



MCFARLAND RADAR (Relevant Alcohol & Drug Awareness Resources) COALITION

AODA PREVENTION SPECIAL EDITION NEWSLETTER

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Starting the School Year Off Right

A new school year can come with lots of excitement. It's the start of a fresh academic year with new challenges and loads of learning opportunities. It's also time to meet new people, make new friends, and learn different perspectives. There are many ways in which parents and teachers can do to ensure that youth start off their school year right.



PARENTS:

- Make early and frequent contact with your child's teacher:
 - Don't be afraid to send an email if you have a question or concern, or just send a note to say 'hi' and introduce yourself. Ask how you can support classroom learning at home, and ask how you can help the teacher—by classroom volunteering or doing what you can at home.
- Know your child's friends:
 - Plan a weekend play date, even if it's only for an hour or two, and don't let the kids hide away downstairs. Make a snack together, play a game together, or pull out a craft to do together.
 - Get to know your children's friends now, and listen to how everyone interacts. If necessary, jump in if you don't like what you're hearing and talk about how kind friends speak to each other, how to share or how to take turns.
- Get your kids involved in at least one extra-curricular activity:
 - Whether it's a community sport, a craft club, a scouting group, or a youth group, it doesn't matter. Youth need some little something to call their own when they're young. And even if an extra-curricular is not in the budget, make it a goal to attend a free event at the library, church, or in the community several times a month.
- Create a structured time and place for homework.
 - For some, it works to get homework completed immediately after walking in the door and finishing snack; for others, homework's best saved for after dinner. Pick which what works for best!

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TEACHERS:

Teachers setting up a reasonable classroom and professional standards at the beginning of the year will help them enjoy teaching and give the students they teach a clear message on expectations but also the community the teacher which to set for the next year.

There are different methods that can be used to set this expectation include:

- “Your Voice is Important”:
 - Encouraging students to actively participate in an activity that builds these normative expectations is a way of saying I see you, your voice is important from the first moments you are together.
- “Community Building”
 - Building this sense of community in the classroom is essential to establish a positive learning environment for every student. When students feel comfortable and valued, they are more likely to engage in learning and take social and academic risks. It also fosters positive relationships among students and the teacher, which can lead to an increase in collaboration, cooperation, and cultural respect for one another.
 - Additionally, it allows teachers to understand each student’s unique strengths and needs, which can inform instructional practice, content choices, curriculum planning throughout the school year.
- Set Clear Expectations:
 - The beginning of the year is when you set the tone for your classroom by providing a set of guidelines for your students about the behaviour you want to see and for you to hear what their expectations are for you.
 - Ideally, class guidelines are decided collaboratively with your students rather than imposed on them.
 - Giving students a say in how the class is run and how behaviour is managed, increases the likelihood that they will cooperate with you and each other.
- Set Up Good Habits
 - Decide on routines for all aspects of classroom organisation e.g. how do students get help, what do students do when they finish early, where do they put their finished work, how do they clean up, how do they enter the room.
 - Teach your students the routines, then practice them and reinforce with encouragement and feedback.
 - Investing time and energy into setting up a calm, positive classroom at the beginning of the year, will ensure that your year is successful, productive and enjoyable.

Suicide Awareness Month

According to the CDC, in 2021, suicide was responsible for nearly 49,000 deaths and it is estimated at nearly 1.7 million people attempted suicide. In the same year, suicide was among the top nine leading causes of death for people ages 10-64 and the second leading cause of death for people ages 10-14 and 20-34.

September is National Suicide Awareness Month, and it is a time where communities can come together and share their stories and

resources to help spread awareness about suicide in the hope of preventing another individual from taking their life. The theme for this year is "Creating Hope Through Action." This theme serves as a powerful call to action and reminder that there is an alternative to suicide and that through action we can encourage hope and strengthen prevention. And by creating this hope through action, others can signal to people experiencing suicidal thoughts that there is hope and that people care and support them.

Last year, the US Government passed a bill that would install the "988" number. The "988" Suicide & Crisis Lifeline which was formerly known as the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, offers 24/7 call, text and chat access to trained crisis counselors who can help people experiencing suicidal but also provide support for those dealing with substance misuse, and/or mental health crisis, or any other kind of emotional distress. People can also dial 988 if they are worried about a loved one who may need crisis support.

Individual Risk Factors of Suicide:

- Previous suicide attempt
- History of depression and other mental illnesses
- Serious illness such as chronic pain
- Criminal/legal problems
- Job/financial problems or loss
- Impulsive or aggressive tendencies
- Current or prior history of adverse childhood experiences
- Sense of hopelessness
- Violence victimization and/or perpetration

A promotional graphic for the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline. It has a blue background with a white border. At the top, it says "988 SUICIDE & CRISIS LIFELINE" in white. Below that, it says "No matter where you live in the U.S., you can easily access 24/7 emotional support." and "Call or text 988 or visit 988lifeline.org/chat to chat with a caring counselor." At the bottom, it says "We're here for you." and features an icon of a hand holding a smartphone with a heart on the screen.

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McFarland is a small community south of Madison in Dane County. In January of 2017, a group of concerned citizens came together to discuss substance abuse problems in the McFarland area. The McFarland RADAR is a result of these meetings



For time, day and place of meetings, please contact Cathy Kalina at CathyK@fsmad.org

We are comprised of local representatives from schools, businesses, churches, village administration as well as parents, and youth—all working together to promote healthy lifestyles

For more information go to: <https://www.radarmc.com/>

The McFarland RADAR (RADAR stands for Relevant Alcohol & Drug Awareness Resources) Coalition works to develop, implement and support environmental strategies to reduce substance abuse.

We believe by working together, we can nurture social and environmental changes to make the McFarland area a safer and healthier place, brightening the future of our children, youth and families.

McFarland RADAR Mission Statement

“The mission of McFarland’s RADAR Coalition is to promote healthy lifestyles in the McFarland area through alcohol and drug abuse prevention and education efforts.”

HOW CAN YOU HELP?

We are asking you to give the gift of time. Make a difference in the lives of our youth and our community by

1. Working with us in providing support for planning, project management and awareness campaigns
2. Helping with coalition events, conferences, workshops, and fairs held throughout the year.
3. Being a voice for change in our community, it is time to come together and be that force for change in the McFarland area.