

Guidelines for Middle School Success

Eleven, twelve and thirteen year olds are in the cognitive development stage of attaining a more fully developed, conscious, self-directed and self-regulated mind. Practicing self-advocacy significantly supports this growth. Emotionally and socially, sixth, seventh, and eighth graders seek independence, greater privacy, and to become more peer-oriented. These guidelines keep these developmental milestones in mind.

Communication

- **Student self- advocacy** is a fundamental middle school goal.
 1. Students are highly encouraged to **speak directly with their teachers**.
 2. Students and parents are best served by **speaking frequently and specifically** with each other about school work and school life.
 3. **Student planners** are excellent tools to keep track of assignments, due dates and work completion. Assignments are always displayed on each teacher's white board and students are expected to copy daily assignments into their planners. Planners should be brought to each class every day and home each night.
 4. **Student binders and Web2School** are both good places to keep track of work completion, work quality, and class content.
 5. Web2School displays ongoing student progress. It is not designed to be a substitute for a planner.
- **Homeroom teachers** review their students' progress reports, report cards and disciplinary reports on a regular basis. If a concern remains after student self-advocacy and parent/student conversations, please contact the homeroom teacher.

Grading

- **Grades earned reflect student learning and effort.**
- Make sure to meet each class's expectations. **Class syllabi are well worth careful attention** as they outline specific academic and behavioral expectations.
- Complete homework by the due date.
- Remember that **not all assignments have equal value** (check Web2School or syllabus).
- Remember that **not all assignments are graded** (for example, some may serve as practice of new knowledge).
- Each teacher has his or her own policy about credit for late work or retakes.
- Web2School displays a *working* report of student progress. A **planner**, written in throughout each day, holds the **key to on-time work completion**. (Think of the planner as the script and Web2School as an ever-updated performance review.)
- Progress reports are a freeze-frame of five weeks of work, from one specific date to another. They remind students and alert parents about areas where more student academic effort is needed. They are used to establish sports participation eligibility.

Successful Student Behavior

- Arrive to class on time, prepared, and ready to do your best work.
- Retain focus on the instruction and fully engage in class activities.
- Allow your peers the opportunity to learn. Support a positive learning environment. Refrain from side conversations and other disruptions.
- Listen to teachers and peers during instruction and discussions.
- Contribute frequently to discussions but please wait your turn to speak.
- **Ask for help**, and ask questions for clarification.
- Actively and equally participate in large and small group activities.
- Complete classroom assignments.

The middle school team is committed to the success of every student. We will do all that we can to ensure that students gain the confidence and skills they need to thrive in their academic endeavors and in their social interactions. We acknowledge that the transition from elementary to middle school can be difficult and unsettling for some students and for some parents/guardians. A positive working partnership between students, parents/guardians, and the school will help middle school students move towards the independence and the overall sense of well-being that is so important to their development. To this end, we ask that students and parents/guardians go over these guidelines together, reference them often, and reach out to the teachers whenever there are lingering questions or concerns.

We look forward to working with you!