



LA CRESCENT-HOKAH
PUBLIC SCHOOLS

TRANSITION TO MIDDLE SCHOOL

LA CRESCENT MIDDLE SCHOOL

WWW.ISD300.K12.MN.US

2020 Parent Informational Meeting
Wednesday, May 6, 2020 at 5:00 P.M.

2020 Student Orientation Day
Thursday, April 30, 2020

Welcome to Middle School!

Making the move from elementary to middle school can be exciting and challenging for students and parents. While everyone makes many transitions during their lifetimes, the transition from elementary to middle school can bring about many questions and concerns. The middle school years are filled with challenges and change - budding bodies, raging hormones, altered attitudes and questions about life that might never have popped up before. Add all this to the rising tide of conflict, peer pressure, and changing relationships that take place in middle school, and even the most balanced student can become overwhelmed. Moving to middle school can provoke a myriad of concerns, emotions and behaviors for young adolescents and their parents. Not only do students experience new stresses during this transition, but parents are often concerned about the welfare of their children during this stage of development. The most important thing is to be a part of your child's life. This may be the last time you can read and spend time with your student before it is not "cool" to do so. You and your child may have many questions, fears, and even misconceptions about middle school. To address these feelings and to prepare your family for middle school, we have created this transition handbook.

This handbook will address the following:

- ★ Characteristics of Our Middle School
- ★ What Parents Need to Know
- ★ Expectations in Middle School
- ★ Concerns of Middle School Children
- ★ Links for the Successful Middle School Experience

If you have any questions, please contact the Middle School Counselor, Lisa Massman at 895-5058 or lisa.massman@isd300.k12.mn.us

Characteristics of Our Middle School

Middle School Vocabulary

Below are some terms that are generally associated with our middle school.

Academic Classes: Middle school students currently have a seven (7) period day and during their day they have language arts, mathematics, science and social studies as well as physical education every third day. In addition, on alternating days they have band/general music and a three trimester rotation that includes art, computer applications and ACES/life skills. The middle school day begins with the first period and it is called advisory.

Advisory Period: Middle school students currently start their day with an advisory period. This is a shortened class period that students spend with their grade level advisor. This time may be spent on building relationships, group building activities and academic advising. The advisory concept allows students to have a close student-teacher relationship while still having the opportunity to work with a variety of teachers. Their grade level advisor is one of the 5th grade teachers and will be the person that conferences with students and parents during the school year. Fifth grade students will have all fifth grade teachers for their academic classes, the exception is language arts which is 5th and 6th grade students and could be taught by a 5th or 6th grade teacher. In fifth grade students travel with the same group throughout most of the school day. Advisory group size is about 20 students.

After-School Care: Students are still able to return to the elementary school and attend Kid's Company if desired through fifth grade.

Assignment Notebook: Middle school students are encouraged to purchase an assignment notebook, for time management and organizational skills. The middle school will have assignment notebooks available for purchase at "Back to School Night" in August. Homework and class work should be written in the assignment notebook. It is important that parents ask to see what is written in the assignment notebook every night. This is a good tool for communication with teachers, if you require your child to update it daily. Your cooperation is what makes the assignment notebook an important tool for middle school success.

Bell Schedule: In middle school we follow a bell schedule, students have four minutes passing time between each class. During that four minutes students are encouraged to get materials ready for the next class, use the restroom and get a drink of water as needed.

Grading Scale: The grading scale in middle school is based on point averages.

A = 100% - 90%

B = 89% - 80%

C = 79% - 70%

D = 69% - 60%

F = 59% and below

Middle school students must pass all classes offered, if/when students do not pass a class they will need to complete a credit recovery contract or attend summer school to master materials taught.

Homework: Unlike elementary school, homework counts for a grade in middle school. This is one of the hardest things for middle school students to understand, especially in fifth grade. About one hour a night should be set aside for homework/reading. Setting a consistent time and place each night produces the best results. Homework is practice for knowledge. Reviewing notes, reading a chapter in a text, book reports, projects, and other types of written work are examples of homework a middle school student might expect. Homework grades are included in the student's academic average, and may count toward a class grade. **Hint:** if your child says they have no homework then read a book together, review material or practice math problems during the set time. Fifth and sixth grade may be the the last time that your student will appreciate or allow time to read with you. Take advantage of this time while it is still available.

Homework Room: When students do not complete their assigned homework they are assigned to the homework room that day. The homework room is during the lunch recess and one of the 5th or 6th grade teachers are there to assist students. Students report to the homework room after lunch.

Lancer Values/Student Discipline: The school discipline policy is printed in the student handbook that can be found on the school website. Please see this document for specifics on expected behaviors. The middle school has four Lancer Values that we expect all students to follow: We are respectful, we are responsible, we are caring, and we are safe. Much of what happens in school and in life can fall into these four areas. At the beginning of each school year we teach and practice what the Lancer

Values look like in several areas of the school, like hallways, classrooms, bathrooms, cafeteria, etc.

Make up Work: If your child is absent from school then it is his/her responsibility to ask the teacher for make-up work. If your child is going to be out for an extended period of time, 3 or more days, then call the school office and ask for work to be collected. Teachers need a notice to get work to the office for pick-up.

Middle School Orientation: Fourth grade students will spend one day at the middle school in early April/May to get a sense of what a middle school day might be like. Your student will come over to the middle school with their fourth grade teachers and have an opportunity to tour the middle school, meet teachers and staff and ask middle school students and staff about middle school. The middle school counselor will spend some time with fourth graders prior to this day to answer questions and provide a transition to middle school.

Report Cards: Middle school students have two semesters in the academic year. Student report cards are mailed home at the end of the school year. Parents are encouraged to frequently check their child's grades on Infinite Campus our student information system throughout the school year. Parents and students are both provided with their individual usernames and passwords to check on academic progress. Concerns about your child's grades should be directed to their teachers and the middle school counselor if needed.

RTI Classes: RTI is Response to Intervention, students may be placed in additional classes in the area of reading and math based on academic need and test scores to provide additional instruction and support.

Schedule: Each student is given a class schedule, students are encouraged to tape this in their assignment notebook so that it is with them until they have it memorized. Middle school students may have up to six academic classes each day. Each student schedule is unique depending upon the needs of the individual.

Special Education Services: Students with an individualized education plan (IEP) can be served through the special education program at the middle school. In middle school, special education students may participate in team taught, small group or self-contained classes depending on the goals and objectives of the IEP. Itinerant services such as speech/language, visual/auditory or occupational/physical therapies are available to those with needs identified in their IEP.

Spirit Friday: Every Friday middle school students are encouraged to wear green or La Crescent Team/Club apparel to show support for our school.

Sports and Activities: In middle school sporting activities continue to be facilitated by community programs and the Boys and Girls Club. In seventh and eighth grade students will have an opportunity to participate in some of the school sponsored sporting programs. Some of the activities that fifth graders can be involved in are: the middle school play (occurs each Fall), student council, math masters, and year-book club.

Teacher Correspondence: Middle school teachers have all students in that grade level. With this in mind, it is very helpful when parents contact teachers when they have concerns. Contacting teachers via email is the most effective way to contact them because it is challenging to connect with teachers on the phone during the school day.

Technology - One to One School: La Crescent Middle School is a one-to-one device school. Fifth grade students/parents will be provided the opportunity to purchase their devices at a discount through Best Buy or students can bring their own device, additional information will be provided at the parent meeting.

The After-School Study Program: (Similar to Oak Street at the Elementary) This program runs from mid-October to mid-May and is designed to help students with homework completion, organizational skills and skill development. Currently the program is every night after school.

Expectations in Middle School

Middle school students interact with more peers and adults than ever before. Students often leave an elementary school that they are both comfortable and familiar with and enter a middle school where the expectations for performance and responsibility increase. While these students are struggling with the transition from being child-like to adolescence, they are also adjusting to a new academic setting. Here are some tips that might help:

Organization:

- Each middle school student is encouraged to have an assignment notebook to keep track of when assignments are due, when tests are scheduled, meetings, practices, and project due dates. Check your child's assignment notebook each day.
- Encourage your student to keep their book bag and locker neat and orderly. A messy backpack or locker can slow a student down and cause them to be late for class or lose important papers.
- Help your student develop a system for organizing his/her notebook(s). They may choose to use a different notebook for each class or use a three-ring binder with dividers. Regardless of their choice, help them choose a system and stick with it.
- Teach your student to master big projects by breaking them down into smaller ones. Help your student set realistic goals for completing the project early.
- Be involved! Don't hold your student's hand but know what projects and assignments are due. E-mail correspondence is the best way to communicate with teachers.

Study Routines:

- Make time for homework. Be sure that your student has a special time each day to complete homework. Help your student balance his or her homework with other activities.
- Make a place for homework. Students need a quiet, well-lit place to work. Be sure your student has the supplies necessary before they begin working and that there are no obvious distractions.
- Encourage your student to prepare for school the night before. Organizing notebooks, selecting clothing, and packing backpacks the night before will help your middle school student start the day more relaxed.
- Use your Skyward access and encourage your student to use their access to check grades on a regular basis and as a tool to set goals.

Concerns of Middle School Students

Over the years, these are concerns that students identify:

- ❖ Finding lockers, classes, and bathrooms
- ❖ Getting to class on time
- ❖ Having someone to sit with at lunch
- ❖ Being able to open the lockers - hint: purchase a combination lock over the summer and have your child practice, in the fall, advisors will also allow students time to practice and will always help students when needed.
- ❖ Keeping up with the work
- ❖ Responding to peer pressure
- ❖ Coping with more teachers
- ❖ Getting on the right bus
- ❖ Being with friends
- ❖ Accepting more responsibility
- ❖ Adjusting to physical differences in peers
- ❖ Adjusting to appearance and peer status
- ❖ Keeping up with belongings
- ❖ Getting through hallways - “Are they crowded? Will I get lost? Are there bullies?”
- ❖ Will I run into “big” kids
- ❖ Coping with a larger school
- ❖ Adjusting to social status and cliques
- ❖ Adjusting to new grading standards
- ❖ Knowing and following the rules
- ❖ Being bullied by “big” kids
- ❖ Adjusting to less free time/recess during the school day
- ❖ Making new friends

**These are some of the areas that are covered with students when the middle school counselor spends time with the students at the elementary school and they are covered on the day that students come to the middle school for their orientation day.

What Parents May Need to Know...

- ❑ Middle school welcomes parent volunteers throughout the school year. There are activities like book fairs, field trips and middle school dances/activities. Parents might also recognize that during these years their child might not be as excited to have their parents in the school environment. This is a normal developmental milestone.
- ❑ Communication is the key to success in middle school. Communication with your student and his/her teachers and counselor will help your child achieve personal, social, and academic success in middle school.
- ❑ Middle school has one official parent-teacher conference week each year during the Fall in which individual conferences are scheduled for each child. Spring conferences follow an open format and occur one evening.
- ❑ If your child is absent from school it is important to notify the middle/high school office, your child is responsible for making up all missing assignments.
- ❑ Middle school students have a locker in the hallway for their books and coats. Students are assigned a hall locker, with a combination lock.
- ❑ Middle school dress codes are different from those of most elementary schools. All students are expected to dress in a manner that demonstrates respect for the learning environment. See the school web site and/or the student handbook for more detailed information. The middle school does have air conditioning so it is important to dress accordingly.
- ❑ Parents may establish a lunch account for their students. Just like at the elementary students can bring cash/checks into the school office or parents can make a deposit into accounts online.
- ❑ Students in 5th and 6th grade have about a 15 minute recess each day after lunch so it is important that students dress according to the weather. Students will go outside unless it is raining or the temperature is below zero.
- ❑ The middle school does provide a supply list for students, these can be found on the middle school website and in most local retailers.
- ❑ All La Crescent - Hokah Schools adhere to a strict policy prohibiting harassment and/or bullying.
- ❑ Students are expected to follow an established behavior management plan - at La Crescent Middle School we call these our Lancer Values.
- ❑ Middle schools typically separate students by grade level. Fifth and sixth grade students rarely interact with seventh and eighth grade students.

Links for Success and Future Planning

*This list does not represent all available resources. The information is subject to change.

Education:

- www.isd300.k12.mn.us - La Crescent - Hokah School District
- www.education.state.mn.us - The Minnesota Department of Education
- <http://education-world.com/students/study/index.shtml> - Education World - study skills and homework help
- <http://middleweb.com> - Information and resources for the middle school years
- <http://how-to-study.com> - Designed to help students do better in school
- www.how-to-study.com - How to Study
- www.greatschools.net - Parent Guide to K-12 success

General Educational Resources:

- <http://www.pta.org/commonsense> - Strategies for raising alcohol and drug-free children provided by the National PTA
- www.parentingteens.com - A newsletter with valuable ideas for parents
- www.pbskids.org/itsmylife/school/middleschool/ - PBS Kids for elementary and middle school kids
- www.kidshealth.org - Kids Health: articles, games, resources for parents.
- www.girlpower.org - Information and activities for girls and parents.
- www.kids.gov/ - Kids portal for the US government - information and activities related to school, careers, recreation, etc.

Internet Safety/Anti bullying:

- www.safekids.com/contract.htm - Family contract for online safety, including guidelines for parents and their children.
- www.stopbullying.gov
- www.pacerkidsagainstbullying.org
- www.stopbullyingnow.com
- www.stopcyberbullying.org

Career Planning: (no it is never too early)

- www.bls.gov/oco - Search by keyword, index, or occupational cluster
- www.math.unl.edu/~nmsi/tQ2/3index1.html - Designed to help students think about futures in math, science, and technology.