



Northeast Middle School

Transition to Middle School

Middle school is an exciting, yet challenging time for students and their parents. Students are moving into their adolescence, exploring their worlds, growing rapidly, and searching for their own unique identity. Middle schools are larger than elementary schools, the school work is harder, and there are more classes and more teachers – all with different expectations and personalities. During this time, every student needs support, guidance, and skills to face unique and diverse challenges, both personally and developmentally, that have an impact on academic achievement.

School counselors are licensed educators with a mental health perspective, making them uniquely qualified to address all students' academic, personal/social and career development needs. Parents/Guardians are crucial in the partnership between families and schools to help young people to have a successful and positive school experience. Here are some key components in supporting a successful transition from elementary school to middle school:

New School Environment

Open House/Tours – Unfortunately we are not able to provide tours at this time. We hope to have an opportunity for families to tour the school at our Open House the Thursday before school starts in August.

Learn about Resources – Calendar on website, Parent portal for accessing grades/attendance, Mental Health Collaborative, Team of Support Staff

Communicating with Teachers/Staff – Weekly newsletter and robo calls, Conferences in October and February, Advisory Teacher is main contact, keep lines of communication open

Navigating Multiple Classes/Passing Time – 7 period day plus Advisory (45 minute classes, 3 minutes passing time, 30 minutes lunch/recess)

Getting Involved in Clubs/Activities – Beacon's Afterschool (GISE/GEMS, Theater, Cooking, Chess, Lopett Skiing, Arts, Leadership, Somali & Latinx Debate, etc), Leadership Opportunities (Student Council, Leos, Native Club, GSA)

Organizational Needs

Using a Binder and Planner – Students use a Binder to keep all of their work organized and together throughout the day, Purchase supplies for your child and check their binders to help them stay organized, Planners are disrupted each quarter to keep track of assignments

Using Locks/Lockers – Each student is assigned a school lock/locker and students are encouraged to not share their locker or lock combination with friends

Managing Time – Set aside a designated time and space for homework and reading each night, balance schoolwork with time for activities, family, and friends

Taking Notes – Students use the Cornell Notes system to keep track of key ideas, questions, and a summary of their learning

Academics

Understanding Letter Grades/GPA – Students are given letter grades each quarter and at the semester (there are 4 quarters and 2 semesters during the year), Honor Roll assemblies are held each quarter to recognize students on the A and B Honor Roll

Using Parent Portal/Planners – Access Parent Portal on our website to view your child's attendance, grades, and missing assignments. Check their planners or google classroom sites for more up to date learning targets

Encouraging Self-Advocacy – Encourage your child to take the lead in asking questions, going to adults for support, and speaking up for themselves

Social and Emotional Changes

Navigating Friendship Changes/Peer Pressure – During adolescence, peer influence becomes increasingly more important. Talk about and practice skills needed for difficult social situations.

Fostering Independence – This doesn't mean completely backing away from supervision and support. Sometimes parents need to be overinvolved at the start in order to back off and let them fly (successfully) later on.

Understanding Identity Development – Adolescence is a critical time for students to explore their own identity.

Coping with Stress – Pay close attention to signs for students using negative coping strategies in dealing with stress.

Online Safety – Monitor and set boundaries for social media and online use

Middle school is hard. There's no doubt about that, but it doesn't have to be miserable. Be thoughtful about the messages you are sending your kids about this new adventure. Are you allowing your own biases to fill their heads with the idea that middle school is terrible and you just have to suffer through it and try to survive? Or are you letting your kids know that it's going to be exciting, energizing, challenging, and new?

Our kids take their lead from our energy as parents. The attitude you project will be the attitude they absorb. These next three years will be an unbelievable transformation! Prepare for it, brace yourself for it, but most of all, enjoy it!

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