

INTRODUCTION TO ROOSEVELT'S HOUSE PROGRAM

Much of the material on the following pages were excerpted from a publication entitled "A Handbook For Roosevelt Advisors." This handbook published several years ago contained a lot of valuable information for Roosevelt Advisors new and old alike. Although House is taking some new directions, much of the information contained in the handbook remains relevant today. In those areas where House is to be developed over the year, information is sketchy and it is assumed that additions will be made throughout the year. Consequently little attention is devoted to the instructional component of House in this introductory section. Rather those other crucial components of the Advisor role are featured here.

"WORDS ABOUT HOUSE"

We have interviewed each advisor and recorded responses as to what a new advisor should know about house. Advisors shared thoughts, feelings, suggestions and hints in order to aid a new advisor. The following comments are excerpts randomly selected from these ...

One of the initial things that had to do with house was that house was an arbitrarily decided group of people. There should be a mix of sex, age and background so that house, as a unit, would be composed of kids who might normally choose not to be together. This provided a chance for kids to work with a group of people they did not know and might not choose to work with. And a chance to appreciate those people as individuals and not a stereotype. A personal comment here, just from me, I think Roosevelt as far as I can tell has such a mix of kids in terms of backgrounds and in terms of class and economic status that it seems almost crucial that we take advantage of cultural and economic diversity of the students here and use it as positively as possible ...

The advisor, in order to function, must believe in what he or she is doing ...

The concept of house should be congruent with the philosophy on which the whole staff agrees. Along with this comes the advice that each advisor has to develop his or her own style within the philosophy. No advisor is going to be successful by copying what another person does nor should the faculty as a whole pressure people to copy what someone else is doing ...

A strong personal relationship with the kids is the number one -- most important -- thing about what house does ...

In the beginning of the year, advisors must explain to students what the expectations of house are and stick to them. Consistency, just as in a classroom, is crucial to successful running house ...

If you don't set expectations you don't have a chance ...

Anytime we deal with new 6th graders, we have to make sure that they understand the kind of system they are going into. They need to know the mechanics. They need to know how they fit into this whole thing. More than that, I think they have to understand to some degree how Roosevelt is different from other middle schools in the area. Why is it we don't do things the way other people do and possibly what each one's responsibility as a student is within this system...

There's a danger here that in paying attention to someone with a great deal of academic and discipline problems, you perhaps lose the kid that isn't really doing anything wrong, but is just getting by ...

In order to be a successful advisor you need to know your kids well enough to deal with them as individuals. In order to do this you have to spend time with them ...

I think a new advisor has to realize that he or she is only 1/22nd of that house group and that even though to a certain extent the advisor is responsible for the success or failure of the house, it is never totally in your control ...

I think the biggest thing is getting kids to know that you are really there to help them and that you are going to do what you can for them ...

I try to make them feel they are really important and that they are special to me and if they have any problems or anything I want them to come to me. I wouldn't be an advisor if I didn't care and if they can't give me that type of respect I must be doing something wrong. I try to stress that I want them to feel that close and I think they really do ...

It takes a long time to advise in that first week. Read the school catalog thoroughly before meeting with kids ...

Perhaps a new advisor should know that you don't impose your own value system or your own life-style on kids. Keep in mind what it takes to function in society ...

Encourage them to be leaders ...

Don't always believe everything the kids tell you at first. Kids perceive things individually. They are not lying. They are too close to the situation ...

Remember that follow-through on consequences immediately or rewards immediately is important. Otherwise, the time lag makes the situation lose its effectiveness ...

It's important to keep track of advisees even after they leave Roosevelt. If you read about them in the paper, a phone call or a little note means a lot to the kid and to you. The relationship doesn't just end--it's one of the peculiar things about house ...

You have a tendency to develop more than a classroom teacher-kid relationship. And because of that you can become emotionally involved very easily and you lose your objectivity in evaluating a situation. You become like a parent to some degree and everything they do can hurt you if they do something negative. You can take it as an affront to you if your're not careful. You would have to remember that you aren't their parent or you aren't their relative, they aren't your kid and allow them the freedom to move about in the school or outside in their own way ...

An advisor is a unique character running round in a school. It's unlike anything most certified people have ever done before. It's different to define because the role is so varied. One minute you are a disciplinarian, the next minute you're willing to fight everybody for that kid. The attachment develops, but in a brief period of time, because of the nature of house and your responsibility as an advisor. An advisor is home base, is the contact point in the school for the kid to belong.

Don't be afraid to be emotionally involved! ...

Be able to be with the group, not above the group, yet be a model for the group ...

Don't let frustration rule you. Accpet the reality while aiming for the ideal ...

Most of all, be honest ...

The advisor must be the energy in house at first ...

Do love. Don't make personal judgments based on your prejudices, morals ...

It's important for your standards to be known, but accept a student where he/she is. Don't judge.

Don't be afraid of consequences or bend consequences to fit individual needs. Don't be a machine or robot--this system isn't. Some kids need to be held, some to be spanked; you have to know the difference. If you goof, don't kick yourself in the pants. You get better as you go along, overall ...

Be aware, not ashamed, to ask for help - other advisors, the counselor, whoever -- if you have a problem that you're stumped on ...

Remember: The kid who doesn't seem to have problems needs strokes also, "like a pinball machine" ...

Activities that work best are away from school: picnics, parties ...

Don't feel guilty if your house isn't functioning as well as the "best house" -- it's OK!...

Don't feel pressure to force people to participate in intramural activities ...

No house is perfect; every house has problems, don't be afraid to seek help ...

THINGS WE ALL GOTTA DO

Although there is much that advisors may do with a house if they are so inclined, there are certain duties required of every advisor if house is going to succeed at all. These include:

- I. Advising students about academic programs and class schedules.
- II. Contacting parents.
- III. Keeping student records.
- IV. Informing house members of school rules and current announcements.
- V. Intervening as advocate for the advisee in conflicts with other students, staff members, or administrators.
- VI. Meeting with house daily.

I. Academic Advising

If a student is to participate successfully in a totally elective program and end up with necessary skills and well-chosen experiences, there must be someone to help the student to question decisions, make suggestions, and open up avenues the student might otherwise overlook. You, the advisor, are that someone.

A. Inservice Week Conference

During the week before school starts, you will receive a list of your house members. Call advisees as soon as possible to set up an appointment to meet with them and their parent(s) during the week to get acquainted, discuss academic programs, and arrange class schedules.

Important! Before you start having conferences, be sure that you have read thoroughly and understand the catalog of course offerings. It is your job to help match up the advisee with the appropriate classes. Find out beforehand when you can go to for help if you need it.

The meeting may take place at school or at the advisee's home. Most advisors suggest doing the following things:

1. Get acquainted with the student and parents, their home, background, and interests.
2. Outline your job as advisor. Be sure the parents and the advisee know you are there to help whenever possible.
3. Set up your expectations for house. This is a good way to help orient parents and students to house and to the Roosevelt program.
4. With transfer students and new sixth graders, review all grade school reports and recommendations. This can help you discover the advisee's strengths, weaknesses, goals, needs and interests. With returning advisees, review last year's evaluations.
5. Help outline a class schedule for the first trimester, making sure the student has back-ups in case the class closes.
6. Help outline tentative goals for the individual student's progress for the whole year.

Other suggestions ----

One advisor asks new advisees to write him a long letter introducing themselves, their family, their interests, goals, etc.

Other advisors suggest long interviews with the advisees as well as the parents.

Some houses use this time to invite advisees and parents to a potluck before school starts. Many use our all-school picnic for this purpose.

Some advisors meet with sixth graders twice, once to get acquainted and to receive materials, then again to make the schedule. This plan encourages more family involvement between the two conferences.

Anticipate questions kids and parents will ask you. Urge them to come back again during the week to make sure their schedule is finalized. You'll hear some pretty bizarre rumors about Roosevelt. Be honest, don't bluff. Find out if you don't know.

B. Registration

Registration is held for each 12 week term, to enroll students for that trimester's classes. CIRP will outline specific procedures prior to each registration. IT IS THE ADVISOR'S RESPONSIBILITY TO ENSURE THAT ADVISEES UNDERSTAND THE PROCEDURES FOR REGISTRATION. Talk with each advisee individually about his or her new schedule.

Prior to registration day each trimester, you should contact parents encouraging them to discuss with their child the new schedule. Most advisors require that students bring tentative schedules signed by their parents on the day of registration. Be sure students have back-ups. Don't down play parental role.

On registration day, you will review the procedures for registration with your house, help rearrange schedules for advisees who are closed out of classes, keep all necessary forms indicated by the registration process, and generally provide help, assistance, and understanding. Registration is often intimidating, especially to new sixth graders. It is not that unusual to have to console a crying sixth grader who has made a mistake and gotten closed out of all his or her classes. Stay cool. You can help set the tone in house during registration. Have seventh and eighth graders help sixth graders.

C. Class Schedule Sheets

After completing registration, students fill out two class schedule sheets. One is turned in to the office. The second is taken home to be signed by the parents and is then returned to the advisor and filed in the student's folder. Most advisors ask students to make themselves an extra copy of their class schedule, in case they forget what classes they are taking.

D. Computer Locator Cards

Shortly after registration, you will receive computer locator cards for each advisee, listing each person's complete schedule. You will receive new copies throughout the term each time an advisee makes a schedule change. If you have any questions about them, go to the Records Office.

E. Changing Classes

If a student decides to change classes after registration, he or she must pick up a change of registration form from the Records Office and have it signed by the teacher whose class is added, the teacher whose class is dropped, the parents, and the advisor. These are then returned to the Records Office.

II. Parent Contacts

The advisor is the primary liaison between the home and the school. It is the advisor's job to keep parents informed of what is happening to their child at school. Advisors should contact parents at least once a trimester.

Some advisors suggest that a parent letter is a helpful introduction to yourself and your role as advisor. Some feel this is less intimidating than a home visit, and may open the lines of communication. Some advisors continue writing letters home at the end of each trimester to inform parents of what is happening within the house and the school as a whole.

Other advisors find it more helpful to contact parents by phone.

Helpful Hints:

Don't contact parents too often, but often enough to keep the lines of communication open. You need to know what you can expect from parents.

Sometimes you need to inform parents of good things the advisee is doing at school. If a parent calls, return the call promptly. Don't wait for a problem to call parents.

Parents' involvement will vary greatly. Some will be extremely open and concerned, while at the other extreme some will be content to let you totally manage their child's program. Explain to the parents how important it is both to be involved in their child's decisions and to give the child room to make independent choices.

III. Student's Record Keeping

The majority of all forms pertaining to a student sooner or later end up in the advisor's hand. It is your job to keep track of your advisees' records.

A. Student Folders

Each student should have a file with his or her name on it to keep all pertinent records and information. You will receive returning advisees folders from the office. Make folders for new advisees. The folders should include:

1. Carbon Copies of evaluations for each trimester.
2. Copies of class schedules for each trimester signed by parents and locator cards listing changes in course schedules.
3. Tardy slips, poor workslips, suspension notices, blue slips (minors), etc.
4. L.A. (reading, writing, spelling) and math recommendations for sixth graders.
5. Summaries of recommendations by teachers on courses the student should take during their seventh and eighth grade years.

Helpful Hints:

Keep up on the record-keeping and keep the files in a neat order. Let advisees take as much responsibility as possible for filling out forms, and checking records. Be sure, however, that you store them.

Many advisors find a check-off list is helpful to keep track of which advisees have taken care of certain items such as lunch permits, signed schedules, signed evaluation packets.

B. Evaluations

At the end of each trimester, students receive credit or incomplete for each class. These are recorded on a computer and logged in by OTIS on the student's permanent record. Teachers also write written evaluations in duplicate on each student's performance. Advisors are given evaluations for all advisees. The advisors then sort out each advisee's evaluations and gather them together.

The originals are put in a manila envelope with a record of the advisee's class schedule on the cover. (These can be obtained in the IMC). These envelopes are taken home by the student to be signed. Students return these signed envelopes to advisors without the evaluations.

Carbon copies of evaluations are also sorted and placed in the student's file folder. Carbons for all three trimesters are grouped together at the end of the year.

Although most advisors read through their advisee's evaluations, some go one step further - they meet individually with the advisees to go over the evaluations personally, to praise good work, and to discuss academic and behavioral problems that show up in the evaluations.

One advisor recommends:

"A new advisor should read all the files on the old kids, to get to know them better and to advise them better. Make sure to read the recommendations on the evaluations. Also, advisors should be encouraged to go over the new evaluations as they come out with the student. You should sit down and read the evaluation with him slowly and carefully, so he understands them and you can interact with the kid about whether or not he deserved that evaluation or if there are any misunderstandings about it. Praise can be lavished here, too. This encourages the kid further."

Disseminating Information

You will be the main liaison between administrative groups and student, so it is crucial that you inform advisees of what is happening around school. Many teachers have a "House" bulletin board in their room to post all announcements, intramural schedules, and dates for registration, etc.

A. Staff and Government Meetings

It is also a good idea to inform students of what is being discussed in faculty meetings, steering committee, and if possible student government. Students can have an effect on decisions at Roosevelt, but they must first be informed about what is going on.

B. School Rules

Roosevelt philosophy encourages "agency", that the student be responsible for his or her own actions. It is important, therefore that you as an advisor make sure that students are informed of and understand school rules.

V. Advocate for Advisees

Most people agree that you are also the advocate for your kids. You are the adult at Roosevelt that each of your advisees should be able to count on to be an impartial judge of any situation that that advisee becomes involved in. This doesn't mean that you always take the student's side, but you make sure, at least, that if the child is accused of something or is involved in some kind of conflict that that child's side is seen as fairly and as openly as possible.

A. Majors and Minors

In order to function successfully as an advocate, you must be aware of school rules and how they are enforced. "Rules and regulations" have been divided into two categories. Some are of a serious nature, and some are of a "good of the order" type. We will call these our "M & M's". (see attached - Behavior Guidelines, Student Behavior Referral)

VI. School Expectations

We have a closed campus. Once a student arrives in the morning, they are expected to stay on campus for the entire school day -- unless parents request otherwise.

The student's dress is a shared responsibility between student and parents, except that students are required to wear shoes. The school may make a judgment as to appropriateness of dress in extreme situations.

Every student is expected to have a full schedule of classes. The only "free" time is the lunch period.

Students are expected to attend classes for which they schedule themselves. The freedom of choice of each course implies that the student will attend classes regularly and complete course requirements.

We expect each student to accept responsibility for the successful functioning of "House".

A. Attendance

Attendance is recorded daily for every period and advisors are contacted when any irregularities are noticed. The full attendance policy is outlined in the section entitled, "Nuts and Bolts". In addition, every student will get a copy of the policy.

B. Visitor's Policy

Occasionally a Roosevelt student wishes to bring a visitor to spend all or part of a day with them at school. There are several conditions which must be met in order for this to happen:

1. Visitors must have the knowledge and permission of their home school, parents and the parents of their host.
2. Visitors are not to be from other Eugene schools on regular school days unless there are special circumstances.
3. Roosevelt students wishing to host a visitor must gain permission from all of their teachers at least a day in advance.

BEHAVIOR GUIDELINES - M&M'S

PURPOSE:

The purpose of the Roosevelt Behavior Guidelines is to assure the safety and welfare of students and staff. These guidelines are intended to promote respectful behavior and to protect an environment where teachers may teach and student may learn.

IMPLEMENTATION:

During the implementation of these guidelines, the role of the House Advisor and the Administration is one of supporting equally both the students' rights and responsibilities. Unacceptable student behavior is divided into two categories: MINOR and MAJOR. Following each category are the procedures to be used.

MINOR OFFENSE:

Disruptive conduct
Skipping class
Tardiness
Littering
Running in halls

Abusing school property (kicking lockers, throwing books, etc.)
Horseplay (pushing, wrestling, etc.)
Closed Campus violation

PROCEDURES FOR MINOR OFFENSES:

- 1st Notification: Advisor discusses incident with student and reviews Behavior Guidelines.
- 2nd Notification: Advisor contacts parent and may take corrective action. Student is warned of next step.
- 3rd Notification: Advisor and student meet with Principal or Assistant Principal. At this time a minor offense becomes more serious and a suspension or other option may be enacted.

The student's minor offense record will begin each school term at zero.

MAJOR OFFENSE:

Fight and/or assault
Harrassment physical or verbal (including extortion)
Insubordination- refusal to obey a reasonable request
Theft
Vandalism

Use of tobacco
Possession and/or use of alcohol or illicit drugs
Possession and/or use of a dangerous weapon
Refusal to cooperate with a substitute teacher
Frequent unexcused absence/or skipping

PROCEDURES FOR MAJOR OFFENSES:

Immediately following the incident, a conference involving an Administrator and the student is held. The student has a right to have his/her Advisor present. Specific action will depend on the seriousness of each situation. If a student is suspended from school, the Administrator, consulting with the Advisor, will determine the length of the suspension and make appropriate contact to insure the student's safe arrival home.

The entire process is to reflect the attitude that we are dealing with student behavior and NOT student character. We intend to maintain a warm, supportive relationship while carrying out the above guidelines.

STUDENT BEHAVIOR REFERRAL
MINOR OFFENSE

Student's Name

Advisor's Name

- _____ Disruptive conduct
- _____ Skipping class
- _____ Tardiness
- _____ Littering
- _____ Running in halls
- _____ Horseplay
- _____ Closed campus violation
- _____ Abusing school property
- _____ Other (specify) _____

Comments: _____

Date _____

Name of person issuing referral

4. Visitors must check-in to the office and get a Visitor's Pass before starting their visit.
5. Visitors are discouraged the last two weeks of the school year.
6. Young children are discouraged from attending school.

VII. Meeting with House Daily

This is the area of House that is being revised this year. Because tremendous attention and energy will be devoted to this area, it will only be mentioned here. This includes the instructional element of the House program as well as the support network for developing daily activities.

NOTE: Outside of School Activities

The general consensus among advisors is that house activities outside of school are often the most effective for developing group identity and inter-personal relationships. Some houses have outside activities once a month, others once a term, others less often. It depends on the groups. Some of the more popular outside group activities are as follows:

- Movie-video tapes
- Potluck dinners (especially the week before school starts)
- Camping at the coast
- Pizza parties
- Rollerskating
- Hiking
- "A - Thons"
- Joint house dances
- Ski trips
- Picnics
- Breakfast at a house member's home
- Saturday softball game
- Ice cream at Farrell's
- Swimming
- Pressing apple cider

No need to worry if everyone does not want or cannot go. Small groups are fun too and help get relationships going.

A note that if you are driving your own car with kids, be sure to sign up in the office for extra liability insurance. Check for details about this in the office. Don't feel shy about asking parents to help with transportation or chaperoning. They love to be involved.

Video Tape Policy

The D.C.C. has been asked to provide direction for building administrators and teachers regarding the showing of videotapes, or videodisks as a part of the instructional program. The DCC's position, elaborated below, applies to all videotape materials rented or otherwise acquired for use with students.

- "X" Rating - May not be shown under any circumstances.
- "R" Rating - Teachers must inform Department Chairperson, or Administrator, and provide the opportunity to preview the program. If any parent objects, the teacher will provide an educationally related alternative for that student.
- "PG" Rating - Same procedure as above for "R" rated films.
- "G" Rating - No notification required. Use the same professional judgment as when using video material acquired from 4J or ESD.
- No Rating Evident - Same procedure as above for "R" and "PG" films.

It goes without saying that no video materials should be used with students without a thorough preview by the teacher prior to intended use date.

Do not rely on "distant recall" because you saw the film in a theater some time ago.

RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO YOU

There's an abundance of expertise available to you, once you discover where to look for it. Probably, you should first get acquainted with the organization of the school, who does what, and from there you can find your own way.

THE ADMINISTRATION TEAM consists of four people:

The Principal controls overall management of building and personnel, and represents our liaison with the central 4J office and the community.

Two Associate Principals handle discipline problems and work with community disciplinary agencies such as the courts, the police, and Skipworth (a juvenile detention facility).

The Counselor is responsible for liaison with "helping" agencies such as Children's Services, Mental Health Division, Christian Family Institute facilities (including shelter home for teenagers) and the University of Oregon and 4J School District resources including counseling, social work, psychologists, and clinical services. The counselor spends a great deal of time helping advisors with concerns they have about advisees.

THE STEERING COMMITTEE is the leadership group. It includes the Administration Team, all team leaders, the head of CIRP ("Committee for Improvement of Registration Procedures, the group which plans and runs registration for classes every 12 weeks. You'll serve on CIRP yourself one of these days), and the staff-selected faculty chairperson, and the Community School Coordinator. This group meets weekly, and you're welcome to attend the meetings.

Any of these staffers can and will be glad to answer your questions, give you help and support. Start with your own team leader.

THE DISTRICT 4J SOCIAL WORKER is in the building every week for a staffing with the counselor in referrals. The counselor will see that you meet her. Just ask.

THE SCHOOL NURSE can be a big help to you if you need any medical information about an advisee. She arranges for free or low-cost burdens where there is need, and can help with clothing, glasses, physical examinations, and dental care for your students.

REFERRALS - WHEN TO GET HELP

As advisor, you will be somewhat like the medical general practitioner. You may be friend, confessor, stern mentor, healer of wounds, all of these and more to your advisees. (You'll also be an adult model, and don't think for a moment that What You Say - Yes, Even What You're Thinking - doesn't have influence. It does, plenty.)

Like the GP, you need to know to let nature take care of things, when to take action and when to get help. No matter how good you are, you will sometimes need help. And, it is okay to ASK for it - it's even expected that you will. You won't lose any points for asking, we'll guarantee

Check out your own perceptions frequently. Ask other advisors how they deal with advisor problems. Locate your resources before you need help.

If you're in any doubt at all whether an advisee is being harshly treated - physically or otherwise, you have an obligation to report your suspicions or findings to a member of the administration team. Don't delay on that This is especially important - if there is strong indication or physical abuse.

HOWEVER

Do Not rush down to Children's Services or make a complaint to police if an advisee tells you the kid's parents are mean/cruel, don't understand them, won't give them money for lunch or clothes, or some such.

Do Not take the kid home with you on the kid's word that conditions at home are awful.

Do Not set yourself up or allow yourself to be conned, snowed, used as a "patsy", or mixed in the middle of a family hassle.

WHEN YOU INTERVENE IN ANOTHER PERSON'S LIFE, YOU NEED TO BE MIGHTY SURE THAT YOUR ACTION IS NEEDED. That does not translate into "if in doubt, do nothing". Precisely the opposite is true. We do want you to move, but move with caution.

Here are some guidelines:

-IF THE SITUATION IS URGENT, YOU'RE SURE YOU NEED TO MAKE A REFERRAL TO AN OUTSIDE AGENCY, BE SURE YOU LET SOMEONE ON THE ADMIN. TEAM KNOW ABOUT IT. Otherwise, we may be working at cross-purposes. Before we wised up and designated handling of certain types of referrals to specific administrators, we once had 3 people working on the case of one kid: the principal, at Mom's request, set up a family counseling situation with one agency; counselor and social worker, at advisor's request, were working with a different agency; and a teacher who had the kid in class made a referral to the school psychologist on the theory that no one was doing anything to keep the kid. Now, we try to keep our communication better than that. We need your help.

-A NOTE ON CONFIDENTIALITY. Suppose you have an advisee you think could be violent. Would you wait it out to see if you're right? Or, your advisee lets you know he's into heavy drugs and having trouble.. Do you try to counsel the kid out of it by yourself? There's a rule-of-thinking by professional counselors to help you: If in your judgment, there is clear and present danger to the person involved, or to other persons, you have an obligation to notify proper authorities - i.e., someone on the admin. team.

ABOUT THE ROOSEVELT COMMUNITY

The boundaries of the Roosevelt attendance area encompass many areas, i.e. University of Oregon, Amazon student housing and Glenwood.

We have a "good mix" representing families from all over Eugene and from the whole range of economic, social, and cultural backgrounds. We have students from Christian Family Institute, a shelter home for teenagers, from the National Academy of Artistic Gymnastics, as well as students from foreign countries whose parents are attending the University of Oregon.

Students in this area attend one of four elementary schools before entering Roosevelt: Edison, Harris, Willard, and Patterson.

Over 150 students transfer into this school from every part of the city; also one class of mildly handicapped students attend Roosevelt.

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