Billings

Dear Families and Caretakers,

Halloween is quickly approaching and we encourage students to dress up on Thursday 10/30 to celebrate! In order to make this as fun, smooth, and safe as possible, we ask that you help us enforce a couple of guidelines around costumes and celebrations. *Namely, we ask that students not wear costume related masks during class, have props (wizard staffs, hockey sticks, etc…), and avoid references to alcohol/drugs/violence. Further, if costumes are very large or otherwise distracting to a learning environment, we ask that students avoid wearing them in class* (this would include inflatable costumes or anything that would make it hard for them or a peer to participate in basic classroom activities). Grade levels may decide to have a celebration during the school day, and this would be a great place for some of the larger, more extravagant costumes, as would lunch!

Most importantly, while dressing up and celebrating Halloween creates opportunities for fun and community building, it can also create situations where students inadvertently dress in a way that can be hurtful to others. Here, we hope you'll join us in helping ensure that students are thoughtful about the costumes that they are wearing to school. Being proactive can help all of us to avoid uncomfortable situations at school and can help us ensure that Halloween is a time where all students feel safe and honored.

Please talk with your student to make sure that the costume that they have selected does not portray a stereotyped image of a culture or group of people. In addition, please help students to make sure that their costume is not offensive to any racial, ethnic or religious group, any people with disabilities or illnesses, or any other group of people. Costumes should not become opportunities to turn a person's identity into a stereotyped image. Students are often unaware of the long history these traditions have of causing harm and need our help in understanding why it can be hurtful. We will discuss these concepts in our classes and advisories, and ask that you continue these conversations at home!

We look forward to celebrating with all of the students on Halloween and appreciate your help in making sure that it is a fun day for everyone. If you have any questions at all regarding the day, please feel free to reach out.

In partnership,

Rob Heavner