

Welcome to Team Rooney

We would like to welcome you and your child to eighth grade and to Team Rooney. Your child's core teachers this year are Mr. Bushmire, Mrs. Prince, Miss McCune, and Ms. Brown. We have worked together for several years and are excited to start another year with such a wonderful group of students. Please review this letter and the procedures that are in place on Team Rooney.

Goals: In one year, you will have a ninth grade student. Eighth grade is a chance to help students transition to a more independent model in order to prepare for high school and all the challenges ahead. In addition to the curriculum, your child should learn how to study this year (See tips below). On Team Rooney, we place a significant emphasis on developing personal responsibility for students' actions and academics.

Absences: The best way for us to teach your child is to see him or her in class. This is the first step to academic success. There are many opportunities throughout the day for students to see teachers regarding missed work in the event of a late arrival or an early dismissal.

Late Work: According to the student handbook, "Homework is viewed as an integral part of the total education of the student when it provides the opportunity for the student to practice, apply, integrate, or extend school learning..." With this in mind, Team Rooney carefully provides meaningful out-of-class assignments that are designed to promote success. It is expected that assignments will be submitted on time. No credit will be given for late homework.

Cheating: Our students display outstanding character on a daily basis. Sometimes, however, it is difficult for a child to differentiate between helping a classmate and cheating. We appreciate your support at home as we help students to recognize that difference. It is important that students do their work independently so that teachers know who is struggling and who needs to be challenged further. In order to enter high school with the skills and knowledge expected, we want students to do their own work and to know the line separating helping each other and cheating or plagiarizing. Thank you in advance for aiding us in teaching students the difference.

How Can I Help My Child?

- Communication between the teachers and parents is vital, and the easiest way for you to get a glimpse of your child's work in school is to check **PowerSchool** frequently. When you are concerned, emailing the teacher will lead to the quickest response. (See reverse side for email addresses)
- Homework is posted every day on the Middle School's **homework website**, and we encourage you to use that resource. However, it is not the primary means from which to monitor student homework. To promote individual responsibility and organization, Team Rooney expects that **each student will maintain an assignment book and write down assignments daily.**

- We need to allow each student the chance to showcase his or her unique abilities and talents. While grades are certainly important, mastering content and skills are equally important as we look to ninth grade, and only through **independent practice**, revision, and at times struggling will students reach that level of mastery.
- **Study with your child.** (See tips below) Talk about what they are discussing in school as you are in the car together or eating together. Know who they are sitting with at lunch, what classes are toughest for them and why, and in what areas they are flourishing. Celebrate the accomplishments, but know when they stumble.
- You should see your child studying and/or completing assignments for at least an hour every evening. Even if there is no nightly assignment, your child should be reviewing key concepts, terms, and skills learned in classes that week.
- Encourage your child to use the resources at school. Is your child going to see teachers during **study lab to get help**? Is your child visiting the Writing Lab and Math Lab? Is your child using study lab to get work done, and if so, are you seeing that work to know it's completed to his or her best ability?

Resources: The four core teachers are available to meet with parents several days each week, all year. If you are concerned about your child's performance or wellbeing, contact one of the core teachers to request a parent conference. These are half an hour conferences that are available at 7:35 am, 10:45 am, and 12:45 pm on Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday. You must **schedule a time with the teachers at least a week in advance**; unfortunately, we cannot accommodate same-day requests or walk-ins.

Study Tips: *This is not an all-inclusive list.

- Read or reread out loud. After each paragraph/section/page, close the book and retell, out loud, what was read without looking.
- Flashcards (There are digital apps for this if you do not want to buy index cards.)
- Start well in advance. Students should be studying several days or even weeks before an exam. It is easier to learn five ideas each night for two weeks than it is to learn 50 ideas in one night.
- Study with a responsible friend. This is helpful to make sure students are studying the correct information, but make sure they are actually studying and not just socializing.
- Rewrite notes. Use different colors for different ideas. (For example, Union generals in blue ink and Confederate generals in red ink. Or, vertebrates in blue ink, invertebrates in red.)
- Create mnemonic devices. Create a sentence to remember something in order (For example, a sentence about "King Phillip" to remember Kingdom, Phylum, etc.)

You can download a copy of this letter from Ms. Brown's website:

<http://www.ptsd.k12.pa.us/DownloadHandouts.aspx>

Thank you, and we look forward to a very successful year together.

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Student Name

Student Signature

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date