

# *THE MESSAGE*

FROM YOUR SCHOOL COUNSELOR

of Meekins Middle School

## **Important Dates**

**10/7 Remote Learning**

**10/13 Flu Clinic 1:00-2:30**

**10/19 End of Quarter**

**10/21 Fall pictures**

**10/27 Parent/Teacher Conferences**

**2:00-3:40**

**10/29 Parent/Teacher Conference**

**2:00-7:00**

**10/26-10/30 Red Ribbon Week**

*\*Activities for Red Ribbon Week  
will be sent home at a later date.*

**Red Ribbon Week:  
October 26-30**

**Parents *and* Students are invited to Take  
the Pledge!**

**Take the National Red Ribbon Campaign  
Pledge now and be a part of the creation  
of a drug free America.**

<https://www.redribbon.org/pledge>

## **Meet Your School Counselor**

My name is Julie Eldridge, and I am so excited to announce that I am your school counselor here at Meekins Middle School. I have been in the education field for 11 years. I earned my Master's degree in School Counseling at Lamar University, graduating in 2016. I am originally from Arkansas County and I am thrilled to be back in the area.

Counseling services are available to help your student succeed in their academic goals, as well as support social and emotional growth throughout the school year. Counseling sessions in a school setting are typically short-term in nature, focusing on solutions to help your student succeed in all areas of development.

In addition to on-campus support, I also provide referral information for children and their parents to outside agencies.

I have created a Google Classroom space, and students can fill out a referral form online.

Parents, please call me or email me anytime if you have any concerns.

**Contact Information:**

**Julie Eldridge  
Meekins Middle School Counselor  
2501 South Main  
Stuttgart, AR 72160**

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# Enter the 2021 Red Ribbon Theme Contest



**Send your ideas for the 2021 Red Ribbon Theme Contest today for a chance to win \$500 in Red Ribbon themed merchandise!**

Entries must be received by December 4, 2020 at 11:59pm (EST), via email, at [redribbon@nfp.org](mailto:redribbon@nfp.org) or via mail to **National Family Partnership, 2490 Coral Way, Floor 3, Miami, FL 33145**. Please include your name, school, telephone number, and email address. Winners will be announced on or before February 3, 2021.

All entries become property of the National Family Partnership. Note: NFP reserves the right to select the theme or design from one submission and match it with another submitted theme or design. In such case, there will be two contest winners.

Entries can include a double-looped Red Ribbon, but it is not required. (Please refer to Red Ribbon logo for sample image in [www.redribbon.org/downloads](http://www.redribbon.org/downloads))

## How to Talk to Your Child About Being Drug Free

As a parent/guardian, you are the biggest influence in your child's life, and having open, honest conversations is one of the most powerful ways to connect with your kid to help him or her develop into a healthy adult.

When addressing some more challenging topics—like nicotine, alcohol or drugs—it's not about having a one-time "drug talk," but rather tackling the subject through more frequent, organic conversations that evolve as your child gets older.

Some things to keep in mind:

- Keep lines of communication open, and make sure you come from a place of love and compassion, even when you're having tough conversations.
- Balance any consequences with positive encouragement.
- Frequent touch points and teachable moments come up all the time—use these as natural opportunities to discuss substance use.

# Talking to Preteens (Ages 9–12) About Drugs

Preteens who are trying to figure out their place in the world tend to give their friends' opinions a great deal of power. At the same time, they're also beginning to question their parents' views and rules. This shift is natural, healthy, and part of a normal process of maturity and identity development. The following are some age-appropriate scenarios to help your preteen understand how to stay healthy and avoid risks related to substance use.

## **Scenario:**

Your child is just starting middle school and you know that it's more likely that there will now be exposure to substances at school or in social environments.

## **What You Can Say:**

"I know we talked about this when you were younger, but you're at the age now when you might be seeing or hearing about other kids vaping, smoking, drinking, or using drugs. I want you to remember that our family does not allow any substance use because it's bad for your health and your brain. I'm here for you, and the best thing you can do is talk to me if you are confused or concerned."

## **Scenario:**

You hear from other parents that kids are selling prescription drugs at your child's school. Your child hasn't mentioned it, but you want to talk about it.

## **What You Can Say:**

"I heard some kids at your school are selling pills—prescription medications that they or someone in their family takes. Have you heard about kids doing this?"

Practice role playing some practical responses your child can give if offered medications by a friend. Let them know that they can always use you as an excuse to get out of a bad situation. You can say, "If you're ever offered prescription medication, you can tell them, 'my parents would kill me if I did that' or 'my parents can always tell if I'm lying or hiding something.'"

## **Scenario:**

Your child's favorite celebrity is involved in a drug scandal, and your child read about it online.

## **What You Can Say:**

"Being in the public eye puts a lot of pressure on people, and some may turn to drug use because they think it will relieve that stress. But when a person uses drugs and alcohol—especially a young person who's still growing—it changes how their brain works and they make poor decisions. Most people who use drugs and alcohol need a lot of help to get better. I hope the celebrity has a good doctor and friends and family members to help them through this."



# PREVENTION TIPS FOR PRETEENS:

Make sure your child knows your rules—and that you'll enforce the consequences if rules are broken. Kids are less likely to use nicotine, alcohol, and other substances if their parents have established a pattern of setting clear rules and consequences.

Feelings of insecurity, doubt, and pressure may creep in during puberty. Offset those feelings with a lot of positive comments about your child's individuality and strengths. Focus on their effort, creativity, and kindness rather than specific outcomes such as good grades or winning a game.

Get to know your child's friends—and their friends' parents. Check in by phone or a visit once in a while to make sure they are on the same page with regard to supervision and prohibiting substance use, particularly when their home is to be used for a party or sleepover.

Help children separate reality from fantasy. Watch shows or movies with them and ask lots of questions to reinforce the distinction between the two. Remember to include advertising in your discussions, as those messages are especially powerful.

Resource: <https://drugfree.org/article/prevention-tips-for-every-age/>

## 24/7 Hotline Numbers for Immediate Support:



**If you suspect child abuse, please contact the  
child abuse hotline.  
1-800-482-5964**

<https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/>



# What Parents Can See and Do on PBIS Rewards App

**Are you checking our PBIS Rewards App to see how many positive behavior points your student is earning? If not, please contact your student's homeroom teacher for a QR code, so you can see the following information:**



- **Parent Teacher Communication**
  - Two-way messaging within PBIS Rewards
  - Send attachments and photos
- **Points Balance & Details – view teacher comments for points awarded**
- **Referrals – both major & minor**
- **Check-In/Check-Out forms**
  - View forms
  - Verify forms
  - Purchases made by their student(s)
  - Upcoming events
  - Contact information for all teachers so parents can contact staff directly from the app