term consequences, such as difficulties forming healthy relationships.

How Parents Can Help

- **Talk to Your Child:** Discuss what bullying is, how to recognize it, and why it's important to speak up. Encourage empathy and kindness.
- **Encourage Open Communication:** Let your child know they can come to you with concerns if they are experiencing, witnessing, or even participating in unkind behavior.
- **Monitor Social Media:** Many bullying incidents occur online. Keep an eye on your child's online activity and talk about the impact of words and actions in digital spaces.
- **Support School Policies:** Review our anti-bullying policy and reinforce with your child the importance of respecting others.
- **Report Concerns Promptly:** If your child reports bullying behavior, notify the school immediately. Early intervention makes a difference.

Our Commitment

We are dedicated to providing resources, support, and training for students and staff to effectively address and prevent bullying. Our school has a comprehensive policy in place, including consequences for those who bully and support for those affected. We also implement programs that promote social-emotional learning, empathy, and respect.

Together, we can foster a positive school culture where every student feels safe, accepted, and supported. Thank you for your continued partnership in making Anchor Bay NORTH a safe and welcoming place for all.



October is National Bullying Prevention Month. I thought it would be a good time to review some of the things we do here at NORTH to ensure a positive school climate for our students.



Bullying Interventions Portfolio

Positive interactions among students and staff in school are an important part of our school culture. Showing respect for everyone in school must be a basic foundation of what we do. There are many challenges to ensure a positive experience for everyone. Educating our students about how to interact and show respect is an ongoing process. We developed this portfolio to highlight the many different initiatives we have put in place in order to promote a warm and friendly learning environment:

Direct Interventions

- **Incident Reporting** – Any student can notify any staff member to report bullying in person, or by filling out an Incident Report from the counseling center. Information received is immediately reviewed and reported to appropriate personnel. Each report is investigated by counselors and/or administration. If a bullying incident is confirmed, parents are notified and discipline is enforced.
- **OK 2 SAY** – is a State of Michigan program designed to empower Michigan students, parents, school personnel, community mental health service programs, and law enforcement to share and respond to student safety threats. It is a confidential way for students to report anything that threatens their safety or the safety of others. State of Michigan Representatives speak to all of our students by visiting classrooms and reviewing the program.
 - The OK 2 SAY Hotline is **800.815.8477**
 - Submit online – <https://ok2say.state.mi.us/>
 - Text message – **652729**

Educational Interventions

Social Media Parent Help – Parents can get information on Social Media by watching a presentation on the different types of Social Media and how they work. The presentation also includes ways to access additional information. Please click on the following links to access helpful tools:

- <https://www.powtoon.com/c/gcvfeMdfCaO/1/m>
- <http://www.connectsafely.org/>



Anchor Bay North

Principal's Corner



Educational Interventions

- **Staff Trained in Recognizing Bullying** – All Anchor Bay NORTH staff have been certified through “Safe Schools” by participating in a training program that focuses on recognizing signs of bullying.
- **Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS)** – teaching behavioral expectations and rewarding students for following them is a much more positive approach than waiting for **STOMP OUT BULLYING** misbehavior to occur before responding. The purpose of school-wide **PBIS** is to establish a climate in which appropriate behavior is the norm. Reward trips (Cedar Point, CJ Barrymore’s), Student of the Month, and Sailor Salute are some examples of PBIS at NORTH.
- **National STOP BULLYING DAY** – On Wednesday, October 8th we are asking our staff and students to wear Orange to bring awareness and stop bullying.
- **Anchor Bay Director of Security, Amanda DePape Presentations** – she will speak about bullying and social media. She will offer ways to seek help and outline consequences for negative behaviors. Students will also watch a video called the Power of choice created by our Security Director.
- **School Resource Officer, Brian Chadwick Presentations**–he will follow up with classroom visits through the month of October speaking about bullying and other topics.



New Student Luncheon

We are very lucky to welcome new students to Anchor Bay North this school year! On Wednesday, October 14th, we hosted a special lunch for the new students who joined our school this year. We introduced our new students to staff and students, played games, and had a pizza party. It is a nice event for our new students to get to know each other and make new friends. Welcome new Tars!

Start with HELLO-

Social isolation is an individual’s perceived or real separation from a group of peers. It is a feeling that you do not fit in, that you don’t belong, or that you have been left out. When we conducted a survey of some of our students, they were asked if they see isolation happening and where they witness social isolation in our school. The results were:

1. Lunchroom
2. Classrooms during group work and when asked to pair up with a partner
3. The hallways at school in the morning
4. On the bus

In an effort to help end social isolation in our school, we adopted the National Campaign of Start with Hello. It is a prevention program that teaches children and teens how to be more socially inclusive and connected to each other. In an effort to educate our students on social isolation and how to recognize it and what to do, we held a spirit week with Start with Hello activities.

Start with HELLO	
Monday	Pajama Day Wake up & say hello!
Tuesday	Hello Across the World Day Wear something that represents your culture, a place you have visited, or would love to visit.
Wednesday	Wild about Hello Day Wear animal prints, or shirts with animals on them. Kindness is universal!
Thursday	Throwback Day Dress in clothes from a past decade (70s, 80s, 90s, 00s). Hello never goes out of style!
Friday	One Tar Team Day Wear red & white for our Tars! Teams work best when everyone is included!

A simple 'hello' can change someone's whole day

START with Hello

SEE PAGE 5



What is AI?

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is a type of technology that allows computers and machines to perform tasks that usually require human intelligence. Some common examples include voice assistants like Siri or Alexa, self-driving cars, and recommendation systems on Netflix or YouTube.

Benefits of AI for Students

1. **Helps with Homework and Research-** AI-powered tools can assist you in finding information faster and more accurately. Search engines, online encyclopedias, and even AI writing assistants can help organize your thoughts, check your grammar, and offer ideas.
2. **Personalized Learning-** AI can create a learning environment that's tailored to your specific needs. For example, apps like Khan Academy or Duolingo adjust their lessons based on your performance, helping you learn at your own pace.
3. **Saves Time-** AI tools can summarize long articles, create study guides, and even automate repetitive tasks. This gives you more time to focus on understanding difficult topics or engaging in extracurricular activities.
4. **Creative Inspiration-** Tools like AI-powered art generators or writing assistants can help you come up with new ideas for projects, essays, or even creative stories.
5. **Accessibility-** AI makes technology more accessible for students with disabilities. For instance, speech-to-text programs can help students who have difficulty typing, and text-to-speech tools can assist students with reading challenges.

Areas of Concern with AI

While AI can be very useful, there are also some important things to be cautious about:

1. MISINFORMATION

AI can generate text, images, or even videos that look real but are actually false or misleading. This is especially true with **AI-generated photos and movies**. These "deepfakes" can be used to spread false information, make fake news, or even create false evidence. Always double-check information from trusted sources.

2. OVER-RELIANCE ON AI

Using AI for everything can prevent you from developing your own critical thinking and problem-solving skills. For example, using an AI tool to write an essay might save time, but it also means you aren't practicing writing yourself.

3. PRIVACY AND DATA SHARING

Some AI tools collect personal data, which can lead to privacy concerns. Be careful about what information you share online, especially when using AI-powered platforms.

4. PLAGIARISM AND ORIGINALITY

AI-generated content might be useful for inspiration, but copying it directly and passing it off as your own work is plagiarism. Schools are increasingly aware of this, and using AI irresponsibly could lead to academic consequences.

5. EMOTIONAL AND SOCIAL IMPACT

AI can affect how you see yourself and others. Social media platforms use AI algorithms to show you specific content, which can sometimes lead to comparing yourself with others or believing that what you see online is always true or real.

Responsible Use of AI

1. **Verify Information-** Before believing or sharing something you found online—especially AI-generated content—always verify it with trustworthy sources. Look for official websites, academic resources, or consult your teacher.
2. **Use AI as a Tool, Not a Shortcut-** AI can help you with research, organization, and even creativity, but it should never replace your own efforts. Balance AI use with your own learning.
3. **Stay Safe Online-** Be mindful of the information you share with AI-powered platforms. Avoid sharing personal information like your full name, address, or school without a trusted adult's guidance.
4. **Practice Digital Citizenship-** If you see AI-generated content that is misleading or harmful, report it. It's important to be responsible and help maintain a safe online environment.

AI-Generated Photos and Movies: Special Concerns

AI can create realistic photos and videos that are completely fake. These can be used in creative ways, like video games or movies, but can also be misused.

1. **Deepfakes-** AI can swap faces in videos, making it look like someone did or said something they didn't. This can be harmful and confusing, so it's important to be aware that not everything you see online is real.
2. **Fake News-** AI can create fake photos or videos that spread misinformation. For example, a picture of a fake event might be created and shared to deceive people. Always check with trusted news sources before believing or sharing such content.

Conclusion

AI is an exciting tool that offers many benefits for learning and creativity, but it also comes with responsibilities. By using AI thoughtfully, verifying information, and being cautious about privacy and plagiarism, you can harness the power of AI safely and responsibly.



Anchor Bay NORTH Clubs

We are pleased to offer a variety of after-school clubs this year, giving students the chance to connect with others, build friendships, and explore new interests. From athletics and the arts to strategy games and environmental action, these clubs provide meaningful opportunities for students to learn new hobbies, develop skills, and be part of a supportive community outside the classroom.

Pickleball Club – Mrs. Goerke

Mrs. Goerke is excited to bring the fast-growing sport of pickleball to our students! The Pickleball Club is a great way to get active, learn the basics of the game, and enjoy friendly competition with peers. Whether you're new to the sport or already a fan, this club is the perfect place to play, improve your skills, and have fun.

Art Club – Ms. Beninati and Mr. Martyniuk

For students who love to create, the Art Club with Ms. Beninati and Mr. Martyniuk offers a space to explore different art mediums, work on unique projects, and share ideas with fellow artists. This club encourages creativity, self-expression, and collaboration while building a community of students who enjoy the visual arts.

Spanish Club – Mrs. Ahedo

¡Bienvenidos! Spanish Club, led by Mrs. Ahedo, is the perfect opportunity for students to learn more about Spanish language and culture in a fun and engaging setting. From practicing conversational skills to exploring traditions, music, and food, this club celebrates cultural diversity while building global awareness.

Green Team – Mrs. Prater

Students interested in helping the environment will love joining the Green Team with Mrs. Prater. This club focuses on making our school and community more eco-friendly through activities such as recycling projects, awareness campaigns, and sustainability initiatives. It's a hands-on way for students to make a positive impact.

Chess Club – Mr. Mittelstadt and Mrs. Rodgers

The Chess Club, led by Mr. Mittelstadt and Mrs. Rodgers, invites students of all skill levels to sharpen their minds and practice the art of strategy. Members can learn new tactics, challenge one another in matches, and build critical thinking skills—all while enjoying the fun and tradition of the game of chess.

Card Club – Mrs. Hann and Mrs. Rodgers

If you enjoy playing cards and learning new games, the Card Club with Mrs. Hann and Mrs. Rodgers is the place for you! This club is all about having fun while developing logical thinking, teamwork, and friendly competition. Students can play classic favorites and discover new games with their friends.

Student Council - Mrs. Kessel and Mrs. VanHeusden

Student Council, led by Mrs. Kessel and Mrs. VanHeusden, gives students a voice in shaping school spirit and activities. Members learn leadership, teamwork, and responsibility while planning events, supporting community service, and representing their peers. It's an excellent opportunity to build confidence and make a positive difference in our school.

Cooking Club is in Full Swing at Middle School North!

Ms. Beninati and Mrs. Brees are leading our 5th and 6th graders in learning how to cook safely, try new recipes, and work together in the kitchen. The club has received great feedback from students, staff, and parents—it's a fun way for students to connect, be creative, and build confidence! Several sessions will be offered throughout the year. Once the next session is scheduled, details will be shared through announcements, our website, and the Facebook parent page. The cost is **\$20**, and space is limited to the **first 36 students** who turn in their permission slip and payment.

STARBASE 2025

Reminder: STARBASE Field Trip for 5th Graders

We are excited to announce that our 5th-grade students will be attending the STARBASE program at Selfridge Air National Guard Base, starting on **Wednesday, October 8th**, and continuing through **December 18th**. Each student will participate in **four engaging sessions** designed to inspire interest in science, technology, engineering, art/design, and mathematics (STEAM).

STARBASE is a hands-on, minds-on educational program sponsored by the Department of Defense. It provides students with 25 hours of interactive instruction, where they engage in activities such as building rockets, programming robots, and exploring engineering concepts. Throughout the program, students interact with military personnel who serve as role models, demonstrating how STEAM principles are applied in real-world settings.



This unique opportunity allows students to explore STEAM fields in a dynamic environment, fostering curiosity and encouraging them to consider future careers in these areas.

Please ensure that your child arrives at school on time and is prepared for these exciting sessions. We look forward to seeing how this experience sparks their interest and imagination!

Important STARBASE Update

Parents, please be aware that STARBASE at Selfridge Air National Guard Base may be **temporarily closed** in the event of any state or federal government shutdowns due to budget delays. While this situation is beyond our control, please know that **we will work closely with STARBASE to try and re-schedule any missed sessions** so that students still have the full program experience.

Thank you for your understanding and support.

Sail The Ship Walk a thon 2025



Middle School Parents®

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Anchor Bay Middle School North

still make the difference!



Support your middle schooler by being an academic coach

An effective coach is someone who guides, encourages and inspires. Thinking of yourself in this role is an effective way to support your middle schooler and promote learning.

To be a positive academic coach:

- **Act as a resource.** Expect your child to complete assignments independently. But be available to offer encouragement, answer questions and suggest places where your child can find additional information, such as a website or a particular reference book.
- **Talk about the things** your child is learning. Grades matter, but they are a product of learning. It is more important to emphasize the *learning process*. This includes hard work,

persistence and making steady progress toward goals.

- **Be willing to say, "I don't know."** There will be times when you are not familiar with the material your student is learning. If your child comes to you with a question, it's OK to say, "I never learned that. Let's look online or in your book."
- **Keep in mind** that your child has strengths and weaknesses. Some students never need help in math, but may struggle in language arts. Support and encourage your middle schooler in every class, but do not expect the same performance in every subject.

Source: K.T. Alvy, Ph.D., *The Positive Parent: Raising Healthy, Happy and Successful Children, Birth-Adolescence*, Teachers College Press.

Help your child build a large vocabulary



Building a strong vocabulary is essential for students to be able to comprehend what they read and express themselves effectively.

To encourage vocabulary growth, have your child:

1. **Read every day.** This is the single best way for anyone to improve vocabulary. If your child likes a book by a certain author, find more books by that author. If your child has a special interest, run with it. If it's airplanes, for example, suggest a biography of a famous aviator. Occasionally, encourage your child to tackle a more challenging book.
2. **Look it up.** A dictionary is a valuable tool for students. Have your child look up new words to learn their definitions.
3. **Practice.** Learning the meaning of a new word is a great start. But that new word will soon be lost if your child doesn't use it repeatedly. Encourage your child to use new words in conversation.
4. **Speak to adults.** Conversations with adults expose kids to new words. Resist the urge to speak for your child.



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A study group can enhance middle schoolers' learning



Does your child enjoy working with classmates? If so, studying with a group may be a worthwhile addition to the work your child does independently.

To form an effective study group, your child should:

- **Choose participants carefully.** Members should be in your child's classes and devoted to doing well in school. Avoid potential conflicts—romantic interests may not be the best choices for a study group. Between four and six students is an effective size.
- **Be clear about the purpose.** Study groups are for improving schoolwork. That can't happen if students are only socializing.

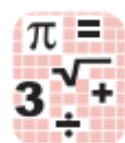
Have group members schedule separate social time every few weeks to reward themselves for their hard work.

- **Set regular meeting times** and adhere to them. If a student needs to miss a session, it should be for a valid reason. Pick a neutral meeting place, such as the library. Or, rotate between homes.

"It is literally true that you can succeed best and quickest by helping others to succeed."

—Napoleon Hill

Strengthen your child's math skills with estimation challenges



Math is a subject that typically depends on precise answers. But the first step to arriving at those answers is often

to look the problem over and make an "educated guess," or an estimate.

You can give your middle schooler lots of opportunities to practice estimating by using scenarios from your daily life. Encourage your child to check the answer by working the problem through, or by comparing the actual answer to the estimate.

Here are estimation challenges to give your child:

- **How many** containers of coffee would we have to buy in a year if Grandpa drinks an average of two cups of coffee each day, and each container of coffee makes 50 cups?

- **How long** will it take us to get to Aunt Maria's house? We're going 27 miles an hour and she lives five miles away.
- **How many** yards would you have to mow to earn \$10,000 if you get \$28 every time?
- **How much** time do you think it will take for you to read that book?
- **How many** bowls of cereal do you think we will be able to pour from this box?
- **How much** will the grocery bill be based on this list?
- **How much** money is there in that change jar?
- **How long** do you think it will take you to finish your assignments?

Source: V. Thompson and K. Mayfield-Ingram, *Family Math—The Middle School Years*, University of California at Berkeley.

Do you monitor your child's time after school?



Research shows that the hours immediately after school are when children are most likely to get into trouble. It's important

to make home-alone time as safe and structured as possible. Answer yes or no to the questions below to find out how well you are doing:

- ___ **1. Do you make sure** your child has an adult contact after school, such as a relative, neighbor or sitter?
- ___ **2. Do you keep in touch** by phone when your child is out of school and you are not home?
- ___ **3. Do you encourage** your child to be involved in supervised extra-curricular activities after school?
- ___ **4. Do you have rules** about who may be in the house when you are not there?
- ___ **5. Have you discussed** with your child the dangers that kids can get into after school (such as alcohol and drugs) and how to avoid them?

How well are you doing?

Mostly yes answers mean you are working hard to keep your child safe and productive after school. For no answers, try those suggestions.

Middle School
Parents
still make the difference!

Practical Ideas for Parents
to Help Their Children.

For subscription information call or write:
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Understand the essential role of middle school counselors



School counselors have become key players on the educational team in middle schools, playing a vital role in supporting student well-being and academic success.

Counselors strive to help all students be productive learners. They also assist students and families to:

- **Develop skills** that will help them navigate changing expectations and environments.
- **Set academic goals.**
- **Select courses** that will prepare them for future classes.
- **Get back on track** after facing academic problems.
- **Build social skills.**
- **Solve problems** with friends. This can include mediation

or counseling sessions for an individual student or a small group.

- **Strengthen coping skills.** This includes skills for dealing with bullies or with grief.
- **Make plans for high school** and beyond.
- **Explore and plan** for different careers.
- **Connect with community agencies** in times of crisis.
- **Locate additional professionals** for academic and personal support.

When reaching out to a counselor, remember that they often work with many families. Patience is key as you await a response.

Source: "The Essential Role of Middle School Counselors," American School Counselor Association.

Five strategies can reduce your middle schooler's test anxiety



Does your child's stomach do flip-flops the night before a huge test? Does yours? Take a deep breath. Although you can't take the test for your child, there are lots of ways you can offer support.

When your middle schooler has an upcoming test:

1. **Sit down and talk.** Ask why your child is so nervous about the test. Is the material too hard? Does your child not understand it? Sometimes just sharing concerns can make a test seem less scary.
2. **Encourage your child** to find out what format the test will be. Essay? Multiple choice? True or false? Knowing the format will help your child prepare effectively.
3. **Help your child** make a study schedule. If the test is next week,

your middle schooler should set aside study time on each of the days leading up to it. This reduces the need to cram the night before.

4. **Create a comfy study spot.** Help your child find a quiet well-lit place to study. When it's time to hit the books, make sure your child has needed supplies—including water and a healthy snack.
5. **Talk about your child's strengths.** "I know you're worried about the big science test, but remember how well you did on the last one?" Focus on the positives.

Later, when your middle schooler receives the test grade, talk about it. Celebrate success and calmly go over anything that went wrong. Talk about what your child can do to improve next time.

Q: I caught my child copying all the answers from a friend's homework. My child said it was no big deal and that other students do it all the time. What should I do?

Questions & Answers

A: Unfortunately, middle school is a time when many students turn to cheating. At this age, students are highly aware of how they compare with their peers and they may view cheating as a way to keep up.

In a study conducted by the Josephson Institute of Ethics, 90% of middle schoolers admitted to copying a friend's homework and 75% admitted to cheating on tests.

Cheating is very serious. But you can keep your child from turning one mistake into a more severe problem. Here's how:

- **Send a clear message** that cheating is wrong. It's dishonest and it robs your child of learning the skills and information needed for success in life.
- **Ask why your child cheated.** Many students are worried about disappointing their families or getting punished for less-than-perfect grades.
- **Don't put too much emphasis** on grades. Instead, stress the importance of learning and putting forth your best effort. Let your child know that mistakes are learning opportunities and don't affect your love.
- **Help your child** strengthen study habits. These help students earn better grades on their own.
- **Find help** if your child has fallen behind. The teacher may know a student who would be willing to tutor a few hours a week.

It Matters: Responsibility

Responsibility helps middle schoolers thrive



Helping your middle schooler learn to be a responsible student is a big step toward academic success. When

kids learn responsibility, they understand how to make smart choices, manage their time and feel good about themselves. To help your child build this important quality:

- **Talk about it.** Middle schoolers are responsible for their attitudes and the decisions they make. If things are going wrong, talk about how your child's choices might have contributed to the situation. Your child may be surprised to find out that even little things, like choice of words, tone of voice or body language, influence the way things will turn out.
- **Enforce it.** Insist that your child take responsibility for personal actions. That means allowing your middle schooler to experience the consequences of those actions. For example, don't take forgotten assignments or lunch to school over and over again.
- **Advocate for it.** Tell your child that you value responsible traits like self-control and persistence. When your child demonstrates those qualities, point them out and offer praise.
- **Model it.** Let your child see you taking responsibility for your mistakes. "I left my gardening tools out in the rain, and now they are rusted. I should have been more responsible." Your admission will teach your child more than an hour of lecturing would.

Give your middle schooler meaningful responsibilities

Fulfilling responsibilities at home helps middle schoolers see themselves as capable people. This feeling of confidence serves them well in school and in life.

Some children are ready for certain tasks before others are. Take your child's development into account, then consider giving responsibility for:

- **Scheduling.** Have your child make hair appointments, RSVP to social events and keep track of extracurricular activities. Encourage your child to mark them on the family calendar and then coordinate transportation to and from activities with you.
- **Budgeting.** Middle schoolers can manage some expenses. If your child wants to buy something, make a plan. Ask, "How much will you have to save? What jobs can you do to reach your goal?"
- **Solving problems.** Ask your child to participate in discussions about



issues that affect family life. You'll still make the final decisions, but ask for your child's opinion and consider it. Having their ideas listened to helps children feel valued and understood.

- **Contributing.** Expect your child to pitch in during family projects and with household chores.

Ask your child to be responsible for reducing phone use



When kids spend an excessive amount of time on their phones, they miss out on more valuable activities. It's important for middle schoolers to be responsible for how they spend their time. To reduce recreational screen use, encourage your child to:

1. **Spend one day tracking** how much time is spent looking at the phone.
2. **Reduce that time the next day.** Help your child come up with

ideas like turning off notifications or only checking the phone at certain times.

3. **Set screen-free times** when all devices should be put away—such as during family meals, study time and bedtime.

When middle schoolers learn to manage their time better, they are often amazed by how much more they can get done in a day!

Source: *The Common Sense Census: Media Use by Tweens and Teens, 2021*, Common Sense Media Inc.