

NMS

Everything You Need to Know About Nyack Middle School!



A Guide for
NMS Students



PosterMyWall.com
Background by Pixl Pusher

Welcome to NYACK MIDDLE SCHOOL!

This planning guide is designed to help make sure that you have a positive and successful learning experience here at Nyack Middle School. Please take the time to review this guide carefully and, if you have any questions, ask your guidance counselor.

Middle School vs. Elementary School: What's the Difference?

The flow of the day in middle school is pretty different from elementary and you will be expected to take on more responsibility for your schoolwork and actions. You will also have more freedom while walking around school, and will meet students from all three elementary schools. While this is exciting for some students, it can also be kind of scary; and it will take some time to adjust. The good news is that, before long, you will grow accustomed to it all and, if you work hard, find help when you need it, and show respect and consideration to others, you will succeed!

Here are some things you need to know:

Electives:

You will be scheduled for Art, Computers, Health, and Music, (depending on your music choice; Orchestra, Band or Vocal). Each elective lasts one quarter (about 9 weeks).

Band / Vocal:

If you choose to take Band instead of Vocal, please understand this is a yearlong commitment. You will play the same instrument you played during elementary school. Students must rent their own instruments.

Hallway Time:

At Nyack Middle School, we give students 2-3 minutes to get from class to class. This may not seem like a lot of time but it's plenty to get you where you need to go.

Class Period:

Students have 8 periods in a day and each core class lasts about 53 minutes. Each elective class lasts 42 minutes. There are no bells but don't worry, your teacher will remind you when it's time to finish up and get ready to go to your next class.

Lunch:

All students eat lunch in the cafeteria during the same period every day with their own grade ONLY. During lunch, you will have time for "recess." Although we don't have playgrounds, students like to hang out and play on the field after eating in the cafeteria. Some students use this time to get extra help from teachers or participate in a lunchtime club or program.



Important People to Know at Nyack Middle School

Principal
Mr. Johnson

Assistant Principal
Mrs. Addison- Harris

Dean of Students
Mr. Kennedy

Main Office Secretaries

Social Worker

School Psychologist

School Guidance Counselors

Guidance Secretaries

School Library Teacher

School Nurse

Family Resource Center Coordinator

Mrs. Clancy
Ms. Santana

Mrs. Rufo

Dr. Campbell-Lodge

Mrs. Battista
Mrs. Falvo
Mr. Lambert

Mrs. Holland
Mrs. McGee

Ms. Quinn

Mrs. Lynn

Mrs. Octaviano



What to Expect at Nyack Middle School:

In middle school, students change classes, have different teachers for each subject, get more homework, and are expected to take on more responsibilities. Some days will be harder than others but if you know what to expect and prepare yourself, things will be easier and you will be able to handle it!

Schedule:

You will receive your schedule at orientation before school begins. You will have a chance to “practice” walking your schedule over the summer during orientation.

PLEASE NOTE: We do not change schedules so you can have classes with friends and we do not change schedules because you do not like a teacher.

Do speak with a guidance counselor if:

- You were placed in a challenge level class that you did NOT sign up for
- You are NOT scheduled for 8 classes, including a language, music and an elective
- You accidentally got scheduled for the same class twice
- You want to be in Band but got scheduled in Vocal

If you have other reasons to request a schedule change, talk to your guidance counselor as soon as you can.



After School Clubs and Sports:

Nyack Middle School has many after school clubs and sports to choose from. Get involved! Try something new! Try out for the school play! Spend time with friends, make new friends and get more out of your experience while you are a middle school student.

Summer Orientation:

Over the summer, your parents will receive a mailing which will contain the date of the 6th Grade Orientation in August. Orientation is very helpful for new students as you are given your class schedule and are given a chance to “walk” your schedule and familiarize yourself with the building. You will also be given your locker assignment and combination lock. This is the only lock that you are allowed to use on your locker so remember to keep the combination in a safe place and **do not share it with your friends.**

School is about Building Life Long Skills:

What are “life skills?”

Life skills are the abilities or habits we need to develop in order to deal with or manage the challenges we face in our everyday lives, whether at school or at home.

In middle school you are expected to assume more responsibility for yourself. While you learn content skills in Math, Language Arts, Science, Social Studies, and other classes, you will also be learning life skills that are necessary to become successful students. These skills include self-direction, effective communication, and effective problem-solving.

Self Directed Students:

- Ask questions, ask for help and advocate for themselves
- Manage their free time so that everything gets done
- Don't wait for parents to tell them to do their HW
- Know what needs to be done, and they do it!

Effective Communicators:

- Wait their turn to speak
- Speak for themselves from what they know, instead of saying things based on others opinions

Effective Problem Solvers:

- Use “I Statements” instead of accusing people with, “Well, they told me to.....”
- Always use a respectful tone when expressing their feelings
- Understand that sometimes we have to agree to disagree about things



Responsibility & Safety:

You will also be expected to be respectful and considerate of others. You, and you alone, are responsible for your behavior. Nobody should be mean to others. Bullying and harassment of other students is unacceptable and will not be tolerated.

- Stop and think before you say or do something that could hurt someone.
- If you feel like being mean to someone, find something else to do. Play a game, read a book, or talk to a friend.
- Talk to an adult you trust. They can help you find ways to be nicer to others.
- Keep in mind that everyone is different. Not better or worse. Just different.
- If you think you have bullied someone in the past, apologize. Everyone feels better.

Every student has a right to a safe school environment and you are expected to behave in a safe manner. If you should ever feel unsafe at any time, or you witness someone that is behaving in an unsafe way, please tell an adult at school or at home immediately!

Get Organized and Stay that Way:



Use Your Planner!

Because you have MORE classes in middle school, and MORE work to complete, it is VERY important to keep it all organized. Each student will receive a new planner on the first day of school, every school year, to write down homework assignments, test dates, project due dates, etc. You can even use your planner to help plan your outside activities!

Make Writing in and Reviewing Your Planner Part of your Daily Routine!

We cannot stress enough how important it is to make your planner part of your every day routine. When using your planner becomes a habit, it will be easier to stay organized, keep up with assignments, and complete all of your homework. As important as it is to write things down in your planner during the school day, **do not forget to take your planner out of your backpack and LOOK AT IT when you get home.** It should be the first thing you look at as you sit down and begin to do your homework every day.

Notebooks / Binders:

Now that you are taking several different classes every day, you need to keep your information separate and organized. You should have different sections in your notebook or binder, or separate notebooks or binders, for each class. If you choose to use notebooks, make sure to use folders for your homework and other loose papers, again, organized by subject. Some teachers may have specific requirements on how to organize your work but whatever system you use or choose, make sure to maintain it and keep it as neat as you can.

Backpack:

Prepare your backpack every night before you go to bed. Make sure you have all your homework, projects, books -- whatever you need for the next day. This will save you the trouble of rushing around in the morning. And don't forget to clean out your back pack every week!

Manage Your Screen Time:

Too much time playing video games, watching TV or using your cell phone can affect your ability to learn and distract from getting your school work done. Limit your screen time. And follow your family's rules about computer use!



Make Time for Homework:

In middle school, homework makes up a big part of your grade. Students who do their homework every day and hand it in on time do well in their classes.

Set up a special time for HW each day and stick to it:

If you do not have a written assignment due, take time to read or review notes for upcoming tests. Just a few minutes of review each night for each subject can make a huge difference!

Set up a special place at home to study:

Choose a location in your home to do your homework and study. It could be a desk, your bed or the kitchen table. Make sure you have everything you need and make sure it is away from the television, from your cell phone and from any other distractions. If you do not have a place like this at home, maybe you can ...



Go to the LIBRARY:

Your school library has resources online, by grade, to support all your schoolwork (*part of the NMS website*):

http://ms.nyackschools.org/groups/7993/nyack_middle_school_library/home.

Your School Library Teacher is here after school, *or* you can head to either the *Nyack* or *Valley Cottage Public Library* to get work done. ANY questions, don't hesitate to ask Ms. Quinn.

Attend Homework Club:

Find out which teachers stay after school for the homework club. This is a great time to ask specific questions and get your homework done for the day. **The homework club is offered every week starting in October on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday from 3:00pm-3:45pm.** You can also get help from your teacher during your lunch period.

Break big projects down into smaller steps:

Create a timeline and set up your own personal due dates for each step. If you need help doing this, ask a teacher or your guidance counselor. Remember: Slow and steady wins the race!

Turn in your homework – ON TIME:

Believe it or not, some students DO their homework, then lose it or forget to turn it in! Why do all that work and not get the credit? DON'T BE THAT STUDENT! Make sure to hand it in ON TIME. This is another important reason to keep your binder and backpack neat and organized!

Need Help? Here's Where to Go and What to Do:

Help with Schoolwork:

If you are struggling in class, not doing well on tests and quizzes, and having a hard time understanding your homework, get help right away by talking to your teacher! The longer you wait, the harder it will be to catch up. Here's what to do:



- Find a moment when the teacher is not instructing the rest of the class and tell the teacher you need help.
- Be specific – Make sure you are clear about what it is you do not understand and where you are having problems.
- Example: “Mr. Jones, can I please get extra help with fractions? I am confused about how to multiply and divide.” Or “Mrs. Smith, I’m having a really hard time with my homework. Can I see you during lunch and review it with you?”
- *REMEMBER your teachers are here to help you. Advocate for yourself.*

Help with Other Problems:

You can stop by the guidance office and talk to your counselor whenever you have a question, or if you need to discuss something you are having trouble with or that is upsetting you. If you cannot wait until lunchtime, you can stop in between classes or ask a teacher for a pass.

Counselors can help with all sorts of things including:

- School-related problems
- Problems with friends
- Family issues
- Personal problems

Help with School Supplies, Enrichment Programs, and more:

Located in the back of the library is the Nyack Middle School Family Resource Center. When you visit, the FRC Coordinator can help you with school supplies and information for you and your family on all sorts of things in school and the Nyack area from community service ideas to summer camp programs. The FRC also offers programs like Girls Circle, Boys Council and the Positive Action Club during lunch. And students can stop by anytime for a light snack or a break from the regular day.



Most Importantly, DON'T GIVE UP:

We are here to help. Everything is a process and success takes time and effort. Embrace the power of YET! You may not understand the work ... yet. You may not be organized ... yet. You may not feel like a middle school student ... yet. **BUT YOU WILL!**

(Revised 5/15/18)



Embrace the Power of

...YET!

I'm not good at this...**YET!**

I don't get it...**YET!**

This doesn't work...**YET!**

I can't do this...**YET!**