

TIPS FOR STUDENTS

Middle school is a wonderful, exciting adventure. Everything is new and different, bigger, and better. As a middle school student, you will have more freedom, more independence, and more fun. You will have a locker, a lunch period, different classrooms, and more teachers. You'll also have more homework, more responsibility, and new students to get to know.

During these middle school years, you will grow and change in many ways, physically and emotionally. You will become more independent, and being with your friends will become more important to you. All of these changes are just part of growing up.

In order to get the most out of middle school, you need to do more than just get good grades. You also need to be involved in activities, have friends, get along with your parents, and know how to make good choices and decisions.

School Calendar ⁽¹⁾

Loyalsock Township School District issued a calendar showing important dates like grading periods, when report cards come out, holiday closings and vacations. This calendar also shows the dates of other events like PSSA testing, parent-teacher conferences, concerts, etc.

Our school calendar is also posted on our web page, and dates are also reflected in our monthly newsletter "the sock scoop"

Put all of these dates in your student Agenda.

Attendance and Tardy Policies ⁽¹⁾

You are expected to be in school every day, unless you are ill. You are also expected to be at school on time each day. If you have a medical condition or an illness that's going to cause you to miss school, have a parent call the office by 8:15 a.m..

While you are absent, try to get some work to do at home. Call friends or classmates to find out what you've missed, or go to the middle school web page to get your assignments.

When you miss school you miss lectures, notes, class discussions, homework explanations, assignments, quizzes, and tests. It doesn't matter how good you are about making up your work, you can never make up everything you miss, even if you're out of school for only one day. In order to get good grades, you need to be in school every day.

If you must be absent from school, remember that you are responsible for finding out what you missed and for getting all of the work made up. You are, of course, also responsible for arranging to make up any quizzes or tests that you may have missed.

Since teachers usually do not have time to talk to students during class, see each teacher before or after class to find out what you have missed.

School Rules ⁽¹⁾

In order to have a safe, inviting place for students to come and learn schools need to have rules. Most students understand that rules are necessary, and they follow them. For the students who don't follow the rules, there are consequences.

All students need to take an active role in making their school a safe place where students want to come to learn. If you ever feel threatened, or if you become aware of a situation that may put you or someone else at risk, please tell a teacher, principal, counselor, or other adult immediately.

Principals and teachers make rules so that their school will run smoothly. The students, however, are the ones who make their school a great place to be!

⁽¹⁾ Please review the Student Handbook for complete details.

People to Go to for Help

If you look around your school, you'll find teachers, principals, counselors, librarians, aides, and secretaries. All of these people are there to help you have the best middle school experience possible.

At some point during middle school, you're probably going to have a question or a problem concerning your locker, a class, another student, or a teacher. In most cases, you can get your question answered, or your problem taken care of, just by going to the office or by talking to the right person.

If you don't know who to talk to, see your counselor. Your counselor can help you with any question or problem that you may have.

Be Organized

- Use your Agenda
- Have a separate folder for each class
- Have phone numbers for classmates in case you have a question
- Keep your locker and backpack neat
- Get everything organized for the next day before you go to bed

Manage Your Time

- Use any extra time in school to get started on homework
- Create a study plan that works for you
- Break large assignments down into smaller parts

Be Successful in the Classroom

- Learn how to get along with different types of teachers
- Learn each teacher's class rules and what they expect of you
- Be in school, on time, every day
- Have everything you need with you when you go to class
- Always do your homework

Set Goals

Goals give you direction and focus. They help you figure out what you want to accomplish, and they help you decide where you want to go in life. If you're not in the habit of setting goals for yourself, now is the time to start.

Short-term goals are goals that you can achieve within days or weeks. Examples are: Get a B on my next history test. Get all of my chores done by Friday. Practice my soccer drills three times a week.

Long-term goals are goals that will take weeks, months, or even years to achieve. Examples are: Get all As and Bs on my report card this quarter. Make the basketball team next year. Go to college and become a lawyer.

- Set Goals that are Specific, Realistic, and Measurable
- Set both School and Personal Goals
- Once you've set a goal for yourself, write it down. Then write down the specific things that you need to do to achieve your goal.

Get Involved in Activities In and Outside of School

While friends and group activities are important, it's also important to have things that you enjoy doing by yourself. During the next few years, take time to develop some personal skills and hobbies. Middle school students can also do community service work. Volunteering at a nursing home or animal shelter, for example, is a great way to have fun and to also do something that's important and worthwhile.

Make Good Choices and Decisions

Now that you are in middle school, you're going to have more freedom and independence than you've ever had before. Of course, with greater freedom comes greater responsibility. Remember, you are responsible for your actions and for the choices that you make. When you make good choices and decisions, you get the rewards. When you make poor choices and decision, you have to accept the consequences.

It's very important for you to think about who you are and who you want to be, before you find yourself in a situation where you're encouraged to do something that you're not sure about.

Too often middle school students do things they normally wouldn't do just to go along with the crowd. Many of these students later regret their actions. Don't ever do something that doesn't feel right to you, and don't ever feel that you need to explain yourself. When you're faced with a difficult decision, try using the steps below:

- Figure out what your choices are.
- Write down the positive and negative things about each choice.
- Make sure that you have all of the information you need.
- Consider your choices, and make your decision.

Dealing with Stress

Whenever you're under a lot of stress, make sure that you get enough sleep, eat right, and get plenty of exercise. Try to spend time with your family and friends, and talk to them about why you're feeling stressed. Talking is good because it helps you sort things out. Also, try to keep a sense of humor, and take time for those things that help you relax.

When you're feeling stressed, try one of the relaxation techniques below:

- Take a deep breath, hold it, and then slowly release it. Do this until you feel your body relax.
- Starting at the top of your head, flex and then relax each part of your body.
- Close your eyes and visualize being in a place where you feel very relaxed and calm.

Dealing with Anger

We all get angry sometimes. However, some people find that they get angry a lot. Other people sometimes get so angry that they think they're going to burst. If you ever get so angry that you don't know what to do, try one of the following:

- Close your eyes, breathe deeply, and slowly count to 10 (or 20 or 30).
- Do something physical (take a walk, shoot baskets, kick a soccer ball, lift weights, etc.).
- Talk to a friend, parent, or counselor about why you're angry.

Dealing with Bullies

In middle school, you will probably run into a few students who act like jerks. You may also see a few students who are more than jerks – they are bullies.

The best way to deal with a bully is to stay away from him/her. A bully is looking for a reaction, so if you're ever the target of a bully, ignore him/her, or give this person a look that says, "This is really stupid," then walk away.

If you're having a problem with a bully, let your friend know what's going on and ask for their support. You should also tell a parent, counselor, or teacher if a bully ever threatens you, or causes you a problem. If a bully is causing you problems, chances are he/she is also causing problems for other students. If you tell someone what's happening, you are not only taking action to protect yourself, you are making your school a better, safer place for everyone.

Bullies want power. They also like to have an audience. Since bullies are influenced by how other people react, bystanders need to let bullies know that their behavior is "not cool," and that it is not acceptable.

Understand the Social Scene

As a whole, middle school students are a lot more interested and involved in social activities than elementary students. During these years, there are parties, dances, cliques, boyfriends and girlfriends, and a lot more gossip. Two students may be best friends one day and not speaking the next. Students' care about what other students do, and everyone is worried about how they look.

The middle school social scene can be exciting, crazy, and sometimes difficult to deal with. Try to

- Find friends that you have things in common with and who like you for who you are.
- Be friendly. Talk to people – even to people you doesn't know.
- Don't do something that isn't you just to be popular.
- Don't get caught up in the drama and dumb fight.
- Be careful what you say. Don't take people too seriously, and let stuff go.
- Having a few close friends is better than having lots of friends who don't really care about you.

Get Along With Your Parents

In middle school, you're going to have all sorts of new experiences and challenges. You parents, of course, also face a new challenge.

During your middle school years, you and your parents will go through different stages, and sometimes you will disagree. While you may not always agree with your parents, if you do the ten things listed below, you and your parents will probably get along fine these next few years:

1. Understand that your parents love you, and that sometimes when you're out with your friends, they worry about you.
2. Talk to your parents about what's happening in school and about what you and your friends are doing. If you let them in on what's going on in your life, they are less likely to feel like you're hiding things from them. Telling them even little simple things like, "The pizza we had a lunch today was terrible" or "I got a B on my math quiz" can make a big difference.
3. Bring your friends home so that your parents can meet them.
4. Never be disrespectful to your parents.
5. Do well in school.
6. Do chores without complaining.
7. Always tell your parents where you're going and when you'll be home.
8. If you have done something wrong, don't lie about it. Admit what you have done, and accept the consequences. Your parents will probably be a lot more understanding if you tell them the truth.
9. When you and your parents disagree, first try to understand why they feel the way they do. Then, if you believe that what you want is truly reasonable, try to work things out by compromising.
10. If there is something that you want or need, or if you have a problem, tell your parents. They aren't mind readers. You have to help them understand what you need or want them to do.