

Surviving

Middle School

**Straight
Talk**

about

**Middle
School**

**to Get
You**

Headed

in the

Right

Direction



Park Ridge–Niles School District 64

Park Ridge—Niles School District 64

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About this Booklet...

The original version of this booklet was published in 1998 through the efforts of the District 64 Community Relations Committee in cooperation with middle school students and administrators. Initial funding was provided by a generous grant from the District 64 Elementary Learning Foundation, with additional financial support from the seven school Parent-Teacher Organizations. Graphic designer Robert Trahan contributed illustrations for the original version. Several revisions were issued through the years, including a complete update in 2009.

This new edition reflects the thoughts and experiences of the current generation of District 64 middle school students.

Hey...

Turn off the TV. Put down the video game controls. Wash your hands and pay attention. It's about to start. The next three years of your life. Middle School. Thousands of students have navigated through these waters successfully, so we asked some of them how they did it. Many of their answers are included here in this booklet.

Here we go...



w00t!

Basic School Hours: Getting In and Out

School Day Starts:	8:05 a.m. homeroom
School Day Ends:	3:00 p.m. Monday, Tuesday, Thursday & Friday 2:10 p.m. Wednesday

But, if for some reason you need to get in earlier, you will need a note.

And, if you forgot something after school, the building is open until at least 3:50 p.m. The office staff can let you in.

Bus Stuff – Basic Facts

1. Not everyone rides the bus to school.
2. Your parents will tell you if you are going to ride or not.
3. If you are, you will need a pass.
4. Your pass will be given to you during the first week of school.
DON'T LOSE IT or you'll have to buy a new one.



Have a special place in your backpack to keep your bus pass, like an outer pocket, so that you will never lose it and always have it with you. -Tommy R.

How to Ride a Bus

Enter through front door...Be sure you have your pass. Say hello to the driver and try not to slug anyone with your backpack...Sit down. (You might have an assigned seat after the first few weeks)...Buckle your seat belt...Don't stand up, throw up, yell or throw things in or out of the window. Riding a bus is a privilege based on PROPER bus behavior.

What is the after school "Activity Bus"?

It's big, it's yellow and it leaves at 4:10 p.m. Take this bus if you need a ride home after a club meeting, band or orchestra practice, detention, etc. It's free and available to ALL students. It runs every school day except Wednesday. The routes are a little different and have fewer stops than your regular bus route; check the office for the stops.

A Secret of Locker Maintenance

Make friends with your lock. Memorize the combination any way you can: make up a song consisting of the numbers in your combination or write it in your assignment notebook in a spot where no one else will look. Whatever works for you. It's easier than you think. Remember...keep it a *secret!*

Tips to Organize Your Locker

It should be better organized than your room. Maid service is not available.

- At Lincoln, buy a locker shelf (these don't fit at Emerson).
- Put your books on the top shelf or bottom of your locker.
- Some kids keep morning books on the top, afternoon books on the floor.
- Some people keep books, spiral notebooks, and folders on the top shelf.
- Separate your books by order of classes.
- Organize folders and notebooks by class periods.
- Put all papers in folders and don't keep any loose papers in your locker.
- Always hang things up.
- Don't keep extra stuff in your locker, especially fresh fruit and vegetables; after a few days, it'll start to smell.

To organize your locker, organize your folders, from left to right, in the order of your class periods.
-Luke I.



To remember your locker combination, write it down on a special date in your student planner. For example, I wrote my combination down on my birthday.
-Samantha Z.



Getting from Class to Class... the Three-Minute Thing

Three minutes...think of it more as 180 seconds. It doesn't sound like much time, but for hundreds of years, that's been more than enough time to get from class to class. Your parents did it, your grandparents did it, and so can you.

Just Keep In Mind These Few Basic Tips:

1. **Talk while you walk.**
2. **Walk at a steady pace.**
3. **Avoid crowded hallways.**
4. **Keep to the right and stay in your lane.**
5. **Don't run.**

Going Up

A Few Words About Elevators

Who can use them?

Not you. Unless you get a pass from the nurse or you are with a parent.

Important Note:

It's not that hard to get through the halls, and most of the teachers are nice about that the first few weeks. Teachers don't expect you to adjust right away. They give you a couple of chances.



Bathrooms

When can I go?

Between classes (but you'll have to hurry!), during your lunch period or sometimes during class if you can get a pass from your teacher.

Who are the counselors and social workers and how can they help me?

There are a whole bunch of people at the middle school who are there to help you. Some are the counselors and social workers. Sometime during the first month of school you will have a chance to meet them. These people are not core academic teachers, but they know a lot. They can help you change your schedule, figure out how to get along better with a teacher, or talk to you about anything that is bothering you. Don't be afraid to talk to them. Helping is their job.

If you have a problem, tell the teacher or ask the social worker for help. They will always help you!
-Daniel W.



detention

All About Detention

Forgetting your homework a lot? Late to school most of the time? You could be detention-bound. What is "detention"? Detention means staying after school or having to come in early before school when you don't necessarily want to. It's a consequence of some behavior that needs changing. It means sitting around. Could be in the principal's office or someplace else. The adults decide that, you don't. You are being "detained." Detentions are not that easy to get but they are really boring. Try not to get them. Just follow the rules and you won't.

Homework: It's a Fact of Life

You'll probably have more than you had in elementary school. You should count on at least 15-20 minutes a day in each core class and foreign language (15 minutes per week for 6th grade foreign language). Plan it into your day-to-day life. Teachers will try to let you know about long-term assignments in advance.

So, How's It Going?

There are lots of ways for you and your parents to find out about your progress during the school year. Especially helpful is the online "Parent Portal"; your family will receive information about it in the fall. Other ways could include: parent-teacher conferences, phone calls, and e-mails. If you want to know how you're doing, don't be afraid to ask your teachers.

If you forget your homework, or don't understand, you can come in before school or stay after school to get help. Remember, you'll need a pass.
-Joe L.



ABCs of Report Cards

- A**ll report cards are mailed home after the end of a trimester.
- B**egin each trimester with a goal to put forth your best effort.
- C**heck with your teacher if you have any questions regarding your grades.
- D**on't wait for the report card to check your grades. Use the Parent Portal!
- F**eel free to make copies and send one to grandma!

You can buy your lunch, bring your lunch and sit next to whoever you want. I guarantee, you will have an awesome time.
-Anna G.



Cell Phone

Cell phones and other electronic devices can be brought to school, but turn them off and keep them in your locker during the school day.



So, It's Time to Eat...

You can't go home for lunch. There just isn't time. You can either bring your lunch (most kids use a brown bag) or buy it at school or do some of each. You and your parents have to decide what works best for you. Lunch items range from about \$1 to \$4, and the menu always includes some "good stuff" like soft pretzels and ice cream. You can use cash or a keypad system connected to an account your parents set up. BTW...the cafeteria also sells milk, fruit, and some other healthy stuff. *Bon appétit!*

Planner

Every student automatically gets a fresh, new assignment notebook—a planner—at the start of each school year. So save your cash, don't buy one.

If you forget to write an assignment in your planner, have a homework buddy you can call. -George S.



Meeting and Greeting

Dances, Basketball Games and Other Social Stuff

Socials: No worry! Most kids don't do much dancing. It's really more like a big party. There's food, music, and decorations. Just go and have a good time.



Don't be afraid to join a club that your friends didn't join because it is an opportunity to make more friends. -Tyler G.

Basketball and Volleyball Games

While many sports have intramural teams that anyone can join, basketball and volleyball are sports that require students (7th and 8th grade only) to try out. Once the teams are selected, games are played October through March generally. Each set of games lasts from about 3:20 p.m. to 5:45 p.m.; girls' games are scheduled first in the fall. The complete schedule is included in the school newsletter and is posted in the Office. There is no admission charge. A game is one of the few things in life that's free! Sort of... (Well, actually, the cost of all games is included in the fee your parents pay at the beginning of the year. The important thing is that YOU don't have to shell out any money when you decide to go to a game.) If you need a ride home, arrange it with a friend or stay until 4:10 p.m. and take the "Activity Bus."

Getting Rid of Rumors

The real truth about things you might have heard...

You don't need dates for socials.

You can't get detentions that easily.

In gym class, you don't have to run the mile in eight minutes or take a shower.

When school first starts in August, you don't get in trouble if you can't find your classroom or get your locker open.

General Tips on Middle School From Those Who Have Gone Before

...suggestions from middle school veterans

Write everything down in your planner.

Ask teachers where classes are located if you aren't sure.

After core classes, put your books in your backpack so you're ready at the end of the day for homework.

Homework affects your grades.

Get homework in on time-it makes life easier.

Study for tests and quizzes.

Try to make all of the games because they are really fun.

Try to make all the socials, because you can hang out with your friends and make new ones.

Come prepared for school.

Do your homework as soon as you get home.

Don't be late to class.

Watch for notices about club sign ups!

Make sure you get to the bus on time.

Don't be nervous; there is nothing to be nervous about.

Have fun!



Four score and seven years ago...
-Abe L.

Glossary of Terms

Elective – A 7th or 8th grade class that is a trimester long and designed around one area of student interest.

Ralph Waldo Emerson – (1803-1888) Famous, tall, American writer and teacher. Not too many schools are named after him, but one of ours is!

Student Government – If you want to be active and make things better for others at school and in the world, there is a club to join to do it. You are not elected; anyone can join.

Core/Team – A group of students who has the same team of teachers for language arts, social studies, math and science.

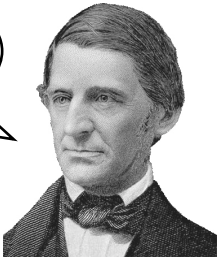
Abraham Lincoln – (1809-1865) Famous, tall, American President. Lots of schools are named after him, including Lincoln Middle School.

Intramural – Sports played after school by grade level. Everyone may play – no one is “cut.”

Hall Pass – A piece of paper or an object given by a teacher that allows you to be in the hall when others aren’t.

Homeroom – Five minutes at the beginning of the day to help you get started at school. Your homeroom teacher will be part of your “team.”

What lies behind us and what lies before us are small matters compared to what lies within us.
-Ralph W. E.



Specifically for 6th Graders

Do we have recess?

Only at lunchtime.

Will there be clubs for 6th graders after school?

Yes. The 6th graders will be a part of all the clubs the 7th and 8th graders are. The only things that will be scheduled separately are intramurals.

Can 6th graders go to socials?

There will be after-school social activities just for the 6th graders, some of which may be dances. Nighttime socials are mostly planned for 7th and 8th graders. 6th graders may be included in some events with approval from their parents, the group organizing the event, and school administrators.

How many different classes will there be during the day?

6th graders will have many of the classes they've had so far...language arts, social studies, math, and science. They also will have P.E. every day. Art and music will be scheduled, and so will a bunch of classes called "exploratories."

Do we get electives?

You will get to take some other classes called "electives," but you won't choose them until 7th grade. All 6th graders take required "exploratories," such as Technology and Health.

How many times do we go to a different classroom during the day?

At least seven.

What's for lunch?

Look here on your school's website.





This belongs to



To play intramurals you don't have to be a great athlete. Have fun, show good sportsmanship and just spend time with friends. -Brendan S.



You can get involved in so many ways. Join a club, star in V-Show, go to a social, support your team, audition for the musical! Becoming involved helps you make tons of friends! -Sara A.

