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Welcome!!!

The Middle School Staff would like to welcome all students and parents to the 2023-2024 school year! This packet is designed to help students and parents get information they will need for a successful middle school experience. **We ask that students and parents read this packet together to get a great start on the year.** Parents, please feel free to contact any of us regarding questions or concerns that you may have. Students, get ready for hard work and fun!

Teachers and Classes:

Mrs. Beth Woodley: 8th homeroom; 8LA, 7 Literature and 6-8 Social Studies

Mrs. Teresa Killian: 7th homeroom; 6-8 Math; 6-8 Religion

Ms. Jessie Dunlap: 6th homeroom; 6LA; 7 English, 6-8 Science

Mr. Jack Treu: Music

Mr. Jim Boland: Art

Mrs. Suzanne Stumpf: PE

Mrs. Lisa Braun: Technology

Mr. David Roberto: Maker Space

A Bit About the Middle School Philosophy

Some parents and students may be wondering “What’s the big deal about Middle School?” Perhaps a brief explanation is in order. Basically, as kids enter the upper grades, they begin to grow and mature physically, emotionally, socially, and intellectually. It is important that they have an environment both at home and at school that recognizes these changes. Students in grades 6-8 are given more choices, more responsibilities, and more opportunities to try new ideas and actually apply knowledge and skills that were taught to them in earlier years.

Educational experts agree that there are certain attributes that good middle schools have. Even though we are technically an elementary school, we strive to create a “school within a school” where the middle school students and teachers operate as a team within the larger school environment. Some of the key practices of effective middle schools are interdisciplinary teams of teachers, common planning time for teams of teachers, flexible scheduling, and students assigned to the same advisory team for all years spent in middle grades. We, here at St. Justin’s, practice each of these key tenets.

So what does that mean for you and your child? Here are some of the things you can expect:

- Teachers share many of the same kids and work as a team to meet that child’s needs and keep team members updated.
- Policies that are as consistent as possible throughout the middle school, such as homework, discipline, headings on papers, etc.
- Activities designed to bring the middle school students together as a group to let them learn from each other and get to know each other better.

- Scheduling for tests and projects that does its best to be aware of what the work load is for core subjects in each grade level.
- Consistent grading scales and procedures

Our main goal is to provide a consistent and positive environment for all our students to thrive. Please let our Middle School Coordinator, Beth Woodley, or any teacher know if you have any questions or concerns about our policies and procedures.

Planners and SJM Website

Communication between home and school is very important, but can be problematic because your child has so many different teachers. Students in middle school may also become reluctant to share information with parents. In order to keep you up-to-date with your child's progress, we will use **the planner, Google Classroom and the A2Z gradebook website.**

Each student will write daily assignments, project info, and reminders in his or her planner. These should be taken home daily and especially over each weekend so parents can review them. If your child's planner looks rather bare, you might want to have them check their Google Classroom (in the event of virtual learning all information will be there) and double-check homework and other assignments. Please read the planner carefully to stay apprised of your student's assignments and progress. Also, be aware that grades are updated **ONLINE** and Progress Reports and Report Cards are NOT MAILED HOME. Report Cards can be found on the A2Z website. Please contact Mrs. Arends if you have any difficulties.

Respect/Responsibility Cards

In striving to create a Christian environment, we as members of the administration and faculty of St. Justin Martyr School work hard to ensure academic success in our classes. We also uphold a philosophy rooted in Catholic values. Therefore, it is important that the discipline policy reflect and support these factors. The goal of the Respect/Responsibility Card discipline plan is to help the students develop into independent, responsible and successful learners. Teachers strive to create a classroom and school environment that allow students to achieve these goals by creating rules and guidelines that will support them. The discipline program is designed to reward responsible and respectful behavior and help correct areas needing improvement. Students will receive **TWO cards** each quarter. One card will be for Responsibility and one will be for Respect.

Infractions

- Respect Marks are issued for problematic behavior. Examples include: but are not limited to: disrespect for people and/or property, disrupting class, etc.

- Responsibility marks are issued for organizational issues. Examples include **but are not limited to:** forgetting supplies, not completing homework, etc. **Responsibility Cards will NOT address uniform violations.**

Rewards

- Students will receive tickets for positive actions or clean cards. Students will have the opportunity to buy items during Homeroom class time using their tickets. Examples of rewards include: Homework Passes, Pencils, Snacks, etc.

Consequences

All consequences will be communicated to parents via phone or email by the student's advisor or Mrs. Maier.

- The first three marks **in Responsibility** will result in a meeting with the student's homeroom teacher. After six marks **in Responsibility** the student will have another meeting with their homeroom teacher. The homeroom teacher will determine if a parent/student/ advisor meeting may be called or the Learning Consultant may be consulted. Parents are asked to sign the positive action form and assist their child at home with the plan. If the child receives nine Responsibility marks in a single quarter or if the plan isn't working, parents will be contacted to help develop a plan of assistance for the child.
- If the student receives three marks in a given quarter in Respect, the student's parents will be contacted by phone or email that the child has 3 marks. If a Student receives four Respect marks in a given quarter, the student will meet with the principal and the principal will determine an appropriate consequence.
- Lost card or not having card on person= students get one day to find their card. If the card is not produced the next day, they will meet with the principal

Advisory

Students are divided into smaller **mixed grade 6-8 advisory classes** with a Middle School teacher as their advisor. Advisory will be held during a rotating Friday class period. Advisors will teach our Top 20, conduct age-appropriate meetings, have some class fun, and will meet with students regarding Responsibility marks and grades during this time. The advisory time will also feature a time for students to meet with teachers or work on homework, projects, etc. Advisory is not a graded class.

Homework

Students will receive homework assignments on a daily or almost daily basis in each of their core classes. Most homework assignments are designed to practice a new skill or review an earlier taught skill. **It is important that students do their homework independently to gain confidence and understanding of the material and so that teachers can properly assess**

each student's level of understanding. As they are reading material or studying notes, it is strongly recommended that students create study aids to use in preparation for future tests. Since individuals learn in different ways, each student will have to determine what type of study aid works best for them. Organizers, note cards, flashcards, mindmaps, and visual aids are some examples. You may consult with the learning consultant for more ideas.

Since homework is an important part of learning, it should be done consistently in all classes. Any missed assignments will result in a Responsibility mark.

- This policy applies to assignments that are not done, left at home, or left in another classroom.
- If absent from school for illness, students generally have one day for each absent day to turn in any missed work.
- A “Homework buddy” will help record and gather materials for an absent student in case of illness, but **each student is responsible for checking with teachers after an absence.**
- Please refer to the SJM Family Handbook for information on Long-Term Absences for absences due to family vacation or other discretionary absences.
- For Long-term assignments, a rubric with expectations, grading guidelines, and due dates will be given out at the beginning of each project.

Guidelines for Turning in Work

Teachers in all classes have consistent guidelines for assignments that are turned in. Students should include a proper heading and follow the guidelines on the “**Homework Rubric**” listed unless otherwise instructed by a teacher for a particular assignment.

Example of Proper Heading:

First and last name #
Subject & assignment
Date

Title if needed

Homework Rubric (for all classes)

Element	Description
Cursive	All handwriting should be completed in cursive. (If a specific educational or physical need causes concerns with cursive, please discuss this with your teacher.)
On-Time	Paper is ready to be turned in with the class when requested by the teacher.
Heading	Paper's heading follows the guidelines on page 5 of the MS handbook
Neatness	Paper is completed neatly with a minimum of scratch-outs.
Paper	Paper is a full sheet of loose leaf without tears, holes, etc.
Spelling/Grammar/Punctuation	Students use proper spelling, grammar, and punctuation as per grade level. Text/IM lingo is not allowed on academic work.
Complete Sentences	Work is completed in complete sentences where appropriate.
Quality	All questions are attempted and illustrate student's best effort.
Pencil (Math Class Only)	Students will complete all math work in pencil
Writing Implement	Students will write in standard black or blue ink or pencil for all assignments.

Grading Policy for St. Justin Martyr School 2023-2024

1. Individual achievement of stated learning goals will be the only basis for grades.
 - Effort, participation, attitude, and behaviors will not be included in grades but will be reported separately under Christian Life Skills and Work Habits.
2. Late work shall be handled as follows:
 - Teachers will set due dates and deadlines for all assignments that will be part of a student grade
 - There will be no penalties for late work
Example: -10 points
 - Late assignments will be written down on the Responsibility card. This will be noted in the “Completes Work” section of the Christian Life Skills and Work Habits section of the grade book.
 - Students may request and receive extension of timelines.
3. Absences will be handled as follows:
 - Students will not be penalized for being absent.
 - Absent students shall be given makeup opportunities for all missed summative assessments (marked assessment evidence that will be part of student grades) without penalty.
 - **Please remember to send in a note explaining the student’s absence on their first day back.**
4. Incomplete assessment evidence will be handled as follows:
 - Assessment evidence that is not submitted will be identified in the grade book as “inc” (Incomplete). Zeros will not be used.
 - Students are expected to complete all required work and will be given opportunities and support to do so.
5. In determining grades teachers must decide whether they have sufficient evidence of achievement.
 - If not, the grade recorded shall be an “inc” (“Incomplete” meaning the student has not completed the assignment.)
 - If the assignment has not been turned in, the “inc” will remain on the report card until such time as the student provides the missing evidence.
 - Please note that “inc” will override the overall strand grade to an overall “Incomplete” until the work is turned in.
 - **Students must complete “incomplete” assessments no later than one week after the due date or a grade of “not yet” will be assessed excluding extended leave due to medical absences.**

Middle School Grading Policy continued...

- Students will be graded on their understanding of **subject learning goals** in each subject area utilizing **Academic Achievement Descriptors**.
- Effort, participation, attitude, work completion will be reported separately under **Christian Life Skills** and **Work Habits** employing **Behavior Achievement Descriptors**.

The following Academic Achievement Descriptors will be used in the Middle School:

The following Behavior Achievement Descriptors will be used in the Middle School for Christian Life Skills and Work Habits:

Performance Level	Description
Secure	The student CONSISTENTLY explains and applies important information, concepts, and skills completely and accurately as dictated by the learning goal.
Approaching	The student USUALLY explains and applies important information, concepts, and skills completely and accurately as dictated by the learning goal but there are occasional errors or omissions.
Progressing	The student SOMETIMES explains and applies important information. The student explains and applies only SOME of the important information, or the student needs teacher support to meet the targeted goal.
Beginning	The student INFREQUENTLY explains or applies important information or makes numerous errors or omissions. The student needs re-teaching and extra support to understand what is required to meet the learning goal.
Not Yet	The student does NOT YET have a basic understanding of the learning goal at grade-level
Incomplete	The student has NOT COMPLETED the assignment(s) necessary to evaluate the learning goal.

Respects Others		
Consistently	Inconsistently	Rarely
Consistently treats others in a caring and respectful way	Inconsistently treats others in a caring and respectful way.	Has difficulty treating others in a caring and respectful way

Engages in Teamwork		
Consistently	Inconsistently	Rarely
Always cooperates with others when working with a group toward a common goal (sharing, compromising, listening, and giving and taking).	Attempts to peacefully solve problems independently with reminders. Inconsistently cooperates with others when working with a group toward a common goal (sharing, compromising, listening & giving & taking).	Has difficulty cooperating with others when working toward a common goal (sharing, compromising, listening, and giving and taking).

Work Quality (see rubric on page 5)		
Consistently	Inconsistently	Rarely
Completes quality work according to the homework rubric	Inconsistently follows most of the homework rubric to complete work	Follows a minimum amount of the homework rubric to complete work

Listens to Directions		
Consistently	Inconsistently	Rarely
Consistently listens to directions and knows what to do without directions being repeated	Inconsistently listens to directions, sometimes knows what to do and/or sometimes may need directions repeated	Has difficulty listening to directions, may not know what to do and may need directions repeated

Is Prepared		
Consistently	Inconsistently	Rarely
Consistently has appropriate supplies, books, and materials ready for use	Inconsistently needs reminders to have appropriate supplies, books, and materials ready for use	Has difficulty having the appropriate supplies, books, and materials ready for use

Middle School Responsibilities

In keeping with our community faith and values, Middle School students are expected to participate in various responsibilities throughout the year. All Middle Grade students are expected to be positive role models and leaders in our family activities and school Buddy program.

Responsibilities by Specific Grade

Sixth Grade

Sixth graders should be **positive role models and leaders** for our Kindergarten buddies. Sixth grade will take over flag duties for the Seventh grade in fourth quarter.

Seventh Grade

Seventh graders should be positive **role models and leaders** for our first grade buddies. Seventh Grade is expected to care for the school's **American flag**. This includes **respectfully** raising, lowering the flag daily, folding properly, and special care in inclement weather.

Eighth Grade

Eighth graders should be **positive role models and leaders** for our second grade buddies. Eighth grade also empties the **recycling** bins for the school on a weekly basis. Recycling duties will be assigned by Mrs. Woodley.

****All Middle School students are offered the opportunity to serve on patrol. Patrol students are scheduled by Mrs. Woodley and trained by Mrs. Schnur. Patrol students are expected to be at school no later than 7:25am. Afternoon patrol can be picked up around 3:15pm. Patrol students are rewarded with tickets and other fun activities throughout the year.**

Uniforms

Please refer to the Dress Code and Grooming Standards section of your Family Handbook to review St. Justin's dress code policies. You will receive an "Out of Uniform" email when your child is out of uniform.

Explore

Explore class is an elective class held once a week on Thursdays in mixed 6-8 classes. Students will be given a choice of elective each semester. 8th graders will have their first choice of class.

Middle School Schedule of Classes

TIME	GRADE	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI
1 7:55-8:40	6	LA	Science	MASS	LA	MASS
	7	Religion	LA (Lit)	MASS	Religion	MASS
	8	SS	PE	MASS	LA	MASS
2 8:45-9:25	6	LA	Religion	Religion	LA	Religion
	7	SS	Science	LA (Lit)	Religion	LA
	8	Music	SS	Science	LA	LA
3 9:30-10:10	6	Music	Religion	PE	SS	PE
	7	Math	SS	Music	LA	SS
	8	Art	Science	SS	Math	Religion
4 10:15-10:55	6	Religion	Music	SS	Art	LA
	7	LA	SS	Science	LA (Lit)	SS
	8	LA	Religion	Religion	Religion	PE
5 11:00-11:45	6	Math	LA	SS	EXPLORE	LA
	7	Art	Tech	Science	EXPLORE	PE
	8	LA	Math	Math	EXPLORE	Math
6 11:50-12:40	6	LUNCH	LUNCH	LUNCH	LUNCH	LUNCH
	7	LUNCH	LUNCH	LUNCH	LUNCH	LUNCH
	8	LUNCH	LUNCH	LUNCH	LUNCH	LUNCH
7 12:45-1:25	6	Science	Math	Math	Science	Science
	7	LA (Lit)	LA	LA	Art	Math
	8	Math	LA	LA	SS	LA
8 1:35-2:15	6	Art	LA	LA	Science	Math
	7	Music	Math	Math	Math	LA (Lit)
	8	Science	LA	Art	SS	Science
9 2:20-3:00	6	SS	Tech	LA	Math	SS
	7	Science	PE	Religion	Science	Religion
	8	Religion	Music	LA	Tech	Science