

Middle School Handbook

HOMework POLICY

Homework

*The academic work in middle school is challenging. As the teachers begin to know each student better, we hope to provide opportunities for enrichment in individual areas of interest, or provide remedial help where needed. We appreciate it when parents fill us in on any areas where students may have particular talents or challenges. It is our goal to equip students with the knowledge, skills, and attitude necessary to converse and participate intelligibly in all areas: literature, language, mathematics, science, art, music, history, physical education, and religion.

*Students will be given homework Monday through Friday. All assignments are written on the board and students are usually given time in class to begin working on the assignment and ask questions. Any work not completed in class is considered homework. If homework is done poorly it may not be redone for higher credit. Test grades cannot be changed. It is difficult to establish a fixed, rigid policy for the amount of homework that students should have each night. Some children will complete an assignment in a short amount of time, while others may take much longer. On average, middle school students will have about an hour and a half to two hours of homework per night (depending on their grade level). If it is taking much longer than that on a regular basis, your child will be asked to fill out a homework log to keep track of the time spent on each assignment. We will then evaluate the log to see if there are any problem areas. In middle school the students usually have study hall time every day. This time, when used wisely, can help children get a jump start on homework while we are there to help them.

Why Students Have Homework

- *Reinforces in-class learning
- *Shows student retention of information covered
- *Aids in developing effective study habits
- *Increases student confidence in handling material independently

Expectations for Students

- *Students will write their assignments in their assignment book daily
- *Work will be completed neatly and on time
- *Students will put the proper heading on each of their homework assignments
- *Students will submit their best work
- *Assignments will be handed in the day after they have been assigned unless otherwise noted by teacher
- *Students will work on their homework independently with little to no help from parents or classmates
- *All typed assignments must be printed at home and turned in to the teacher. If students are unable to print at home they must email the assignment to the teacher the night before it is due, or it is considered late.
- *If there is a problem, students are encouraged to communicate with their teachers as soon as possible.

Expectations for Parents

*Parents are essential to their children's school success. It is important, therefore, that parents reinforce positive study habits at home. Your child needs a quiet, organized place in which to study. Homework is to be completed solely by your child. However, it is helpful when you occasionally check his/her student planner to see what homework they have and give assistance when needed. In middle school students should be able to show responsibility for their own schoolwork. A student's ability to communicate with their teachers is a life long skill. Please encourage your child to discuss and resolve questions or issues with their teachers.

Assignment Books / Planners

*Students are expected to copy every assignment written onto the board into their assignment planners. These planners help keep students organized and remind them of their daily assignments. They are also a good way for parents to be aware of what is going on in our classroom on a daily basis. We may require individual students to get parent signatures if they repeatedly have missing assignments. We will also periodically check student

planners to make sure that they are being filled in daily. As a student progresses into the upper grades, they are expected to carry their planners to class and fill them in independently. During the second part of 8th grade, the teacher's planner sheet will be put away, as a way of preparing the students for high school.

Redoing Homework Assignments

*Teachers may require students to redo assignments to gain a better understanding of the material. Students are encouraged to review graded assignments to understand their mistakes. Corrections are encouraged, but may not affect their grade unless approved by the teacher ahead of time.

Plagiarism

Students are expected to write assignments in their own words. If they use research to support their assignment, they must cite all sources of research used. If a student does not cite their work, and it is obvious that it is not middle school writing, then the teacher will investigate further. Students caught plagiarizing will face disciplinary action.

Graded Work, School Communication, and other handouts

*Graded work will be handed back directly to the students, usually on a daily basis. Most school handouts are handed out at the end of the day. In middle school the teachers emphasize the importance of students being responsible. Therefore, they will be responsible for making sure their graded tests, assignments, and handouts are taken home. Since graded work is sent home almost every day, if students are not bringing work home, please contact us.

Not Understanding Homework

*Students are given many opportunities during the school day to begin working on homework. It is during this time that we expect them to ask questions to make sure they understand the assignment. They can also ask for a "check-up" from the teacher to see if what they have gotten done in class is correct. Usually teachers are also available to help during morning

recess or immediately after school. In some cases however, a student may get home and not understand how to do their assignment. If this happens, these are the steps the student should follow:

- Look back at the work they got done in class as an example of how to do the rest.
- Look back at the teaching page in the book to see other examples and instructions.
- Call a classmate and ask for guidance on how to do the assignment. (Remember, helping a fellow student does not mean giving them the answers>)
- Ask parents for assistance.
- Email the teacher and let them know specifically what you are having trouble with. (The teacher may not receive the email in time to help, but will know that you ran into trouble with your homework the night before.)
- Show up to school early (8:00 AM) and knock on the teacher's door to see if they are there to help.

*Students that follow all of these steps and make every effort to do their assignment will not be marked late even if the assignment is not completed. However, they will be expected to sit their recesses and complete the work after the teacher has provided assistance. If a student fails to do this the assignment will be considered late.

*Students that come to school with work not completed on a regular basis will be marked late.

Late Work

*Learning to honor a deadline is a very important life skill. We expect that students will complete assigned work on time. There will, of course, be rare occasions when the homework is justifiably not completed (i.e.- a family emergency). If this is to occur students should communicate with their teachers. Again, such situations would be highly unusual. Homework is considered late if it is not turned in the morning when it is due. For unexcused late work the following will be done:

- *If it is turned in by the end of the day, 10% will be deducted. If it is turned in on the next day, 25% will be deducted. After that, it becomes a permanent zero. Parents may choose to have their child

complete missing work as a consequence, but it will not receive credit if it is more than two day late.

*If students have a problem completing homework, or needed help, they must follow the steps listed in the section on Not Understanding Homework.

*The consequences of missing work is that it can dramatically lower students overall grades in a subject.

*Field trip slips, grade reports, behavioral notices, detention notices, and any other required paperwork count as homework missing if they are not returned when they are due.

*Multiple missing assignments may result in an after school detention.

*Students who turn all homework in on time for an entire trimester will earn the opportunity to walk across the street for lunch with the middle school teachers. If a student has only two missing assignments for the whole trimester then they earn the opportunity to buy a Jamba Juice and have it delivered to them at school.

*It is our hope that all middle school students will utilize their planners, listen in class, ask questions to clarify assignments ahead of time, use their in-school study hall time wisely, and exercise good organizational skills. Incomplete homework should be a "non-issue" by middle school. We look forward to praising the students for their responsible approach to homework.

Absences

*Students occasionally miss school. When students miss, they will have one day for each day missed to complete missing homework. Students are responsible for finding out what they missed from the teacher or a classmate and making it up in addition to keeping up with their regular schoolwork. During the school year, please try to avoid pulling your child out for reasons other than illness, not only do students have to make up the work, but they miss out on valuable in-class learning. If a student has a planned absence, they should let the teacher know in advance. Work may be provided by the teacher ahead of time, given enough notice, however it is not always possible. Therefore in some cases, the student will have to complete the work after they return from their absence.

Tardies

*Please ensure that your child gets to school on time. When a child is late, they disrupt the rest of the class, and miss out on valuable class work or instruction time. Students need to be in the classroom between 8:10 and 8:15. At 8:20 we will begin our first academic subject. Students need the time between 8:10 and 8:20 to unpack, turn in their homework, sharpen their pencils, get their books ready, and complete their morning work. A student will be considered tardy after 8:20. If a student exceeds five tardies in a trimester they will be given an after school detention for each subsequent tardy. Exceptions will be made for 91 West commuters during difficult traffic periods.

Report Cards

*Report cards go home three times a year at the end of each trimester. Students will receive grades in Memory[°], Religion[°], Math[°], History[°], Science[°], Language Arts[°], Spanish[~], PE[~], Computer[~], and Fine Arts[~].

[°] denotes classes that count towards GPA

[~] denotes classes that may keep you off Principals Honor Roll and Honor Roll

Trimester Awards

*Every trimester, students have an opportunity to receive an academic award. The Principal's Award is for students who receive A's in every subject and maintain a 95% or higher average. The Honor Roll award is for students who receive A's and B's in every subject and maintain an 88% or higher average.

*At the end of the year, students also have an opportunity to receive church and school attendance recognition. Perfect attendance is for those students who do not miss any school for an entire year. Exceptional Church Attendance is for those students who go to church every Sunday. Students may miss one Sunday and still receive this award. Honorable Church Attendance is for those students who go to church over half of the time.

*There are other special awards presented throughout the year such as sports awards, simple acts of care and kindness awards, music awards, etc.

MIDDLE SCHOOL DISCIPLINE PLAN

Classroom Expectations

- *We expect students to keep their desks and cubbies neat and organized.
- *We expect students to be respectful and considerate of others and their belongings.
- *We expect students to raise their hands and wait for permission to speak.
- *We expect all students to come to class prepared and ready to learn.
- *We expect students to follow directions the first time they are given.

Positive Recognition

- *Verbal Praise
- *Whole class rewards
- *Positive notes to students
- *Teacher given prizes

Consequences

Student conduct and behavior is a choice. If students choose to make poor choices there are consequences for their behavior.

- *First Time: Verbal Explanation and check in behavior log
- *Second Time: Second check in behavioral log, sit recess and copy a consequence essay. Essay is sent home for a parent signature.
- *Third Time: Third check in behavioral log, and a 45 minute after school detention is scheduled.

*Each day students start off with a clean slate. So if they made poor choices the day before, they can make better choices the next day. All teachers will be monitoring student behavior. If a student was already warned for talking in class, then their next offence, even if it is with a different teacher will lead to the next step of discipline. If a copied essay is sent home, it must be signed by the parent and returned the next day. Parents are encouraged to discuss the unacceptable behavior with their child. Detention notices must also be signed by parents. After school

detentions cannot be rescheduled even if it conflicts with after school activities. Saturday detentions can be scheduled for students who receive multiple detentions and show no effort to improve their behavior. If a student has continuing discipline problems, the principal will be informed and a parent/teacher/principal conference may be scheduled. Students may skip steps and receive a larger consequence, even for a first offence, if their behavior warrants that to be a necessity. Parent support of classroom discipline is appreciated. Parents should be aware that when a child brings home a copied essay, it is not for making just one poor choice. By the time a student copies an essay, they have not heeded the teacher's warning and have made another poor choice.

Rewards

We love to reward good choices! Each middle school teacher has their own special way of rewarding good conduct and hard work.

CURRICULUM

*At Hephatha Lutheran School sixth, seventh, and eighth grades are considered part of the middle school. It is our goal in middle school to prepare students to be successful in high school. Students will be switching classes for Language Arts, History, and Science. In addition, they will have a Spanish class three times a week, a computer class once a week, and a PE class twice a week. We know that Middle School is a big change for our incoming sixth graders, so we will be providing them with extra training and support.

Religion

*In Religion class we are going to be following a theme-based approach. Students will be exploring various religious themes. Student's grades will consist of workbook pages, which we often complete together in class and tests on units of study.

Memory Work

*Memory tests will be given once a week, usually on Thursday or Friday. Students will receive a memory book via e-mail at the beginning of the year, which lists all of the memory work and the due dates for the entire year.

Math

*In Middle School there are there four different levels of Math. These include 6th, 7th, 8th grade Math and Algebra. Those students who score well on a placement exam and have a teacher recommendation may be accelerated one grade level. Student's Math grades consist of nightly homework, projects, in class quizzes, and tests.

Science

*Miss Williams teaches all Middle School Science classes. Students will participate in hands on experiments. Grade level areas of study include: 6th grade - Earth Science, 7th grade - Life Science, and 8th grade - Physical Science. Grades will consist of homework, labs, projects, tests, and notes.

History

*Mrs. Flohra teaches all Middle School History classes. Grade level themes of study include: 6th grade - Ancient Civilization, 7th grade - Medieval and Early Modern Times, and 8th grade - American History and the Constitution. History grades consist of homework, quizzes, tests, notes, and projects. Students may check out History text book CD's to view at home.

Language Arts

* Miss Greene teaches all Middle School Language Arts classes. In Miss Greene's class students work on vocabulary, literature, and writing. Students are graded on weekly vocabulary, writing assignments, quizzes, tests, reading comprehension activities, projects, and homework.

Grammar

*The student's grammar lessons will be taught by their homeroom teacher. Students will receive a grammar grade on their report card.

Fine Arts

*Once a week on Mondays, all middle school students will participate in a Fine Arts class of their choosing. Some of the classes offered in the past have included: hand bells, praise band, theatre, art, calligraphy and reader's theatre. More information about our fine arts program will be provided at the beginning of the year.

Computers

*Students will have computer class once a week. We may also go to the lab additional times during the week to do research.

P.E.

*P.E. classes will be every Tuesday and Thursday afternoon. Students are required to dress in their P.E. uniform and wear good tennis shoes.

Spanish

*A Conversa teacher will be teaching Spanish on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. The classes focus on conversational Spanish as the students participate in a variety of fun learning activities. The students will also take quizzes and complete assignments as part of their Spanish grade. An exit exam will be given at the end of 8th grade, and it will count toward their final grade in the class.

Strings and Band

*Mrs. Lisa Rudi, a very talented music teacher, will be teaching the strings and band program. The strings class meets every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday morning from 7:50-8:35AM. The band class meets every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday afternoon from 2:30-3:00PM. Students can enroll in either of these classes at the beginning of the year. Children will have an opportunity to display their talent by performing in Chapel services, Concert on the Green, and other school events.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Morning Routine

Students need to be in class between 8:10-8:15.

- *Walk into the classroom quietly.
- *Empty backpack and put it in cubby.
- *Have two sharpened pencils and necessary books ready.
- *Get homework out and turn into boxes.
- *Complete morning work.
- *Read a book silently until it is time to start our first subject.

Textbooks

*All textbooks are to be covered by the second week of school. Please do not use sticky covers.

Birthdays

*Students may bring in a treat for the whole class to be eaten during the morning or lunch break.

Athletic Academic Requirements

*Students who participate in after-school athletics must maintain a "C" or better in all subjects or they will be suspended from the team. Students will remain on suspension until the next report card or the teacher verifies the improvement in the grade.

Water Bottles

*We encourage students to keep a water bottle on their desk as staying hydrated is very important. They may not have sports drinks, juice, food, or sodas at their desk.

Field Trips

*We will usually go on a field trip about once a trimester. Many of these field trips may be as an entire middle school. If there is an upcoming field trip, we will send home a notice and a permission slip usually with the Monday letter. If you would like to attend, just make a note on the permission slip.

Outdoor Education

*In May the Middle School goes on an Outdoor Education trip for a week. Sixth grade goes to Indian Hills Camp in Jamul, California and seventh and eighth grade either go to Catalina Science Camp or to Washington D.C. More information will come out later in the year.

Fundraising

*Parents may want to organize fundraisers to offset the cost of the Outdoor Education trips. Let one of us know if you are interested in coordinating a fund raiser.

Parent Letters

*Parent information will be emailed out to all parents on a regular basis. The parent letter discusses the upcoming week and any other important information. It is one important way for you to be aware of what is going on in the Middle School. Please make sure that you keep a lookout for this letter.

Contacting Teachers

*If you need to get in touch with any of the Middle School teachers, there are several ways to reach us. You are welcome to send a note with your son/daughter, call and leave a message on our school voice mail, email us or come by the classroom after school and make an appointment to meet at a later time. The morning tends to be a very busy time for teachers, so it is best to come in and communicate with us after school.

E-Mail Addresses:

Mrs. Flohra- Mrs.Flohra@hephatha.net,

Miss Greene- kjgreene7@yahoo.com,

Miss Williams - caitlyn_williams16@yahoo.com),

Parent Volunteer Hours

*There are many opportunities for parents to volunteer in the Middle School. If you would like to help out, just let us know, or volunteer for any of the classroom jobs at the beginning of the year.

Hephatha's Parent Handbook

*Please refer to the school's parent handbook for additional school-wide policies and information.

Thursday, August 20, 2009

Dear Middle School Parent,

We hope you and your family enjoyed a nice summer vacation. We are really excited to be starting this new school year. We feel truly blessed to have the opportunity to teach your child and just know we are going to enjoy a wonderful year together.

We look forward to working with you this year as partners in your child's education. We would like you to read through the middle school handbook with your child, sign, and return the form below by Friday, August 28th. The middle school handbook outlines a lot of important information about the school year and policies for our sixth, seventh, and eighth graders. At Back to School Night we will have the opportunity to go more in depth on how middle school works. We will continue to communicate with you about what is going on in our classroom through weekly parent letters. If you have any questions about the handbook please feel free to give us a call and leave a message, or email us, or stop by after school to schedule an appointment. God's blessings to you and your family.

Sincerely,

The Middle School Staff

Kristie Flohra- sixth grade teacher

Katie Greene- seventh grade teacher

Caitlyn Williams- eighth grade teacher

I have received, read and agree to abide by the Middle School Class Handbook for the 2009-2010 school year.

Parent Signature _____ Date _____

Student Signature _____ Date _____