

Hints and tips that we would have loved to have known when our kids were entering 6th grade!

Schedules, teams and lockers

- Schedules get mailed sometime in mid August. If you can, make a couple copies so they can put one in their locker, one for their bag and maybe one for a pocket for the first week. Keep a copy at home in case your child misplaces the rest at school!
- The schedules also include your student's team number (1, 2 or 3), locker number and locker combination.
- Until you know your child's team and teachers, you don't know exactly what supplies you will need, and no, the office don't know that information yet either!
- To get an idea of what each team/teacher requires in terms of supplies, you can check out last year's team supply lists on the lms website
http://lms.arlingtonschools.org/pages/LaGrange_Middle_School/Our_School/Team_Supply_List_S
- The lockers have combination style locks and you will have the combination of your child's assigned locker on the mailed schedule.
- If your child is unfamiliar with the combination style lock, it may be useful to get one to practice with (you will need to provide one for their gym locker anyway)

6th Grade Student Walkthroughs

- 8th grade volunteers will walk your child (and accompanying family) through their schedule and answer their questions and even give hints and tips on getting around the school. This is such a great opportunity to ease fears about finding their way around the 'big' school.
- There are 3 walkthrough events scheduled this year – 8/27/15 9-1pm, 8/31/15 9-1pm and 8/31/15 6-8pm. It is fine to come to more than one of these.
- This is a fantastic time for your child to practice unlocking their locker. Practice this lots of times, until they can open it every time.

Open House

- This takes the place of curriculum night or back to school night in elementary school
- You get to walk through your child's schedule and meet the teachers.
- It is normally your only opportunity to meet those teachers as there aren't any parent teacher conferences.
- This year it is scheduled for 9/17/15 and is 12-2pm and 7-9pm.
- It isn't an informal drop in event like meeting your child's specials teachers at elementary school. Instead you start in your child's homeroom and each time the bell rings you move classes (like your child will do during the day) to meet the next teacher. You get about 10 mins with each teacher and a few minutes to change classes.

- The students get a half day on open house day, but they won't be the only one to be left in the seats in the foyer if you don't want to leave them home alone...

Buses

- Expect a new bus route and for that bus to arrive stupidly early in the morning.
- The kids get off the bus at 7:20am and have 10mins to go to their lockers and get to their homerooms in a morning.
- There is no teacher leading a line of students to their bus in the afternoon, so I wrote my son's bus number on his schedule.
- The ladies in the office are awesome if anyone doesn't know which bus they need, as are the drivers. But the child does need to know the road/cross road where they got on the bus.
- The activity and sports buses are at 3:30pm Monday to Friday and 4.15pm Tuesday to Thursday. They are great but run a modified route and may result in a really long ride... You can see the routes for the last school year
http://lms.arlingtonschools.org/files/_4JJBo_/d689f99e8afcd2a63745a49013852ec4/2014-2015_Late_Bus_Runs.pdf

Parent Portal

- Sign up for it!!!
- You can find the registration form at
http://lms.arlingtonschools.org/files/_yNJ3d_/2871616760eb04fd3745a49013852ec4/Parent_registration_form_PP_2014.pdf
- You will need to fill it in and bring it into school with some id
- Register for it as soon as you can
- Teachers post grades for tests/assignments on parent portal (sometimes it may take a while for them to do it) so you can keep an eye on how your child is doing.
- Report card grades and comments are also posted on parent portal usually by the morning after the cards are mailed.
- Schedules are also posted on parent portal along with teams and locker numbers, once they are in the mail.
- It is a good way to keep up with how your child is doing, as many teachers don't send tests home for the parents to sign to say they have seen it as may have been the case in elementary school.

Day to day things

- Color code the binder/folder/notebooks for each subject makes it easier to grab what is needed from your locker or out of your backpack, e.g. if everything you need for math is blue, science is

green, ela is yellow and social studies is red, it is harder to grab the wrong thing when you only have 30 seconds to get them!

- If your child is out sick for a day, you aren't expected to call the office about it but if they are going to be out for a few days you need to call the guidance office to organize getting homework (it will build up after a day or two and they still need to get it all done).
- Your child's guidance counselor is very helpful. If you are concerned about behavior, social issues, school work issues, call & email him/her. He/she will be a great advocate to work with during middle school.
- Also never hesitate to contact your child's teacher about an assignment issue, concern in that class, etc. if you are having problems communicating by email, talk to your guidance councilor and they will facilitate, it is part of what they do in school!
- You will need to provide a combination lock for their gym locker. Make sure you keep a note of the combination at home, as your kid will probably forget it at some point!
- Ask questions on the pta facebook page, if we don't know the answer we can usually tell you who to ask☺. There are no stupid questions, and if you are wondering, there are probably another dozen people wondering the same thing!
- Daily announcements are posted on the lms website most days, but if the person who posts them at school is out, then they won't be posted. We do try to copy and paste them onto our facebook page most days.
- The announcements are read out at the start and towards the end of the school day in school, and each teacher is also supposed to have a copy so students can ask them if they can't hear the announcements properly.
- If you are collecting your child at the end of the school day rather than letting them get the bus, you don't have to sign them out.
- For band/orchestra/chorus, we had 3 concerts last year in December, spring and June
- Our PTA bookfair is in the beginning of December. It will be open during all 4 lunch periods and last year we were also open before the December concerts.
- Tickets for school dances are usually sold just outside of the cafeteria during lunch periods and normally cost a few dollars. They are a school run event, not PTA
- Don't expect lots of notices and paperwork to come home with your kids. The important things are mailed such as report cards. I remember the fall photo paperwork being mailed too, but we never received anything for the spring photos. Flyers for the dances are never sent home, it will appear on the lms calendar eventually (when the tickets go on sale it should be mentioned in the daily announcements), and instead they expect the students to inform their parents.

Thanks to the following for their hints and tips!

