

Save the Dates!

- **High School Night:** Monday, 10/5 at 5:30 pm for 8th grade families
- **LINKS Inc Parent Orientation:** Tuesday 10/6 at 6pm for 7th and 8th grade parents
- **School Closed:** Monday, 10/12 for Columbus Day
- **Board Meeting:** Tuesday, 10/13 at 6pm in the Common Room
- **Progress Report Conferences:** Friday, 10/23 3:30-6:00 pm
- **Violence and Vandalism Awareness Week:** 10/19-10/23
- **School Wide Interim Math Assessments:** Wednesday 10/28
- **12:30 Half Day Dismissal for Students:** Thursday 10/29
- **School Closed:** Friday, 10/30 for Professional Development

At Pride Academy we value and honor education and make the best of every opportunity to learn and teach. We can show this each day by:

Dressing for success!

Being on Time!

Being prepared to learn in all our classes!

Staying in school all day!

Being peaceful, kind, honest and respectful towards others and our school!



Keeping the Peace

This month, during the week of October 19th Pride Academy will recognize Violence and Vandalism Awareness Week by renaming the week as *Keeping the Peace at Pride Week* and conducting school wide activities that will teach our students about tolerance, living our core values, non-violent conflict resolution, and anti-bullying.

Our school community will be involved in workshops and class discussions; listening to guest speakers; creating visuals and banners promoting peace; and wearing theme clothing to remind ourselves of our commitment to keeping the peace.

Please read the article on bullying in this newsletter and share the information with your child. If you would like to volunteer your time to address our students or if you have resources or contacts that would help us to raise our students' awareness about how to manage their anger and conflicts with others, please reach out to Ms Brower or Mrs. Thomas.

"One day we must come to see that peace is not merely a distant goal we seek, but that it is a means by which we arrive at that goal. We must pursue peaceful ends through peaceful means." —Dr Martin Luther King Jr

The faculty and staff at Pride Academy are committed to ensuring that our school continues to be a safe and peaceful place of learning, character building, and service. Our zero tolerance policy for aggressive language and touching of any kind including harassment, teasing, hitting, kicking, tripping, shoving, pinching, slapping, rough housing, play fighting, threats of/instigation of jumping others and fighting will continue to be strictly enforced. When students make poor choices that break our core values, they face serious consequences, and depending on the severity of the situation, the involvement of law enforcement. Violence of any kind disrupts education and the capacity for our teachers and staff to teach.

We appreciate all of your efforts to continue to support and work with us to model and reinforce the pursuit of *"peaceful ends through peaceful means."*

Progress Report Conferences

Please make every effort to come to school on Progress Report Conference afternoon on **Friday, October 23rd** between **3:30 pm and 6:00 pm** to pick up your child's progress report and meet with teachers. If you are unable to make it, please call your child's teacher to make an alternative day and time. Progress reports will not be mailed or sent home with your child. In order to ensure that your meeting is productive, please consider these tips:

- Prepare your questions in advance.
- Let the teachers know what your concerns are and what you feel is important for them to know about how your child learns.
- Ask to look at your child's work.
- Be open-minded in working with the teacher to develop an action plan to help address any concerns that you may have.
- Share your expertise about your child that may be impacting your child's academic performance or conduct; help the teacher understand how best to work with your child.
- Share any situations that may be going on at home that may be impacting your child's academic performance or behavior.
- Be prepared to hear good news as well as perhaps hearing news that may be disappointing or surprising. Your children's teachers may have insights and knowledge about your child's learning that you may not have heard before. Be open to discussing these calmly and professionally.
- After the conference, be sure to take time to sit down with your child to discuss his/her progress report. Celebrate the good and address the concerns by coming up with a plan to make improvements.

Help Us Keep Your Family Healthy this Flu Season

As soon as the H1N1 flu vaccine becomes available, make arrangements to get all your children in your household vaccinated.

Teach your children to wash their hands thoroughly and frequently with soap and water or a hand sanitizer, cover their noses/mouths when coughing or sneezing, and dispose of used tissues appropriately.

Keep your child home if he/she is sick or has flu like symptoms or any sign of fever (100 degrees Fahrenheit or more) and keep your child home until he/she is fever-free for at least 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medicines.

If your child is absent from school because of flu like symptoms, please call the Main Office to let us know that your child will be absent and tell us the symptoms that he/she has so that we can monitor our overall absenteeism rate and tailor our school wide response accordingly.

Reinforce with your children appropriate use of the soap/paper towels provided in our restrooms.

Please consider donating boxes of tissues and alcohol-based hand sanitizers to your child's homeroom teacher so that we can always have these materials available for your children on a regular basis in every classroom.

Bullying

We want to continue to ensure that our goal to create a bully-free school environment is addressed. This column shares some research tips on what parents and guardians can do in order to equip children with effective ways to report and manage acts of bullying.

1. Encourage your child to report bullying incidents to you.

**Validate your child's feelings by letting him/her know that it is normal to feel hurt, sad, scared, angry, etc.*

**Let your child know that s/he has made the right choice by reporting the incident(s) to you and assure your child that s/he is not to blame.*

**Help your child be specific in describing bullying incidents: who, what, where, when. (Look for patterns of repeated bullying behaviors.)*

2. Ask your child how s/he has tried to stop the bullying.

3. Coach your child in possible alternatives.

**Avoidance is often the best strategy.*

Play in a different place.

Play a different game.

Stay near a supervising adult

**Look for ways to find new friends.*

encouraging him/her to extend invitations for friends to play at your home or to attend activities.

Involve your child in social activities outside of school.

4. Treat the school as your ally.

**Share your child's concerns and specific information about bullying incidents with appropriate school personnel.*

**Work with school staff to protect your child from possible retaliation.*

**Establish a plan with the school and your child for dealing with future bullying incidents.*

5. Encourage your child to seek help and to report bullying incidents to someone s/he feels safe with at the school.

6. Use school personnel and other parents as resources in finding positive ways to encourage respectful behaviors at school.

**Volunteer time to help supervise on field trips, on the playground, or in the lunchroom.*

**Become an advocate for school wide bullying prevention programs and policies.*

7. Encourage your child to continue to talk with you about all bullying incidents.

**Do not ignore your child's report.*

**Do not advise your child to physically fight back. (Bullying lasts longer and becomes more severe when children fight back. Physical injuries often result.)*

**Do not confront the child who bullies.*

**Do not confront the family of the child who bullies." (Extracted from: Bullying in Schools and what to do about it. Dr. Ken Rigby)*

If you are interested in being on a committee taskforce to create our school wide anti-bullying program, please call Mrs. Thomas at 973-672-3200. We are eager to have you share your insights and expertise as we continue to develop policy and strategies to create a bully-free school.

A Gala Event for Pride ! by Ms Dumenigo

Last year, Ms Mercedes Cotchery volunteered time at Pride Academy establishing and leading a mentoring program for our 7th and 8th grades students. This year, Ms Cotchery plans to work with a team of volunteers to expand the program at Pride so that all 7th and 8th grade students receive an opportunity to participate in the program for at least one trimester.

Ms Cotchery's husband, Jerricho Cotchery, is the wide receiver for The New York Jets, and together with his wife Mercedes, established *The Cotchery Foundation* to benefit urban youth. The Foundation's mission *"is to inspire kids to conceive and achieve goals by providing programs and services designed to enhance their futures. The Cotcherys have set out to help our children understand that ordinary people can do extraordinary things if they have the desire and passion."*

On Monday October 19th, the Cotcherys will be hosting their second annual celebrity fundraising event in the NY/NJ area to benefit local organizations that dedicate their mission and resources to supporting positive change and providing opportunities for success in the lives of our youth. We are proud and excited that the Cotcherys have selected Pride Academy to be one of the beneficiaries.

Pride Academy staff and two student representatives will be attending this gala event in NYC at the ESPN Zone. The entrance fee is \$75. If you are interested in attending or finding out more information, please contact Ms Dumenigo at 973-672-3200 ext 210.