

# Parent Learning Community

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## NEWS YOU CAN USE

The purpose of this newsletter is to gather and organize information for parents regarding topics that are useful and support networking and collaboration. We would like to continue our Parent Learning Community in the hopes of sharing ideas and information as we all interact with the teens in our community.

Collaboration with the school and using the school social worker to help research and put the ideas in written form made sense to help parents share ideas in a time-effective way. Our hope is that questions and concerns can come through the email address anonymously

so that parents feel comfortable asking questions that may be difficult to discuss otherwise. There are “no holds barred” on questions and topics that may arise for discussion.

So, how does this work?

First, the topic is emailed to me so I can gather articles and information. Then, the newsletter is composed and distributed. If parents are interested, a meeting can be set up at for parents to discuss the topic together. Just let me know...

My e-mail is [Liberatore.Melissa@rrcs.org](mailto:Liberatore.Melissa@rrcs.org)

## The Question...Dear Counselor (Mrs. Morriss)

**Dear Guidance Counselor,**

I am a RRHS parent who wants to learn more about how to make sure my high school student is safe in the community?

~a RRHS Parent

**RRHS Parent,**

I have had several parents ask this question during my time as a Guidance Counselor. Parents want to make sure their teen is safe, but find it difficult to monitor their teen to make sure they are making safe decisions in the community.

Teens definitely need freedom to make mistakes. They can learn from mistakes. However, as parents, we want to give some parameters to the kids' freedom so that the consequences are not too big.

I have always felt that communication is the key to influencing kids. Strangely enough, by listening, and being open to talking (sometimes about topics that we are not fully comfortable about), we can influence

our kids' decisions in a positive way. Still, it's important to set some concrete rules.

Teens are not experienced in how to handle all situations they encounter...even if they think they are. Your teen needs the structure that rules and limits provide. It provides the support they need to experience life more safely than they may on their own. Rules and consequences help kids develop the self-control that they will need when they are truly on their own.

Even though they may test limits and complain (loudly) when rules are enforced, teens need limits. Your rules regarding issues like curfew, substance use, friends & acquaintances, dating, cell phones, Internet and unsupervised time, driving (and more) can make all the difference in the world.

Feel free to call if you have questions or need support. The RRHS Guidance phone number is (440) 356-6804. The Safe School Helpline is 800-418-6423 x 359.



## Personal Safety for Teens

Neighborhood Watch News, Vol 16, Iss. 5, Washington Cty Sherriff's Offc, May 2002

According to the National Crime Prevention Council, teens are twice as likely as adults to be victims of crimes such as rape, assault, and robbery. Although statistics also tell us that the overwhelming majority of victims know their attackers (10-15% of sexual assaults occur between strangers), it's the unknown that we tend to fear the most. Teens also need to understand how to differentiate between healthy relationships and abusive and controlling ones.

Time and time again, the most effective strategy for keeping kids safe are parents who are actively involved in their children's activities, know their whereabouts, and are engaged in teaching them about personal safety. Here are some ideas and reminders—"talking points"—that you can share with your child or that special teen in your life.

### Awareness

- Stay alert and tuned in to your surroundings. Look around for danger signs!
- Keep your wits about you and stay sober. Alcohol is known as the number one date rape drug!
- ALWAYS trust your inner voice! That internal alarm alerts us to unseen but very real danger!
- If something doesn't feel right, don't wait to find out what-it could be too late!!
- Don't give people the benefit of the doubt, make them EARN your trust!

### Body Language

- Project a confident and decisive attitude.
- Keep looking around as you walk or wait on the street. Show that you're not an easy target!
- Take up space when sitting or standing to help define your personal boundaries.

- Make brief, selective eye contact that sends a message that you notice others around you.

### Have A Plan!

- Travel with a group.
- Avoid problem areas and short-cuts through unknown territory.
- If followed or feeling threatened, head for a safe area: GO TO THE LIGHTS AND THE NOISE!
- Carry a cell phone.
- Use your voice-have something to say! Shout or scream to draw attention.
- Practice yelling or speaking loudly. NO! BACK OFF! LEAVE ME ALONE!
- Prepare yourself further by taking self-defense or martial arts classes.

*"A danger foreseen is half avoided"*

Officer Mike Bernhardt says:  
*"Teens should use the 'buddy system' when they are out in the community."*



## Protecting Yourself:

### A list of tips on staying safe

#### *National Crime Prevention Council*

- Don't walk or jog early in the morning or late at night when the streets are deserted.
- When out at night, try to have a friend walk with you.
- Carry only the money you'll need on a particular day.
- Don't display your cash or any other inviting targets such as pagers, cell phones, hand-held electronic games, or expensive jewelry and clothing.
- If you think someone is following you, switch directions or cross the street. If the person continues to follow you, move quickly toward an open store or restaurant or a lighted house. Don't be afraid to yell for help.
- Try to park in well-lighted areas with good visibility and close to walkways, stores, and people.
- Make sure you have your key out as you approach your door.
- Always lock your car, even if it's in your own driveway; never leave your motor running.
- Do everything you can to keep a stranger from getting into your car or to keep a stranger from forcing you into his or her car.
- If a dating partner has abused you, do not meet him or her alone. Do not let him or her in your home or car when you are alone.
- If you are a battered, call the police or sheriff immediately. Assault is a crime, whether committed by a

stranger or your spouse or any other family member. If you believe that you are in danger, call a crisis hotline or a health center (the police can also make a referral) and leave immediately.

- If someone tries to rob you, give up your property—don't give up your life.
- If you are robbed or assaulted, report the crime to the police. Try to describe the attacker accurately. Your actions can help prevent someone else from becoming a victim



## What's Next?

Rocky River Police Department (Officer Mike Bernhardt) is working with RRHS to develop age-appropriate Personal Safety videos for Goldwood, Kensington Rocky River Middle School and Rocky River High School. The videos will be filmed by our own Broadcasting Class Students and shown to students. Additionally, RRHS is working with Officer Bernhardt to develop a Personal Safety Forum for parents this Spring. *More details will follow.*

YOUR LOGO  
HERE

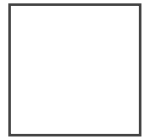
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We're on the Web!  
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