



# Transitioning to Middle School



**The transition to middle school is different for everyone. Your Little will encounter new people, new school subjects, new activities, and many more teachers than they are used to. All new experiences are frightening at first, but if they have the right attitude and solid info on what to expect, they'll be ready in no time. Help your Little be prepared by going over the following information with them:**

## What is Different?

### 1. More work

Teachers in middle school often view their students as young adults. This means that assignments and tests will be more challenging. In addition to nightly homework, you might have papers and exams for the first time. Exams test on all the material learned during the semester during a given class, so it is important to save class notes and assignments for studying. If you are having trouble keeping up with the work, talk to your teacher, a parent or guidance counselor.

### 2. The A-B-C's

Some elementary schools do not grade using only an A, B, C, D, F grading scale. In Middle School you earn these grades as well as in-between grades like A+ or C-. They are also averaged into your G.P.A. A's are worth 4 points, B's are worth 3 points, C's are worth 2 points, D's are worth 1 point, and F's are worth 0. Some activities and clubs require certain grade point averages, so you'll have to make sure you get good grades to be able to join.

### 3. Lockers

Most middle schools in St. Augustine have lockers. You will be going to many different classes in one day and instead of lugging all your stuff around in one bag, you'll have a place to store everything safely. Remember to be organized and have the notebook and book you need for class with you. You won't be able to go to your locker after each class and will need to be prepared to have what you need with you. If you forget a homework assignment in a locker, your teacher most likely won't let you get it. The lockers are big enough to put books in but not big enough to be shoved into, like you see in movies. This is one thing you won't have to worry about!

### 4. Library

Your middle school library (media center) will be bigger & better than the library at your elementary school. Many have more than just books- they might also have computers, video stations, and other forms of media to help you learn. Don't be afraid to ask the media specialist for help!

### 5. Schedule

In middle school, you are going to have a different class in a different hour, almost every hour. You'll also have different classes on different days. This might be a little overwhelming at first. Review your schedule and you'll probably have it down in no time. If you have trouble finding a new building or have trouble knowing where you have to be, speak up! The school staff are there to help. Plan on getting lost your first day of school. There will be hundreds of other 6<sup>th</sup> graders that get lost too and also feel confused. IT IS NO

BIG DEAL! Teachers will understand that you may get lost during your first week, so don't worry about getting detention because of it your first day of school.

## **6. Recess**

Once you start middle school, you'll no longer have recess. You'll most likely have a lunch period or home room to relax or work on some class assignments with friends. Lunch, homeroom, walking to class, and clubs are the best ways to hang out & talk to your friends and have some free time. If you like recess because you get to run around, you can get the same thing during P.E. or in a fitness-based club.

## **7. Extra-Curricular**

One of the best parts about middle school is the chance to get involved in school sports, activities, & clubs. These activities are a great way to make friends, explore new interests, and have fun! As mentioned before, there will be grade minimums you have to meet in order to participate so you'll need to make sure you stay focused on school work.

## **The Student Body**

Most of you will be going to a middle school that brings together kids from different elementary schools, so there will be plenty of new faces.

When you begin middle school you're going from being one of the oldest kids at school to one of the youngest. You might be taking classes or doing activities with 8<sup>th</sup> graders who seem a million times bigger. Remember though, these "big kids" were once newbies like you, and most will be friendly and willing to help.

Because of the variety of courses and activities in middle school, differences between people might become a little more obvious. You'll probably notice kids who do great in academics, some who score big in the playing field, and some who are awesome at art. Sometimes people form "cliques", or groups of people who hang out because of what they have in common.

Although its natural to spend time with people who share your interests, try to keep yourself open to everyone. You might discover some new people who love the same music you do or have the same taste in movies. This is especially true when it comes to students of different ethnic backgrounds than you are familiar with. A new school and new student body are a great opportunity to learn about new people, places, and cultures from all over the world. Differences make life more interesting.

## **Hints for Success**

### **1. Get a sneak peek**

Visit your middle school for a taste of things to come. Sometimes elementary schools will escort you to the middle school for a sneak peek. If it doesn't, ask your parents to arrange one.

### **2. Get organized!**

- Develop a system for your schoolwork and belongings. You'll now have a lot of books, papers, and schools supplies, and you might want to create a folder for each class. That way, everything is easy to find when you need it.

- Make sure you use a student planner. It will let you keep track of your classes, your homework assignments, your projects, and your exams. Most schools actually require the use of a student planner and even supply you with one.
- Have phone numbers for classmates in each of your classes in case you have questions

### **3. Get Active**

Explore as many clubs and activities that you can. You can get involved with any activities as you like. It doesn't matter who you are or what you're interested in- there's a place for you in middle school activities. School activities give you time to spend with friends, help you enjoy school more, let you practice being a leader, relieves stress, and develop your talents.

### **4. Get help when you need it.**

If you need any sort of advice, assistance, or general support during your first weeks of middle school makes sure that you ASK QUESTIONS. There are lots of people available to give you the answers that you need: teachers, counselors, even coaches or office staff. It is their job to give you guidance.

### **5. Make sure you don't miss class**

When you miss school, you miss lectures, notes, class discussions, homework explanations, assignments, quizzes and tests. It doesn't matter how good you are at making up your work, you can never make up everything you miss, even if you are out of school for only one day!! If you must be absent from school, remember *you* are the one responsible for finding out what you've missed and for getting all the work made up. If you know you are going to miss, tell your teachers ahead of time and ask for assignments.

### **6. Set Goals**

Goals give you direction and focus. They help you figure out what you want to accomplish. Short-term goals are goals that you can achieve within days or weeks. Long term goals are goals that will take weeks, months, or years to achieve. Make sure your goals are realistic and specific. For example, *"I usually get all Cs on my report card, but this semester I'm going to get Bs in at least 2 of my classes"*