

Good Evening Sixth Grade Parents and Guardians,

It has been a pleasure for School Adjustment Counselor Dr. Kathleen Pennoyer and I to help with your child's introduction to Middle School the past three weeks and we are excited to be teaching Organizational, Time Management, and Planning Skills (OTMP) in the classroom. The first two lessons focused on the challenge for each student to develop a well-organized assignment notebook as a tool for school success. As an ice breaker activity during our first class, students documented their number one passion in their assignment book (see pg. 6) and shared it with the class. While we strive to support student academic growth, we also emphasize the importance of fun activities to help one have a balanced lifestyle. The attached handout was taped inside the back of student planners so it could be referenced as we discussed each step to developing a well-organized assignment notebook.

How can you help your child in this process?

First, using the attachment and your child's planner, ask your child to explain the planner process to you. In school, the sixth grade team of teachers is trying to establish routines to help your child accurately record each homework assignment and to remind your child to bring home necessary homework materials. At home, you can establish your own homework routines:

- On Sunday evenings, meet and work with your child to help record afterschool activities (practices, religious ed., doctor's appointments, etc.) into their planner for the upcoming week. Additionally, plan homework times so that an adult will be available to monitor your child's efforts and assist if needed.
- Pick a quiet study place that will be used consistently for study and homework.
- Encourage your child to put forth a strong effort. Offer help to your child, but beware of doing your child's work for them. If your child cannot finish an assignment and is becoming stressed, place a question mark (?) along with your initials in the planner. Talk to your child about this and emphasize that trying one's best is what is important. They are not expected to know all of the material all of the time and should understand that this is ok. Encourage your child to self-advocate at school by seeking additional help from a teacher if they do not understand a concept or problem. This is **acceptable** and gives us insight into a child's learning needs.
- Extra help is available on a regular basis via the classroom teacher, Middle School Homework Club and from the High School National Honor Society's Tutoring Program. You can encourage your child to use these resources.
- Check to see that completed assignments are checked off in the assignment notebook and are placed into a homework folder and backpack to be returned to school.

The key ingredient to establishing good school and homework routines is consistency. Sixth graders will require steady support to develop routines as they manage the transition to Middle School. As Middle School counselors, we feel you cannot provide your child with too much structure entering the middle school and early adolescence. Your child should be rewarded for following the established routines and seeking out academic assistance when facing new challenges. Establishing routines in grade 6 will lay a strong foundation for success in the upcoming years at MERMS.

If we can be of any assistance in this process, do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,

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ASSIGNMENT NOTEBOOK

Challenge: Develop a well-organized assignment notebook.

Task: Steps to an organized notebook

1. Copy the assignment “word for word” into your planner...write neatly.
2. If you do not have homework, write “none” in the corresponding subject area. If you do not have the subject class, write “drop” in the corresponding subject area.
3. If we do not have school due to snow or a hurricane, write “snow day” or “hurricane day” in the corresponding day area.
4. If you are absent from school, write “absent” in your planner on the day you were not at school. Make sure you talk to your teachers about missing class work and homework. Develop a plan to make up your work as soon as possible.
5. Place a checkmark (✓) in the box to the right of your assignments as you finish them. Do not scratch out your assignments.
6. If you are struggling with an assignment for 20-30 minutes, you may put a question mark in the box next to the homework (?) and have your parent / guardian place a note at the bottom of the page regarding the situation. **Remember, if you are having trouble in a class, get help!
7. Use the “afterschool” area to manage your time after school:

- See student example on the next two pages as guide to help you.

2:20-3:30 Extra help or Homework Club (Get a teacher’s signature in your notebook to verify you stayed after school for help).

3:40-5:00 Late bus to Essex for basketball practice

5:30-6:00 Homework

6:00-7:00 Dinner and family time

7:00-8:00 Homework

8:00-9:00 Relax

9:00-9:20 Study vocabulary terms

9:30 Bedtime

8. If you are struggling with an assignment remember to call a peer on your buddy list (only 2-3 people on your buddy list).
9. Get your parents involved in what you are doing. Encourage them to write notes in your assignment notebook if they have questions for your teachers.

Keep your assignment notebook intact....do not rip the pages out after use!