

**WHAT EVERY CHAMINADE PARENT
SHOULD KNOW**



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One of the most valuable resources for all Chaminade parents is our website:

www.chaminade.org

- On the homepage, there are links to calendars and the major school areas (including the two campuses). Click on the high school link and you are led to an array of student and parent sites, including our handbooks and faculty websites.
- We recommend that you print the monthly calendars that are pertinent to you. You will notice that the High School Master Calendar numbers each day in the Six Day Cycle and indicates the dismissal time. Once they are updates, faculty websites will minimally contain the course syllabi.

Time management can be tricky. In particular, block scheduling creates choices for homework & studying.

- It is ideal for students to complete homework for the classes they had on that same day. This reduces the chance of forgetting assignment details, increases a sense of continuity from class to homework, and provides time between homework and the due date. Therefore, the student will have an opportunity to get help the next day if he/she has trouble or questions. Making use of X-Block is important.
- Studying for a test may be most successful when done the night prior. This can be a trial and error type of effort but an important one to talk about with your student and help him/her assess the options.
- It is also important to be aware that at the high school level athletics and extra curricular activities take more time than they did in middle school (in most cases); however, students are encouraged to get involved in a club or activity they're interested in because it helps the students to feel connected to the school and to make friends.
- The first progress report will be issued in six weeks. It is really important for parents to monitor the work of 9th grade students in the first six weeks of school.

Parent/caregiver involvement with academics, clubs, and athletics is still desirable.

- This is true for students and for the school as a whole. Students do best when they have parents/caregivers who balance giving them independence with being involved in their daily lives.
- At every age your child wants to be noticed by you and listened to by you.
- Although your child may not always admit it, he/she will appreciate the family support at Chaminade events

There is a protocol to follow if your child is having difficulty in or out of class.

- Let's start out knowing that we are all on the same side and friendliness works best, even if the teacher has made a mistake.
- If there are problems with a class or teacher, please contact that teacher via e-mail (it seems to work best). This gives teachers the choice to answer your correspondence outside of school hours. Communication with the teacher usually solves the problem. However, if you are not satisfied with the response from the teacher, you should then

contact the department chair. If you are still not satisfied, you may contact your child's academic counselor or Assistant Principal, Jenny Long.

- For discipline problems, please contact the Deans.
- For social/psychological problems, please contact your child's counselor.

Your family will function best when you continue to make decisions based on what has worked in the past. Your family may have different goals, values, and expectations than others.

- You may get pressure to be like every other family, but in our experience there is no one right way and a variety of options can work.
For example, curfews—going to parties—going to dances—loading up on Honors and AP classes—strategies for handling these vary from family to family, child to child and situation to situation. In general, communicate with your child.
- The best decisions usually reflect a combination of your thoughtful, responsible parenting and your child's increased desire for independence (when safe).
- Teenagers are learning to be independent. One of the best ways for them to learn independence is to allow them to make "safe" mistakes. They want to learn from their own mistakes and it is appropriate to encourage them to take reasonable risks in order to allow them a variety of opportunities.
- It also helps to keep in contact with other parents and bounce ideas off each other. You are a valuable resource for each other.

Encourage your daughter/son to get involved in extracurricular activities.

- Time and again when we hear from seniors, they say the best advice they have for incoming students is to join something. This creates commitment to the school, balance to challenging academics, and an excellent opportunity to get to know other students in a variety of grade levels.
- If your child is coming from a school other than Chaminade Middle School, the adjustment may take a bit longer and it is especially important for her/him to get involved in activities.
- Every child has special talents and gifts that deserve support...not everyone is meant to be a doctor, lawyer, investment banker. After all, the world would be much less interesting without zookeepers, architects, writers and teachers, and much less beautiful without artists, dancers, musicians...Help your child discover her/his gifts and talents. They might surprise and delight you.

Teenagers are part of the larger world and, therefore, they are exposed to inherently difficult, sometimes dangerous, situations. Talk to your child about these and keep up with new trends.

- Stay informed! Talk often with: other parents, your child and your child's friends, coaches, teachers, counselors, campus ministry leaders, etc.
- If you notice fairly dramatic changes in mood, behavior (one example might be, frequent afternoon naps), friends, grades, or participation in sports or clubs, we encourage you to take a closer look at your child's well being—these may be red flags.

Although we would love to be able to, we cannot totally protect your child from being exposed to drug and alcohol use.

- We work hard to keep our school safe and drug/alcohol free, but we need parents/caregivers to be our partners. Please be aware that your child will most likely (over the course of his/her high school years) be in situations where he or she has to make choices about whether or not to use these substances.
- Weekend student parties present a special problem for the school community. Drugs and alcohol are commonplace at parties and such parties are not condoned by the school.
- Do not let your child attend a party if you have not made contact with the parent of the child who is hosting the party.
- We provide random drug testing of our students according to the Chaminade Drug Testing Policy.

Be aware of the dangers of the internet. These dangers range from e-mail or instant-messenger threats, school gossip websites, to role-playing games.

- Emails and instant messaging can get teenagers in trouble when they use them as if it was a form of verbal communication. Recipients can print out full or parts of conversations and show them to other students or take them to the police (in the event that they feel threatened). It is helpful for students to understand that emails and IMs create a document that can be used against them.
- School gossip websites, especially www.myspace.com, can make normal adolescent tensions seem overwhelming. It is best for students not to take part in these. It is hard to imagine that any good could come from these sites and we have seen a lot of destruction as a result. Even in the best of circumstances, a good philosophy might be “it is better to be kind than to be right.”
- Role-playing games are not, on the surface, problematic. However, we believe it is healthier for students to interact with other students through sports, clubs, attending events, phone calls, etc. Role playing games take many hours, are often played daily, and do not advance social skills or help relationships in any way. In addition, they can become addictive. If your daughter/son is involved in these, we recommend that you limit the amount of time spent in these internet games and be aware of whether or not they are positive or dark games.

There is a trend in high schools (and some middle schools) across the country that is endemic of a blurring of appropriate body-boundaries...some literature calls it sexually aggressive behavior.

- It is not okay for students to grab each other’s bodies as they pass in the halls of school, nor is it okay, for them to jokingly touch each other in areas that could be considered private or sexually provocative.
- For example, there is nothing funny or acceptable about a boy grabbing a girl’s chest as he hugs her from behind. Similarly, there is nothing funny or acceptable about a girl grabbing a boy’s bottom as she walks up to him. Unfortunately, some of these examples are not unusual to see currently in high schools (especially in the first two years).
- Appropriate hugging, arm around the shoulder, hand-holding is a whole different story and may be okay—if both parties feel okay with it. All teens (actually all people) want to feel loved, accepted, wanted, admired, noticed...there are many relationship-building

ways to do this. Aggressive-sexual behavior (such as the examples above) destroy relationships and are divisive. Socially, these behaviors show a bullying, power differential and do not show the receiver a desire for real friendship.

- Please talk with your sons and daughters about the difference between what's okay and what's not. If you need guidance, please call your child's counselor.

Retreats offer a wonderful bonding time and time for self-reflection.

- Retreats are offered at every grade level and at a variety of times each year. This is a special opportunity for students to get to know themselves, God, other students and faculty on a more personal level.
- Students who graduate from Chaminade often say that the retreat program alone was pivotal for them. Money is also not an issue. That is, we will find a way for every student (who wishes) to attend.

One recent graduate wants to advise parents to remind your son/daughter that “Life is far too important to be taken seriously” (Oscar Wilde).

- Her point is, grades matter but so does enjoying high school. On the one hand, it is important to keep in mind that classes in high school will be harder and take more time than in middle school.
- It is equally important to keep an open mind and think of high school as a time of exploration...a time to try a variety of clubs (Robotics, Key Club, etc.), go on retreats, write for the newspaper (one example), and in doing so...become a part of the Chaminade student community.

Freshmen grades do matter.

- In past years, you may have heard that freshmen grades don't matter—colleges don't even look at them, but, things have changed. A growing number of colleges are expanding admissions criteria and some evaluate the freshmen year grades. Some colleges that have not yet begun to do so are talking about it.
- For example, UC San Diego reported at their most recent college conference that adding in freshmen grades is one of the ways they may change the current selection system.
- While it is not our goal to “stress out” freshmen, it is now unrealistic to think that freshmen grades don't matter for college entry. The truth is for some colleges they already do, for some they may soon, and for others the option to change admissions policies is in the control of college admissions committees, not Chaminade.

Help your child recognize *too much* stress.

- Stress can be a good thing...that is, just enough stress gets us going and helps us to perform optimally. However, as a parent/caregiver, there may come a time when you notice that your child is feeling overwhelmed.
- Too much stress hinders performance. For example, you may notice decreased sleep, nail biting, and anxiousness. If you observe some of these behaviors in your child, he/she may be under too much stress. Talk with your child about it, then help him/her make a plan to break the stress down into more manageable parts. It may be as simple as getting more time for sleep built into the schedule (sleep researchers report that teens need between 8 and 9 hours of sleep each night). Some other “stress-busters” might include exercising,

praying, playing music, listening to music, drawing or meditating. Healthy possibilities are almost infinite. Between you and your son/daughter, come up with something that is logistically reasonable and truly enjoyable.

Family rituals are healthy and important. Identify which are most important to your family and work to maintain them.

- High school's added demands may make it seem as if you should just forget trying to make time for family dinners, going to religious services together or even attending your favorite teams' games or fun movies. But, please don't give up.
- You may need to be flexible and make adjustments based on new time constraints, but these family traditions or norms provide meaningful stability and continuity.