

Welcome to Conrad Weiser Middle School



Answers to All the Questions You Forgot to Ask

Prepared and Sponsored by the
Conrad Weiser Middle School PTO

Introduction

Middle School is an exciting adventure for new students and incoming 5th graders! As with all adventures, there can be nervousness and many questions from parents and students about what to expect while at the Middle School. This booklet, structured in a question and answer format, was put together by the Conrad Weiser Middle School PTO in order to help minimize the anxiety and answer questions in hopes of providing a smooth and stress-free transition to Conrad Weiser Middle School.

Student Planner

Q: What is the Student Planner?

A: The Student Planner is a calendar-type book for you to record your assignments and due dates. It also includes the school rules and policies.

You and your parent/guardian must acknowledge you have read and understand the school rules and policies by signing the Planner and returning the signed page during the first week of school. You will also use the Planner as your hall pass to move about the Middle School.

Absences

Q: What if I am absent from school?

A: Your parent/guardian should report your absence on Skyward. Reporting in Skyward serves as written notification.

Your parent/guardian can call in your absence to (610) 693-8504, but you must submit a parent-signed written note within three days of your return.

You are responsible to make up any/all miss work during your absence. Assignments, worksheets, and Hybrid Agendas will all be accessible via Schoology.

Q: What must I do if I need to leave school early?

A: You must submit a parent-signed note to the office when you arrive at school for an early dismissal. Upon leaving school, you must sign out in the

office. Upon returning to school, you must sign in at the office. If you leave prior to 1:00 AM your dismissal will be coded as a 1/2 day absence.

Q: Where do I go if I arrive early to school?

A: You will not be permitted to enter the building prior to 7:00 AM. You may enter the building either by the main entrance at the flag pole, or by the side cafeteria door.

Personal vehicles are not permitted in front of the building between 7:15 and 8:15 AM. You should be dropped off in the west main (gym) parking lot to enter at the main entrance (at the flag pole), or dropped at the side cafeteria door. All buses will drop off at the main entrance.

Breakfast, Lunch and Other Food

Q: What are the lunch choices at the Middle School?

A: You have three main lunch choices which are included on the lunch calendars found online at the Middle School website. For an additional charge, you may also choose from a number of extra choices like ice cream, slushies, cookies etc. *These extra items are not available the first few weeks of school.

Q: What does a meal cost at the Middle School?

A: For 2016-17, breakfast is \$1.50, and lunch is \$2.80

Q: What happens if I do not have lunch money?

A: If you do not have money in your lunch account, you are permitted a basic lunch until you reach a maximum overcharge of \$10.00. Your parent/guardian may add money to your lunch account by check, cash, or credit card via the website www.parentonline.net. The Skyward system will notify your parent/guardian of low account balances weekly. You are responsible to monitor the balance in your lunch account.

Q: Are we allowed to choose where we sit with at lunch?

A: The 5th grade teachers will decide where their classes sit in the cafeteria. Each class/team will be assigned specific rows/tables.

Q: Is breakfast available?

A: Breakfast is served in the cafeteria and auditorium lobby until 7:45 AM. You can purchase individual bagels, muffins, fruit, etc. if you do not want a full breakfast.

Students who receive free-or-reduced lunch are also entitled to free-or-reduced breakfast.

Q: Is there anywhere I can get a snack at the end of the day?

A: Yes. There is a Snack Shack located in the gym lobby area after school from 2:45—3:15 PM. The Snack Shack is closed Fridays. Snacks sell for a low cost of \$.50 - \$.75 (prices are subject to change) and include a variety of healthy snack and drink options.

The Snack Shack is run by the CWMS Renaissance Club with the help of parent volunteers. If your parents are interested in volunteering to help run the Snack Shack, please have them contact Mrs. Pam Light at the Middle School for more information (p_light@conradweiser.org). The proceeds from the Snack Shack allow the Renaissance Club to supply academically-driven students with various rewards and helps offset the cost of creating the white, blue and gold cards students receive twice a year for high academic achievements.

Buses

Q: Will I sit with older students on the bus?

A: Since Middle School and High School both start at the same time, Middle School and High School students share buses. Some bus drivers require 5th graders to sit closer to the front of the bus with older students in the back. However, this is not school policy and not all bus drivers follow this practice.

Q: How will I know where my bus is located at the end of the day?

A: Staff have maps to show you where each bus is located at the end of the day. There will also be bus maps posted around the school at the beginning of the year. The buses will consistently line up in the same order. *some exceptions may apply. Staff will be available to help you find your bus.

Q: If I normally ride the bus but I am being picked up at the end of the day, do I need my parent/guardian to send a note?

A: No. The dismissal bell rings at 2:45 PM. and you should proceed to where you need to go to get home. Please prearrange this spot with your parent/guardian

Q: Where do I go when I am dropped off by my bus (or parent/guardian) in the morning?

A: You should report to the auditorium. If you are eating breakfast or arrive before 7:25 AM, you should report to the cafeteria. Students who arrive after 7:30 AM may report to the auditorium.

Q: What is a second run bus?

A: Not all students can be accommodated by the district's buses at one time so a second run of buses is needed. If you are on a second run bus, wait in the cafeteria for your second run bus to be called. Staff members on bus duty will call out bus departures to the students.

Cell Phones in school

Q: May I carry my cell phone in school?

A: No. All personal electronic devices are to be turned off at 7:45 AM and stored in your locker. Personal electronic devices may not be turned on again until 2:45 PM. The ONLY exceptions are when an administrator may need to view a cell phone during an investigation or if a pre-approved class project warrants the need.

Q: How about field trips?

A: You are encouraged to carry your cells phone on some field trips to take pictures, or in the case of an emergency. Your teachers will decide if a need exists for you to carry your phone on a field trip.

Classes and Structure of School Week

Q: How long are classes?

A: Classes are 63-minutes each. There are five (5) teaching blocks a day, and a 45-minute E/R (enrichment/remediation) block.

Q: How is the school week structured?

A: The middle school operates on a six day cycle. All Specials and other school activities are based on a cycle running from Days 1-6. For example, if a student is involved in band, practices may be on Day 2 which could fall on any day of the week. It is important to know the cycle day.

Q: What is Enrichment/Remediation (E/R)?

A: E/R is the last block of the day for middle school students and runs from 2:00 to 2:45. Students can use this period to complete assigned work, go to the library, work with a teacher, make up missed work from an absence, or participate in other activities such as band, chorus, FFA, Student Council, etc. You need to fully understand that E/R is not “free time,” rather, time devoted to individualized work with access to your teachers for help.

Q: What is Advisory?

A: Every middle school student should have at least one adult advocate that they can trust over time. Advisory is a key component of a true middle school. You will meet in small groups every Wednesday morning with your Advisor for 30-minutes. Each week will have a meeting theme based on community service, The Six Pillars of Character, Olweus Bully Prevention, or team building. Students and their small team work with their Advisor for their entire middle level career, developing that long-term relationship of trust.

Clubs/Chorus/Band

Q: What are clubs and how do I get involved?

A: Students at the middle school can expand their life experiences through involvement in several clubs/activities. These include FFA, Student Council,

Science Olympiad, TV Studio, Yearbook, Stage Crew, Reading Olympics, Math Counts, Band, Jazz Band, and Chorus.

Q: How do I get involved in band, chorus, etc.?

A: During the first weeks of school, meetings will be held for students interested in participating in clubs, chorus, band, etc. These meetings are usually held during E/R. Watch and listen to the morning announcements to hear meeting times, dates, and locations.

Detention/Suspension

Q: How do I get detention?

A: This is a very popular question with many incoming middle level learners. Hopefully you will never need to know about detention. The Student Planner outlines clear expectations for student behavior. Simply put, if you make all your choices following the Six Pillars of Character, complete all the assigned work, and show respect, life will be good.

If you choose to make a poor decision, you may earn lunch detention, detention, or possibly suspension.

Lunch detentions are held in a separate room from the cafeteria, and students who do not pack will be given a basic lunch.

Detention is held before/after school, and you are responsible to arrange transportation to/from detention. Details are outlined in the Student Planner.

Again, you should never have to know about detention or suspension as long as you make good choices “Everywhere, All the Time.”

Grades

Q: How can my parents and I access my grades throughout the school year?

A: You and your parents can use Schoology to access some graded assignments, but all graded assignments for the marking period will be

posted in Skyward. Some teachers may not post grades in Schoology, so you should check Skyward regularly.

The Skyward program is available on the Conrad Weiser Middle School website. Your parents can gain access to Skyward by setting up an account. Skyward also provides important notifications related to the closing and dismissal of school and other important matters. Your parents can receive Skyward notifications via email or a phone call. It is important to make sure your parent's contact information is updated correctly in Skyward.

Q: How do my parents set up an account in Skyward?

A: Skyward logins were mailed to all parents/students when you began school with Conrad Weiser. Unless a password has been changed, the login should be the same. During Open House and Meet the Teacher Night, staff are available to help with any issues. Account info can also be obtained by contacting the Middle School Counseling Office.

Laptops/Devices

Q: Is every 5th grade student issued a laptop? What about the rest of the middle school?

A: Yes. Beginning in 2014, 5th grade students were all issued laptops. The 5th grade curriculum incorporates the use of a laptop throughout the school day and they will need it to complete much of their class and home work. In 2015, 5th and 6th grades received laptops. In 2016, 5th, 6th, and 7th grades received laptops. By the start of the 2017 school year, every student in Middle School will be issued a laptop.

Q: Do I need to have insurance on the computer?

A: If you want to take the laptop home, yes. There is a \$45 annual accident insurance fee if you wish to take your laptop home (which is recommended) for homework. Students who qualify for Free and Reduced Lunch will pay a \$25 fee for the insurance.

Q: Am I required to bring my computer home every day?

A: No. You are encouraged to carry your computer to and from school. Part of being prepared is to have your computer charging while at home for the

next school day. It is imperative to have your computer in school every day. If you leave your computer at school, it must be put in a secure area designated by your teacher.

Q: Can my parents access my curriculum and assignments?

A: Yes. The Middle School is utilizing Schoology, an online learning, classroom management and collaboration tool for their classes and assignments. The Schoology interface allows you and your parents to see assignments, the outline of the material covered in class, the rubric for grading assignments, the date for completion, plus any other relevant messages the teacher posts. You are given a username/password to access Schoology. Your parents may acquire an access code from the teacher that will link to your student account.

Q: What is Hybrid Learning?

A: Hybrid Learning is an instructional strategy that blends digital resources with classroom teaching to increase student engagement and improve academic achievement through the delivery of lessons in small groups, the use of data to differentiate instruction, the encouragement of individually-paced learning and the application of multiple educational methodologies.

The hybrid learning model combines up to three methods of learning into one classroom – instruction from teachers, group activities, and self-instruction through digital content. In hybrid classrooms, teachers work with smaller groups – personalizing instruction and creating more one-on-one time with students. In direct instruction, teachers are able to focus on smaller groups for lessons. This allows the teachers to have more one-on-one time with each student.

Location of 5th Grade Students

Q: Are 5th grade students with the other students in the Middle School?

A: Rarely. 5th grade classes and lockers are located in the A-wing. You will travel to other parts of the school for lunch and Specials classes, but there will be very little interaction with the other grade levels. Each grade level has its own lunch period, so you will eat with only 5th grade. The only

interaction you will have with the other grades is during Advisory and extra-curricular activities (FFA, Student Council, etc.)

Lockers

Q: How will I remember my locker combination to get into my locker?

A: You will be able to practice opening a locker when you come to the Middle School Summery Academy. You will be able to practice your locker combination when you come to the Middle School Open House in the middle of August. During the first week of school, teachers are also available to help you open your locker. **Keep your combination for your locker in a safe, private place, until you memorize it. DO NOT give your combination to anyone and do not share your locker with anyone.**

Q: When will I be allowed to go to my locker?

A: You will go to your locker at the beginning and end of each day. Teachers will allow you to go to your locker between certain blocks during the day, including before and after lunch. You may, at times, need to stop at your locker before and after Specials.

Q: What items can I carry with me during the day?

A: You must take all items needed such as the Student Planner, books, pencils, notebooks, folders, laptops, etc. for the time period until you can return to your locker. You may not carry a backpack during the school day. You are required to carry your Student Planner with you at all times.

Parent-Teacher Organization

Q: Does the Middle School have a Parent-Teacher Organization (“PTO”)?

A: Yes. Please have your parents see the beginning of the year info to sign up.

Q: What does the PTO do?

A: The purpose of the PTO is to involve parents, teachers and interested community members in the activities of our school and to promote the

educational welfare of the middle level learners. The PTO purchases items for the school to enhance the education of the students, including iPads to be used by teachers and students, calculators for PSSA testing, art supplies, music and technology equipment, a WeatherBug weather station located on the Middle School roof, and the transportation for the annual 8th grade trip to Washington, DC. These are just a few of the ways in which the PTO helps to broaden your education.

Q: How can my parents and I help the PTO?

A: You and your parents can help the PTO by coming to meetings (held the third Wednesday of each month at 6:30 p.m. in the MS Library), by participating in PTO fundraisers, by collecting and submitting Box Tops and Redner's Markets receipts, by volunteering to help when requested, etc.

Restrooms

Q: When am I allowed to use the restrooms?

A: You are encouraged to use the restrooms between classes to minimize interruptions to your educational time. You may request permission to use the bathroom during class. Before leaving the classroom, your Student Planner must be signed by your teacher and you must complete the room sign-out sheet.

The Six Pillars of Character

Q: What are the Six Pillars of Character?

A: The Six Pillars are a guide to every choice you make in your life. When you have to make a decision to study, complete work, behave properly, help a friend, study, return a lost object, or any other situation, thinking about the Six Pillars will help direct you to the most ethical decision. It typically will not be the easiest decision, and it may not be the fun decision, but it will be the right decision.

Trustworthiness, Respect, Responsibility, Fairness, Caring, and Citizenship are not new concepts to you as a middle level learner, so they should be easy to remember and follow.

Teachers

Q: How many will I have?

A: 5th grade teaching teams consist of two core teachers. You will spend most of your day switching between the same two teachers. These teachers provide instruction in math, language arts, and content (social studies and science).

6th, 7th, and 8th grade teaching teams consist of four core teachers. You will have a different teacher for each core subject: Math, Language Arts, Science, and Social Studies.

You will also rotate throughout the year into an assortment of Specials classes. To help with organization and consistency, middle school students will have one Special at a time. Specials meet daily at the same time. Every 16-17 days, you will move into a new Special course. Throughout the year, every 5th grade student will have a rotation of Agriculture, Tech. Ed., Spanish, Art (twice), Music (twice), and Physical Education (four times).

Q: How do I (and my parent guardians) contact my teachers?

A: Your teachers can be reached either by email, Schoology, or voicemail. Email addresses can be found at the end of this booklet or on www.conradweiser.org. Students are also able to message teachers via Schoology messaging. To reach a teacher by phone, contact the main office at (610) 693-8514 and you will be transferred to the teacher's voicemail to leave a message.

Important Middle School Contact Information

Main Office: (610) 693-8514

Library: (610) 693-8516

Counseling Office/Attendance: (610) 693-8504

Tom Hoover (5th/6th Guidance Counselor) t_hoover@conradweiser.org

Nicole Noll (7th/8th Guidance Counselor) n_noll@conradweiser.org

Sally Lamm (Guidance Secretary) s_lamm@conradweiser.org

Fifth Grade Teachers

Blue Skies

Mr. Timothy Feeg t_feeg@conradweiser.org

Mrs. Cathy Mason c_mason@conradweiser.org

White Rain

Mrs. Karen Parkinson k_parkinson@conradweiser.org

Mrs. Melani Sanders m_sanders@conradweiser.org

Blue Thunder

Mr. Chris Arthur c_arthur@conradweiser.org

Mrs. Jamie Gruver j_gruver@conradweiser.org

White Lightning

Mrs. Kate Huber k_huber@conradweiser.org

Mrs. Laurie Ostimchuk l_ostimchuk@conradweiser.org

Special Education Teachers

Mrs. Heather Sellars h_sellars@conradweiser.org

Mrs. Jenny Miller je_miller@conradweiser.org

Enrichment Teacher

Mrs. Kelly Snyder k_snyder@conradweiser.org

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