



December 2021

Plainview- Old Bethpage Central School District GUIDANCE NEWSLETTER

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Director's Message

"I hope that in this year to come, you make mistakes.

Because if you are making mistakes, then you are making new things, trying new things, learning, living, pushing yourself, changing yourself, changing your world. You're doing things you've never done before, and more importantly, you're Doing Something.

So that's my wish for you, and all of us, and my wish for myself. Make new mistakes. Make glorious, amazing mistakes. Make mistakes nobody's ever made before. Don't freeze, don't stop, don't worry that it isn't good enough, or it isn't perfect, whatever it is: art, or love, or work or family or life.

Whatever it is you're scared of doing, Do it.

Make your mistakes, next year and forever."

— Neil Gaiman

Here's to a wonderful year ahead. Happy 2022!

Laurie B. Lynn, Director of Guidance



News From the Elementary Schools

Start with Hello

To celebrate the 4th year participating in Start With Hello, through the Sandy Hook Promise, the elementary school counselors chose meaningful activities, teaching children to become active members in helping their classmates in need. Efforts have certainly paid off as the elementary schools applied for the National Sandy Hook Promise District Award and won! A special thanks to all of the outstanding students, staff and parents who helped make this happen!

Bullying Prevention Month

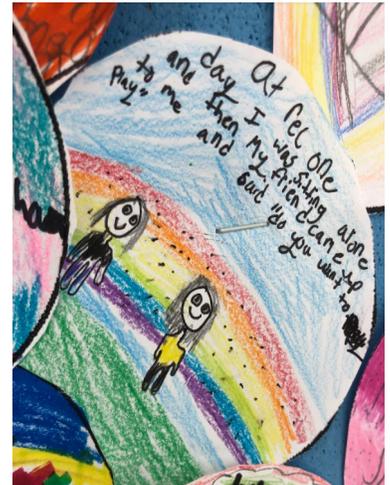
October was Bullying Prevention Awareness Month. The elementary schools celebrated this important month with daily announcements about being an upstander and practicing self care. Students participated in three coloring activities to promote an inclusive environment. On Unity Day, October 20, the entire elementary student body came together as a community to wear orange. Students watched a video made by student leaders, on why wearing orange is so important.

No Place for Hate

No Place For Hate is now officially in full swing with the first two activities underway. Activity 1 was Start With Hello Week, particularly the “What Lifts You Balloons” and “Power of One Word” activities. The second activity is underway and is called, “One Book, One School.” During this activity, each K-4 class will be reading *The Smallest Girl in the Smallest Grade* and learning how even someone small can make a big difference.

SEL In the Elementary Classrooms

Classroom lessons in the elementary schools follow the new Social Emotional Curriculum, Harmony SEL. This curriculum is free for parents to sign up and check out. The first unit focused on community building and inclusion. Currently, unit 2 is underway with a focus on empathy and critical thinking. To support this at home, please check out these home activities: [HAR_Home-Activities-Unit-2.pdf](#)



The Best of the Best

Is your family gifting digitally this year? Check out some of the best apps, movies, and books of the year for your child's age group! Common Sense Media is a great place to check if something is age appropriate for your children.

[Best Apps of the Year: 2021 \(commonsensemedia.org\)](https://www.commonsensemedia.org/best-apps-of-the-year-2021)

[Best Movies of the Year: 2021 \(commonsensemedia.org\)](https://www.commonsensemedia.org/best-movies-of-the-year-2021)

[Best Books of the Year: 2021 \(commonsensemedia.org\)](https://www.commonsensemedia.org/best-books-of-the-year-2021)

On [CommonSenseMedia.org](https://www.commonsensemedia.org) you can also find the [Parents' Ultimate Guide to ...](#)

- [Minecraft](#)
- [Google Classroom](#)
- [Fortnite](#)
- [YouTube](#)
- [Snapchat](#)
- [TikTok](#)
- [Roblox](#)
- [YouTube Kids](#)
- [Zoom](#)
- [Messenger Kids](#)
- [Parental Controls](#)
- [More ...](#)

Looking for a break from screens? Check out these fun and engaging screen-free activities and games to do at home:

- [Family Talk Board Game](#)
- [120 Screen Free Activities](#)
- [Indoor Games to Get Children Moving](#)
- [Positivity Board Game](#)
- [Try New Things Bingo](#)
- [Make your own holiday presents using this set of giftable badges with inspirational messages](#)



Signs of Stress

With the return to in-classroom learning, parents and teachers need to watch for signs of stress. They must be attuned to the cues that let them know when students may be suffering from diminished social stamina.

Many kids are excited about getting back to normal, others may experience a sense of being “judged” by peers or adults when they go back to school. They may have a longing to stay in the relative comfort and safety of home. Some may be especially hard-pressed to adapt. For those who struggle with social anxiety or difficulties with attention and self-regulation, remote schooling may have offered a relief from the difficulties and frustrations of in-person learning. Accordingly, a return to school means a return to familiar challenges.

Some signs of social stress may manifest, including:

- Challenges adjusting to the school routines, structures, and rules.
- Exhibiting anxiety and depression-related symptoms due to separation from parents and caregivers.
- Behavioral issues related to the traumatic stress of the pandemic, such as anger, outbursts and attentional issues.
- Irritability with friends, teachers, and events.

In general, the social pressures of in-person learning create potential complications for kids who have been out of their usual social routines for a year or more. Their social stamina—the ability to navigate a complicated interpersonal landscape—may have diminished through disuse.

Experts say parents, teachers, and administrators can play a pivotal role in ensuring that students are able to adapt to in-person learning. Educators have a unique influence in helping students navigate not just the academic but also the social challenges of post-pandemic education.



Self-Care Around the Holiday Season

As the holiday's approach, understanding the concept of self-care can be extremely valuable. So often during this time of year we put others' needs before our own. This can lead to burnout, resentment, and exhaustion!

Self-care is often poorly identified as taking a long walk, a massage, or sleeping in. While these things may be helpful, we should encourage ourselves to look at self-care a little bit more deeply.

Self-care is being aware of your wants and needs. What lights you up and makes you feel good. Conversely, what brings you down and makes you feel depleted? Being able to do this means being able to have effective boundaries.

What are boundaries?

Boundaries are borders in our own life. They define what is ours and what is someone else's. What are our likes, our dislikes, our values? What is me vs. what is not me? Where do I start and where does someone else begin?

Some questions to consider:

- What is my relationship with my wants and needs?
- Are you encouraged to be a peacemaker?
- Are you used to being a people pleaser?
- What do I want for myself?

Body signals that a boundary hasn't been set up soon enough

- Rage
- Irritability
- Resentment
- Chronic frustration

Lack of self-care can often look like:

When we neglect our own self-care (our wants and needs) it may look like this.

1. We believe we should put everyone's needs before our own.
2. Persistent anxiety that if we put our needs first, that everything will fall apart.

Practice

Practice saying NO without an explanation. Say no to people, places, and things that don't light you up on the inside.

After-School Questions

Research shows that most tweens would like to talk more with their parents about school. However, asking your middle grader "How was school today?" might not get you far. Instead, ask questions like the examples below to gain a better picture of your youngster's day:

- What's the coolest thing that happened today?
- Pretend you're the teacher: how would you describe the day?
- What made you laugh today?
- What was the most creative thing you did?
- How were you kind or helpful today? How was someone kind or helpful to you?

Effort = Results

The better your middle grader understands that hard work contributes to success, the more likely they are to put in effort. Help them see the connection with these suggestions:

- Focus on their actions. Rather than saying what a great writer your child is, you might point out that all the time they spent editing their essay made it better. They'll learn that they have control over the results they get.
- Encourage persistence. When your tween faces a setback, recommend that they make adjustments rather than give up. For example, say they receive a lower-than-expected score on a quiz, suggest they set aside more time to study for the next quiz.



Hawk Healthy Habits

As the weather gets cold here are some ideas for how you and your family can create healthy habits while staying warm! How many boxes can you and your family check off the list? Share on social media by tagging @GuidancePOB and #HawkHealthyHabits

- **Habit 1: Make Eating Colorful.** Try to eat food that are at least five colors of the rainbow
- **Habit 2: Drink More Water.** Try to only drink water for one whole day.
- **Habit 3: Stretch or Practice Mindfulness-** [GoNoodle | Stretch](#)
- **Habit 4: Meal Prep-** Meal prepping is not just for athletes anymore. Plan healthy meals ahead of time so you can be sure to get a balanced diet. [Meal Prepping With Kids](#)
- **Habit 4: Find Ways to be Active!**
 - **Balloon Volleyball-** Make a net by tying a piece of string from one chair to another. Then blow up a balloon and start practicing those serving skills! Change things up a bit by kicking or head-bumping the balloon.
 - **Freeze Dance** -Who doesn't like a good dance party? [Shaking it off](#) to a few favorite jams is a surefire way to get the kids off the couch. To brush up on listening skills, try freeze dance. The rules are simple: dance when the music plays and when the DJ stops the music, freeze!
 - **Book-Worm Workout-** [Story time](#) doesn't have to be just a bedtime ritual. Pick a book that has a word that's often repeated. For example, choose the word "hat" if you're reading *The Cat in the Hat*. Every time the word comes up in the story do a jumping jack. You can also play this game while watching a movie.
 - **Broom Hockey-** Use masking tape to set up a net on opposite ends of the hallway. Divide into two teams, making sure every player has a small broom. Use a tennis ball as your [hockey](#) puck. The first team to get 10 points wins. Plus, you get a clean floor!
 - **Set Up A Maze-** Turn the hall into a "laser" maze with yarn. Zig-zag yarn from varying heights and challenge your kids to get across without touching the "laser."
 - **Check out GoNoodle** -Tons of physical activities (from dancing to stretching) that you can do in a small space.
 - **Try Yoga-** [Cosmic Kids Yoga - YouTube](#)

Additional Resources:

- [Making New Year's Resolutions with Your Child... | PBS KIDS for Parents](#)
- [Speaking to children about holiday change](#)
- [How to Take the Stress Out of the Holidays](#)
- [Enjoy the Holidays More With Mindfulness](#)

Mental Health Corner

On November 16th, our district-wide Mental Health Providers, Dr. Jessica Macklin and Ms. Gina McGarry, presented a parent workshop to middle and high school families on “*Helping Adolescents Cope with Anxiety and School Avoidance*.” Here are some suggestions that were shared with families:

Reduce your children’s vulnerability to react to emotions:

- Provide structure and predictability: Create a routine and sleep schedule, set clear and reasonable expectations around behavior and academics.
- Model healthy coping skills at home and in the community.
- Implement healthy communication at home: Check in about emotionally sensitive topics, limit judgments, ask open ended questions and validate your children’s emotions.
- Create a space at home that will be comforting for your child when they need to manage their emotions
- Ensure your child is:
 - Getting enough sleep
 - Building healthy habits (eating, exercising, avoiding substances)
 - Building relationships
 - Building positive experiences every day

Help your children use coping skills on a regular basis:

- Use distraction - Go for a walk, read, write, games, help others, imagery, word puzzles, alphabet backwards, etc.
- Self soothe using the 5 senses – Find items that are soothing to feel, taste, smell, see, and hear.
- Model positive self talk / encouragement - “I’ve gotten through tough times before.”
- Practice deep breathing: ensure your out breath is longer than your in breath.
- Put coping tools into a box for easy access when in distress.

Tips for school avoidance:

- Create morning and night time routines
- Talk to your child about why they don’t want to go to school and problem solve
- Set limits and validate feelings – ‘I know you feel anxious about taking that test and you have to go to school and try your best on the test.’
- Practice what your child will tell peers about their absences.
- Continue to bring your child to school daily
- Use consistent rewards and consequences – reward small steps!
- Ensure that when your child is home they are safe but are not enjoying their time.
- Attempt to manage your own emotions.
- Talk to school staff about assisting in an exposure plan.

Did you know that the Plainview-Old Bethpage Central School District has a mental health partnership with Northwell Health? The Northwell Health school – based mental health program provides connection to therapy, medication management, psychiatric evaluations, crisis support, and more. Contact your school psychologist for more information.

PRIDE, UNITY and No Place for Hate

Mattlin and POB Middle Schools concluded a fun-filled PRIDE Week with a wonderful Unity Day event. At MMS, on Friday, October 22nd, all students and staff members made their way to the high school track for a school-wide UNITY march. Students marched the track to signify their commitment to UNITY, PRIDE and being a No Place for Hate School!



On Wednesday, October 20th, POB Middle School celebrated Unity Day. Unity Day is a day for all students to stand "united for kindness, acceptance and inclusion." Students decorated their school hallways with orange and were encouraged to wear orange in celebration of the day. During MAP, students participated in an activity called Project Connect, where each student received an orange strip of paper or "link" for their message of kindness. The paper links were connected to create long chains to visually represent the school uniting for a common cause. The chains were hung in the main lobby to spell out "Unity Day." These links serve as a daily reminder to treat each other with kindness and respect.



The Guidance Department and Support Staff Team came together to celebrate Unity Day on Wednesday, October 20. This event brings all of POBJFKHS together to stand against bullying and promote kindness, inclusion and acceptance.



5 Things You May Not Know About College Admissions This Year

As the holidays approach, and some students get decisions back from colleges, it is helpful to have a broad perspective about the process this year as it is never a "one size fits all" admissions cycle. Here are some trends to know that are new as well as recurring:

1. Nearly three quarters of JFK seniors have applied to at least one college by November 1 - Wow! Our office was incredibly busy leading up to 11/1. Don't fret, however, if you were not one of the early birds. There are still plenty of worms out there for you as well. Speak with your counselor about regular, rolling, or even Early Decision 2 applications.
2. Popular is not always right for you - Our top 20 schools that JFK students apply to are on our guidance webpage, and we encourage you, as always, to find your match. Counselors get just as excited to advocate for you at a school that hasn't seen a JFK application in years as we do when we see an application to one of our big "feeder" schools.
3. Earlier is better on the FAFSA - here is where you're better off being the early bird. You're simply more likely to be eligible for federal, state, or institutional money if you apply early, which means soon after October 1. Now would be the best time to file if you haven't already done so!
4. There's still a lot we don't know about enrollment management given the pandemic - think of the past two years as a "supply chain" management issue. Rather than computer chips and toilet paper, colleges are still reconfiguring their formulas and algorithms on admitting people. For you, this still means applying to financial and academic matches. If you get into a school that has overenrolled students, you will need to decide if you want to be on an overcrowded campus. If the school under-enrolls, be a wise consumer and look to ask which programs and services may be cut on campus.
5. Test optional is likely to stay at many places - some schools will still require standardized tests. For those that don't, you want to have control over where to send and where not to send your scores. You still want to present your application in the most favorable light, and if your scores are in the mid 50% for admitted students, it may be wise to send those scores to colleges. Speak with your counselor about your individual circumstances.

HAWK Awards at POB Middle School

POB Middle School is very busy celebrating their students' positive behaviors and recognizing when they help others with kindness! Every two weeks, staff members have an opportunity to nominate students for their random acts of kindness. Students are presented with a certificate to hang up at home and pictures are taken. There is nothing better than catching students demonstrating positivity. The word is out and it is catching on!

HAWK stands for:

H- Helping

A- All

W- With

K-Kindness



College Decisions: Waitlist and Deferral

You receive your college admissions decision, and it says, “You have been put on a waitlist.” What does this mean? It means that you meet the admissions criteria, but the college has already filled its quota. If a spot becomes available later on, you may be offered a place; but this often occurs after May 1 and even into June.

What if you’ve been deferred? Being deferred means that your application hasn’t been accepted yet, but it might be later. If you’ve applied as an early action or early decision application, a ‘deferral’ means you will be reviewed again during the regular application timeline and are freed from any obligation to attend the school if accepted. If you applied as a regular decision applicant, then the college is likely seeking more information on which to evaluate your application (i.e. updated test scores, senior year grades, etc.).

So Now What?

- Contact your regional admission representative to update them with any new achievements or supplemental material since your application.
- Keep up the hard work! You may be re-evaluated based on your senior grades and extracurricular commitments.
- Reconsider the colleges that accepted you and celebrate your accomplishments!

Waitlisted Students:

- Follow the college’s instructions on how to notify the admissions office whether or not you want to stay on the waitlist. If you decide to remain on the waitlist, prepare to attend another college so you are assured to have a spot at college in the fall.
- Contact the admissions office to find out about their waitlist process. Ask the college if they rank waitlisted students.

When in doubt, consult with your school counselor!



POBJFK Guidance Event Highlights

The Guidance & Counseling staff at POBJFK High School has had a busy fall! In addition to working with our students and families on a daily basis, there have been a number of programs to assist our students at each grade level. Below is a highlight of some of the programs to enhance our students and families' experiences at the high school.

- **Freshman Orientation:** The school counseling staff invited all incoming 9th graders to a program that included an introduction to the high school.
- **12th Grade Information Night:** Counselors presented to senior students and families about the in's and out's of the college application process. Topics included POBJFK HS application procedures, recommendation letters, personal essay, resume building, the importance of creating a "best-fit" list of colleges, and more. Click on the link to access all [Night Presentations](#) hosted by the POBJFK HS guidance counselors
- **11th Grade Information Night:** Counselors presented to 11th graders and their families. Topics included SAT/ACT testing timeline, Naviance, visiting colleges, communicating with college admission representatives and much more.
- **10th Grade Information Night:** The guidance staff introduced Naviance Student to sophomore students and families detailing the program's features.
- **Freshman Conferences:** Counselors host individual meetings with their freshman students to review high school expectations, the role of the school counselor, present progress, resume building, and more.
- **Financial Aid Night:** Representatives from Adelphi University's Office of Financial Assistance provided a step by step guide to the Financial Aid process.
- **Operation Apply:** POBJFK HS hosted two Operation Apply programs where school counselors were available to work with senior students on starting and completing their college applications. Students logged into their college application accounts, giving them the ability to continue or complete their applications with the support of the counseling staff nearby. In addition, teachers from the English department were available to help seniors with their personal essays and supplemental questions.

Attention Juniors!

Here are some words of advice regarding recommendation letters from our friends at the University of Pittsburgh:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l6Jsz0v0slY&feature=youtu.be>

National Scholarship Search Lands on Naviance

Access to a free National Scholarship Search was recently added to Naviance Student. This feature is enabled for 11th and 12th graders. Once the student has signed onto Naviance, they click on *Colleges* on the top banner, then under *Scholarships and Money*, they click on *National Scholarship Search*. The next screen is a list of scholarships based on pre-generated information. In addition, a student may personalize their search by selecting, "*click here to update your profile and scholarship filters*". A student will then be presented with a list of scholarship options, matching their criteria.

Email Etiquette

With children utilizing digital communication more frequently for school, it's important for them to understand how to properly write/format an email to their teachers.

What is Email Etiquette?

- Think of it as the "Code of Conduct" for email communications.
- It refers to the principles of behavior that individuals should use when writing and answering emails.

Why is Email Etiquette Important?

- Emails are a form of communication. Just as you follow face-to-face communication norms in conversation, you should do the same in written communication.
- Larger class sizes, busy schedules, and online classes make it difficult to have in-person discussions with teachers about questions and/or concerns.
- You want the message to be understood in a positive manner as well as taken seriously.

Format:

- Use proper structure and layout. Make sure to have short paragraphs with spaces in between multiple paragraphs.
- Watch out for run-on sentences and long emails. Emails are meant to be concise and to the point.
- Think about the impression the tone will make in the email.
- Do not write in all capitals, use emojis, or use abbreviations. Do not write an email like you are texting a friend.

In The Email:

- Start with the subject line: This should be a two- to five-word summary of what the email is about:
 - Example: "Missing Grade" "Homework Question" "Late Work"
- In the message body: Always start with a greeting:
 - Example: "Good Morning Ms. Smith" "Hello!" "Good Afternoon"
- Get to the point and add specific details:
 - Example: "I am writing because...", "I already tried...", "I remember the first step, but I can't remember..."
- Always end with a closing statement:
 - Example: "Thank you" "Have a good night"
- Sign your name at the bottom.

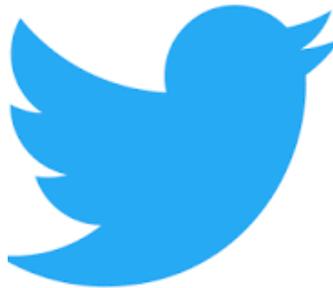
Other Tips:

- Allow the proper response time. This applies to both the sender and receiver. The rule of thumb is 24 hours. If no response occurs after that, you can follow up.
- Always double check your attachments to make sure you are attaching the right image or document.

WE'D LOVE TO
Connect
WITH YOU!



@POBJFK_Guidance



@POBGuidance



jas3j7o

Don't Miss Out On

- Scholarship Opportunities
- College Rep Visit Information
 - College News & Events
 - Financial Aid Information
 - SAT/ACT Dates and Details
- Student, Parent & Guardian Resources
- Elementary School Guidance Lessons and Updates
 - And much more!

**PEEP OUR AMAZING
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
COUNSELORS**



@mslodatopob



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Wishing our POB family a very happy and healthy holiday season!



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