

COUNSELLING MATTERS...

Parent Meetings/Tips for Grade 9/FCD visit

From the High School Counsellor...

Two evening events for you this coming week:

'Freedom from Chemical Dependency' Parent Evening
NOTE DATE CHANGE
Tuesday 4th November
MYP LGR 7pm - 8pm
(More information on Page 2 of this newsletter)

'U.S. University Application info session and College Extension Opportunity' Janet Tso from WorldStrides
Thursday 6th November,
MYP LGR 6pm - 7pm

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Tips for Grade 9

Find something you enjoy doing and then keep doing it. Dance, basketball, math, debate, robotics, writing — the interest itself is far less important than the pleasure you take from it. You may encounter well-meaning people who encourage you to “find your passion.” There’s nothing wrong with that advice as long as you don’t mistake passion for a single-minded focus on one pursuit to the exclusion of all others. High school affords you more opportunities than you’ve probably ever had to explore classes and activities. Try new things. You may be pleasantly surprised at what you learn about yourself.

If a teacher gives you advice, take it. Teachers are smart people, and they want you to be successful. They observe more than you realise, from your study habits to your classroom demeanour to your interactions with your peers. They know what works and what doesn’t: Write down your homework assignments. Plan out long-term projects. Ask for help when you need it. Don’t multitask when you’re studying. In the moment, the advice might seem nagging and inconsequential, but it’s not. Your teachers are trying to help you build good habits that will benefit you well beyond this year. If you follow their advice, you’ll do just that.

Take some risks. That may sound scary. After all, risk-taking always comes with the potential for both rewards and failure. But in 9th grade, the stakes are not very high, and you probably have more safety nets underneath you than you realise. So go ahead: Audition for a play. Try out for a team. Volunteer in your community in a way that challenges you. If you happen to make a misstep, just remember that some of the most powerful lessons we learn in our lives often come not from our successes but our failures — and that’s true no matter how old you are.

Don’t let your strengths limit you. How can strengths be limiting? Too often, students let themselves be defined by what they’re good at, which in turn makes it very easy for them to write off subjects that don’t come naturally. ‘I can’t do math. I don’t write well. I stink at art. I’m terrible with languages.’ It’s one thing to recognise that some subjects are more challenging (and perhaps less enjoyable) than others. It’s another to let that perspective devolve into a defeatist attitude. Not only does that temperament almost always result in lacklustre grades, it also encourages people to see the more challenging fields as a waste of time. I assure you they are not, and any teacher of any subject will be more than happy to dissuade you of this notion.

Ask questions. Even though it’s probably too early to think about applying to college, some of you are already thinking about applying to college. If that’s the case, you probably have questions. You also have more resources at your disposal than you probably realise. From your counsellor to your teachers to admission officers at colleges, you have an army of people ready to help you think about your future: how to plan, how to prepare, and what to expect. All you need to do is ask.



As you know, we have invited Prevention Specialists from FCD Educational Services to join our community next week from Monday to Wednesday. FCD provides substance abuse prevention education for schools. Since 1976, they have taught over a million students of all ages. Their mission is to:

- Encourage and support the non-use of alcohol and other illegal or illicit drugs during the growing years.
- Empower young people to make healthy, responsible choices regarding alcohol and other drug use

- Teach students and adults how to recognize the early warning signs of substance abuse and to intervene appropriately
- Educate students, parents, teachers, and administrators on the physiological and psychological effects of alcohol and other drugs
- Promote awareness of drug addiction, including alcoholism, as a progressive, chronic, and often fatal disease
- Provide educational communities with the guidance and training necessary to implement comprehensive, effective approaches to substance abuse prevention

FCD Prevention Specialists are highly trained professionals who have achieved long-term recovery from alcohol or other drug addictions. This unique perspective enhances the credibility of their message and provides students with role models for happy, healthy, drug-free living. The FCD Prevention Specialists will present a parent workshop to offer support and guidance in helping your children enjoy a drug-free adolescence on **Tuesday 4th November at 7pm in the MYP LGR**. Some of the topics to be addressed include:

- Effective ways to communicate with your child about drugs and drug use
- Up-to-date facts about current drug use and trends
- What to say about your own experiences with alcohol and/or drug experimentation
- How to spot early warning signs of trouble and effective ways to respond.

This program presents a perfect opportunity for discussing alcohol and other drug-related issues with your children. Parental involvement is crucial to our efforts to reduce the risks teenagers face. We want our students to hear from both school and home that we are concerned about alcohol, tobacco and other drug use, and that we are committed to keeping our children safe.