



# Parras Middle School

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Dear Parents and Guardians,

Did you know that strong social connection can strengthen our immune systems, lower rates of anxiety and depression, and improve self-esteem? In the educational setting, connection is crucial for learning as well! Strong feelings of connection to school, peers, and staff can support students in developing organization and time management skills, increasing memory and attention, and decreasing instances of bullying.

At school, connection is built when teachers and students get to know one another. We use spirit events to foster connection to our school through fun activities and dress-up days. Even during distance learning, we have adapted many of our activities, such as our weekly Hangout Spot, to continue these opportunities for social and school connectedness.

We encourage you to focus on connection at home this month, especially in light of this holiday season when connections may look different than usual. This is a great opportunity to connect as a family by setting aside planned time away from distractions (cell phones, tablets, video games, etc.) to focus on one another. Plan a [fun family activity](#) like a movie or game night, find a new family hobby, cook a new recipe together, or get outside and go for a walk! Remember that while time away from school can lead to an increase in family connection, your student may have feelings of disconnection from their friends and school as well. Encourage your student to keep in touch with friends during this time to maintain those valuable social connections. Texting, phone calls, video chats, and video games are all great tools for keeping in touch, when used appropriately and mindfully. If your family feels safe, perhaps organize a socially distanced visit between your student and a trusted friend!

Relevant Resources:

- [Connect to Thrive - Benefits of Social Connection](#)
- [6 Ways to Stay Connected with Friends](#)

If your student feels they may benefit from additional support, they can make a virtual appointment with their school counselor: <https://calendly.com/parras-counseling>

Happy Holidays!

The Parras School Counseling Department

Lisa MacMillan, Ashley MacDonald, Cassy Ryley (Long Term Substitute for Rachel Andrews)