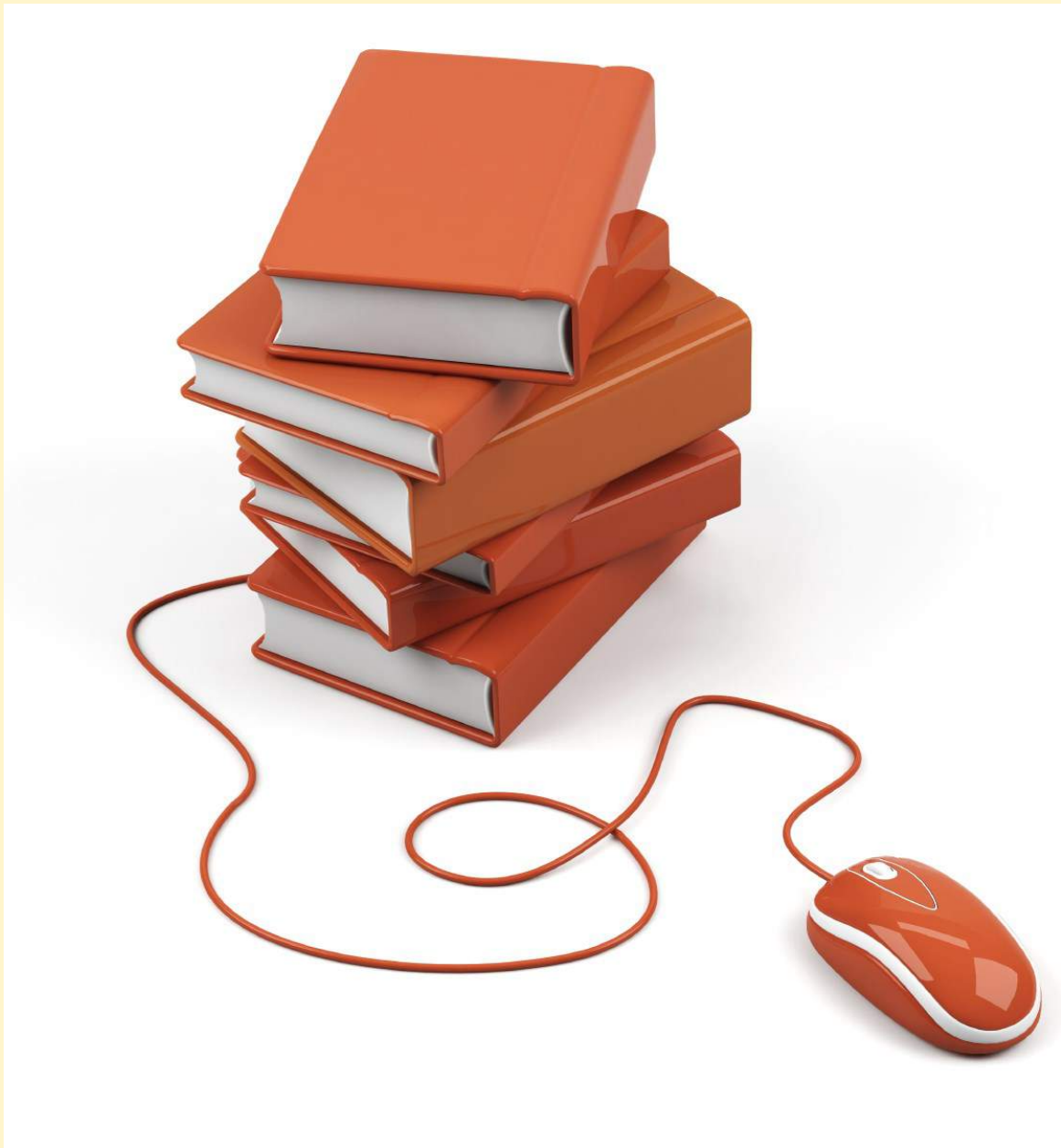


# Packin' Up

---



**A Guide to Middle School Transition**

# Table of Contents

## **I. General Information**

- 1. Glossary of Middle School Terms**
- 2. Who's Who in the Middle School?**
- 3. Day -to-Day Specifics**
- 4. Discipline**

## **II. Academic**

- 1. Letter Grading in Middle School**
- 2. Homework Requirements**
- 3. Time Management/Study Habits**
- 4. Student Assignment Book**
- 5. Description of Core Classes**
- 6. Support/Tutoring Programs**

## **III. Social**

- 1. Problem-Solving, Making Good Choices, Responsibility**
- 2. Making/Choosing Friends**
- 3. Cliques**
- 4. Peer Pressure**
- 5. Bullying**

## **IV. Extracurricular/Getting Involved**

- 1. Sports**
- 2. Clubs**
- 3. Music/Band**

## **V. Tips for Parents**

- 1. Tips for Parents**
- 2. Homework Hints**

## General Information

The transition to middle school can be challenging for students due to differences in middle and elementary school settings. This section will provide general information about the functioning of the middle school.

### 1. Glossary of middle school terms:

ISS : In-school suspension

PSC: Positive School Culture

PBA: Project based assessment

IAT: Instructional assistance team

EOY: End of Year Assessment

### 2. Who's Who in the middle school?

Student may notice when they get to the middle school that there are several adults around, but they are not always sure what those adults do and who to ask for help.

#### Counselor

Our counselors provide a variety of services to students at Shroder. Initial contact can be by parent or teacher referral to support students through mediation and intervention.

#### Intervention Specialist

The intervention specialist provides direct services to student on IEPs and others in intervention. These services can be provided in small group specialized classes, a study skills bell and in the general education classroom.

#### School Psychologist

The school psychologist coordinates the Intervention Assistance Team (IAT) and evaluations for students on IEPs.

#### Speech/Language Pathologist (SLP)

Like the intervention specialist, the SLP provides services in a variety of settings, collaborating with teachers to provide academically relevant services to students. .

### School Resource Officer (SRO)

This presence can be intimidation if students are unaware of the role the resource officer plays within the school. The resource officer is not a security guard, but a Cincinnati Police officer. These individuals are on campus to maintain student safety. Almost all middle schools in the district have one, so it does not mean a school is a tough school for having a full time resource officer. The school resource officers are very approachable and they are another source of help for students.

### Administration

The administration layout can be very confusing to some. There is a principal, assistant principal and dean of discipline. The Dean of discipline and assistant principal most often handle safety, disciplinary, and/or facility situations.

## **II. Academic**

## Academic

### 1. Letter Grading

In middle school ,students earn letter grades of A, B, C, D, or F on their report cards. Letter grades have the following numerical values:

A	90—100
B	89—80
C	79—70
D	69 -60
F	59 and below

### 2. Homework Requirements

Homework at the elementary level is used for skills practice and is an indicator of understanding of concepts. At the middle school level most often homework is graded and averaged in as a portion of a student's grade. This must be explained to rising 7th graders so they understand that they will be held accountable for correctly competing homework, and that their grades may drop if they consistently do not turn in completed homework in a timely fashion.

### 3. Time Management/ Study Habits

In middle school, time becomes a precious commodity. Students normally have six classes in a school day - with six different teachers, six different expectations, and sometimes with six different homework assignments! Along with being responsible for all of the above, students must also be responsible for managing time; both at school and at home. One major academic process that students must fit into their busy schedules is homework - whether completing homework assignments, major projects, or studying for tests. Learning and utilizing study skills will both qualify and quantify time for a 7th grader.

### 4. Student Assignment Book

One of the most important objects a student will possess in middle school is his/her agenda (Student Assignment Book or SAB) which is provided to all students. The SAB is essentially a planning book in which students can write down homework assignments, upcoming projects, dated activities, or any other important information. The SAB is arranged by weeks, and is sectioned off into days.

Each day has spaces to write information about each class that a middle school student would have - language arts, math, social studies, science, literacy for life, and an elective. Because 7th graders will have many different classes and teacher expectations to keep track of, writing everything down is essential.

## 5. Description of Core Classes

Seventh grade students study language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, literacy for life, and an elective.

### **Language Arts**

Grade 7 English Language Arts, ELA, is a mixture of reading, writing, speaking, listening and language. These aspects of ELA are designed to prepare students for success in college, career, and life. The Ohio New Learning Standards, ONLS, and Cincinnati Public Schools' ELA Pacing Guide are used to create thematic units throughout the school year. The following are the thematic units for the 2015-2016 school year:

Quarter 1 - Personal Challenges

Quarter 2 - Human Nature

Quarter 3 – Independence

Quarter 4 – Responsibility

A digital writing portfolio is required for all grade 7 students. Each student will upload writing pieces to the portfolio throughout the school year.

### **Mathematics**

This course represents a new direction for Cincinnati Public Schools. In order to support student preparation for grade 8 Algebra 1 and the new graduation requirement of four mathematics courses, a Pre-Algebra course in grade 7 was needed. The primary objective of this course is to prepare students for success in Algebra 1. The Pre-Algebra curriculum consists of all grade 7 standards and grade 8 standards not specifically addressed in an Algebra 1 course. The standards are organized into cohesive units incorporating both grade 7 and grade 8 standards within common CCSSM grade 7/8 domains.

Operations with integers and rational numbers

Proportional reasoning and percents

Expressions, equations, and inequalities

Linear functions

Statistics and probability

Powers and roots

Transformational geometry, congruence, similarity, and the Pythagorean Theorem

Volume and surface area

## Science

Four Major Outcomes for Cincinnati Public Schools Science Teaching and Learning Aligned to Ohio New Learning Standards

•Through Project-Based Learning (PBL)/Capstone, students build deep understanding of content and effectively apply learning within and across disciplines

•Using Argument and Evidence, students craft responses based on evidence including: demonstrate understanding, explain reasoning and or justify a position.

•Digital Lessons increase students' strategic use of appropriate technology in academic and real world settings

•Engineering Design Competitions provide students with opportunities to engage in an inquiry-based process to solve problems by creating solutions under real-world constraints. Students will utilize the Engineering Design Process (EDP) .

Concepts/Units that will be covered:

- Lab safety
- Science Inquiry and Application
- Hydrological Cycle Influences Atmospheric and Oceanic Currents through Thermal Energy
- Cycles and Patterns of Earth, Moon and Sun: The Moon's Effect on Earth Systems
- The Living World: Cycles of Matter and Flow of Energy in Biomes
- The Living World: Biomes and their Processes
- The Living World: Diversity of Species
- The Living World: Genetic Transfer
- Genetics



## Social Studies

The seventh grade year is an integrated study of world history, beginning with ancient Greece and continuing through global exploration. All four social studies strands are used to illustrate how historic events are shaped by geographic, social, cultural, economic and political factors. Students develop their understanding of how ideas and events from the past have shaped the world today.

### Capstone Connections:

The following capstone questions should be applied across all standards as an integral part of instruction for the year.

**Driving Question:** What factors affected the intensity and focus of the influence -\_ had on other civilizations?

Choose any civilization from the 7<sup>th</sup> grade SS curriculum, including but not limited to: Rome, Greece, The Mongols, The Islamic World, Renaissance Europe, Empires in Africa or Asia (Ghana, Mali, Songhay, Byzantine, Ottoman, Mughal, China), European explorers & colonizers

**Task:** Write an essay that explains the influence the \_ had on other civilizations and the factors that affected the focus and intensity of that influence. In it, examine whether the ways modern nations influence each other are affected by similar factors. Create a multimedia presentation detailing your response.

1<sup>st</sup> Qtr: Practice skills related to the following standards: CCSS Reading 1, Writing 1 - Write a claim statement that answers the driving question. Give 2-3 pieces of evidence that prove your claim.

2<sup>nd</sup> Qtr: Write your essay.

3<sup>rd</sup> Qtr: Create you multimedia presentation

4<sup>th</sup> Qtr: Hold a building showcase event.

## Literacy for Life

### 6. Elective Courses

Elective courses may be offered in nine-week, trimester, semester, and/or year-long formats. These courses may include: band, music, art, and/or health.

### 7. Support/Tutoring

Academic support and tutoring opportunities are regularly available. After and during-school programs are available. Teachers provide help sessions one afternoon a week from 3:45 - 4:30 p.m.

# **III. Social**

# Social

## 1. Problem-solving, Making Good Choices, and Responsibility

It is important to remember that students' first priority in middle school is to learn! That being said, social skills can greatly enhance their chance of having a positive environment in which to learn. As with everything in life, students will get out of middle school what they put into it. Efforts and choices will directly affect grades, opportunities to participate in sports and/or other extracurricular activities, peer interactions, and relationships with adults both in and out of school. Part of growing up and gaining independence involves gaining the trust of both teachers and parents. To do so, students must demonstrate responsibility and the ability to make good choices across settings. The students' ability to problem-solve and choose positive ways to interact with parents, teachers, and peers will aid in making their middle school experience successful.

## 2. Making/Choosing Friends

Going to middle school is a great opportunity to make new friends. Some tips for making new friends are:

1. Get involved in school activities.
2. Introduce your self to students who sit around you in your classes.
3. Choose different partners during group work assignments in your classes.
4. Sit with different groups of people at lunch.

## 3. Cliques

Groups of friends with similar interests are healthy and natural. However, cliques are formed when people gather together and begin excluding other people from their group based on superficial reasons (i.e. not pretty enough, not smart enough). Stereotyping, discrimination, and negative social interactions with other groups are possible outcomes of joining cliques.

## 4. Peer Pressure

Middle school is a time of great transition emotionally, physically, and socially. All of these changes can either be nurtured, or hindered by peers. Remember, peer pressure can be either positive or negative. Examples of positive peer pressure might include encouraging friends to study by offering to study them or motivating them to work hard at a sport. Examples of negative peer pressure might include someone encouraging students to smoke, drink alcohol, or skip school. In order to best handle social pressure, the following tips might be helpful:

1. Find friends with similar interests, values, and beliefs

2. Be assertive—tell friends what you like/don't like.
3. Don't use alcohol or other drugs.
4. Avoid situations in which you know that you could get into trouble.
5. Learn to handle conflicts in a positive way.
6. Talk with trusted adults about situations that you don't understand and/or that make you feel uncomfortable.

## 5. Bullying and Sexting

**Bullying is unfair (meaning the “bully” uses some sort of power over his/her victim) and one-sided (meaning only one person or one group of people is engaging in bullying behavior in the situation.)**

**Bullying** can happen in many forms: verbal, written, physical, graphic, electronic or cyber. It happens when someone keeps hurting, frightening, threatening, or leaving someone out on purpose. Help is available to students who feel that they are being bullied.

If you are being bullied, tell a trusted adult. The staff at Cincinnati Public Schools will assist students and parents who come forward with bullying issues. **We want our students to be safe** and focused on learning.

If a student witnesses a bullying situation, they have the power to be part of the problem or part of the solution depending on their reactions to the situation. They can exacerbate the situation by doing nothing, encouraging the bully, or pretending not to see. Students can help the situation by helping the victim to get out of the situation, encouraging the victim to get help, and/or reporting the situation to an adult.

**“Sexting”** means sending a sexually explicit photograph over a cell phone or e-mail.

- It is a crime to create, send or possess sexually explicit photos of a minor (even if the photo is of you, or if it is sent to your boyfriend or girlfriend).

When sending texts or e-mails, or surfing the Internet, remember ...

- Don't assume that what is being sent is private.
- There is no changing your mind. Once you send something, it is sent.
- Think of how the recipient will react to the message.
- Nothing is truly anonymous in the cyberspace world.
- Resist pressure to do anything that makes you uncomfortable.
- Never respond to a threatening or obscene message.

Never meet with someone you know only online.

Cincinnati Public Schools is committed to promoting a safe school environment

CPS Board policy No. 5517.01, Bullying and Other Forms of Aggressive Behavior, can be viewed on the [District's Web site](#).

**IV. Extracurricular  
Activities/  
Getting Involved**

## Extracurricular Activities/Getting Involved

### 1. Sports

An activity that rising 7th graders often look forward to in middle school is the opportunity to represent their school in athletics. Students must maintain a C average to be eligible to participate in sports.

- Football (boys)
- Volleyball (girls)
- Basketball (girls and boys)
- Cross Country (girls and boys)
- Track
- Baseball (boys)

### 2. Clubs

- Men of M.O.R.E
- Mathletes
- Dance Team
- Engineering Club
- M<sub>2</sub>SE
- Catalyst Club (Science)
- Student Council
- Chess Club

More clubs might be created as the year progresses.

## **V. Tips for Parents**

## Tips for Middle School Parents

Parent participation in education is closely related to student achievement. Both of you will be affected by this change to middle school. The key during adolescence is to balance your support while promoting responsibility and independence in your child.

- ⇒ Be informed about your new school by attending orientations, read school guides and student handbooks and visit their web site regularly for current information.
- ⇒ Your 7th grader doesn't want you showing up for long, but you can stay involved by joining and volunteering with PTA.
- ⇒ Students of all ages benefit when family and school cooperate and have a positive relationship. If you have questions or concerns don't hesitate to call or email the school staff. Know the name of their team and the homeroom teacher.
- ⇒ Provide the supplies from the various teachers' lists. Ask to see their student agenda - assignment notebook with communications from the teachers - regularly.
- ⇒ Organization and time management skills must be developed so students will not feel overwhelmed. Be sure to limit after-school recreational activities, provide a quiet study area and expect to see your child working regularly on homework and long-term projects. Set rules about TV and computer use.
- ⇒ Know the dress code for your school and check to see that your child is wearing "school friendly" attire daily.
- ⇒ Check the calendar for your specific school - know when interims and report cards go out, if there are early release days and any dates of special activities.
- ⇒ Be sure the main office has current contact information - don't assume your child will know or share changes in phone numbers or addresses.
- ⇒ Talk to your child about school and peers. Listen for comments that reflect what they are feeling and thinking. Expect your child to make mistakes and have personal struggles. Give them to think and make decisions about how to handle their problems and deal with the consequences.
- ⇒ Peer acceptance and self-esteem issues become increasing important. Provide opportunities for your child to develop their interests and socialize with friends, but be sure to monitor their choices.



## Homework Hints

Here are some tips for you and some ideas to pass along to help your child (ren) make the most of their study time.

- \* Provide a place to study that is free of distractions such as television noise and people talking on the phone. (But provide soft music or white noise if it helps your children concentrate.)
- \* Instill a positive attitude. Help your children to think, "I can do this."
- \* Keep all necessary supplies in one place, such as at a desk or computer station. Having pencils, paper and calculators all in one spot means your children won't have to search for them, which saves time.
- \* Have separate folders for each course to help keep paperwork organized, so it doesn't get lost in the bottom of a backpack.
- \* Establish a regularly scheduled time for doing homework. This time probably should not be immediately after school. Young people need a little time to relax.
- \* Have your children start with the most difficult assignment first.
- \* Let your children take five-minute breaks every so often.
- \* Keep the resources they need available. Start a personal reference library for your children, and keep it current. Begin with the basics: dictionary, thesaurus, almanac, desktop encyclopedia, atlas. Add reference books on specific topics related to your children's classes and interests. If you have a computer, consider buying an encyclopedia on CD-ROM or access online encyclopedias and references sites.
- \* Encourage your children to study with other students when appropriate.
- \* Remind your children to do as much work as possible during the school day, and if they ride the bus and they feel it's possible to take advantage of that time to get work done as well.
- \* Recommend that your children keep an assignment notebook (SAB) so they know what homework must be done each day.
- \* Suggest your children hang on to past quizzes and tests to prepare for future ones.
- \* Encourage your children to make connections between their homework and any cultural or family history.
- \* Praise your children for doing their homework.
- \* Keep in contact with your children's teachers to be aware of the quality and quantity of work being turned in.

## **VI. Resources**

## Resources

### *Academic Information Websites*

Ohio Department of Education—Parents

<http://www.education.ohio.gov/Parents>

Cincinnati City Public Schools—policies, calendars, current news, etc.

<http://www.cps-k12.org>

Eric Digests—education articles clearing house

<http://www.ericdigests.org>

### *Middle School Websites*

National Middle School Association

<http://www.nmsa.org>

PBS Kids—for elementary and middle school students

<http://www.pbskids.org/itsmylife/school/middleschool/>

Kids Health—articles, games, resources for parents, kids & teens

<http://www.kidshelath.org>

Girls Power—information & activities for girls and parents

<http://www.girlpower.org>

Kids Portal for the US Government—information & activities related to school, careers, recreation, etc.

<http://www.kids.gov/>

How to Study

<http://www.How-to-study.com>

Studying and organization

<http://big6.com/kids/>

National PTA

<http://www.pta.org>

The Public School Parent's Network

<Http://www.psparents.net>

Bridges—student achievement for parents and students

<http://www.bridges.com/>

Parent Guide to K-12 Success

<http://www.greatschools.net>

### *Mental Health & Social Issues Websites*

National Mental Health Association—issues, information for all ages

<http://www.nmha.org>

National Association of School Psychologists—helping children achieve

<http://www.ansponline.org>

National Mental Health Information Center—information for all ages

<http://mentalhealth.samsha.gov>

## *Bullying*

<http://www.freespirit.com> - materials for students site

<http://www.cyberbully.com> - for parents

<http://stoybullyingnow.hrsa.gov/index.asp>—interactive for students.