

High School Parents[®]

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Chambersburg Area School District

still make the difference!

Talk to your teenager about how to be respectful at school

Teens don't always know what "showing respect" means, especially in a school environment. They have a vague idea that they need to say *please* and *thank you*, and they know they have to listen to their teachers.

At school, students don't just have to respect teachers, the principal and other staff members. They also have to respect the other students and the school building. Discuss this with your teen.

Talk about respectful:

- **Language.** Your teen should refrain from cursing, using inappropriate language or using racist words. Discuss how people unintentionally overhearing his conversation might get offended.
- **Conduct.** Your teen shouldn't hit, jump on, touch or forcefully bump into others—even if he is just fooling around with friends. He should also avoid talking back to teachers or using disrespectful body language such as rolling his eyes.
- **Treatment of the building.** Your teen shouldn't paint or write



graffiti on walls or lockers, or even write on desks in classrooms. He shouldn't deface posters on the walls.

- **Treatment of possessions.** If your teen is borrowing his textbooks from the school, he should not write in them or tear pages. He should also be mindful of how he treats others' possessions. Encourage him to treat others' things as carefully he would his own.

Source: "Delaware Valley Charter High School Respect Code," Delaware Valley Charter High School, [www.dvchs.net/Portals/0/Policies/Respect Code1.pdf](http://www.dvchs.net/Portals/0/Policies/Respect%20Code1.pdf).

Expectations are road maps for your teen



Setting high expectations for your teen is the only way to be certain she will succeed in school.

Think of your expectations like a road map—without the map, there's no guarantee your teen will end up at the final destination (or even know what it is). With the map, she'll be able to successfully find her way.

To make sure your expectations for your teen are clear:

- **Talk about future goals.** Help your teen make plans for the future and figure out how to make those plans a reality.
- **Discuss the link between effort and outcome.** Assure your teen that you are more concerned that she give her best effort than that she get all A's.
- **Make time to talk about school and schoolwork.** Your teen will feel that you are interested in her education.
- **Have your teen set routines for homework and chores.** This shows your teen that you are confident in her abilities to get the "little things" done by herself—and will prepare her to tackle larger goals.

Encourage your high schooler to remain aware, alert online



Your high schooler likely has at least one social networking profile floating out there in cyberspace. You've told

her not to post her real name, her address, her phone number or any disgraceful pictures online.

But make sure your teen also knows:

- **How to use the website's privacy settings.** Most social networking websites allow users to limit who is able to see their profiles. Some websites even have a "block" feature where users can restrict people from being able to contact them at all.
- **Not to answer messages or accept friend requests from strangers.** Even if someone says he's a friend of a friend, your teen should not

communicate with that person until she can verify his identity.

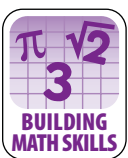
- **To tell you** if someone she doesn't know is constantly messaging her. You can report cyber harassment to the website administrator or to the police. Have your daughter keep a record of all messages and the dates they were sent.

Source: Vallencia Cunningham and Crystal Garcia, editors, "When a Cyberstalker Invades Your Life," Teen Voices Online, www.teenvoices.com/issue_current/articles/august_09_stalker.html.

"At the end of the day, the most overwhelming key to a child's success is the positive involvement of parents."

—Jane D. Hull

Practice really does make perfect when it comes to math classes



Math is one of the most useful classes your teen will take in school—and one of the most difficult.

Unfortunately, there's no single "magic secret" that will help your teen do well in math. It takes work—even the best math students study every day.

Share these math studying tips with your teen:

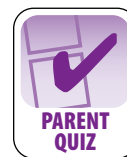
- **Take notes in class**—and review them each evening. Write down any questions you have and ask the teacher the following day.
- **Do the homework every day.** Don't wait until 30 minutes before the class to complete homework.
- **Hold on to old quizzes** and homework. They'll help you remember

the steps you used to solve each problem—and you're likely to see similar problems on the next test.

- **Solve sample problems.** Look in the book and ask your teacher for sample tests you can take.
- **Start a study group.** What you don't know, a friend might. Just be sure to keep the focus on math.
- **Don't be afraid to ask questions** in class. If you're confused about how to solve a problem, others in the class may feel the same way.
- **Avoid missing classes.** All learning builds day by day—especially math. If you do fall behind, ask for help right away.

Source: "Study Tips from Actual Students," ETSU Developmental Studies, www.etsu.edu/advisement/devstudy/studytips.jsp.

Can you help your teen deal with a tough teacher?



Sooner or later, every student will encounter a tough teacher. Are you preparing your teen for life after high school by

helping him deal with this challenge? Answer *yes* or *no* to the questions below to find out:

- ___ **1. Have you reminded** your teen that throughout his life he will have to deal with people who are difficult?
- ___ **2. Have you talked** with your teen about his goals for the class? If he wants to earn a good grade, he will need to work with the teacher.
- ___ **3. Have you brainstormed** with your teen about things he can do to improve the relationship?
- ___ **4. Have you explained** to your teen that the teacher's attitude does not have to affect him? He is still a capable student who works hard.
- ___ **5. Will you encourage** your teen to talk with his guidance counselor if the problem persists?

How well are you doing?

Each *yes* means you are helping your teen learn how to handle life's challenging people. For each *no* answer, try that idea in the quiz.

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Show your teen how to learn information in breadth, in depth



In high school, your teen is expected to do two different types of learning. Some subjects are covered in *breadth*,

while others must be learned in *depth*.

Breadth means getting a broad understanding of the overall subject. In U.S. history, it involves being able to name at least three causes of both the Civil War and the Great Depression. To learn information in breadth:

- **A single reference**, such as a textbook, is all that is needed. The goal is to understand the key points or most important events.
- **Memory is the key.** The student needs to understand how things fit together, knowing, for example, that Hemingway and Fitzgerald wrote at roughly the same time.

Depth involves learning the details of a particular subject: why the Battle of Gettysburg was a turning point in the

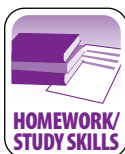
Civil War, for example. It usually focuses on a single topic, with the goal being to learn as much about that topic as possible. To learn information in depth:

- **Consult different reference sources.** A student should understand different points of view on a subject and then draw her own conclusions about it.
- **Analysis is the key.** A student should ask questions when learning in depth: Why did that occur? How might things have gone differently?

Research has shown that students who study topics in greater depth often have an advantage when they reach college. If your teen can't stop talking about last week's lesson in chemistry, encourage her to do additional research on the topic.

Source: Rebecca P. Arrington, "Study Finds That Students Benefit From Depth, Rather Than Breadth, in High School Science Courses," UVA Today, www.virginia.edu/uvatoday/newsRelease.php?id=7912.

Teach your high schooler how to create a 'study island' for success



Today's teens never seem to focus on one thing at a time. They send text messages while they read their history. They watch

TV while they're writing their English paper.

And they're not doing any of it *well*. Research shows that the brain can really focus only on one thing at a time. So one of the best ways you can help your teen be successful is to create a "study island."

It should be a quiet place—somewhere your teen can focus on studying. And it should be separated

from the rest of the world. That means no phone or text messages and no TV. It also means only using the Internet for school work during study time.

Have your teen try this for a few weeks. Keep track of how long it takes him to do his homework. Also keep track of the grades he receives.

Before long, he should begin to notice a difference. When he studies on his "study island," his grades will go up.

Source: Lawrence J. Greene, *Study Max: Improving Study Skills in Grades 9–12*, ISBN: 1-41290-468-4 (Corwin Press, a SAGE Company, www.corwinpress.com).

Q: My daughter tells me she falls asleep in her English class! It's her first-period class and she says that a combination of a subject she doesn't like and the early hour just knock her out. What can I do?

Questions & Answers

A: Studies show that most teens are not, by nature, morning people. But they have to get up and get to school anyway.

Sleeping in class is a problem. First, your daughter is obviously missing some of what the teacher has to say. If she already struggles with English, this will make the situation worse.

She is also hurting her relationship with the teacher. If she ever wants extra help, the teacher may wonder why she didn't pay attention the first time he taught the material.

So work with her to find ways she can stay awake during her class. Here are two ideas:

1. Enforce a bedtime. No, your teen won't like it. But as long as she can't meet her responsibilities in the morning, she'll just have to go along.

Make sure your teen knows that bedtime means "no media." Don't let her keep her cell phone in her room for recharging—she'll send text messages all night. Turn off the computer and the TV, too.

2. Encourage her to make some changes in class. Have her talk with the teacher and request a seat near the front of the room. A combination of more sleep and a little more focus should keep your teen awake during all her classes, even the early-morning ones.

—Kristen Amundson,
The Parent Institute

It Matters: The Home -School Team

Refer to your school's website for information



You're out of town on the night of the band concert. But you may not be out of luck.

Today, some schools "broadcast" school

activities online.

Here are some of the things you can find out on school websites across the country. You can:

- **Hear the lecture** that the famous author delivered to the 11th grade English classes.
- **Find out what's for lunch** on the school menu.
- **Pay for school lunch.** Some schools allow online payments for lunches and other fees, including activity or bus fees.
- **See what your child will learn** in that math class. Many schools post a description of courses offered.
- **Check assignments.** Does your teen say there's no history assignment tonight? Go on the website—many teachers post assignments each day.
- **Check out the dress code.** He wants to wear a T-shirt with a beer ad on the front. Can he do that? An online link will let you find out what is—and isn't—going to pass muster.
- **Read the parent handbook,** just in case yours is lost in a drawer somewhere.
- **Find the dates** for college testing. Many schools list both the date of the testing and the date by which students must register.
- **Review the school calendar** for scheduled school closings.

Talk to your teen about what it takes to prepare for college

Most students (and most parents) think they will go on to college after high school. But far too often, neither group knows what students need to be ready.

One study found that only about one student in eight had any idea of the courses they needed to take to be successful in school. Many did not know that *all* grades count—and that colleges may look at grades of students as early as eighth grade.

All this means that students may reach their senior year and discover that they can't get into a college. Or they may have to take remedial classes when they get there.

What can you do?

- **Don't wait** until your teen is a senior. Find out what classes are needed to get into college. Talk with the guidance counselor.



- **Get involved.** Be sure your teen signs up for the right classes. She may not want to take that extra math class, but it could have a big impact on her future.
- **Stay in touch** with the school. Be sure your teen's teachers and counselors know your goals.

Source: Jennifer Dounay, "Involving Families in High School and College Expectations," Education Commission of the States, www.ecs.org/clearinghouse/70/37/7037.htm.

Rule out vision problems if your teen is having trouble in school



If your child is having trouble with school, the problem may be his eyes. Studies show that as many as one in four students has a vision problem. Some may be so serious that they can't see well enough to read the board. Or, they could have trouble seeing close up to read.

Not all schools test students' vision. And students may not know that their academic problems are really caused by poor vision. In particular, close-vision problems may go undetected.

Here are some signs your teen may have a vision problem:

- **Squinting.** Kids who can't see well sometimes squint to try to improve their vision.
- **Headaches.** Students who strain to read the board or their book may get headaches.
- **Holding books too closely.**

If you notice these signs, ask your doctor for a vision test. A pair of glasses may improve your teen's vision—and his grades.

Source: "Vision Problems Linked to Poor Grades," Teacher Magazine, www.teachermagazine.org/tm/articles/2009/08/26/badvisionbadgrades_ap.html.