



December 2024

Plainview- Old Bethpage Central School District GUIDANCE NEWSLETTER

106 Washington Ave, Plainview, NY 11803 (516) 434-3000

In this issue:

Helping Your Child Explore Their Interests	2
POB JFK Visits Iona University	3
Finding Warmth in the Winter: Staying Positive During the Holidays	4
13th Annual Alumni Q&A Day at POB JFK High School Welcomes Back Our Finest!	5
Give Something Back: CommunityService Opportunities	5
World Kindness Day at POB Middle School	5
Are you Looking for the Perfect Picture Book to Read to Your Children?	6
Attention High School Seniors: Complete Your FAFSA Today!	6
National Bullying Prevention Month at POB Middle School	7
Tips for Talking About Online Safety	8
Using AI to Support the College Admissions Journey	9
Five Things to Know About The Anxious Generation	9

Director's Message

As we approach the holiday season, I want to take a moment to express my gratitude for the POB community's continued support and partnership throughout this year. The holidays offer a wonderful opportunity to reflect on the progress our students have made and to recognize their hard work and dedication.

During this time, I encourage you to find joy in the little things—the quiet moments, the laughter shared with family, and the simple acts of kindness. These moments often bring the most warmth and meaning. It's also a great time to remember the importance of supporting our children in building their empathy, kindness and resilience. By nurturing these qualities, we help them grow into compassionate, confident individuals who can face challenges with a positive outlook.

One way to foster empathy and kindness at home is by encouraging your child to think about how others might feel in different situations. Simple conversations about how we can help or support others—whether it's a family member, a friend, or someone in need—can go a long way in teaching them the value of kindness. When we practice empathy, it helps cultivate inner gratitude and joy, as we become more aware of the blessings we have and the positive impact we can have on others.

Wishing you all a joyful and restful holiday season.

Laurie Lynn, Director of Guidance



Helping Your Child Explore Their Interests

Helping children discover their passions and talents is one of the most rewarding parts of parenting. Encouraging exploration fosters curiosity, creativity, and confidence. Along with visiting local destinations, you can also incorporate activities at home to inspire and engage your child. Here are some tips and resources to help them uncover and nurture their interests.

1. Listen and Observe

Pay attention to what excites your child. Do they enjoy building, drawing, or exploring nature? Are they curious about how things work or love telling stories? These clues can help guide their exploration.

2. Encourage Exploration at Home

Home is a great place to try new things and spark interests. Here are some activities you can do together:

- Science Experiments: Create a mini-lab with simple materials like baking soda and vinegar for a volcano or plant seeds to learn about growth. Resources like Science Buddies (www.sciencebuddies.org) offer easy-to-follow experiments.
- Creative Arts: Set up an art station with paper, paints, and craft supplies. Try online tutorials from websites like Art for Kids Hub (www.artforkidshub.com).
- Cooking and Baking: Involve your child in the kitchen to teach math, science, and creativity while making family meals or fun treats. Host a family bake-off competition!
- Coding and Technology: Explore beginner coding with free tools like Scratch (scratch.mit.edu) or build simple projects using household items.
- Music and Dance: Encourage self-expression by learning a new instrument, making homemade drums, or dancing to their favorite songs.

3. Incorporate Local Resources

Complement home activities with visits to inspiring destinations:

- Art and History: Explore virtual tours from the Metropolitan Museum of Art (www.metmuseum.org) or visit in person for inspiration.
- Nature and Science: Pair a visit to the American Museum of Natural History (www.amnh.org) with creating a nature journal at home to document their observations.

4. Support Without Pressure

Encourage your child to try new activities without focusing on results. Let them explore freely, and remind them it's okay to move on from something that doesn't resonate.

5. Celebrate Effort and Growth

Recognize their curiosity and progress, no matter how small. Display their artwork, share their homemade meals, or discuss their projects together.

6. Combine Learning and Fun

Incorporate play into everyday activities. For example, turn building with blocks into an engineering challenge or use sidewalk chalk for creative outdoor storytelling.

By combining at-home activities with visits to local attractions, you create a rich environment for your child to explore, grow, and discover their unique interests.

POB JFK Visits Iona University

The POB JFK Guidance Department took 41 juniors to visit Iona University in New Rochelle, New York, for a full-day program on a college campus as part of our College Tour series. Highlights included a campus tour, an Admissions Office information session, and lunch at the dining hall. In addition, students had the unique opportunity to attend workshops with a focus on marketing and finance. POBJFK students engaged in informative conversations with Iona professors and gained a better understanding of the college admissions process.



Finding Warmth in the Winter: Staying Positive During the Holidays

As the days get shorter and temperatures drop, it's not uncommon to feel a bit of the "winter blues." While it's normal to feel a little down when the cold weather keeps you indoors, there are ways to stay positive and make the most of the season. Here are some tips to keep your spirits bright:

1. Get Moving

Even if it's chilly outside, staying active can help turn a frown upside down. Exercise releases endorphins, which are natural mood boosters. Bundle up and take a brisk walk, try an indoor workout routine, or join a fitness class. If you enjoy winter sports, ice skating or skiing can add an element of fun to your routine.

2. Let There Be Light

The lack of sunlight during winter months can affect your energy and mood. To combat this, try to spend time outdoors during daylight hours, even if it's just a few minutes. Open your curtains during the day to let natural light in and soak up some rays.

3. Connect with Loved Ones

The holidays are a time for togetherness, but it's easy to feel isolated if you're stuck inside or far from family and friends. Schedule regular video calls, send holiday cards, or plan small gatherings with friends or neighbors. Simple acts of connection can warm your heart and lift your spirits.

4. Create a Cozy Atmosphere

Lean into the season by embracing the art of coziness. Light a scented candle, snuggle up with a soft blanket, and enjoy a warm cup of cocoa or tea. Surrounding yourself with comforting sights, smells, and textures can help you feel more content.

5. Stay Engaged in What You Love

Whether it's baking, reading, crafting, or watching your favorite holiday movies, dedicating time to hobbies and interests can help keep your mind off the winter chill. Take this time to try something new or pick up a project you've been meaning to start.

6. Give Back

Helping others is one of the best ways to brighten your own outlook. Volunteer at a local charity, donate to a food drive, or lend a helping hand to a neighbor. Acts of kindness remind us of the true spirit of the holidays and can be incredibly fulfilling.

7. Practice Gratitude

Take a moment each day to reflect on the things you're grateful for. Whether it's your warm home, supportive friends, or a favorite winter treat, focusing on the positives can shift your mindset and help you appreciate the season.

8. Seek Support When Needed

If you're finding it hard to shake the feelings of the winter blues, ask for help. Talk to a trusted friend, family member, or school counselor. Sometimes, sharing your feelings and seeking support can make all the difference.

The holidays may come with challenges, but they also bring opportunities for connection, creativity, and reflection. By focusing on what brings you joy and taking steps to care for yourself, you can find warmth and positivity even in the coldest months. And remember, spring is just around the corner.

13th Annual Alumni Q&A Day at POB JFK High School Welcomes Back Our Finest!

On Wednesday, November 27, the Guidance and Health departments hosted the 13th annual Alumni Q&A Day, as part of the College 101 curriculum. This important and meaningful event welcomed back over 50 Class of 2024 graduates! These college students came in to participate in panel discussions in Health 12 classes to discuss their post-high school experiences. Some of the topics covered included balancing college academics, living in a dorm, commuting to college, social life on campus and much more. Alumni shared honest information on both the highs, and lows, of the post-POB JFK journey. From helpful websites and apps, to how to navigate the challenges of becoming an adult, alumni enlightened current seniors who are getting ready to embark on their life beyond POB JFK.



Give Something Back: Community Service Opportunities

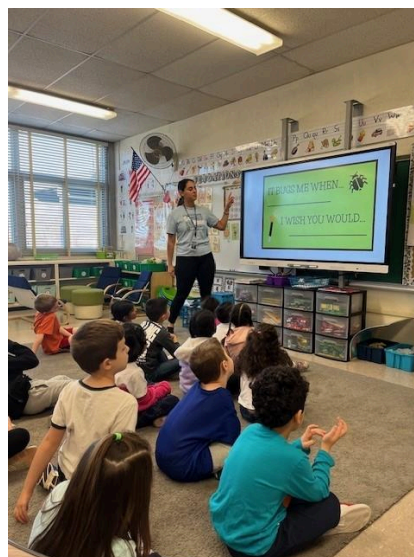
Part of holiday cheer is fostering a sense of gratitude and connection. Volunteering gives students an opportunity to support their communities while developing empathy, teamwork, and leadership skills. These experiences can be deeply rewarding and provide lasting memories, reminding young people of the joy that comes from helping others during this special time of year. [LI Teen Rise](#) is an online resource guide for volunteer opportunities around Long Island, created by a local student. There's no better time than the present to help others!

World Kindness Day at POB Middle School

With the help of the Best Buddies Club, POB Middle School celebrated World Kindness Day on November 13, 2024. Students demonstrated how they will be the "I" in Kind. Each student took time to think about what they could do to spread kindness in our school community.



Below: First Graders Learn About Problem Solving and Self-Advocacy at Old Bethpage Elementary with Ms. Lodato



Are you Looking for the Perfect Picture Book to Read to Your Children?

When you are having a hard day...

Bedtime Stories for Hard Days by Scott Stuart

Sharing isn't easy but it's important...

Sharing Is UnBearAble! By J.E. Morris

Finding time to be with your family...

The Lots-of- Time Machine by Paulette Bogan

A little empathy goes a long way...

King Lion by Emma Yarlett

It's important to be brave, even when it's scary...

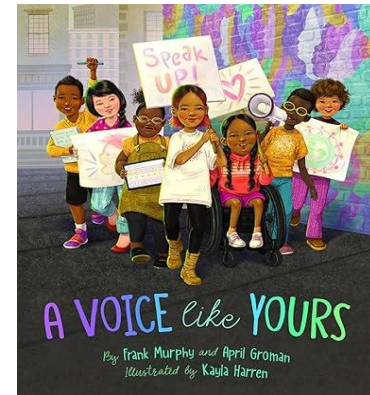
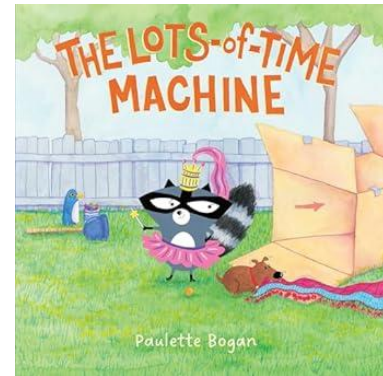
Dare to be Daring by Chelsea Lin Wallace

Even the best friendships have rough moments...

Bookie and Cookie by Blanca Gomez

Using our unique voices, because voices are meant to be heard...

A Voice Like Yours by Frank Murphy and April Groman



Attention High School Seniors: Complete Your FAFSA Today!

The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) is a crucial step for students planning to attend college. By completing the FAFSA, you unlock access to federal grants, loans, and work-study programs, as well as financial aid from many states and colleges. Filing early is key, as some financial aid is awarded on a first-come, first-served basis.

Here are some tips to get started:

- **Gather Your Information:** Have your Social Security Number, tax returns, W-2 forms, and other financial records ready. Dependent students will need their parents' financial information.
- **Create Your FSA ID:** This is your electronic signature for the FAFSA and other federal aid documents.
- **File Online:** Visit studentaid.gov to complete the application quickly and securely.

Don't miss out on funding opportunities for college. Even if you're unsure about your eligibility, filing the FAFSA is the best way to find out what financial aid you may qualify for. The sooner you apply, the better!

For questions, visit the Federal Student Aid [website](https://studentaid.gov) or contact your school counselor. Make this important step a priority today!

National Bullying Prevention Month at POB MS

In honor of National Bullying Prevention Month, POB Middle School celebrated Unity Day on October 16th. Unity Day serves to remind our school community that we are united for kindness, acceptance and inclusion and that bullying behaviors will not be tolerated. Through our school-wide activity called Project Connect, students were encouraged to think about what action they can take to create a more inclusive school environment. Student thoughts and ideas were added to orange links that were strung together to create a chain. This chain is on display in the main lobby for all to appreciate.



Tips for Talking About Online Safety

Discussing internet safety with your child is essential in today's digital world. *How* you speak to your child about this is critical in encouraging a healthy dialogue about digital usage. Here are some tips to guide this important conversation.

Engage Your Child

- Start by asking them what they know about internet safety. Encourage them to share their ideas for using devices safely and responsibly.
- Keep it positive: Remind your child that the internet can be a fun and engaging place when used responsibly. Emphasize that unsafe behavior online can disrupt this experience for everyone.
- Relate it to real life: Compare the internet to any other shared space—everyone has the right to feel safe and respected.

Be Clear and Specific

- Establish clear guidelines about what is and isn't acceptable online. Avoid gray areas to give your child confidence in their ability to navigate the internet safely.

Establish Expectations

- Set boundaries: Discuss which websites and apps your child is allowed to use.
- Teach privacy basics: Remind your child never to share personal information, such as their full name, address, passwords, phone number, or upcoming plans.
- Warn about strangers: Discourage your child from interacting with people they don't know online.
- Customize privacy settings: Help your child configure privacy settings on devices, websites, and apps to protect their information.

Monitor Internet Use

- Stay informed: Regularly talk to your child about the apps and websites they use. Research these platforms to understand potential risks and discuss safety strategies.
- Model good behavior: Use the internet together and demonstrate the kind of responsible online behavior you want your child to adopt.

Set Up a Plan

- Address cyberbullying: Discuss what cyberbullying is and how to identify it. Encourage your child to tell you or another trusted adult if they encounter anything online that makes them feel unsafe or uncomfortable.
- Create an agreement: Collaborate with your child to develop a written contract or agreement about internet safety and usage.

Using AI to Support the College Admissions Journey

The college journey is an exciting adventure of self-exploration and discovery, full of opportunities to gather, digest, and consider valuable information. With the support of our expert school counseling staff and innovative AI-powered tools, students and families can focus on finding colleges that align with their goals and dreams.

Gone are the days of flipping through endless brochures and books—today, AI-powered tools are transforming the college search process, making it more efficient, personalized, and less stressful.

AI tools offer tailored recommendations based on students' academic profiles, interests, and career goals. Here are some examples of how these tools can assist families:

- [Uni](#) provides interactive quizzes and algorithms to match students with colleges that align with their personalities and aspirations. The platform even integrates scholarship databases, simplifying the search for financial aid opportunities.
- [Kollegio](#) helps families manage the application process, tracking deadlines, essay requirements, and interviews. It also offers AI-driven feedback on essays, helping students refine their writing while staying true to their authentic voice.

By embracing these cutting-edge technologies, families can save time, reduce stress, and enhance their chances of finding the perfect college match. Remember, our counseling staff is here to guide and support you every step of the way.

Let's embark on this exciting journey together!

Five Things to Know About The Anxious Generation

The POB Guidance Department and Support Staff recently held its first Book Club, discussing Jonathan Haidt's New York Times bestseller, *The Anxious Generation*. The book offers crucial insights into engaging and educating today's youth. Here are the key takeaways:

1. **Limit Smartphones Before High School**
Introducing smartphone restrictions in elementary school could establish healthier habits by high school. Though challenging, this cultural shift could bring significant benefits.
2. **No Social Media Before 16**
Extensive research highlights the harmful effects of social media. Framing restrictions like anti-smoking campaigns of the past could help normalize this approach.
3. **Phone-Free Schools**
POB JFK High School is already using phone pouches during classes with success. Expanding this policy to cover hallways, lunch, and free time could further reduce distractions.
4. **Encourage Independence and Free Play**
Haidt emphasizes balancing real-world independence with virtual protection. Supporting kids in stepping out of their comfort zones fosters meaningful growth and self-sufficiency, aligning with Vygotsky's developmental theories.
5. **Positive Change Is Possible**
Just as anti-smoking efforts reshaped norms, changes to social media and technology use can succeed with time. Starting locally could inspire broader legal, educational, and cultural shifts.



Laurie B. Lynn
Director of Guidance
llynn@pobschools.org

Newsletter Editors:

Domenick DiDomenico
ddidomenico@pobschools.org

Sara Egosi
segosi@pobschools.org

Cristina Rivas-Laline
crilaline@pobschools.org

Board of Education

President, Ms. Debbie Bernstein

Vice-President, Mr. Seth Greenberg

Trustees

Mr. Gary Bettan

Mr. Jared Goerke

Ms. Ginger Lieberman

Dr. Karen Reiss Medwed

Ms. Tara Rock

Central Office Administration

Dr. Mary T. O'Meara, Superintendent of Schools

Mr. Christopher T. Donarummo, Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources & Safety

Dr. James E. Bolen, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum & Instruction

Dr. Christopher P. Dillon, Assistant Superintendent for Business

