



Questions that Parents Frequently Ask!

Provided by Palos Verdes Peninsula High School
Counseling Staff

How many Honors and AP classes should my child take?

- The intermediate school teacher's recommendation is the #1 guide to course level placement for freshmen.
- There are always exceptions to the rule. For example, if your son/daughter is good at math but didn't try -- or got too far behind -- then perhaps you may want to try and Honors class. It is wise to err "on the side of caution". We would rather see students feel caught up and successful than struggling to keep up. Remember – NOT being in Honors in 9th grade does not prevent a student from being in Honors in 10th grade or beyond.
- We all have strengths and weaknesses. When trying to make this decision, if your child usually does better in subjects with one right answer (i.e. Math and Science) and is recommended for Honors Math and Science - go for it! If this same child doesn't like to write or read a lot – Honors English and World History Honors might not be the best choice at this time.

My child took foreign language in 8th grade. Should he/she repeat the foreign language as a 9th grader?

Again, start with the 8th grade foreign language teacher's recommendation. We tell students that if they don't feel confident in whatever foreign language they took, then it is best to repeat it. It is a subject that builds on prior learning – so it is important to have a strong foundation.

How much homework can I expect my child to have every night?

We need to start by reminding you that homework and studying are two different things. Homework is something that is assigned by a teacher to reinforce what was covered in class. Studying is going beyond assigned work; for instance re-reading a chapter, making vocabulary flashcards or re-working math problems.

In general, you can expect your child to have at least a half hour of homework, per academic class. One of the most common comments from parents is "I never see my child doing homework!" The most common comeback from your teenager is "I did it in class!" What students need to do differently from intermediate school is not just complete the homework but either review (study) what was covered in class that day or start studying for an upcoming test. Your response to "I did it in class" should be "well then I guess you just have studying to do then." This doesn't mean that your child doesn't need "down time". Just like you and/or your spouse needs to unwind from a long day – so do your children. Allowing them to snack, rest, and talk to their friends on line or on the phone after school is healthy in moderation.



What is a Safe School Counselor and when would my child need to seek out her services?

The Safe School Coordinator is Mrs. Christine Lopez. Her counseling position (aka: Student Advocate Counselor) is very unique in that she does not have an alpha caseload; rather she is available to meet with students on a drop in basis. Mrs. Lopez meets with students who are dealing with a wide variety of issues: social, emotional, psychological, cultural, and family issues. Mrs. Lopez does not change schedules or deal with academic issues; however, she works closely with fellow counselors and teachers, the Associate Principal of Discipline, Stephanie Scott, our Principal, Mitzi Cress, and various community organizations.

In addition to meeting individually with students, Mrs. Lopez is responsible for coordinating the Outlook Program (individual appointments with a drug/alcohol counselor) and Support Group Program on campus each year. There are 5 support groups on campus: Girls Group, Boys Group, Co-Ed Teen Issues Group, New to PEN High Group, and Grief Group.

How does my child find out about sports teams?

Mr. Yoshida, Athletic Director, ext. 692 or Mrs. Shiosaki, ext. 690 in the Athletic Office.

Many of the sports teams require a tryout; however you can walk onto some sports like track and field. The best way to be in good shape for a tryout is to participate in the summer sports program. Most sports have summer programs and some sports require you to participate in the summer program to be eligible to try out during the school year.

I am especially worried about my child because we just moved into the district and she/he doesn't know anyone at the school. Any thoughts on how to help my child feel more comfortable at school?

Every new student is invited to an orientation. We also have a support group for new students called "Transitions". This group is a great way to commiserate with other new students and to meet new friends. In addition, you should encourage your child to get involved in an area they are interested in, for instance; join a club, sport, yearbook, newspaper, drama and so forth.

As a parent, how do I get involved on campus?

We need you at our school. There are numerous volunteer opportunities on our campus – Parents on Campus, Registration Day, the College Career Center and helping in the Attendance Office etc. Please call the main office and they will direct your call to the appropriate person.

Peninsula High School is huge – much larger than my child's intermediate school. I hear how important it is to "get involved". Where would my child start figuring that out?

Counselors have a lot to do with making a school feel more manageable. We encourage students to get involved in an area they are interested in, for instance they could join a sport, yearbook, newspaper, drama and so forth. Clubs and volunteering also helps. We have club sign-ups in the fall. Everyone is invited. A club is only as strong as its members and we tell your kids to never assume the club doesn't need them. Better yet, start your own club; this is also a great way to meet people that like the same things you do!!

Is there a community service requirement at Peninsula High School?

No, however colleges like to see "service to others" and "giving back to the community". Moreover, colleges look for a history of commitment, a passion for one or two activities versus a long list of clubs you may have only signed up for but never really participated in. Think: "quality vs. quantity".

I know my child is only going into 9th grade but if it goes as fast as intermediate school did, I know college will be here before you know it. What can my child be doing right now to prepare for college?

- Keep up his/her grades
- Get organized- (purchase our agenda book in the student activities office or use some sort of an assignment book)
- Write down each and every assignment from each class, crossing it off when completed
- Study skills- (discuss homework versus studying)
- Get involved at school or in the community

What happens if my child needs to be in a less strenuous class? Or what happens if my child needs to be in a more challenging class?

Your student's school counselor is the one who will advise your student of college and graduation requirements. Therefore, counselors are the ones who your student must see for guidance on class changes, or level changes. Teacher recommendations are always taken into account when level changes are being made. Encourage your student to advocate for him or herself by having them reach out to their counselors when they have a concern.

To take or not to take summer school?

Summer school should not take priority over a planned family vacation. Summer school is usually taught on a high school campus which makes it a great way to get used to high school. Year-long courses run 6 weeks. Summer school is not recommended in subjects like Math or Foreign Language that are foundation building subjects.

When do 8th graders meet with their high school counselor and when do parents get to meet the counselors?

Counselors meet with 8th graders at their intermediate school at the end of March to explain the scheduling process and transition to high school. This is followed by two (2) parent orientation nights on our campus in April. In April, we return to the immediate school to meet with each 8th grader individually to review their course selections.

How does my child get in touch with his or her counselor?

Students come to the counseling office and fill out a form "Request to see Counselor". Be specific on your request, as it will help your counselor. The counselor will call in your child to talk about their request. There are also "drop-in times". In general, these are before school, during lunch, or after school. Contact your individual counselor for specifics.

How do I (the parent) get in touch with my child's counselor?

Counselors answer your questions and concerns via phone and/or email. We are also available for appointments/meetings with you and your child. If you have questions about a class or grade, it is best to contact the teacher directly via phone or email.

When can I expect to see my child's grades?

Intermediate schools are on a trimester system, we are on the semester system. Grades are given out at 10 week periods or quarterly.

- 1st quarter (November) and 3rd quarter (March) grades are progress report grades and issued in your student's 2nd period class.
- 2nd quarter (February) & 4th quarter (June) grades are recorded on the permanent (transcript). Report cards are mailed home.
- You can monitor your students' grades on Edline or contact their teachers.

What is Naviance and why is it important to my child?

Naviance: Workspace k12 is a computer program relatively new to Peninsula High School. It is important to incoming 9th graders as each student must not only complete a registration sheet, each student must also register for classes online through Naviance. If your child attended an intermediate school in our district we registered them at the intermediate school and they are ready to access all the wonderful features Naviance offers!

Naviance is a Web-based service designed especially for students and parents. It is a comprehensive website that you can use to help make decisions about high school courses, colleges, and careers.

Naviance: Workspace k12 will allow students and parents to:

- Get involved in the planning and advising process – Register for high school classes online, build a resume, complete on-line surveys, and manage timelines and deadlines for making decisions about colleges and careers.
- Research colleges – Compare GPA, standardized test scores, and other statistics to actual historical data from our school for students who have applied

and been admitted in the past, in addition to reviewing national data about colleges.

- Sign up for college visits – Find out which colleges are visiting our school and sign up to attend those sessions

Naviance: Workspace k12 also lets us share information with you on up-coming meetings and events, local scholarship opportunities, and college and career information. You can also use the site to send your counselors an e-mail message.

How do we access Naviance: Workspace k12?

We will provide your child with a personal access code and instructions for accessing Naviance: Workspace k12 (<http://connection.naviance.com/pvphs>) during scheduling in April. (Please note: Students need their own email addresses separate from their parents) Parents will receive their own codes in the fall. You will use that code to create your own Naviance: Workspace k12 account in conjunction with your own email address.