

Ananda Living Wisdom School

Recommended Student Behavioral Guidelines for the Will Years

Ages 12-18

Dear Parents,

While recognizing that every child and family is unique, the school staff came up with the following general guidelines for out-of-school behavior. Our goal is to identify a direction of development that is in keeping with the Education for Life goals of calmness, self-control, clarity of feelings, good health, and a generally expansive consciousness. We look forward to working with you to create a harmonious blend of school and homelife in order to best serve your child. Many of these topics will be discussed in depth at our Parent Discussion Forums during the coming school year.

After-school Time: It is important to monitor how a child is affected by time spent with his or her peers. Negative or overly-excited behavior is a sign that children need recentering time, either with adults or by themselves. Even in our wonderfully safe and fun “downtown” Market area, too much unsupervised free time has a negative effect on children. Our teens generally have a lot going on after school in working to make tuition money, substantial amounts of homework, and other on-going activities. As a change of pace, social time at the Market can be a healthy thing. Even with this age group though, too much “Hanging-out” can result in low energy and various kinds of misbehavior. When these symptoms appear, it is important for parents to step in and provide more structure while decreasing the amount of free time. Suggestions include art, music, dance, martial arts, sports, and apprenticeships.

Bedtime: We would all probably agree that getting children to bed at an early enough time is one of life’s greatest challenges! The obvious general guideline is that a child should get enough sleep to stay healthy and be ready to go in the morning. The American Sleep Disorder Association says that the average teenager needs 9 1/2 hours of sleep. If mornings tend to be filled with tension, conflict, and grouchy feelings, it may be due to lack of adequate rest. As a help in getting the day off to a calm start, we suggest the following bedtimes for school nights:

13-14 year olds: 9:30pm

15-16 year olds: 10:00pm

We also recommend getting the day started with a healthy, non-sugar breakfast.

Uplifting Family Time: We encourage families to provide their children with some kind of focused, uplifting time on a regular basis. Examples include: service projects, nature outings (hiking, biking, etc.), family sharing time, spiritual practices and services associated with one's own faith, etc. Of course, you are always invited to join the family services at Ananda. Many have found that in our busy lives it is helpful to set aside a regular time, perhaps weekly, as well as on other special days, for such experiences. Joining with other families can also add magnetism to these experiences.

Electronic Apparatus: (television, cell phones, computers, ipods, video players, etc.): We live in an age of ever-increasing electronic gadgetry. Although they offer many advantages when used judiciously, the temptation to over-indulge can be strong. Students are asked to deposit all electronic equipment in their cubbies since no electronic use is allowed during school hours.

For weekends and holidays we suggest that for every hour of electronic stimulation, the child spend another hour in physical or creative activity. On school days we recommend a limit of an hour a day as the maximum with all devices turned off at least a half hour before bedtime.

Specific guidelines include:

Television: The goal for the teen years is the development of dynamic will by expanding the depth and scope of involvement in life. It is a time for taking up sports, music, service, adventure and other active pursuits. Since television along with other electronic devices are physically passive by

nature, we suggest limiting viewing to such topics as the Olympics, history, scientific discovery, and uplifting drama and music.

Videos/Movies: We suggest no more than 2 movies per week, viewed on non-school nights. The rating system on movies can help when making choices for your family. Special emphasis needs to be placed on the guidance aspect of PG and PG-13. Ideally, these movies should be previewed by a parent or other respected adult who is able to look at the movie in terms of how a child, as opposed to an adult, might be affected by it. For example, much current humor involves disrespectful, "put-down" behavior, which is not at all what we want our children to regard as acceptable. When it is not possible to have a movie previewed, the website www.kids-in-mind.com can give explicit information on the contents of any particular movie. Before showing a movie to a child other than your own, check with that child's parent(s) to make sure that it meets their standards.

Computer Games: We recommend that all video and computer games be carefully screened by parents to assure that no gratuitous killing of people, animals, or humanoid-type robots takes place. By reading the parental advisory warnings, next to the ratings, one can begin to make an informed judgment. Sports and racing games that are rated "E" (for everyone), are non-violent, yet may contain objectionable material (suggestive themes, "comic" mischief, etc.). Therefore it is always wise to preview games, and/or participate with your child in the initial playing or viewing.

Internet: The almost measureless advantages for communication and access to information on the internet are accompanied by a number of dangers. The most publicized of these are sites offering pornography and hate messages, and chat rooms frequented by sexual predators. "Net Nannies" and content advisors can help screen out unhealthy material. Another helpful approach is to limit computer use to the living room or other public areas of your home.

Music: Music has the power to inspire us toward greater awareness and broadened sympathies, or conversely to emphasize turbulent emotions like anger, restlessness, and moodiness. When helping your children develop discrimination, a simple test is to ask how the music leaves him/her feeling. Increased tension, sadness, and a generally contractive spirit can be contrasted to calmness, joy, and an enthusiasm for life. Unintelligible lyrics should be avoided.

Boy/Girl Relationships: As our children reach adolescence, we encourage their participation in a wide variety of group social activities (volleyball, choir, drama, ping-pong, etc.). In this way they have ample opportunity to fulfill their social needs while developing interpersonal skills. Guidelines for group activities include having alert adult involvement at all times, clear parent/student communication regarding any changes in plans, a 10pm ending time for events, and a plan for providing rides as opposed to walking home at night. We strongly discourage dating in 7th and 8th grades with the intent that students wait until their junior year before forming exclusive 1-1 relationships. Further guidelines for dating include:

- A. Students have been in school for at least 6 months to give them time to cultivate a variety of friendships, to establish good study habits, and to engage in a wide range of activities.
- B. Couples are within two years of age to take into account differing rates of maturation.
- C. Students are willing to discuss the effects of the relationship on school matters (grades, emotions, other students, etc.) with their teachers.
- D. Parents know and approve of the relationship.

Driving Cars, Golf Carts, and Motorcycles: Ananda Village has detailed guidelines for these activities. Contact Sitabai Betts at 478-7510 for a copy.

Drugs and Alcohol: Involvement in these activities provides grounds for expulsion from school.

Smoking is not an acceptable activity for students in our school.