

WHAT TO EXPECT IN MIDDLE SCHOOL...

6th GR Student and Parent Orientation
Summer 2019



MAIN DIFFERENCES BETWEEN MIDDLE SCHOOL AND ELEMENTARY:

Elementary School

- Students have one teacher that teaches one subject
- Students typically stay in one classroom all day long
- Students have their own desk to keep their belongings in
- Most elementary schools don't offer extracurricular activities

Middle School

- Students have several different teachers; each teach a different subject
- Students change classrooms to go to different teachers
- Students have a locker to keep belongings in
- Middle schools offer extracurricular activities including sports, interest clubs, music,



STUDENTS WERE RECENTLY ASKED “WHAT DO YOU WISH YOU KNEW BEFORE STARTING MIDDLE SCHOOL?”..

- how to handle the **drama** (hallways, classes, social media)
- how to make **friendships** from kids from multiple schools
- how do classes and **credits** work?
- what are the best ways for **parents to communicate** with the school?
- how are students expected to be more **independent** and **responsible** in middle school than they were in elementary?
- how to handle **peer pressure**
- what role does the **school counselor** play in supporting students?



EXPECT TO FORM NEW FRIENDSHIPS..

Tips for developing new friendships:

- Successful students surround themselves with successful students.
- People will treat you how you treat them...be kind.
- Friendships sometimes change when students go to middle school and that is okay.
- Consider middle school as an opportunity to make new friends...potentially with students who may have attended a different elementary than you.
- If you want friends, then be one..
- Get involved in your school: join an athletic team, a school club, or run for student office.



EXPECT ADDITIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES AS A STUDENT..

Tips for students being responsible and organized:

- Maintain a planner for writing down class schedule and assignments.
- Be responsible for your academic success...don't blame teachers.
- Responsible students get to class on time.
- Expect homework: write down all assignments and turn it in regularly.
- Choosing a positive attitude and demonstrating effort in every class are critical for success in middle school.



EXPECT ADDITIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES AS A PARENT..

Tips for parents being involved:

- Monitor your child's academic progress by utilizing Schoology.
- Take initiative to contact your child's teacher when you have a concern.
- Volunteer during school events when available.
- Monitor your child's social media accounts- limit social media exposure, review text messages and posts, know what your child is doing online.



EXPECT TO BE A RESPONSIBLE STUDENT WHEN USING SOCIAL MEDIA..

Tips for being responsible and mature on social media:

- Check your privacy settings- the best settings are where only friends can see your posts.
- Be cautious of friend requests.
- Think before you post.
- Know that once you post, it is public and almost impossible to delete.
- Know the consequences of sending threatening messages or nude photos via social media.



TIPS FOR PARENTS MONITORING SOCIAL MEDIA..

- **BE AWARE:** Read articles, talk to other adults to stay current on how various social media work and which ones are “in” and “out” among teens. Be aware of the dangers that exist online.
- **SHOW INTEREST:** Ask your children about their social media, listen to their stories, give advice or assistance when asked. Children share more with parents who seem genuinely interested and supportive.
- **SET GUIDELINES:** Establish clear rules for your child’s use of social media and try to be consistent in enforcing the rules.
- **KEEP TABS:** Find a reasonable way to monitor what your child is doing on social media. Be consistent with how you keep tabs on your child’s activity on social media.
- **BE FLEXIBLE:** As children grow older, adjust the guidelines to give them more responsibility to manage their social media on their own.

Source: <https://prsg.education.wisc.edu>



EXPECT TO HAVE CONFLICT WITH OTHERS AND KNOW HOW TO RESPOND..

Tips for resolving conflict with others:

- Discuss the conflict privately with your school counselor..
- Four steps- 1.Cooling off when upset. 2.Speaking directly to each other (assertively, honestly, and kindly); 3. Listening carefully to others and paraphrasing their words; 4. Proposing solutions and agreeing on a solution to try.
- Don't be known as a gossip.
- Demonstrate empathy and respect for those different from you.



BE PREPARED TO HANDLE THE DRAMA (BULLYING, NAME CALLING, PEER PRESSURE) AND HOW TO REPORT IT..

Tips for handling middle school drama..

- Learning resilience by developing assertiveness, empathy, communication skills, and problem solving strategies.
- Your advisory course will include discussions on what is bullying, how to report it, and how it is addressed.



EXPECT MIDDLE SCHOOL TO PREPARE YOU FOR HIGH SCHOOL.

What to know..

- You will have your own locker and will be expected to use a combination lock.
- You will have homework and completing it will benefit you.
- You will be expected to pass certain classes to move to the next grade level.
- You will be expected to be more independent, responsible, and organized than what was expected in elementary.
- You might earn the opportunity to enroll in a course during middle school that results in high school credit (e.g. math, science, foreign language).
- 8th Graders will create a Personalized Education Plan (PEP) to prepare for high school courses and to begin planning for college or a career.



EXPECT TO RECEIVE PEER PRESSURE ABOUT..

- dating & relationships
- sexual decision-making
- alcohol
- smoking cigarettes & vaping
- possibly marijuana
- skipping class
- cheating or academic dishonesty



HELPING YOUR CHILD MAKE WISE DECISIONS IN THE FACE OF PEER PRESSURE..

- **Initiate a conversation.** Be the first to bring up peer pressure and the tough decisions your teen may be faced with. Be proactive about this conversation; don't wait until an issue arises.
- **Remind your child of family values.** Each family has their own particular set of values and morals, and enforcing these helps you create a strong family foundation. Address the way the family feels about certain social pressures like smoking and drinking, "Our family doesn't participate in or tolerate the act of smoking."
- **Role play.** Let your child bounce ideas off of you and give her suggestions as well. Go over ways to avoid a peer pressure situation or what she can say if she's ever in one. You don't need to be longwinded or over-explain your answer, something simple such as, "Smoking just isn't my thing" is a direct and confident answer.
- **Let her play the blame game.** Allow your child to use you as an excuse, "I can't skip class because, if my mom finds out, I'll be grounded and won't be able to hang out for at least a month." This sets up the expectation so the person who's doing the pressuring knows not to ask your child to skip anymore because this particular excuse will always be relevant.

Source: www.kidpoints.com



WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT FROM YOUR SCHOOL COUNSELOR..

- available and involved in helping students..
- focused on the academic, mental health, and the college and career needs of students..
- will be confidential...and will listen to and act upon any student concern.



WHAT IF MY STUDENT NEEDS ADDITIONAL SUPPORT?

Our School has a Student Assistance Team (SAT) to develop ideas and strategies to help when a student is experiencing academic or personal difficulty.

- 1) Students may be referred to the SAT by a staff member, a parent, a student or other.
- 2) Our School's SAT Coordinator contacts the parent to schedule initial SAT meeting.
- 3) First SAT meeting is held, initial Meeting Report completed, concerns are identified and interventions put in place.
- 4) Follow-up SAT meetings are scheduled to review progress toward goals, and need for further intervention.

*Contact the office to reach our school SAT coordinator.

