



MIDLAND PARK PUBLIC
SCHOOLS

Week of Respect Newsletter

October 7-11, 2019



Midland Park Take Action Peer Leaders

Week of Respect Calendar of Events

October 1st

Keynote Presentation:
**"You Don't Know Me, Until
You Know Me"**

**By Mr. Mykee Fowlin
Grades 6-12**

October 7th

**Student Senate distributing
Orange Ribbons**

**K-2 Read Aloud with the
Principal (all week) Godwin**

October 8th

**"No Bully" Magic Show
Godwin and Highland**

**Intro Lesson to the Chil-
dren's Therapy Center
Grade 7**

October 11

**Holocaust Presentation:
Reflections on Washington,
D.C. Trip - Grades 11-12**

Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights Legislation *Dr. Marie C. Cirasella, Superintendent*

The New Jersey Department of Education's (NJDOE) website provides information for parents with regard to Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying (HIB) and our state's Anti-Bullying Statute (ABS). Among the most important resources provided is information regarding signs that your child is being bullied, "Children often will not tell parents about being bullied because they are embarrassed or ashamed; afraid of revenge from the bully; or do not believe that the situation will change if they report it. Since it may be difficult for a child to tell a parent he or she is being bullied, there are many signs parents can identify. The signs below may or may not be an indication of bullying, however, if parents see these signs, they should consider bullying as a possible reason for the behavior :

- Your child has cuts, bruises or scratches;
- Your child has few, if any, friends or playmates;
- Your child seems afraid to go to school, or complains of headaches or stomach pains;
- Your child does not sleep well or has bad dreams;
- Your child loses interest in schoolwork;
- Your child seems sad, depressed or moody;
- Your child is anxious or has poor self-esteem; or
- Your child is quiet, sensitive or passive.

Harassment, intimidation and bullying are serious offenses that will not be tolerated in the Midland Park Public Schools. To report an incident of alleged harassment, intimidation and/or bullying, please contact the school principal, the school's Anti-Bullying Specialist, and/or the District Anti-Bullying Coordinator. Contact information for these staff members may be found on our district website:
www.mpsnj.org



If your child is showing any of these warning signs, you should talk to them to find out the cause and then talk to your child's teacher or principal."

One of the greatest challenges with regard to ABS compliance is in identifying HIB under the law and the difficulty in attaining a global definition of these terms. In Midland Park, we continue to work with students, staff, and community partners to develop a greater understanding of what accurately defines HIB incidents or those which are more rightly remediated under the student code of conduct. Ensuring a safe and civil environment for all students is a primary concern in our district and we remain dedicated to working collaboratively and remaining in compliance. This year, we reaffirm our shared commitment to ensuring all incidents, whether identified as HIB or student code of conduct violations, are swiftly and appropriately addressed. Ongoing staff training, survey analyses, and the support of our School Safety Committees, make our district schools instructional environments where everyone feels safe, valued, and welcomed. For more information on HIB and the ABS, please refer to the NJDOE website: <https://www.state.nj.us/education/students/safety/behavior/hib>

A Message from Mr. Craig R. Rush District Anti-Bullying Coordinator

It has been nine years since the Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights Act was signed into law. Our school district continues its mission to maintain a climate that fosters a caring and inclusive community for all of our students. In 2011, Midland Park Public Schools set the goal to become a New Jersey school of excellence in the area of Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying (HIB) prevention. The district continues to work with Dr. Paula Rodriguez-Rust, Sociologist and Bullying Prevention Specialist. Dr. Rust serves as a consultant on best-practices program implementation when addressing school climate. In the spring of 2019, students (with parental consent) participated in a school climate survey for the ninth year in a row. Dr. Rust was able to interpret the data and compare and contrast the results of the 2019 survey with the data from the previous eight surveys. Dr. Rust will be making a presentation to the community on the results of the School Climate Survey on the evening of October 21, as part of our annual HIB Community presentation. All parents and interested community members are invited to attend.

As the district Student Assistance Counselor and Anti-Bullying Coordinator, I am proud to say that Midland Park remains committed to expanding its prevention efforts and initiatives. During the 2018 – 2019 school year, our members of the elementary and secondary School Safety/Climate Committees created Action Plans for each building. Our high school Take Action Peer Leaders made prevention-based presentations to our sixth grade, and provided two evening seminars on the topics of “Overcoming Obstacles” and “Procrastination.” Our high school Spectrums Diversity Club created a safe and caring environment for our students to celebrate the diversity of all students. Our middle school students received an annual “Cyberbullying” assembly provided by the Bergen County Prosecutors Office. Our seventh grade students had an opportunity to work directly with disabled students at the Children’s Therapy Center. In the classroom, our teachers used curriculum-based infused lessons to provide “teachable moments” in bullying prevention throughout the academic disciplines. We were honored to have Holocaust Survivor Mark Schonwetter and his daughter make a presentation to our eighth-grade students. We also had a speaker present to our Holocaust class on the Armenian Genocide. Our students are exposed to powerful and thought-provoking learning opportunities as they formulate their philosophies and prepare to be the leaders of tomorrow.

Highland and Godwin Schools recognize Respect Week

Highland School Principal: Peter Galasso

If you ask me what I want for my own children, what I want them to be, how I want them to live in this world – my response would be for my children to be: 1) healthy and 2) kind. That is it; everything else is gravy. As I progress through my career, now 16 years in, I am astonished how life in general has changed, how fast everything moves, and how everything we need to know can be found in the palm of our hands-literally. But, those two aspects of life, healthy and kind, even among all the advances we have made in the last quarter century, withstand the test of time and are still more important than anything the ‘advances’ of the 21st century has to offer. Of course, I want my children to be smart, or be great athletes, or succeed at an instrument, or take the lead in the musical. Of course, I want them to be great at everything they do, but not at the expense of being healthy, and certainly not at the expense of being kind to others. Those two things are the foundation of a good life. Research shows that one of the greatest ways to feel better about yourself and to achieve a sense of self-worth is by giving and doing for others: being kind. Research also shows how

mental and bodily health have a tremendous impact on personal well-being and overall happiness. In the end, isn’t that what we want—happy children? If this is the formula that I can reinforce to my children at home, it is certainly something we want to reinforce to the students. The Highland staff is always looking for opportunities to expand student horizons when it comes to health and kindness. To promote physical health our PE teachers incorporate a fitness unit throughout the year, using ropes, weights and resistance bands. They have also started a Physical Education Week to encourage students to be active at home. Highland School’s Social Emotional Learning program, though in its infancy stages, has shown great promise in getting students to understand goals and emotions so they can be healthy in mind. Furthermore, Ms. Scala and the staff have also set up opportunities for students to give and be kind both in and out of Highland School. Our Student Council, led by Mrs. Lelinho, travels to a shelter and prepares meals for the homeless every year. We also have countless donation opportunities that we engage the student body in. This

year, we are planning an experience where our students can travel to a children’s therapy center to help out with severely disabled children. Let’s not forget the little things, one of them being the ‘Make Someone Smile Campaign’ where students write anonymous notes to peers to make them smile. None of this is easy, and all of it is work that goes beyond academics. These activities may not make Highland School’s mandated state assessment scores better, but we are confident it will make our children better and happier people. Please keep this in mind with your own children because if we all try to raise healthy and kind little people, everything else will fall into place.



Godwin Principal: *Danielle Bache*

In the last five years, the Godwin School has taken a proactive approach to implementing the Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights. The daily mantra focuses on kindness, respect and the Golden Rule. Students are taught appropriate ways to interact with each other and “on the spot” interventions are used to mediate conflict. Through our Action Plan, developed with the School Safety Team, key areas are targeted to improve the overall climate and culture of the school. This work is ongoing to ensure our students understand, internalize and emulate the ideals of our school motto: Godwin PRIDE.

Godwin PRIDE is the umbrella we use to categorize traits that are important for students to develop at a young age. The acronym PRIDE encourages students to do their Personal Best, be Respectful and Responsible, Make a Difference in their school and community, Dream Big and Excel Academically. Through literature, conversations and assembly programs, we strive to help students understand each trait and emulate it in their daily lives.

At this grade level, students need to be explicitly taught how to be respectful, responsible, courteous and empathetic. If we want to create a society of socially conscientious individuals, we must spend the time teaching them how to be respectful, how to communicate and collaborate, and how to create and maintain positive relationships...just to name a few. Classroom teachers do an amazing job weaving these skills into everyday lessons. They seamlessly infuse life skills into their daily repertoire by creating an environment of respect and rapport, modeling acceptable behavior, and using teachable moments to guide acceptable behavior.

The journey is long and arduous at times, but the rewards are worth the effort. It is a team approach and one that cannot be accomplished without the efforts of all: parents, teachers, aides, coaches, principals, etc. We hope that families will partner with us on this quest to raise children who are respectful, responsible, courteous and conscientious.

Parent Resources on Bullying:

www.stopbullying.gov

www.netsmartz.org

Message From The Jr/Sr High School Principal *Nicholas Capuano, Principal*

As we embark on the “Week of Respect,” our dedication to our community in the high school should be highlighted and celebrated. Our pride is reflected in physical improvements to the building, academic performance, athletic accomplishments, dedication to the arts and music, and perhaps most important, the respect and dignity we share with one another.

When you enter the high school, you will notice a variety of improvements. The building has new windows, trim panels and soffits. These improvements instill aesthetic pride. In addition, we have made safety and security improvements with double locking doors in the front vestibule and renovations to the front office to enhance security protocol.

Our academic commitment is evident in our new dual enrollment classes, AP scores, and the new electives on the horizon, including a new culinary program.

Our students’ creativity is on display through the fine and performing arts. The fall drama, spring musical,

marching band competitions, and art exhibits are noteworthy. Please plan to attend the fall drama, *A Lighter Shade of Noir*, as well as the annual marching band competition, Music in the Park. Our athletic teams continue to be competitive and high performing. The football team has opened the year undefeated. We are still celebrating last spring’s accomplishments with the baseball team’s successful year and the golf team’s repeated titles of state sectional champs and county champs, as well as their designation as “Small School Golf Team of the Year.”

As a community, we can be proud of these student accomplishments and performances. Perhaps we can be most proud of the way our students are socially and emotionally developing to treat one another with kindness, dignity, and respect.

The “Week of Respect” serves as a reminder for the entire community to focus on kindness and tolerance for others every day. The Senate will be distributing orange ribbons to all students and staff to symbolize the common purpose of treating everyone with respect and dignity. Together we can continue to make MPHS an ever-improving learning environment.



Respect

Jason Cata, Assistant Principal

As each year moves on at Midland Park Junior Senior High School, our students grow older, while a new group of seventh graders join our family. Through these annual changes, we continue to foster a sense of trust and safety in the school culture. MPHS is proud of its culture that mirrors trust and safety. These attributes help build an institution where teachers can mold positive learning experiences for all students as they acquire the knowledge needed to become successful.

The positive learning environment always comes from the key idea that we MUST all respect one another: respect a person for having a bad day; respect a person for having a great day; respect a student who studied hard to earn their grade; respect the teacher who put a lot of time and planning into their lessons or units; respect that we are all Midland Park Panthers. Most importantly, respect yourself and hold yourself accountable for the positive aspects that surround you. If we can all commit to this, our school culture will continue to be a safe, trustworthy environment where academics and school pride flourish..

A Message about our District School Safety Teams

Midland Park Jr./Sr. High School Anti-bullying Specialists

Theresa Soda and Elizabeth Wall

The School Safety & Climate Team has been hard at work helping to make MPHS as safe and as inviting as it can be for our students. This committee is comprised of teachers, administrators, guidance counselors, case managers and parents.

This past year, the committee created and modified action plans to increase positive school climate. Based on the School Climate Survey and student input, the School Safety and Climate Team created action plans. The action plans were geared towards enhancing empathy of the student body and diminishing “hot spots” where conflicts had the potential to occur. The results from the School Climate Survey, that students participate in, have shown positive trends over the years thanks to our staff and community!

The physical education department have been hard at work integrating Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) into the 7th grade health curriculum. There are many studies that show the importance of SEL, and our school district is excited about this opportunity. We will continue to work with students, as well as the School Safety & Climate Team members, to keep our school the welcoming and accepting place it is. Keep an eye out for The School Safety & Climate Team’s future initiatives!

Meet our members!

MS/HS School Safety & Climate Team

Nick Capuano, *Principal*

Craig Rush, *Anti-Bullying Coordinator*

Liz Wall, *Anti-Bullying Specialist*

Theresa Soda, *Anti-Bullying Specialist*

Maureen Fister, *MS/HS Teacher*

Morgan Altemus, *MS Teacher*

Hanora Bellucco, *HS Teacher*

Karen Corcoran, *MS/HS Nurse*

Melissa Brockway, *S.H.I.P.*

Jason Tillson, *School Resource Officer*

Padma Dhalwani, *Parent*



Highland and Godwin Kelly Scala, Anti-Bullying Specialist

The Climate Committees at Highland/Godwin have been working with the staff, parents and students for several years now to improve the school climate.

The team works hard on maintaining the positive climate in Godwin. Ms. Bache works hard to make sure the focus is always on “Kindness and Respect.” She has several posters throughout the school and this year added some beautiful murals with inspirational quotes for the kids to enjoy as they walk through the hallways.

Throughout the year, assemblies, read-alouds, and direct lessons are taught to emphasize the ideals of good character using the motto Godwin PRIDE, with each letter of pride representing the various ways to show pride.

Mrs. Scala further enhances the character education program through the Second Step Program. Direct lessons are taught in first and second grades to help children understand how to interact and deal with conflict. The team also decided to invite a puppeteer to come in and highlight the important message of the power of kindness.

Throughout the year, Ms. Bache would also meet with the lunch aides to discuss ways of changing the climate on the playground and in the lunchroom to reinforce positive behavior.

Ms. Bache and the staff tend to focus on “teachable moments” throughout each day to reinforce the proper behavior which encourages the students to continue to strive to do it themselves.

Mr. Galasso told the team he would be conducting “Do the Right Thing” assemblies with the students rewarding those students who exhibited positive role models and were recommended by their teachers. A mentor program was also implemented in Highland with the 3rd and 6th grades to foster positive role model relationships.

Mrs. Scala developed an “intergenerational” program with a fifth grade class which consists of monthly trips to the Mill Gardens Assisted Living home. She will also launch a program with the fifth grade this year

where they will visit the senior center in town on a monthly basis to foster positive relationships with the seniors living in the community. Throughout the year, Mrs. Scala facilitates several charitable fundraisers at both schools, to support various causes in an effort to enhance the positive ideals of good character. At the annual HIB Community Presentation, parents have the opportunity to review the Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights Act and to review the results of the School Climate Survey.

2019- 2020 Godwin Safety/Climate

Team: Ms. Bache (Principal), Mrs. Scala (Anti-Bullying Specialist), and Ms. Disposito (HIP Representative), Mr. Rush (Anti-Bullying Coordinator), Mr. Winters (Teacher), Mrs. Martinez (Teacher), Mrs. McCarthy (Parent), Mrs. Tarleton (Parent) and Officer Jason Tillson (SRO officer).

2019- 2020 Highland Safety/Climate

Team: Mr. Galasso (Principal), Mrs. Scala (Anti-Bullying Specialist), Ms. Disposito (HIP Representative), Mr. Rush (Anti-Bullying Coordinator), Mrs. Chase (Teacher), Mrs. Mullady (Teacher), Mrs. Sonderfan (Parent), Mrs. Dhalwani (Parent) and Officer Jason Tillson (SRO Officer).

District Anti-Bullying Coordinator: Mr. Craig Rush, Ph: (201) 444-7400, ext. 206
Email: crush@mpsny.org

Godwin & Highland Anti-Bullying Specialist: Ms. Kelly Scala,
Ph: (201) 445-3880, ext. 319,
Email: kscala@mpsny.org

MPHS Anti-Bullying Specialist:
Ms. Theresa. Soda & Ms. Elizabeth
Wall Ph: (201) 444-7400, ext. 212,
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A Message from the Athletic Director, Mike Gaccione

Leadership is a characteristic that is often tied to athletics. In professional sports, many leaders are the star or captain, leading their team through both good and bad times. At the High School level, leaders are also characterized by upperclassmen and admiration. However, those features do not always epitomize great leaders.

At Midland Park we encourage all of our student-athletes to strive to be a leader. We have successfully explained that leadership is attained through honest, integrity, good communication, and respect among other qualities. We continue to encourage these attributes to our students, and although we encourage this growth each and every day, we believe the “Week of Respect” is a great time to reflect on one’s actions. So, I encourage everyone to be the best leader they can be for Midland Park.

