

**The Week At WHMS**  
**(parent edition)**  
 Week of March 7, 2022



**Thought for the week:**

“Motivation is what gets you started. Habit is what keeps you going.”

– Jim Ryuh

**Weekly Calendar: HABITS OF MIND – Spirit Week**

<u>Monday</u>	<u>Tuesday</u>	<u>Wednesday</u>	<u>Thursday</u>	<u>Friday</u>	<u>Sat/Sun</u>
3/7	3/8	3/9	3/10	3/11	3/12-3/13
Day 2	Day 1	Day 2	Day 1	Day 2	<b>SUNDAY</b>
<i>Responding with Wonderment and Awe</i> <b>Wear neon or sequins</b>	<i>Finding Humor</i> <b>Wear mismatched clothes or socks</b>	<i>Taking Responsible Risks</i> <b>See email from Mr. Murray for homeroom activity</b>	<i>Remaining Open to Continuous Learning</i> <b>Wear college or career gear</b>	<i>Thinking Interdependently</i> <b>Wear West Hempstead Gear #RamFam</b>	Bowling Fundraiser for 8 <sup>th</sup> grade events @ Herrill Lanes, 12:00pm
8 <sup>th</sup> graders meet with their counselors during art classes	8 <sup>th</sup> graders meet with their counselors during art classes	9a-11a – Hackathon practice session	<b>Club Meets:</b> Art club; Science & Robotics	8a-12:30p – Hackathon competition	Email <a href="mailto:lkatrakazis@yahoo.com">lkatrakazis@yahoo.com</a> or <a href="mailto:kjones@yahoo.com">kjones@yahoo.com</a> for more info
	3:00p – Department meetings	1:15p – PST meeting		All day – JVE “field trip” to Virtual Trade Show @ WHHS library	
	7:30p – Board of Education Budget Workshop @ HS VCR	<b>Club Meets:</b> Dignity & Tolerance		8:45a – RTI meeting	
		7:30p – SEPTA meeting @ Cornwell			

**Instructional tips:** (from *Edutopia*)

**Empathy as a Classroom Management Tool** by David Greenslade

*Sharing with students how you feel when they’re disruptive can open up a conversation on how everyone can work together better.*

If you had asked me five years ago what phrases were used most in my classroom, “That really hurt my feelings” would not have been on the list. “Stop that,” “please be quiet,” and “hey!”—at a volume everyone but me would describe as a frantic shout—were in heavy rotation, but there was nothing about feelings. I was a teacher, gosh darn it, and teachers don’t have feelings.

Contrary to popular belief, teachers are, in fact, real human people with real human feelings. It is tempting to treat our humanity as a weakness, as something to transcend rather than embrace, but a teacher’s humanity should instead be used as a tool, a way to build compassion and connection with a class.

When we interact with our friends, families, spouses, or coworkers, one of the least productive ways to change unwanted behavior is to bark a command like, “Stop that!” It may stop the behavior in the short run, but it doesn’t build a relationship or create a context for two-way communication.

Yet that kind of sharp redirection is often the main tool that teachers rely on for classroom management. I’ve had a lot of arguments in my personal life that started with a sharp command, but the real reconciliation happened when we were both able to talk about what had bothered us and how we could avoid hurting each other in the future. This same emotional honesty can be used to foster connection in the classroom.

### **RETHINKING THE SERIOUS VOICE**

Like many educators, I spent much of the first decade of my teaching career developing my “serious voice,” the tone used to snap students out of disinterest and side talk and let them know that I was strong and powerful and meant business.

But after years of utilizing the serious voice, I began to question my tactics. I spent hours meticulously crafting lessons, but very little time contemplating what subtext I was conveying with my manner. Upon reflection, I realized that the only thing I was teaching my students with my serious voice was that when I sounded angry they needed to be quiet.

A few years ago, around the time that I realized I wanted to change my manner, I taught a sixth-grade class that I found difficult to manage. I decided to forgo my serious voice and ask the class a question instead: “Who here has ever tried to get someone to listen to you and had them refuse?” Most of the students raised their hands. I invited the students to talk about those experiences if they wanted to, and many did.

At the end of the discussion, I shared, in my normal voice, what I was feeling: “I’ve often felt like people don’t want to hear what I have to say, and to be honest, I’ve felt like that teaching this class. It really hurts me to feel like I’m not being listened to. What can we do as a class to make sure everyone in here feels heard?”

I learned that by honestly stating my feelings—not out of spite, but out of a desire to be understood—and asking for collaboration instead of giving an order, I could empower students to take ownership of their actions and create a plan for how to improve classroom dynamics. Teachers should not try to make their students feel guilty, but they should also not pretend that students’ actions have no effect on them.

## A WAY TO IMPROVE RELATIONSHIPS IN THE CLASSROOM

In the teacher-student relationship, as in any relationship, vulnerability breeds more vulnerability. After I made the change in my classroom, I began stating when disrespectful behavior was bothering me and checking in with students to see how I was making them feel. Students began sharing more—not just thoughts about the subject matter, but also about what was important to them, what they loved, and what they feared. As the class progressed, I not only saw a reduction in my need to redirect but also started to find more openness in class discussions and discovered things to love about my most challenging students.

We were developing empathy. Empathy is the act of meeting someone in their pain and helping them feel like they're not alone. In order to inspire students to take that journey, we as teachers cannot pretend that human feelings are something to which we are immune. We have to feel with students, which requires both an acknowledgment that our own feelings exist and a desire to understand the feelings of our students. If we can create a fertile space for empathy to grow, we can also provide the opportunity for meaningful connections with students.

As counterintuitive as relinquishing authority in favor of emotional honesty and collaboration may seem, the ability to move from serious voice to being vulnerable is within the abilities of any teacher. All it takes is an honest assessment of how you feel, a willingness to share that with the class, and an openness to work on the solution together.

When you find yourself on the verge of using your serious voice, look inward and then state how the student's actions make you feel. There will almost certainly continue to be the need to clearly redirect, but it will likely come less often—and, when it does, it will feel like it's coming from a real, relatable person.

For full article see <https://www.edutopia.org/article/empathy-classroom-management-tool>

### Items of importance:

- **WEATHER NOTICE**: we have outdoor recess, outdoor AM line-up, and outdoor PE daily unless it is raining. Please make sure your child has appropriate clothing and outerwear. We only stay indoors if the temperature falls below 30° or the wind chill falls below 28°
- We mailed home a letter regarding the annual School Climate Survey prior to the winter recess. Please go to: <https://www.whufsd.com/events?id=10240135> and complete the survey prior to 3/29. Thank you!
- **Have you downloaded the West Hempstead App yet?** It is available in the App Store and Google Play, just search "West Hempstead." This will let you keep track of everything happening in our school and access documents such as this "Week @ WHMS" newsletter.
- *Let me know when you have exciting learning taking place that I can tweet out and be sure to tag @WH\_MS RAMS if you tweet yourself*

### Items of interest:

- Our club calendar is available on the website at: <https://www.whufsd.com/o/whms/browse/221769>. Students should listen to AM announcements for the most up-to-date information about meeting dates and locations.
- The **extra help schedule** can be found at: [https://core-docs.s3.amazonaws.com/documents/asset/uploaded\\_file/1553808/Extra-Help\\_Schedule\\_MS\\_21-22.pdf](https://core-docs.s3.amazonaws.com/documents/asset/uploaded_file/1553808/Extra-Help_Schedule_MS_21-22.pdf). Students should take advantage of teachers' availability to do their best work.
- The Homework Center is open after school on Monday, Wednesday, and Thursday. See details below:

## Homework Center Information: 21-22

Homework Center is open 2:45-3:45 on the following days

<u>Day</u>	<u>Teacher</u>	<u>Room</u>	<u>Notes</u>
Monday	Ms. Healey	257	Support available for any subject, or just a quiet place to work after school.
Wednesday	Ms. Geiger	17	
Thursday	Ms. Rogan	16	

### "COVID Corner" Information:

- NYS has removed the "mask mandate" from public schools and the decision to wear a mask is a personal/family choice. We will ensure that regardless of your family decision, students are treated with dignity and civility.
- **ESPECIALLY in light of the reduced mask use, I cannot say how vital it is that if your child, or anyone in your home, feels sick, your child MUST REMAIN HOME FROM SCHOOL.** Call the nurse or Mr. Murray for advice on when it is okay to return to school.
- **Please send your child to school with a refillable water bottle.** Our water fountains are "COVID-safe" and only the water bottle filler function is available.

### Looking ahead:

Monday, March 14: *Day 1*

- ESSA School Climate Survey will be administered in Social Studies classes this week and support students' civic engagement
- PTSA meeting, 7:30pm @ HS VCR

Tuesday, March 15: *Day 2*

- Select department meetings, 3:00pm
- Board of Education regular meeting, 7:30pm @ HS VCR

Wednesday, March 16: *Day 1*

- PST meeting, 1:15pm

Thursday, March 17: *Day 2*

- Happy St. Patrick's Day!



Friday, March 18: *Day 1*

- Amplify PD for Science, AM
- RTI meeting, 8:45am
- Amplify PD for admins, PM