

TRANSITIONS – TIPS FOR MIDDLE SCHOOL PARENTS

As each new school year gets underway, teens have the opportunity to reinvent themselves. They are a year older than last September and facing new classes, new classmates, new teachers, maybe a new look, a new attitude. All these changes represent a fresh beginning and a new developmental milestone, but with these changes come new expectations, for you and your kids. Teens will be looking for more freedoms and more privileges, which entail greater responsibilities.

Now is an ideal time to reevaluate and communicate your expectations for your teen, adjusting limits and clarifying family rules.

The new school year offers the perfect set-up for discussing your values about concerns such as:

- Homework, academic integrity
- TV and internet time/content
- Curfews
- Hanging out
- Communication policies (like calling when you change locations)
- Tobacco, alcohol and marijuana use
- House parties
- Sexual activities
- Social values
- Household responsibilities (chores, errands, cleaning, etc.)
- Financial responsibilities

Every family has its own “social norm,” and every teen is different. The important thing is to talk to your teen often. Clarify expectations and consequences and keep the lines of communication open.

B-PEN (*Brookline Parent Education Network*) works with Brookline school administrators and PTOs to engage and educate parents on how to successfully navigate the complex social and emotional challenges currently affecting teens and pre-teens – developmental challenges all our kids face in some form or other that often can lead to risky behavior. Our goals are to facilitate connections – with other parents, with school and town resources, and with helpful information via written/electronic materials on a wide variety of teen concerns. For more information on B-PEN or for help starting a Parent Network, visit www.B-PEN.org or contact coordinators June Harris (june_harris@psbma.org) or Karen Campbell (Karen_campbell@psbma.org)