

February 3, 2019

Hi Families,

Some exciting happenings this week...thanks for all of your continued support! John

Safe Schools day is coming this Thursday, February 6 during the early release day. Students will be in their communities from 8am until 11am. Each grade level has a specific theme and focus for the morning; all of the work is related to building a tighter, more trusting, inclusive and supportive environment for all students. I will send out this Wednesday the slide shows that students will be receiving in their respective small Community groups.

Early Release Thursday: Be aware of the unstructured environment of Newton Centre:

An Early Release Day is this Thursday, February 6 at 11:30am. It has been a custom among many middle school students from all four middle schools to ask their parents for permission to visit Newton Centre during these afternoons to hang out and socialize with friends. Unfortunately, when **dozens to hundreds of students** gather in an unstructured, unsupervised location such as one of the parks, CVS, Panera etc in Newton Centre, students can more easily make bad choices and their behavior can affect other patrons and community members' experience in these stores, cafes and restaurants. We recommend that you consider setting up alternative after-school arrangements - especially for younger middle schoolers. If you do allow your child to walk/bus to Newton Centre, please discuss with them their responsibility to act respectfully and kindly at all times as they are representing themselves and Newton schools on these afternoons. I thank you in advance for engaging your children in a helpful conversation prior to Thursday.

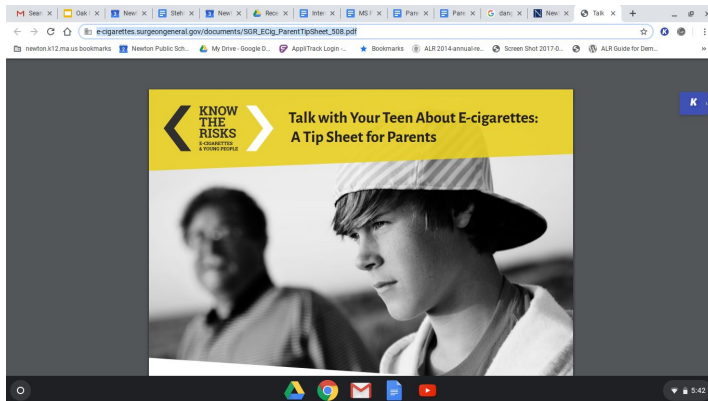
[A brief update about vaping and its harmful effects on children and adolescents:](#)

Our School Council met several times last year and we worked together to put out information to families about the dangers and risks associated with e-cigarettes. I am part of a district working group that includes representatives from Newton’s Health and Human Services Department as well as NPS educators from across the district. We will be meeting again soon and I will give another update at that time. For now, if you can prioritize 15 minutes, it is worth to review one of the following links to educate yourself and then begin a conversation with your children regarding the risks associated with e-cigarettes or vaping.

[Click here to read a quick one-page summary](#) of how to help talk to your children about the risks associated with vaping. Even if you think your child is not vaping or has not thought about it, the research prevention literature supports taking the time to talk about it with your child early.



[Click here if you have a little more time to read this 4-page guide; it is very helpful in planning out conversation with your child about vaping.](#)



MCAS 2020: Please avoid scheduling appointments or vacation on the test dates.



6th grade:

ELA- April 9, 13 (periods 1-3)
Math- May 12, 13 (periods 1-2)

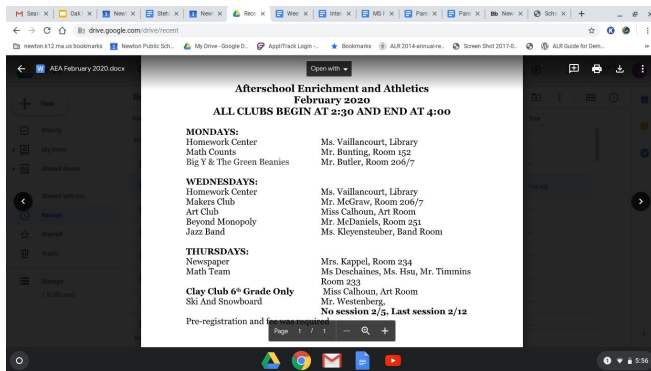
7th grade:

ELA- April 7, 8 (periods 1-3)
Math- May 18, 19 (periods 1-2)

8th grade:

ELA- April 14, 15 (periods 1-3)
Math- May 7,8 (periods 1-2)
STE- May 14, 15 (periods 1-2)

After-School Enrichment and Athletics February Club Offerings:



- [Click here for the complete flyer](#) of the current February club offerings.
- **Homework Free Week** Coming during February vacation on February 14-23!