

*“Some think it's holding on that makes one strong; sometimes it's letting go.”*

**Sylvia Robinson**

# Grey Matters

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I hope everyone had an enjoyable Labor Day weekend. The Hardimon clan spent the weekend in Agawam, MA at my 9 yr. old daughter's soccer tournament. Just before the first game, the coach met with all the parents and reminded us that while we were welcome to encourage our children, we were not to coach from the side lines or to comment on the referee's calls (apparently there was an embarrassing scene last season involving a few of our parents). As the game began, parents chatted about how hard it can be to watch our children make mistakes on the field. Expressing our frustration through words and/or actions is a natural response. At the same time, we recognized that doing so was often counter productive since it made it harder for our children to focus on the game and listen to their coach. With these words of wisdom behind us, we bit our tongues and worked hard to be “good” soccer parents.

As the parent of a child just entering middle school myself, I want my daughter to be successful. I believe in monitoring my child's work, encouraging her diligence, and pushing her to do her best. When she is not doing her best or has made a mistake, I want to help her and, to some extent, believe that doing so is just fine. At the same time, I recognize that the soccer coach's advice to refrain from “coaching from the sidelines” relates to how we may at times react to our children's successes and failures in school. There is a line between encouragement and over involvement. Encouragement increases self reliance and independence. Over involvement can increase frustration, and can even hinder the process of learning from our own mistakes. The key question is, “Where is the line?” As I have crossed it myself, I raise the issue as something to think about as our children progress through these challenging “middle years.”

Stepping off of my soap box, let me take a moment to remind everyone about the drop off procedures here at RJG. While I recognize that people are often in a rush, our children's safety dramatically increases when everyone cooperates.

1. The front entrance loop is for buses only between 7:00AM – 7:45AM. and 1:45PM – 2:30PM. Other vehicles are not to enter the loop during these times.
2. Student drop off and pick-up is allowed at the bottom of the steps in the lower parking lot only. *This lot is located east of the building, behind the tennis courts, just off Charter Road. Please pay particular attention to students entering and/or exiting cars when driving through this area.*

3. Parents and guardians are asked to enter and exit the parking lot via Charter Road, not Mass. Avenue (Route 111). *Driving through the campus during bus drop off and pick-up interferes with the buses and causes unnecessary traffic problems.*
4. Students are not to be dropped off in front of the Blanchard gym or in the parking lot on the west side of the building. *Students cannot enter through these doors as they are locked during the school day. Additionally, entering this area interferes with our school buses and causes unnecessary traffic problems.*
5. Visitor parking is only allowed in the lower lot and in the visitor spaces off the front loop. *Please note that the visitor spaces in the front loop are for short term parking only.*
6. Cars are not to be parked – momentarily or otherwise – in the front loop area except in a visitor’s space.
7. Lastly, please remember not to pass the busses. *While I am sure you never do, the frequency of this occurring is surprisingly high.*

Finally, I want to remind everyone that our daily announcements (sports updates, club information, and upcoming events such as this Thursday’s Picture Day) can be found on our website under the “What’s New” link.

<http://ab.mec.edu/rjweb/index.html>