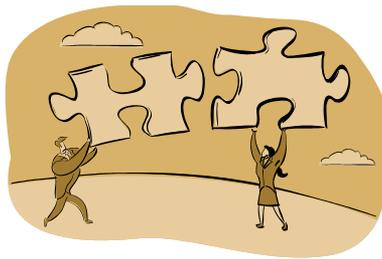


**MIDDLE SCHOOL  
PARENT  
SURVIVAL BOOK**



**Parents' guide to solving  
Middle School Issues**

**EISENHOWER  
MIDDLESCHOOL**

# Middle School Parent Guidebook

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## **The Transition to Middle School**

In middle school, students are faced with lots of new opportunities and challenges, the coursework is more difficult, and they have more homework. Middle school students also find that they're expected to be more independent, more focused, and more responsible than they were in elementary school.

The middle school years are crucial in student development. Our goal is to provide a comprehensive middle school education. One in which our students can grow intellectually, socially, and emotionally. EMS is a place where our students feel safe and are willing to take educational risks to meet the vision of the district.

During this transition period, it's important to keep the lines of communication open. Talk to your children, and let them know that you're there to help them make the transition to middle school as smooth as possible. You need to make sure that your children are doing well in school, and that they are making good choices and decisions. Now, more than ever, your children need your guidance, encouragement, love, and understanding.

## **Middle School Basics**

### **School Calendar**

The district calendar that shows when the school will be closed for holidays and vacations and when each grading period begins and ends can be found on the Roxbury School webpage. In addition our EMS web page during the school year will post daily announcements on what is going on during and after school that day.

### **Code of Conduct/ School Rules**

The EMS Code of Conduct contract is a commitment by the students to exercise good judgment in all affairs, to represent self, school, family and community in the most positive manner at all times, and to encourage others to share these ideals. Students engaged in interscholastic athletics or student activities are considered leaders and, as such, are expected to represent themselves in that fashion. Participation in co-curricular activities is an avenue for the teaching and practicing of good citizenship, for promoting the growth of good character, and for the development of other important life skills. Student's involvement in EMS co-curricular program is an honor and a privilege, not a right. The privilege comes with inherent responsibilities, and is dependent upon compliance with applicable rules and regulations.

## **Attendance Policies**

EMS encourages regular attendance, while allowing students to be absent if they're ill. If your child is going to be absent for more than three days, please contact the guidance office to arrange for work to be sent home by the student's teachers. If your child has an extended illness or a chronic health problem, please get documentation from your child's physician and give it to the principal and school nurse.

Students will be considered tardy if they report to school after 8:00 am. Anyone coming into school after that time must report to the Guidance Office to sign in. If a student who is tardy does not report to the guidance office to sign in, a safety Honeywell notification will be sent.

1<sup>st</sup> Tardy- Verbal Warning

2<sup>nd</sup> Tardy- Written Warning

3<sup>rd</sup> Tardy- Lunch Detention

4<sup>th</sup> tardy- Saturday Detention

5<sup>th</sup> & Subsequent Tardies- Parent & Administrator conference and discipline based on discretion of administration.

## **School Counselors**

Our counselors are here to help the students choose their courses, monitor academic progress, and talk to students about their educational options. Counselors are also available to answer questions, to listen, and to help students figure out how to deal with difficult situations.

If you ever have concerns or need information, contact your child's counselor. Each grade level has a specific counselor assigned to them; Mrs. Lommuntad is our seventh grade counselor and Mrs. Torres-Davis is our eighth grade counselor. In addition we also have our SAC counselor, Mrs. Esposito. Counselors are not only excellent resource for students; they're also great resources for parents.

## **Bullying**

Bullying can be a real problem at the middle school level. Talk to your child about what to do if he/she ever sees or hears about a student being bullied. If your child ever complains about being bullied or harassed, find out exactly what happened, and then talk to a counselor or principal.

## **Extracurricular Activities**

Eisenhower has a variety of clubs, organizations and teams that students can join. Students who want to play a sport will have athletic eligibility requirements that they will have to meet.

- Student Council
- Art Club
- Builders Club
- Tech Club
- Robotics
- Math League
- Chess Club
- Academic Team
- Intramural
- News/Magazine Literacy
- Drama Club
- Encores Choir
- Harmonies
- Yearbook
- Jazz Band
- Girls/Boys Cross Country
- Field Hockey
- Girls/Boys Basketball
- Girls/Boys Track

## **Help Your Child Succeed**

### **Provide a Place to Study**

Make sure your child has a place at home to study that's quiet, well-lit, and comfortable. Use time each day to review notes, complete assignments, and prepare for the next day. You will remember more and avoid having to cram for tests.

### **Set Academic Goals**

Succeed by setting goals and planning how to accomplish them. At the beginning of each grading period, sit down with your child and figure out what grade he/she should realistically be able to earn in each course. Goal setting can help you earn better grades, save time, reduce frustration, and increase self-esteem.

### **Insist on Daily Attendance**

When students miss school, they miss lectures, notes, class discussions, assignments, quizzes, and tests. It doesn't matter how conscientious students are about making up their work; they can never make up all of what they miss, even when they're absent for only a day or two. Letting your child miss school when they are not ill not only hurts the child's education, it also sends a message that school really isn't that important.

### **Attend all Parent Programs**

EMS has a “Back to School Night” in the beginning of the school year. Programs like this are important to attend; it gives parents the opportunity to see the school, meet teachers, and to learn about the course your children are taking. You are also showing your child that you’re interested in his/her academic progress.

### **Use Rewards and Consequences to Encourage Change**

Rewards are most effective when you want to encourage a change in attendance, effort, or behavior. A reward for improved effort or for a specific achievement can be very motivating. Make it a point to recognize effort and to acknowledge each academic success, even if it’s just a good quiz grade.

Students need to learn that there are consequences for poor school performance. Consequences are most effective when they are reasonable and logical, and on a daily or weekly basis.

### **Encourage a Healthy Lifestyle**

With all of the changes that middle school students are going through, it’s very important that they eat right, exercise, and get enough sleep. Have nutritious food at home, make sure that your child does something physical on a regular basis, and insist on a reasonable bedtime hour.

## **Help Improve Organizational Skills and Time Management**

With more teachers, classes, homework, and activities, middle schoolers need to develop good organizational skills. When students are organized they get better grades, are less frustrated, and have more time for family and friends. The following suggestions can help your child become better organized.

- Make sure your child has a folder, binder, or notebook that's clearly labeled for each class.
- Utilize the advantages of the chrome book. The organizational features of the calendar, document folders, and the internet for an information source.
- Encourage your child to clean out his/her locker and backpack.
- Before going to bed each night, have your child get everything ready for the next day.

Time Management for a middle schooler is very important now that they are receiving a significant amount of homework then they are used to. In order for students to keep up with all of their school work and their various after-school activities, they need to have good time-management skills.

### **Encourage Involvement in School Activities**

Studies have shown that students who are involved in extracurricular activities enjoy school more and they do better academically. Encourage your child to participate in activities at school. Your child will make friends, gain new skills, and have fun. Also encouraging your child to be a part of the school community by attending school-sponsored activities.

### **Encourage Independent Problem Solving**

Parents need to know what's going on at school, and they need to monitor their children's academic progress. It is, however, important for students to learn how to solve their own problems and how to take care of their own affairs.

You want to help your child become more independent and **self-sufficient**; however, you also want your child to know that you are available if they ever need your help. As a parent you want to promote self advocacy.

### **Provide Academic Support**

Middle school students need their parents to support them academically. Be available to help when your child gets stuck, needs someone to read an essay, listen to a speech, or go over material for a test. However, don't give more help than is wanted, and don't do the work yourself. If something doesn't get done, don't come to the rescue.

## **Work With Your School**

### **Support your Child's School**

Children's attitudes about education and school are, to a great extent, determined by what their parents say and do. Your child needs to know that you support the teachers and the administrators at your school, and that you consider education to be a top priority.

### **Communicate with your School**

It's so much easier today for parents to stay informed and to communicate with school personnel. EMS has its own web page with daily announcement; and a Facebook page and Twitter account. Parents can be kept up to date with daily posts and pictures on what's going on at EMS. Parents can communicate with teachers and counselors via email or call the main office to speak to an administrator. It's important that you feel connected to what's happening at your child's school and that you feel comfortable asking for information and/or help. If there's ever a situation that might affect your child's attitude or performance, be sure to contact the school and let them know what's going on.

### **Work with the School to Resolve Problems**

If your child complains about a class or teacher, listen closely, and try to determine what's going on. While doing so, remember that part of your child's education is to learn how to succeed in subjects that he/she may not particularly enjoy. Also remember that it's important for students to learn how to adapt to different teachers, expectations, and teaching styles.

If there is a problem with a class, teacher, or another student, first try to help your child figure out how to deal with the situation independently. If you think the problem is serious, or if you feel that you need to intervene, contact the teacher, counselor, or principal and share your concerns.

## **Facts and Tips for Parents**

### **Understand the Changes**

Middle Schoolers can challenge and frustrate even the most patient and caring parents. However, parents should consider all the changes middle schoolers are going through, it's much easier to understand why they act the way they do.

### **Physical Change**

Most students are going through puberty in middle school. Because some students mature earlier than others students come in a wide variety of shapes and sizes. When going through puberty children can often feel self-conscious and embarrassed by things their bodies are doing.

The best way for parents to help their children is to talk to them and reassure them that all of these changes are normal. So that middle schoolers can feel good about how they look, parents may want to discuss personal hygiene and grooming. Parents should also help their children choose clothes that are in style and flattering, **but that also adhere to school dress code.**

## **Emotional Changes**

Middle school students are often moody. They're up, they're down, they're happy they're sad. These mood changes are the normal result of the changes their bodies are going through and of their need to figure out who they are and how they fit into this complicated middle school world.

Parents can best help their children by providing support, encouragement, love, and a stable home environment.

## **Intellectual Changes**

Middle Schoolers are ready to explore and learn about life. They have a strong sense of what's fair, and they like to think that they can make a difference. Middle schoolers are able to think more abstractly, and they can handle more complex intellectual tasks.

Parents can help their children develop intellectually by discussing serious topics with them, by giving them opportunities to express their opinions, and by showing respect for their ideas. Family dinners are a great way to encourage your child's critical thinking skills, and to just connect with your child.

## **Social Changes**

Friends are very important to middle schoolers, and they often spend a great deal of time talking and texting them. They are also beginning to take a much greater interest in the opposite sex.

Middle school students are trying to find their own identity, but they don't want to be different, and they worry about what other people think. They also want to be part of the group. Because "fitting in" is so important, middle school students are often susceptible to peer pressure and to the images and messages they get from the media.

Students who are self-confident are less influenced by peer pressure and media messages. It is, therefore, important for parents to spend time with their children and to help them develop a strong sense of who they are. While being with friends is very important to middle schoolers, doing things with their parents and their families provides them with a much needed sense of security.

## **Communicate with your Child**

Communicating with middle school students can be difficult, but because it is so important, parents need to make an extra effort. During middle school parents need to be the most involved and vigilant. A whole new world has opened up to the middle schoolers, and this is often the time when they are tempted to “try new things.” The following are tips to keeping your child on the right track and help communicate and stay connected with them.

- Know where your child is and who your child is with if they leave the house.
- Invite your child’s friends over and get to know them. Also know their parents.
- Talk to your child about the dangers of drug, alcohol, and smoking.
- Be available to listen when your child wants to talk.
- Ask open ended questions that require more than the one word answers.
- Communication with middle schoolers works best when you smile or nod. Most of the time they just want you to listen.
- Don’t be afraid to apologize or admit you were wrong. Children need to know its ok to make a mistake or be wrong.
- Lastly, Keep your sense of Humor!

## **Teach Responsibility**

Middle Schoolers need to understand that with increased independence comes increased responsibility.

- Base the amount of freedom your child is given on how responsible he/she is.
- Teach your child how to problem solve.
- Talk to your child on the importance of making good decisions.
- Tell your child that you can always be used as an excuse.
- Make sure your child knows basic social behaviors.
- Be a good role model.

## **Provide Appropriate Consequences**

Good kids sometimes make bad choices, and all kids make mistakes. Children do, however need to know that their actions have consequences.

- Use logical consequences whenever possible.
- Never take away positive activity
- Never use physical punishment as a consequence.
- Consequences should be specific and for a set period of time.
- Don't feel that you must provide immediate consequence. Take time to calm down and think things over.

## **Understand their Technology**

Middle school students have grown up with technology. They text message and use cell phones with their friends to communicate. They use the internet not only to locate information, but to also express themselves through personal profiles and blogs. While many parents don't understand the technology their children are using, parents need to be aware of how, and for what purpose, their children are using their computer and cell phones.

The information below will help you better understand some of the lingo.

- Blog- online journal that's regularly updated and written for others to read.
- Chat Room- a place on the Internet where people go to discuss an agreed upon topic.
- Cyberbullying-using technology to threaten, harass, or taunt another person.
- Facebook-Popular social networking site.
- Personal Profile- a web page posted by an individual to share information about themselves, through pictures or video.
- Phishing- a scam that tricks people into providing personal information online.
- Pirating-downloading music/movies illegally.
- Text Messaging-using a cell phone to send a message.

## **Tips for the Parents of Athletes**

Through athletics, students strengthen their bodies and perfect their skills. They learn how to win, how to lose, and how to be a part of a team. Athletes develop new and lasting friendships, and they also have lots of fun.

### **Be Involved**

Some coaches have preseason meetings for the parents of their athletes. These meetings are usually very informative, and they give parents an opportunity to meet the coaches. They also give parents a chance to meet and get to know each other.

### **Show Good Sportsmanship**

School sporting events can be very exciting, and it's easy for players and fans to get caught up in the action. As the parent of an athlete, you need to always set a good example. Avoid any kind of confrontation, and support the coaches and players at all times. The best way to help your athlete is to provide encouragement and to be positive, both at home and in the stands.

