



ASHBROOK INDEPENDENT SCHOOL

To Nurture and Challenge Academically Capable Students

From the Office of the Head of School, Dr. Christopher A. Schoberl

Is it Monday, Yet? is my once monthly attempt to address developmental and topical issues we confront as we “challenge and nurture” our children. The topics I cover will be drawn from developmental and cognitive psychology, current research, and my own parenting and school administrator experience, and could just as easily be a response to local, national, or world events that have parenting implications. Keep your eyes on this spot in the final Compass of each month, and if you have any great ideas about future topics, please shoot me an email or text me... or, better yet, kick it old school and give me a call.

Is it Monday, Yet,? 12/3



Oxford HS: Tough to Understand Such “a thing”

By now, you, and likely your children too, have read or listened to more than enough stories about the school shooting at Oxford HS. I have always detested the phrase “school shooting,” not only because of what it references, but also because once a word or phrase enters into our lexicon, once we have a common vernacular to reference “a thing,” it acknowledges that it has become “a thing” and, in a way signals that it is here to stay. More offensive to my heart than to my ear, however, is what seems an oxymoron of “school” + “shooting.”

As a father, my heart goes out to the families of the victims and also to the family of the shooter. As a Head of School, I walk around our campus always with an eye towards security, and am humbled by the trust you place in Ashbrook to make sure your children are safe. Incidents such as the one at Oxford, recalibrate the antenna I use to notice and respond to potential issues of safety, security, and the sense of belonging and fulfillment of our students.

How do we make sense of such a thing as a school shooting, for ourselves as adults, and then in a way that allows us to translate it for our children, many of whom hear or see the news play out on their devices while we are still back on our heels? How are we, as parents, supposed to navigate a world in

which the functioning of our families and the safety of our children depend upon our devices, and reconcile this with our responsibility to raise healthy, aware, and empathetic adults?

When I was a child, my parents would share, over corn flakes the next morning before we went off to school, news they saw on TV the night prior. I recall hearing from them first, thoughtful and developmentally appropriate versions of stories about Kent State and John Lennon's death (my dad, with the NYPD, was a first responder that night).

For the vast majority of our families, the filter between a newsworthy event and a published news story is increasingly porous and becoming moreso, as trends in media consumption tend to favor the sensational and the immediate. If you find yourself struggling with how to navigate a world filled with devices, or how to talk with your children about what happened in Oxford, please link to the below IIMY? articles on the Ashbrook Website (About Ashbrook>Communication from the Leadership Team). In addition to these articles and the resources attached, here is [a great article from Common Sense Media](#).

[Is it Monday, Yet? 8/27](#)

[Raising Kids in the Age of Screens... and Merlot](#)

[Is it Monday, Yet? 9/24](#)

[How to Talk with your Child about Difficult Topics](#)

In the past, as in the case of Oxford, Ashbrook has made the decision not to take time during the academic day to talk with students about these incidents. Acting on the premise that school should remain a safe space, and not wanting to frighten children, it has been our position that parents would know the best place and time to broach such topics with their individual children (and we have provided resources as a good place to start). On the other hand, the argument might also be made that leaving the topic unaddressed in school leads to students feeling *less safe*; both opinions have merit; what do you think?

Amidst all of the confusion and ambiguity surrounding such issues, there is one sad certainty: human nature and issues of mental health being what they are, we can probably count on seeing related images and news, connected to future acts of violence, on our many screens. Against the backdrop of this disappointing reality, please rest assured that the entire Ashbrook staff will continue to work hard to remain an inviting place of joy, inclusion, and kindness; ensuring student safety AND making sure that we always deliver the best possible student experience, are not mutually exclusive.