

July 1, 2011

Dear Parents:

The staff at Roscoe Middle School is increasingly concerned about the number of students abusing prescription medications. This abuse includes misusing medication that has been prescribed by a physician and medication that has been prescribed to someone else. I have spent some time researching this topic and have found that many communities are experiencing children as young as 12 years old trying prescription drugs to “get high.” According to a New York health website, “Prescription drugs are more easily available to children than illicit drugs like marijuana because they can be stolen from the medicine cabinet at home, rather than having to be bought on the streets. An added danger of abusing prescription drugs is that teens consider them safer than street drugs because they are manufactured by a pharmaceutical company.”

(<http://www.health.state.ny.us/professionals/patients/medicines/prescription>)

A major concern we have at RMS is the misuse of ADD/ADHD medications as well as painkillers such as Vicodin. In addition to these, the following drugs are also commonly misused:

- Pain Killers including morphine, codeine, OxyContin, Vicodin, and Demerol. A large single dose can cause severe respiratory depression and death. Long-term abuse leads to physical dependence and, in some cases, addiction.
- Depressants including Nembutal, Valium, and Xanax. These slow down normal brain activity and cause a drowsy, uncoordinated feeling. Large doses can depress breathing and cause a coma. Long-term abuse can lead to physical dependence and addiction.
- Stimulants including Ritalin, Dexedrine, and Medidate. These drugs elevate blood pressure and heart rate. High doses can cause dangerously high body temperature and cardiac arrest brought on by an abnormal heartbeat.

As a staff we will continue to monitor and educate the children to the best of our ability. However, we are asking for your help and assistance with monitoring the prescription medications within your home. We also ask that you never send prescription medication to school with your child and that you help educate your child on the dangers of abusing prescription medication.

Sincerely,

Julie Cropp
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