

## Transition to 6th Grade: Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

### ➤ Academics

- **How are students organized at middle school?**
  - Students are organized by grade level teams. Daily class schedules consist of the following:
    - 4 core classes:
      - Math (84 minute block)
      - Science (42 minute class)
      - Language Arts (84 minute block)
      - Social Studies (42 minute class)
    - 4 Exploratory classes (1 per quarter, 42 minute class)
      - Spanish
      - Art
      - STEM
      - Computer Applications/STEAM
    - Physical Education (PE) Daily (42 minute class)
    - Encores/Band/Choir Daily (30 minute class)
      - Encore is a study hall time
      - Band/Choir (students can participate in both)
    - Flex Time
      - Every Thursday for 30 minutes with a modified schedule for the day
      - A time for academic support and/or extended study time
- **How much time are students allowed to get to classes?**
  - Students have 3 minutes in between classes. Hallways are monitored during passing periods by staff.
- **When will my 6th grader know their schedule?**
  - First hour teacher, locker information, lunch code, and transportation information will be sent home via mail during the week of August 3-7
  - Student's class schedules will be posted for viewing and printing in Skyward by Friday, August 14
  - Details regarding online registration, important dates, and deadlines will be sent home via email throughout the summer
- **What supplies will my child need for school?**
  - The [Supply List](#) can be found online under the student tab
  - New for this year; students may now carry their backpack throughout the building with them
  - Binders or trapper keepers are no longer needed

## ➤ Athletics and After-School Activities

- **Sports**
  - **What sports are available to my 6th grader?**
    - Cross country
    - Wrestling
    - Track and field
    - Intramural volleyball, intramural boys basketball, and intramural girls basketball depending on interest
- **Clubs**
  - **How does my 6th grader find out about joining clubs?**
    - Information about clubs, sports, and activities is shared with students during daily announcements, news of the week sent home via email to parents and students.
    - On our website and other social media pages
    - Students are encouraged to get involved at school, whether through an afterschool club, activity or sport. If there isn't a club that suits their interest, students are encouraged to bring new ideas to the school administration for consideration.
  - **What is Homework Help?**
    - Students can stay after school in the library to get help with homework beginning at 2:50pm and ending at 4:00pm on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays.
    - A permission slip is required and can be found in the office or on our website in the virtual backpack
  - **What is Knight Crew?**
    - Knight Crew is our student leadership club that anyone in grades 6-8 can participate in. Knight Crew (K-Crew) plans social events such as school dances and dodgeball tournaments, they help to support our PTO, manage and run our concession stand at home games held at NMS, and many more opportunities that help to support the climate and culture of NMS.
  - **What is Drama Club?**
    - Drama Club is open to any 6-8 grade student and meets from just after winter break through the middle of March with a play performance for their culminating activity.

- **Activity Bus**
  - **Can my 6th grader use the activity bus?**
    - All students can use the activity bus which leaves NMS @ 4:00pm on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays. Note: The activity bus drop-off location can be different from a student's regular assigned bus stop. A permission slip is required prior to using the activity bus and can be found in the office or in the virtual backpack

➤ **Attendance, see the student handbook for all related attendance policies.**

- **What do I need to do if my student is sick?**
  - Call the school's office line (815) 678-7129, press 2, and leave a message (English/Spanish) by 8am. Messages can be left at any time (24 hours/day).
- **What happens if my student is late for school?**
  - Students check in at the office for a pass to class and the tardy is recorded.
  - After three tardies, a notice will be given indicating that the next time there is tardy, school consequences will apply (ex: 30-minute lunch detention).

➤ **Cell Phones; visit the ["Student Handbook"](#) link for more information.**

- **Can 6th graders have cell phones at school?**
  - Students can bring cell phones to school but will be asked to keep them in the cell phone bin located in each classroom
- **Can 6th graders wear smartwatches at school?**
  - Smartwatches can be worn as long as they are not used for two-way communication or as a cell phone.
- **What if my child violates the cell phone procedure?**
  - Consequences for cell phone violations are outlined in the student handbook link above.
- **What if there is an emergency and my child needs to reach me or I need to reach my child during the school day?**
  - Students may use the phone in the school office or classroom if necessary during the school day.
  - Parents may call the school office in the case of an emergency.
  - Should the school need to contact parents in the event of an emergency during the school day, messages will be sent to parents via email, text and/or phone. For more information about emergency communications, please visit the <https://www.nippersink2.org/> website

## ➤ Technology/Chromebooks

- **What are the expectations for Chromebooks?**
  - Each student will be issued a Chromebook for the school year.
  - Students bring devices home every day. Chromebooks must be charged and ready for learning each day.
  - Students/families are expected to review and adhere to the acceptable use policy.
- **How do I know my child is safe while using the Internet?**
  - Students are taught digital citizenship through their computer applications class as well as through daily instruction.
  - GoGuardian is a 24/7 monitoring tool that filters and blocks some internet content and allows teachers and administrators to track how students are using their devices. Student activity on the Chromebook will be reviewed as needed and school administrators will address any concerns or violations as outlined in the student handbook.

## ➤ Communication

- **How do I get and share information with the school/teachers?**
  - School and district websites
  - News of the Week
  - [Social media](#) Twitter (@nippersinkmidd1) and don't forget to like us on Facebook
  - Email, phone calls; voicemail messages
    - Keep contact information up-to-date in Skyward in order to receive emails, text messages, phone calls, etc. Please report any changes to your contact information to the school so we can update your Skyward account.

## ➤ Exploratory Classes

- **How do Exploratory classes work?**
  - All students have one quarter of instruction in each of the 4 exploratories so they gain exposure to a variety of areas.
  - Exploratories include:
    - Computer Applications/STEAM
    - Art
    - Spanish
    - STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math)

## ➤ Choir / Band / Encore

- **What is Encore?**
  - Encore is a 30 minute study hall period prior to lunch that all students not in band or choir will be assigned
- **Choir/Band**
  - Choir and Band meet every day for 30 minutes just prior to lunch. Students may participate in both if they choose
- **When will my child have band lessons?**
  - Band lessons occur weekly and at different times during the instructional day each week.

## ➤ Health

- **Do I need to fill out any forms for medication to be given to my child?**
  - Yes. Health forms can be found on the [District 2 website](#) and must be completed for ANY medication (prescription and non-prescription, ex. Tylenol) to be given.
- **Does my 6th grader need a physical?**
  - Yes. Information about [required physical, dental and vision exams and immunizations](#) can be found on the District 2 website.

## ➤ Lockers

- **Are students assigned their own locker?**
  - Yes. All students are assigned a locker by their last academic class of the day
- **Can students decorate their lockers?**
  - Yes. Students may decorate their lockers with small photos and other items but the decorations must not interfere with opening and closing of the locker. **NO TAPE OR GLUE** may be used, only magnets
- **Are students provided locks for their lockers?**
  - Yes. Students are provided locks for their lockers and are strongly encouraged to keep their lockers locked at all times to protect their personal belongings. Students should NOT give out their locker combinations to anyone.

➤ **Lunch and Breakfast; visit the [Food Services webpage](#) for more information.**

- **Does NMS serve breakfast?**
  - Yes. Breakfast a la carte items are available in the cafeteria before school from 7:00-7:30. Students must have money in their lunch account to purchase food items.
- **What are my student's options for lunch?**
  - Students may bring their own lunch or purchase a lunch from the school district's food service in the cafeteria. Students can also purchase a la carte items such as fresh fruit, cereal, water, and other snacks.
- **How does my student pay for lunch?**
  - With a credit card through the Web Store in Skyward
  - With cash or check (made payable to "Nippersink Middle School") which can be dropped off in the office or given to the student's first hour teacher
- **Do students go outside for recess?**
  - No, but if weather permits, they may go outside for the last 5 minutes of lunch.

➤ **Physical Education (PE)**

- **Do students have PE every day?**
  - Yes.
- **Are students required to wear a uniform for PE?**
  - Yes. Students change into uniforms for physical education each day.
  - Students may bring a sweatshirt and/or sweatpants to wear but they can not be the clothing they wore to school.
  - Students are encouraged to have PE shoes that are separate from the shoes worn at school for the day
  - Uniforms should come home with students each week to be washed.
- **Are students provided a gym locker and lock?**
  - Yes. Students will be issued a gym locker and lock.
- **Is there a cost for PE uniforms?**
  - Uniforms are \$13 (\$4.50/shirt and \$8.50/shorts)
- **What if my student is injured and cannot participate in PE?**
  - You will need to have your child provide documentation of the injury to the school nurse and notify the PE teacher.

## ➤ Schedule

- **When is the first bell?**
  - The first bell rings at 7:40am; classes start at 7:45am.
- **What time is dismissal?**
  - Students are dismissed at 2:50pm.
- **When is the main office open?**
  - 7am - 3:30pm

## ➤ Transportation: Busing

- **How do I know where my child's bus stop is and when the bus comes?**
  - Bus route information will be mailed out in the first part of August. It will include:
    - Route number
    - Bus stop location
    - Pick-up and drop-off times
  - Students should arrive at their bus stop 5 minutes before their scheduled pick-up time.
- **Do school buses have cameras?**
  - Yes. School buses are equipped with cameras (that capture both audio/video) for the safety of all students.
- **Can students ride a different bus to go to a friend's house?**
  - No. For safety reasons, students are *not* permitted to ride a bus that they are not assigned to.
  - Students must get off the bus at their bus stop only.
  - Families with special circumstances may contact the NMS main office to request route changes.

## ➤ Transportation: Walkers / Bike Riders / Car Riders

- **Bikes:** Students may ride bikes to school, but will be required to walk the bike once entering school grounds. Students are encouraged to bring locks and to lock their bikes on the bike racks.
- **Skateboards and scooters:** Skateboards and scooters are discouraged due to lack of storage.
- **Cars riders:** Be aware of traffic delays, especially on inclement weather days. **Students should be dropped off and picked up in the back of the building.** The back of the building can be accessed by using East St.
- Students can be dropped off as early as 7am in the **back of the building.** They should report directly to the cafeteria where they will be supervised by a staff member until the bell rings at 7:40

## ➤ Security

- **What can I expect regarding security?**
  - All exterior doors are locked at all times
  - Staff members will be present to allow students into the building before school in the back of the building from 7am-7:45am. After 7:45am, students will need to use the main entrance in the front of the building.
  - When entering the building, please ring the bell at the front office. The secretaries will be glad to help you.
  - All visitors will be required to show a picture ID to be scanned through the Raptor identification security system.
  - **ALL** visitors are required to check-in at the main office before entering the building.
  - Interior and exterior cameras are in use at all times