



Defer Dragon's Burning News

"To The Pointe"

October 16, 2008

Defer Behavior Pledge

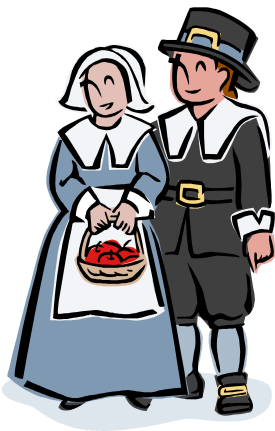
Today, I will **DO** my best
to **BE** my best.

I will be **Respectful**.

I will practice **Responsibility**.

I will always be **Safe**.

I will show my **Dragon Pride**.



Defer Elementary School
15425 Kercheval
Grosse Pointe Park, MI 48230
Phone: 313/432-4000
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www.gpschools.org/defer



GROSSE POINTE
PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM

Dear Defer Families,

As you may know, Parent-Teacher Conferences will follow a somewhat new schedule this school year. In addition to the afternoon and evening sessions, we have added a morning session. The purpose for this is two-fold: to provide an opportunity for those parents to attend for whom a morning session works best and to better balance the number of instructional days between the AM and PM Kindergarten sections. To accomplish this, the traditional number of afternoon sessions has been reduced and a morning session has been added.

Students will continue to be involved in the conferences in most instances, but the amount of their involvement is determined by the individual teacher to best meet their goals for the conferences. Teachers also try to provide some time with the parent to speak privately without the student present. The challenge lies in the schedule - we only have about 20 minutes per conference allotted due to the number of conferences that each teacher must accommodate in the 4 sessions. We truly appreciate your cooperation with being on time and respecting the time that the teacher has available for your child's conference. If you feel that you need more time to meet with the teacher following the conference, please schedule an additional meeting with him/her at a mutually convenient time. Our goal is to meet your needs for information about your child as well as to work with you in meeting your child's educational needs. We know that this can only be accomplished through open and frequent communication.

The schedule for the November Parent-Teacher (Student-Involved) Conferences is:

- Thurs., Nov. 6 AM School Only 8:25-11:34
 P-T Conferences 12:30-3:30 & 5:00-8:00
- Thurs., Nov. 13 PM School Only 12:29-3:38
 P-T Conferences 8:30-11:30 & 5:00-8:00

We look forward to meeting with you for the mutual benefit of your child. Most parents signed up for conferences at Back to School Night. If you have not yet signed up, please contact your child's teacher. Please leave younger siblings home so that you can devote your full attention to your child's conference. Thank you.

Ronald D. Wardie
Principal

P.S. Please note the Parent-Teacher Conference suggestions section found on Page 6 of this newsletter.

SAFETY / SERVICE

This year we have 44 Safety/Service members. They are the highly visible helpers in their fluorescent yellow belts in and around the school.

The position of Safety/Service is a respected one whose roots trace back to approximately 1920. Helping children cross the street safely, to become safe pedestrians and to become leaders and good citizens are some of the aims of the Safety/Service at Defer.

To reward their hard work and dedication, Defer School and its PTO sponsor several fun events throughout the year for our Safety/Service Squad members.

In September our members were sworn in by the Honorable Judge Carl Jarboe at the Grosse Pointe Park Municipal Court.

If you see a Safety/Service member doing a good job, tell them.

Thank you,

Helen Srebernak
Safety/Service Coordinator



Safety/Service Members of the Month - September

Safety: Connor
Service: Jonathon

Help Us Recognize Distinguished Employees

The Grosse Pointe Board of Education has established the Employee Awards Program to recognize distinguished service by employees in various programs and activities sponsored by the public schools. Board-level recognition is intended to reward those employees who have initiated a new program, service, or activity and/or who have served the district above and beyond their daily employee responsibilities.

The criteria are simple:

- (a) The recipient must be an employee of the district who donates service and/or time beyond their usual work requirements.
- (b) Consideration for an Employee Award will be based on the impact of their accomplishment, service, or activity, rather than strictly on an accumulation of volunteer hours, although consideration will be given to the amount of time contributed.
- (c) The Employee Awards Program is designed to recognize individuals.

Nomination forms must be received in the Superintendent's Office, 389 St. Clair, Grosse Pointe, MI 48230 by **Friday, October 24, 2008**. Forms are available in all school offices and the administration building. Nominations made by non-administrators must have the support of the building or program administrator.

Every Kindergartener Gets a Flag

The Louisa St. Clair Chapter, Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) of Grosse Pointe is promoting patriotism by providing kindergarteners with a flag. When they have memorized the Pledge of Allegiance, each kindergartener will receive his or her own flag on a stand to take home and keep. The flags are delivered to the school in September to be placed in the kindergarten classrooms. Each flag pole has a label with room for the child's name. The chapter, this year is also providing each school with a flag code poster showing proper display of the flag and a book entitled Our Flag containing facts about and pictures of the USA, and all states and territories.

The Pledge was first published in 1892 in the Youth Companion Magazine in Boston, Massachusetts to commemorate the 400th anniversary of the discovery of America, and was first used in public schools to celebrate Columbus Day on October 12, 1892. The original version read "my flag" instead of the flag of the United States. The wording was changed in 1923 to prevent ambiguity among foreign-born children who might think of the flag of their native land when reciting the Pledge. DAR members urged Congress to add the phrase "under God" and this was done by a Congressional Act approved on June 14, 1954 by President Eisenhower.

Organized in 1893, the Louisa St. Clair Chapter www.LSCDAR.com is the oldest Michigan Chapter of the National Society Daughters of the American Revolution. The work of this service organization is to provide projects relating to historic preservation, patriotism and education. .

Important Message To All Parents

There have been a few cases of head lice in our learning community. It is extremely important for you to check your child's head frequently. It is sometimes difficult to detect them when the infestation is in the beginning stage. Please keep checking every day until there are no head lice found for 10 consecutive days. Teach children not to share combs, brushes, hair ornament, hats, caps, scarves, headsets, or any other personal headgear.

- Do not try on other people's hats (even in department stores)
- Teach children to hang coats separately—placing hats and scarves inside coat/jacket sleeves.
- Clean or disinfect shared headgear (i.e., helmets) with Lysol (®) or rubbing alcohol before being used by others.
- Conduct regular head checks of your child.

If head lice are found on your child, please notify the school and go to:

[http://www.michigan.gov/documents/Final Michigan Head Lice Manual 103750 7.pdf](http://www.michigan.gov/documents/Final_Michigan_Head_Lice_Manual_103750_7.pdf)



From the Office of
Dona Johnson-Beach
&
Tina Justice

The DeBug System

We have completed lessons on the DeBug System in classrooms at Defer. We believe that this is a system that can help families as well as classrooms. The purpose of the DeBug System, originally designed by Dawn Harris (1989), is to equip children with a series of steps that they can use to solve problems when others are “bugging” them. It helps define the parents’ role as one of assisting children after they have attempted to resolve the difficulty themselves.

The five steps of the DeBug System are simple. In no time, even kindergartners can list them. The children are taught that if someone is bugging them, they should try the following:

- Ignore.** If that doesn’t work...
- Move away.** If that doesn’t work...
- Talk friendly.** If that doesn’t work...
- Talk firmly.** If that doesn’t work...
- Get adult help.**

The parent response, when a child complains about a conflict with a sibling or friend, is to ask the following:

- Have you tried the DeBug System?
- What step are you on?
- Come back if you get to step five.

When a child has reached step five and needs a parent’s help, the parent follows these steps:

- Get both children together with you and then....
- Provide a place they can talk. Have them discuss:
 - What do you want to happen?
 - How can you make that happen?
 - Express confidence that they can work it out.
 - Have the children share their agreement with the parent.
 - If absolutely necessary, help the children talk it through.

We cannot emphasize enough that when the child comes to you after doing all four steps the parent needs to stop and take the time to facilitate the resolution of the problem by following the above steps. A simple response of having them ignore (again) or move away (again) will only reinforce for the child that asking for help is not okay. In our society, we need a balance between empowering people to solve their problems but also asking for help when they need to. Over the many years of working with families, we have found many families who have found the DeBug System helpful to them. Post the steps somewhere visible in your house to use at home.

As always, we are available to talk with parents. You may call us at 432-4015 or 432-4016.



The DeBUG System



Ignore.

If that doesn't work . . .



Move away.

If that doesn't work . . .



Talk friendly.

Use an "I" message.

If that doesn't work . . .



Talk firmly.

If that doesn't work . . .



Get adult help.



Featured Book of the Month

Title: Taking Charge of ADHD
Author: Russell A. Barkley, Ph.D

Parents,

If you and others in your child's life have been concerned about inattention and/or hyperactivity becoming an obstacle in their learning and interactions, then this is the book for you! Dr. Barkley is a renowned expert in the area of ADHD and his latest book includes the most current information and treatment of this disorder. Strategies to put in place at home and school, as well as practical advice for parents, make this book a must read.

This easy read is available in the Defer Parent Library, located on the first floor near the main office. Come by and take a look at our other fabulous book selections, handouts, parenting magazines, and current community events for parents.

Please feel free to stop by or contact Dona Johnson-Beach or Tina Justice (Student Assistance Specialists) during the course of the year if we can be of assistance in helping your child here at Defer.

10 Internet Safety Tips



1. Create clear and simple ground rules for children to follow.
2. Place a computer with Internet access in a location that is visible to other members of the family. (Not in a child's bedroom).
3. Explain to your children that they should never give out identifying information—name, home address, school name or telephone number—in a public forum such as a chat room or a bulletin board (newsgroup) or to people they do not know.
4. Discuss the importance of telling you or a trusted adult if something ever makes your child or teen feel scared, uncomfortable or confused while online.
5. Get to know the Internet and any services your children use.
6. Become familiar with blocking and monitoring programs.
7. Never allow a child to arrange a face-to-face meeting with another computer-user without parental permission or accompaniment.
8. Tell your children never to respond to messages or bulletin board items that are suggestive, obscene, belligerent, threatening, or make them feel uncomfortable.
9. Report messages that present a danger to local law enforcement.
10. Remind your children that people online may not be (and likely are not) who they seem, and that everything people say online may not be true.

Parent-Teacher Conference Suggestions

One of the most important aspects of the fall Student-Involved Parent-Teacher Conferences is goal-setting. This is a great time for you and your child, along with his/her teacher, to set some specific learning goals. Here are a few tips:

- Set a couple of broad goals – those that will be the focus for the school year, such as improving reading comprehension skills, math problem solving skills, cooperative learning skills, etc. Think high – the higher the goal, the higher the likely performance and outcome. Just make them realistic and achievable.
- Break the goals down into attainable and measurable steps. Be specific. For example, if a student wants to improve their Writing skills, they could set a goal of writing at least one story at home each week in addition to their writing at school, while a student who wants to improve their Math Computation skills could practice 10-15 math facts at a time for 10 minutes every night.
- Write the goals down and post them where you and your child will see them.
- Review goal progress regularly. Set some benchmarks as indicators of progress. For example, if a child needs to learn all of their multiplication facts, mark off each sub-set of facts as he/she has mastered them in order to show their progress.
- Determine if a reward is appropriate. Students don't always have to be presented with a tangible reward for learning, but we all like to get rewarded for a job well done. Perhaps you could set a special family activity or personal time with your child if he/she reaches a particular benchmark for his/her goal or if he/she reaches the broad goal.



Halloween Parade Friday, October 31, 2008

The annual parade will begin at 12:50 p.m. with students exiting the Nottingham door. They will proceed around the block counter-clockwise (Nottingham to Kercheval to Balfour to Vernor to Nottingham) and re-enter the building at the Nottingham door.

If rain prohibits the parade, we will only be able to have our parade indoors. In that case, parents are invited to come to the Gym and we will parade through the hallways and in to and out of the Gym so parents can see each class of students.

We ask that ALL students and parents who may be dressing up for our annual Halloween Parade to PLEASE use good judgment in selecting costumes:

- **No violent or “gory” costumes, no fake blood, no rubber scary masks, etc.**
 - Although scary masks and costumes may not bother the older students, they can create fear in many of the younger children. Please save those kinds of costumes for your neighborhood trick-or-treating, if desired.
 - For safety reasons, students should NOT wear their masks on the way to school.
 - **NO WEAPONS** – no toy guns, knives, swords, or ninja weapons, etc.
 - Bringing these items to school is a violation of the Grosse Pointe Public School System Student Code of Conduct.
- If students come to school with any of the above, we will ask them to remove the item, or we may ask them to call home or not participate in the day's activities. If you question whether a costume is appropriate for school, the best choice would be not to wear it.

New Staff Members



Please join us in welcoming some new staff members:

- Suellen Lohr—Reading Specialist
- Kim Manikas—EDK Assistant
- Marie McGovern—Magnet Assistant
- Jill Flaherty—Title I Assistant & Lunch Supervisor
- Crystal Moore—Lunch Supervisor

Librarians for October

Triniti & Solana



Student Pick-Up During School

Please **come to the office to sign out your child** if you need to take him/her out of school between 8:25am-3:38pm. The office will contact your child's teacher and your child will be sent to the office to meet you. It is helpful if the parent writes a note to the teacher indicating what time the child will be picked up that day. Parents should not go directly to the classroom to release a child. Students **MUST** be picked up in the office. A child will only be released to the persons listed on his/her emergency form.

Parent and Visitor Information



Every parent, visitor and volunteer entering Defer during school hours **MUST** sign in at the office. All visitors/volunteers in the building **MUST** have a visitor's badge. Wearing the badge lets staff and students know you are a safe person in our building.

Michigan Booster Seat Law

A new law requiring booster seats for young children went into effect on July 1, 2008.
<http://www.michiganafekids.org/>

Children must be in a booster seat until they are 8 years old or 4'9" tall, whichever comes first. If your child is 8 years or older, but under 4'9" tall, the law does not apply. If your child is under 8 years old, but over 4'9" tall, the law does not apply. If your child is under 8 years old and under 4'9" tall, the law **does** apply.

Types of booster seats:

A booster is a seat that boosts a child up so that the seat belt fits properly. There are two types of booster seats, no-back and high-back.

A no back booster can be used when the vehicle seat/head rest supports the child's head.

A high-back provides head and neck support and can be used on vehicle seats with or without head restraints.

All booster seats **must** be used with a lap/shoulder safety belt.

Field Trips:

All students who require the booster seat must have them when attending field trips with parent/volunteer drivers. Parents are responsible for providing booster seats for their children. Students who do not have them will not be allowed to attend field trips.

Medication

If your child needs medication, it is important that you follow these procedures:

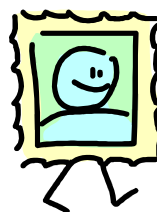
1. The office **MUST** have a "Medication Prescriber/Parent Authorization" form completed and signed by your physician for the office to distribute **ANY MEDICATION.**
2. The label from the pharmacy that indicates quantity, day, time and duration medication is taken must be on the container. Over-the-counter medication must be labeled with the doctor's written prescription.
3. An adult **MUST** bring all medication to the office in the original container supplied by the pharmacy. No child is allowed to bring medications to school or to keep medication with him/her during the school day. This policy was designed to keep all Defer children safe and healthy and is a Grosse Pointe Public School System policy.

Classroom After Hours



Please help to remind your child to gather everything they will need from their classroom at the end of the school day. Classrooms may not be unlocked after school hours. Please do not ask custodial/office staff to unlock a classroom for you. We appreciate your cooperation in this matter.

PICTURE RETAKES REMINDER



This is a reminder that picture retakes will take place on October 22 from 8:30 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. If your child was absent on picture day, please have them bring their picture envelope with payment to hand to the photographer when their picture is taken. Envelopes are available in the office.

If you would like to have your child's picture retaken, they must bring their original picture package to give to the photographer when their picture is taken. **No re-takes will be done without the original package being returned.**

Spanish News

Dear Families,

The first unit of Spanish is quickly coming to a close. Your fourth or fifth grader recently received a homework packet. This packet will be due on:

A Day Students: November 12
B Day Students: November 13
C Day Students: November 14
D Day Students: November 15

Please be sure to check my website for up to date information regarding units of study, schedules, or due dates. Thank you so much for your continued support of the Elementary Spanish Program

Sincerely,

Mrs. Delgado



Fourth Grade Rides The Diamond Jack

The students in the fourth grade toured the Detroit River on the Diamond Jack. Each student received mail from the J. W. Westcott II mail boat, while moving down the river.



Save the Date!

All First, Third and Fifth Grade Students, as well as the Defer Choir, will be performing in the **Winter Vocal Music Concert**. All Students should wear “dressy clothes”.

The concert will take place on Thursday, December 18, 2008 at 7:00 P.M. in the Pierce School Auditorium.

Teamwork/Cooperation at HNC

Defer’s fifth-grade students visited The Howell Nature Center on October 3. During our visit we overcame obstacles to solve problems on the low-ropes course using teamwork and cooperative skills. The 500 ft. zipline across a pond was a personal challenge for each student, but encouragement from the whole team made it a fun ride for many, including Mr. McKelvey.

News Flash From Student Council

Defer School has the month of October to raise money and/or donate clothes to the **Full Circle Upscale Resale Shop** that is getting underway. This organization is working towards establishing a business that resells upscale, gently used clothing donated by the Grosse Pointe community. The income generated by the resale shop will provide for job training and work experience for young adults with special needs in the community.

So...some events that we will be hosting here at Defer include..

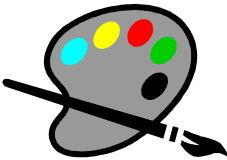
Friday, October 17th — Bake Sale at lunch
(tickets being sold in the AM)

The week of the 20th we will host a winter clothing drive so be gathering all of your upscale winter clothing to donate!

Art Room News

Welcome back!

FYI every grade every year has an artist upon whom we focus our studies:



Grade K Georgia O’Keefe
Grade 1 Henri Matisse
Grade 2 Vincent Van Gogh
Grade 3 Claude Monet
Grade 4 Pablo Picasso
Grade 5 Alexander Calder



Please ask your students about these artists during the year. Also, share any knowledge you might have regarding the artists and their works of art.

Defer Art Club

The Defer Art Club is available to make giant signs for all school related activities. PTO Committee Chairpersons should please send me an e-mail with the information for the sign and the due date. We will have it ready for you in the office. **Please allow advance notice.**

Ms. Tedesco