

# Sixth Grade Survival Guide



**...all you need to know to survive sixth grade at  
ROBERT E. MELICAN MIDDLE SCHOOL**

## *To the Reader...*

We know that change can bring about many fears and concerns. Moving into the sixth grade is no different. We are sure you have heard stories of what may or may not go on at Robert E. Melican Middle School. You may have heard that the teachers are mean, that homework is piled on, that sixth graders get stuffed into lockers, or that there is a pool on the fourth floor. This book will help you sort those myths from reality. We asked our experts, the sixth graders, to help put together this “Survival Guide” to help you make a smooth transition to middle school. Real sixth grade students and staff share their thoughts on everything from lockers to changing classes, from schedules to studies. We all want to help turn your fear into excitement as you enter the sixth grade. You are going to love it here! 😊

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# **The ABC's of 6th Grade**

After school activities

Best Teachers

Computers

Determination

Education

Freedom

Guidance Counselors

Homework

Independence

Joining four schools as one

Kindness

Library

Marvelous

No walking in lines

Orange team

Purple Team

Quizzes

Respect

Studies

Tech Ed.

United

Variety

Wonderful

eXperiences

You will love it

Zillions of great things to learn and do!!!

# Kids explain...

When you get to Melican you may hear words or names that describe things around school. You may have never heard these names before in elementary school! So we thought we'd take a few of those words and explain them to you. Soon these words will become part of your everyday language.

**SECTIONS and TEAMS** – The 6<sup>th</sup> grade (just like 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup>) is divided into 2 teams. In 6<sup>th</sup> grade, the teams are ORANGE and PURPLE. The teams will all have students from all four elementary schools mixed together. You will be put into one section...your section is also your homeroom, where you start your day every morning. You will have almost all of your classes with your section. That means you will spend most of your day with the same people, kind of like you do in elementary school. In elementary school, you don't have sections, but you might say, "I'm in Mr. Olson's class," or "I'm in Mrs. MacDonald's room." Now, in 6<sup>th</sup> grade, you'll say something like, "I'm in 6-3" or "I'm in 6-9." Each section starts with a 6 (for 6<sup>th</sup> grade), and then your section number, 1 through 9. And don't worry, your number doesn't mean you're "first" or "last" or anything like that...it's just a way of naming the sections.

**GUIDANCE COUNSELORS** – The guidance counselors have their own offices where you can talk to them in private. They will listen to you and help you with problems you might have in school, with friends, or with other people you know. They can also help if you don't understand your schedule or if you have any questions during the day about school. The guidance counselors talk with students individually and in groups. They are nice, and they are here to help you! You will have the same guidance counselor all three years of middle school.

**LOCKERS** – Your locker is nothing but a small metal closet in the hallway! It's a place where you keep your bag, books, and jacket during the day. You are given a lock and the combination to the lock. The combination is like the code you use to open the lock (kind of like a key). Remember, you can only use the lock that the school gives you, not one from home. Just in case you forget or lose your combination, your homeroom teacher will have it written down. You can decorate the inside of your locker with pictures, posters, and mirrors, but they have to come down at the end of the year.

**AGENDA** – Your agenda helps you stay organized. Students are expected to bring their agendas to all of their classes and write their homework assignments down. You can decorate your agenda any way you want.

**LUNCH** – You already know what lunch is...but here are some things about lunch in the middle school: you eat lunch with the whole 6<sup>th</sup> grade, and you can sit with anyone you want! When you get to the cafeteria, you sit at a table and wait to be called on. When you're called on, you get into line (there are usually three lines), and then buy lunch! About half of students buy lunch and half bring lunch from home.

**BRAIN BREAK** – When the weather is nice, students have the choice to go outside for Brain Break at the end of lunch period. Teachers at lunch will let you know when it is time for Brain Break, and then you and your friends can go outside and play on the basketball/tennis courts, or just hang out and get some fresh air. Brain Break lasts about 10-12 minutes. If you'd rather stay in the cafeteria during that time, you can choose to do that instead.

**HEALTH** – In health class, you learn about staying healthy and keeping yourself safe. You may have gone through D.A.R.E. before and learned about the bad effects of drugs, alcohol, and cigarettes. These are some of the things you will learn more about in health.

**ARRIVAL** – Some of you might walk to school, others might get a ride, and most will take the bus. You should arrive at school between 7:25 and 7:40. When you get to school, everyone walks in through the cafeteria doors. Then 6<sup>th</sup> graders will walk through the cafeteria and into the gym. Then you can hang out with your friends until the morning bell rings. When that bell rings, you go to homeroom and the day starts!

**DISMISSAL** – At the end of the day, when the last bell rings at 2:15, students are dismissed to go home. That's the time when you go to your locker, get everything to go home, and then walk outside to find your bus (or to walk home if you live close to school). Are you afraid you'll miss the bus? I've got one word for you---RUN! Just kidding. You will have plenty of time to get to your locker and WALK to the bus outside. The buses are all outside in a line, and each bus has a number on it. It's really easy to find your bus, but if you need help, ask someone. There are a lot of teachers outside to help.

**TECH ED** – Technology Engineering, as it's officially called, is a special class you'll have once a week. Here you'll learn about technology, construction, and building with different materials. It's a really fun class where you get to work with your hands and build fun projects. Sixth graders design, build, and race CO<sub>2</sub> cars at the end of the school year.

**AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES** – There is A LOT of great stuff to do after school. This means that at 2:25, instead of going home, you stay at Melican. After-school activities take place Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday after school. Your teachers will usually stay after once a week. This is great if you need help with an assignment, or you need to make up some work you might have missed. Sometimes teachers may ask you to stay after if they would like to go over something with you. DON'T WORRY if you get asked to stay after school...usually it's to help you get caught up with your work...and that's a good thing! If you're not staying after with a teacher to do work, you can choose to participate in an after-school club or activity. There are many to choose from. You will get a list of after-school activities in the beginning of the year, and then you can pick what you'd like to try.

# Sixth Grade Myth vs. Reality!

We understand that you might be nervous about the transition to sixth grade, but trust us...you have nothing to worry about! We thought we'd take a few minutes to share with you some of the myths and realities of being a sixth grader at the middle school. We looked back and thought about the fears and concerns we had as fifth graders. We called those the **myths**. Then, we took the myths and turned them into **reality**...that is, what *really* goes on in sixth grade. Here they are...Enjoy!

**MYTH #1:** The school is HUGE! I'll never be able to find my way around. I'm going to get lost!

**REALITY:** The school is not that big. It just seems big at first. You'll know it like the back of your hand by the third day of school.

**MYTH #2:** Changing classes and going from room to room is hard. I won't have enough time to get to class.

**REALITY:** You have a few minutes between classes to switch, which gives you plenty of time to get to class. Plus, most classes are on the same hallway!

**MYTH #3:** It will take a long time to learn my combination and how to open my locker!

**REALITY:** It might be hard at first, but after a while it will become routine. There are a lot of people to help you if you are having trouble.

**MYTH #4:** In sixth grade, there will be a lot of homework...and no time to do it!

**REALITY:** There's not as much homework as everyone expects. And you can work on your homework during study periods or in after school help times!

**MYTH #5:** The teachers will be really mean!

**REALITY:** That's not true. The teachers are nice and very understanding. They know that we're still getting used to new things, like changing classes and having a locker. They helped us feel comfortable when we were still nervous in the beginning of the year.

**MYTH #6:** The eighth graders are going to shove me in a locker!

**REALITY:** First things first. We barely even see the eighth graders. Their classes are on the first floor and we're on the second floor. Second, they don't really pay much attention to us. And third, the lockers are really small. You wouldn't fit into one anyway!

**Finally, the biggest 6<sup>th</sup> grade MYTH:** There's a swimming pool on the fourth floor.

**REALITY:** In reality, there isn't a pool...and there isn't a fourth floor, either!

# \*The 6th Grade Source\*

Advice and tips from someone who knows!

Dear 6th Grade Source,

I have a question about lockers. First of all, what exactly IS a locker? How will I know where my locker is? How will I open my locker? What should I keep in my locker? HELP!!!

Signed,

Leery about Lockers

Dear Leery,

Don't worry! I was nervous about my locker too, until I found out how easy it is. Look on the bright side - a locker is a really COOL thing! Your locker is a special spot to keep your stuff. And only YOU will know how to get into it! A locker is like a little metal closet in the hallway where you can keep your coat, books, and other school supplies. You may have had a cubby in 5th grade...that's sort of what a locker is. The best part about a locker is that it's protected during the day by a LOCK. You will be given a lock, and the only way to open it is with three number combination. Just like you get into your house with a key, you get into your locker with a combination. Your teachers will help you with your lock and locker, and if you forget your combination your teacher will have it written down. Some of my friends asked their parents to buy them a lock over the summer, and they were able to practice on it before 6th grade started. Even if it's your first time with a lock, believe me, after a few days you will be a locker PRO!

Dear 6th Grade Source,

Everyone Says that 6th graders get SO MUCH homework. I'm worried about that...what's the deal with homework in middle school? How will I keep up in all of my classes?

Signed,

Hesitant about Homework

Dear Hesitant,

I get a lot of questions about homework. The truth is, YES, we have homework in 6th grade, but it's really not as bad as people think. On average, you should expect to spend about one hour on homework each night. Some nights it's much less than that! Even though it may seem like we have more homework in middle school, we also have these cool periods called "studies." Studies are periods when you can catch up on work, get extra help, and do your homework. Many students are able to get some homework done before they even get home! Also, teachers stay after school on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays, so you can get extra help with homework. It's a good idea to stay after every now and then to make sure you're keeping up in your classes - most kids do it (it's a good thing!)

Dear 6th Grade Source,

I know that Melican 6th graders come from four different elementary schools. Will my sixth grade class be like my 5th grade class? Will I still see my friends from elementary school? What if I don't know anyone in my class?

Signed,

Troubled by Transition

Dear Troubled,

One of the great things about 6th grade is that you will get to meet new people from three other schools while also reconnecting with your 5th grade friends. I have made so many new friends in 6th grade! It's nice to know that everyone is going through the same changes at the same time. You will be placed into a 6th grade class, called a SECTION, and you will travel to your classes with your section. Each section will be made up of kids from all four elementary schools. There are times during the day when you will see students from other sections: at lunch, in the morning before homeroom, and in the hallways, to name a few. And you can sit with anyone you want at lunch! Your teachers and guidance counselors also have some fun activities planned to help kids get to know each other and make new friends.

Dear 6th Grade Source,

Should I be worried about the 7th and 8th graders? Do they really pick on the 6th graders? I am so used to being the oldest kid at school...now I'm going to be the youngest. What should I expect?

Signed,

New and Nervous

Dear New,

That is probably the biggest fear I had when I was going into 6th grade. But I soon realized that there is NOTHING to worry about. First of all, teasing of any kind is not allowed here, in ANY grade. The teachers keep an eye open for that kind of stuff...and trust me, they don't let anyone get away with it! Second, you'll almost never even see the 7th and 8th graders. 6th graders stay on the second floor for most of the day, 7th graders are on the third floor, and 8th graders are on the first floor. And believe me, the 7th and 8th graders are all too busy with their own friends and classes that they really don't pay much attention to us at all! Just think...how much attention do YOU pay to the kindergarten and 1st grade kids at your school? If anything ever does come up, you can talk to a teacher or your guidance counselor. That's what they're here for!



## READING YOUR SCHEDULE

For many people, looking at a middle school schedule for the first time is like reading a new language! Reading a schedule is pretty easy...once you know what to look for. Here are some tips! Look at Sally Sixthgrader's schedule, then read the explanations below.

Sally Sixthgrader		Homeroom: 208/6-90		Grade: 06	
	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Period 1	Library Science Mrs. Bisset LIB 7:55-8:46	Science Ms. Shaughnessy 210 7:55-8:46	Science Ms. Shaughnessy 210 7:55-8:46	Physical Education Mrs. Sheckman GYM 7:55-8:46	ELA Ms. Johnson 208 7:55-8:46
Period 2	ELA Ms. Johnson 208 8:46-9:37	Physical Education Mrs. Sheckman GYM 8:46-9:37	ELA Ms. Johnson 208 8:46-9:37	Science Ms. Shaughnessy 210 8:46-9:37	Social Studies Ms. Mesite 202 8:46-9:37
Period 3	Mathematics Mrs. Robeau 201 9:40-10:31	ELA Ms. Johnson 208 9:40-10:31	Music Mrs. Getchell 110 9:40-10:31	ELA Ms. Johnson 208 9:40-10:31	Science Ms. Shaughnessy 210 9:40-10:31
Period 4	Flex Ms. Mesite 202 10:31-11:22	Mathematics Mrs. Robeau 201 10:31-11:22	Mathematics Mrs. Robeau 201 10:31-11:22	Mathematics Mrs. Robeau 201 10:31-11:22	Library Science Mrs. Bisset LIB 10:31-11:22
Period 5	Lunch CAF 11:22-11:52	Lunch CAF 11:22-11:52	Lunch CAF 11:22-11:52	Lunch CAF 11:22-11:52	Lunch CAF 11:22-11:52
Period 6	Chorus Mrs. Getchell 110 11:52-12:43	Flex Ms. Mesite 202 11:52-12:43	Chorus Mrs. Getchell 110 11:52-12:43	Flex Ms. Mesite 202 11:52-12:43	Math Mrs. Robeau 201 11:52-12:43
Period 7	Social Studies Ms. Mesite 202 12:43-1:34	Technology Engineering Mr. Williams 124 12:43-1:34	Language Exploratory Ms. Mullen 310 12:43-1:34	Art Mrs. Hansbury 131 12:43-1:34	Language Exploratory Mrs. Novitski 320 12:43-1:34
Period 8	Science Ms. Shaughnessy 210 1:34-2:15	Social Studies Ms. Mesite 202 1:34-2:15	Social Studies Ms. Mesite 202 1:34-2:15	Social Studies Ms. Mesite 202 1:34-2:15	Flex Ms. Mullen 310 1:34-2:15

The top part of the schedule has Sally's personal information. You will get a similar schedule with your own information on it. It will have your name, homeroom number, section, and team (O for Orange, P for Purple); and it will also have the name of your guidance counselor.

The numbers 1-9 going down the left-hand side are the numbers of the **periods** each day.

Now for the most important part...all of those boxes! Each square tells you what class you're in, who the teacher is, where it's located, and what time the class begins and ends. You might notice that some rooms are lettered, not numbered, like CAF (cafeteria), LIB (library), and GYM (you can figure that one out!).

So...do you think you understand the schedule? Try this quiz: #1. What class does Sally have Tuesday, 4<sup>th</sup> period? #2. What does she have Friday, 2<sup>nd</sup> period? #3. What team (Orange or Purple) is Sally on? Check your answers below.

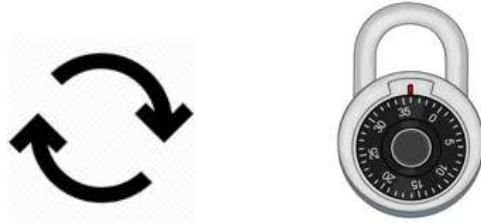
ANSWERS: 1. Math 2. Social Studies 3. Orange

WHY WAIT UNTIL FALL? LEARN THE SECRET THAT'S ON EVERY 5th GRADER'S MIND...

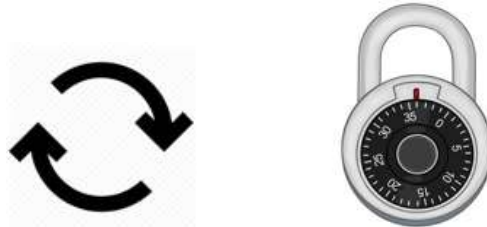
# HOW TO OPEN A LOCK!

OK. Let's say you get your lock, and the combination is 3-21-15. (Every lock has a three-number combination). Here is how you unlock the combination!

**STEP ONE:** Turn the dial around to the right (CLOCKWISE) a few times to clear the lock.



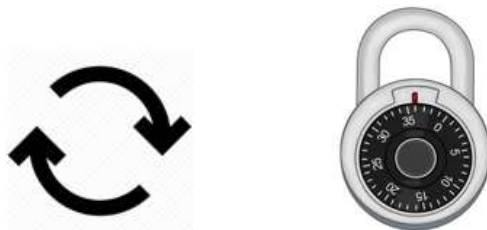
**STEP TWO:** Keep going CLOCKWISE or RIGHT and STOP right on the 3.



**STEP THREE:** Now turn the dial LEFT or COUNTER-CLOCKWISE. Go PAST 21 once and then STOP on 21 the second time you land on it.



**STEP FOUR:** Go to the RIGHT (CLOCKWISE) until you land on 15. STOP there and pull the lock open!



Remember, this takes time to learn. So relax and take your time. It might help to buy a lock over the summer and practice if you're worried. Or just wait until school starts...you will have plenty of time to figure it out once you get here, and plenty of help from your teachers!

# 6th Grade: A Day in the Life



**6:40 AM:** I just woke up. Gotta get ready for school and I can't forget to put on deodorant!

**7:15 AM:** I'm on the bus, talking with my friends about the English assignment we had last night. The 7th and 8th graders are totally ignoring us!

**7:35 AM:** Waiting in the gym to go to homeroom.

**7:40 AM:** I'm at my locker getting books for the first two periods. In homeroom the teacher will take attendance and lunch count, then we'll listen to announcements and say the Pledge of Allegiance before heading to first period.

**8:46 AM:** Off to second period. I just had a map quiz in Social Studies. I did AWESOME!

**9:37 AM:** Break time! I have enough time to stop at my locker and get books for my next two classes, and maybe even a quick snack.

**11:22 AM:** I just finished my last two morning periods...time for LUNCH!

**11:52 AM:** Now I'm at my locker getting my books and materials for my afternoon classes.

**12:43 PM:** I just had Chorus, where we rehearsed for an upcoming concert. Now I'm off to Tech Ed...can't wait to work on my CO<sub>2</sub> car!!!

**2:15 PM:** My last two periods went well. Now it's dismissal time! I'm putting my homework and necessary books in my backpack and heading out the front door to get on my bus. My friend is staying after school for extra help, so she's taking the late bus. We'll catch up with each other tomorrow when we do it all again!

Thanks for reading! See you in sixth grade! :)