



# Rootstown Middle School

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Parents/ Guardians of RMS Sixth Graders,

We hope that this letter finds you well and that the beginning of the school year is off to a great start. Our staff thought it would be helpful to bring together some of the expectations that we, as a sixth grade staff, have for our students this year. We know that the transition to middle school brings many challenges including an eight period day, new lockers/combinations, an increased workload, getting up earlier, and facing all of the joys that come with being a middle school student. We believe that communication is clarity. Therefore, it is our hope that this letter will answer any questions that you may have about some of the expectations that your students are asked to adhere to throughout the school year. These expectations include, being a respectful member of the classroom, practicing responsibility daily, maintaining a high level of academic achievement, and to be able to adapt and overcome challenging situations.

Respect is a trait that is highly valued in our school. Daily, students are told that our school motto is to be a “Responsible, Respectful, Role Model.” What this means is simply to treat others the way that you would like to be treated. This goes for staff and for students. Creating a culture for our students to thrive, have productive conversations, ask great questions, and engage with one another all starts with a respectful relationship between students and staff. Listed below are the ways that students are expected to show respect in their relationships with staff and other students.

- Consider others feelings when speaking.
- Don't touch each other's personal property.
- Acknowledge that time is valuable.

Responsibility is another pillar of what we believe makes a productive learning environment for our students. This seems to be where most sixth graders have the hardest time adjusting to middle school expectations. There are several reasons for this. As mentioned before, students have more moving parts throughout their day than in previous grades. They have a different class every period, lockers that they have to manage, and homework. We know that this is an adjustment and much grace is given at the beginning of the school year. As we are now past the midpoint of the first nine weeks, it is our hope that students have a better understanding of how to navigate these newfound responsibilities. Showing up to class on time as well as homework are two of the most consistent struggles that we see with incoming students. Getting to class is an expectation that we, as a staff, intend to adhere to. Our class time is precious as there are only forty four minutes on average per class. Even coming in a couple of minutes late can throw a student off for the rest of the period and possibly even distract other students as well. Getting to class on time is a high priority because productive class time is a high priority.

Homework is another responsibility that sixth grade students are getting used to. It is important for us to communicate that it is not the goal of our staff to have your student sitting at the dinner table for hours every night. If homework becomes too challenging, we ask that you send the subject teacher an email so that we can look for a solution together. It is also important for us to communicate that some work outside of the classroom is best practices and has been proven to be beneficial for learners. Robert J. Marzano, a well respected educational researcher states that homework and extra practice is one of the nine most effective ways for students to increase their knowledge base. For more information on this, there have been dozens of articles written on the “Marzano 9 Instructional Strategies.” Students will have

some homework every week. In each of the core classes: English, Math, Science and Social Studies, students write down all of the homework in their school-issued planner either at the beginning of the week, or on a daily basis, depending on the class. This is consistent across all subjects so that students have a place where all of the work that is to be done that week is clearly written down to refer back to. Each teacher handles homework slightly different. If you have any questions about a specific subject area, please feel free to contact the subject-specific teacher for clarification. All class materials are expected to be brought to class. Leaving to get materials in the middle of class takes away from instructional time and could be a safety issue in an emergency.

Another responsibility of students is to maintain their grades. As always, grades can be checked by students and parents on progressbook. Some grades are in-class, (20% of overall grade). While others are assessment grades, (80% of the overall grade). Test corrections are worth half of the original points and are to be done on the school issued Test Corrections Form. Most assignments are not eligible for corrections. The form can be found on Google Classroom. When students are absent, they are responsible for the work that they missed unless otherwise told by the teacher. Some classwork is due in class and is not meant to be homework. Therefore, partial or no credit may be given if not completed in a timely manner.

We have had several questions as to the purpose of intervention. This is a time for reiteration, correction and preparation for each specific class. Students rotate through five different classes during the week. Their daily class is posted on the schedule that they received at the beginning of the year. This time is also used specifically for state test preparation so that students know the kinds of questions that are asked on the Ohio state test.

Lastly, as we have seen from the last few years, there will be obstacles throughout the school year. It is our job as staff and students to adapt and overcome these roadblocks. Having an open mind, looking at all sides of the problem, and finding solutions are skills that we are building in our students daily.

It is our honor and privilege to have your student in class this year. As we often remind them, we teach because we care about them as well as their long term success. Let's continue to build a culture of respectful, responsible, role models. GO ROVERS!

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