

Thursday, August 17, 2017

Dear Middle School Families:

Welcome to the 2017-2018 school year. We hope it's been a great summer, and we're looking forward to the start of a terrific year of learning and growing. The first day of school for students is Wednesday, August 30th.

Whether you are looking forward to your child's first day of middle school or your child is returning, the start of a new school year is an exciting time. As parents, you have an extremely important role in your child's education, and parental involvement makes a critical difference. Although your child is getting older, your participation in his/her education is very important in helping your child succeed. Communicating with your son/daughter is essential - it can be as simple as discussing current affairs with your child or having a family conversation about the school day over dinner. Also, keep in mind that it is really important for your son/daughter to start off the day with a nutritious breakfast and arrive to school well rested, alert, and on time (seated in homeroom by 8:00 a.m.).

Additionally, it is important to plan family vacations around the school calendar. When scheduling doctor appointments, please keep in mind that Science CMT testing for 5th and 8th graders, and Smarter Balanced testing, which assess 5th, 6th, 7th, and 8th graders in English Language Arts and Mathematics, takes place in April and May.

As you work with your child and his/her teachers, please be aware that we encourage open lines of communication. However, we ask that you recognize that teachers are not available to talk on the phone while they have students in their classroom. That said, we seek to respond in a timely manner to voicemail messages left to us. You may contact us easily through email, which, in most cases, is the best method of contacting a teacher, by using the last name of the staff member followed by @brooklynschools.org.

I utilize SchoolMessenger to communicate school news and information (you will be receiving more detailed information about SchoolMessenger). When there is inclement weather the Brooklyn School District utilizes SchoolMessenger to notify families of school cancellations, delayed starts, early dismissals, etc. The messages I send through SchoolMessenger are generally short, quick bits of information about events, activities, and school news. As always, Mrs. Tamsin and I can be reached by email or by calling the school.

Keep in mind you can visit our website, which contains valuable information, on your computer and/or you can get the Brooklyn Schools App for your smartphone. The homepage is www.brooklynschools.org. You can go to the App Store to get the Brooklyn Schools App for free. Our webmaster, Mr. Lessig, regularly updates the site, which includes a calendar of monthly events, a monthly lunch menu, an invaluable library/media page maintained by Mrs. Reading, a comprehensive health and wellness page created by Mrs. MacFarland, and more.

Bus routes were created over the summer based on your home address, and will be published on the district website prior to the start of the school year, printed in the Turnpike Buyer, and we will post the bus routes on our front foyer window the week of August 21st. If there is a problem with the pick-up or drop-off location for your child, please contact the school business office by calling the school at 860-774-9153 extension 205. Please be aware that Bus Guests Requests will be granted on a space available basis. The request must be in writing to the principal, and we ask that the request be received at least two days prior to the date of riding as a guest. The full policy on Request for Bus Changes will be included in the packets that students will take home on the first day of school.

We offer a number of items on our breakfast and lunch menus. Breakfast is served each day and is \$1.50 (30¢ if qualified for reduced price). Usually for lunch, the kitchen will provide two alternative choices, in addition to a variety of daily main meals. The price for lunch at the middle school cafeteria is \$2.80 (40¢ if qualified for reduced price). Milk without a meal may be purchased at breakfast and lunch for 60¢. Students may pay for meals daily, or you may prepay for as many meals as are convenient for you. We do encourage you to utilize prepaid meal accounts because it helps the lunch lines go faster, and it gives students more time to eat, relax and play. It also gives you the peace of mind of not having to worry about looking for lunch money every day or worry that it might get lost, stolen or used for something other than lunch.

You have the option to pay/prepay your student's meal account online. Go to Payforit.net and follow the straightforward instructions. Online payments are an easy, safe and secure way to make payments 24 hours a day at your convenience. As always you can send (in with your student) cash and/or checks. Please place money in an envelope marked clearly with your student's name and ID number (pin number).

Students are allowed to charge up to twenty dollars (\$20.00) in reimbursable meal or milk charges or ten dollars (\$10.00) in reduced meal charges. A-la-carte items may not be charged. When the charge limit has been reached, students will be served and charged for a substitute meal until the debt is paid. Students, who owe money to the cafeteria, may not purchase a snack until the debt is paid.

If you have children in both schools, please send in money for each student to the respective school's cafeteria. In other words, the middle school cafeteria cannot accept payments for elementary students. Please be sure to place the full name of your child on the memo line. Your son/daughter will receive a copy of the September menu along with a free and reduced lunch application. If applying for free or reduced lunches, all parents/guardians must fill out and return one application per family. Please be aware that these forms must be completed and submitted each school year.

Below are several items pertaining to the start of the school year:

- Within the first several days of school, there will be an assembly to review school and bus rules, share general information, and communicate precautions and procedures.
- Students interested in participating in an interscholastic sport, including cheerleading, must have on file with the school nurse, a current physical examination, which was performed within the past 13 months. Students may not participate in tryouts or attend practice without an up-to-date physical. Forms are available in the office. **The school will not be providing physicals this year.**
- The middle school **Open House** will be on **Wednesday, September 6th, at 7:00 pm.** The program is for parents and guardians.
- The High School Choice Fair will take place the same evening as Open House, Wednesday, September 6th - more details will be sent home.
- The PTO's annual Back to School Cookout is Thursday, September 7th, from 5:00 - 6:30 p.m. at Brooklyn Elementary School.
- Picture Day is Monday, September 11th.

Please check your student's backpack for the following:

- Student Information Card. Please return the card by **Friday, September 8th. The Student Information Card is critical and must be returned.**
- Agenda. You and your child should review the handbook section. **To acknowledge that you have reviewed the student agenda, the last page of the handbook section must be signed and returned to your student's T.A.G. teacher by Friday, September 8th.**

- Acceptable use of Internet and Website Permission Form **must be returned by Friday, September 8th.**
- Accident Insurance Form **must be returned by Friday, September 8th.**
- Free and Reduced Lunch Application **must be returned by Friday, September 8th.** (Only one per household is necessary).

The school is in superb shape, due to the hard work of our custodial staff. Additionally, our secretaries have expended a great deal of effort in preparing for the opening of school. We are grateful for all of their efforts and dedication.

Four final notes:

1. We will continue to follow the traffic pattern for student drop-off/pick-up that was used last year:

All vehicles enter the school grounds by turning into the BMS driveway from Gorman Road. All traffic at all times will flow in one direction by entering the middle school driveway, and exit by driving around the back of BMS and BES, travel onto School Street, and exit onto Gorman Road.

Drop off and pick up will still take place at the side of the gym. For the safety of our students and for quicker unloading, students should ride in the back seat, so that they may exit the vehicle on the school side. A map/diagram is enclosed

As always, if parents need to come to school during normal school hours (other than the drop off and pick up time blocks), parents may utilize the parking area in the front of the middle school, and when exiting the front parking area, utilize the exit that is near the auditorium end of BMS.

2. Please be reminded that it is illegal to pass the buses, while they are loading and unloading in front of the building. The fine for illegally passing a bus is now \$450.00. More importantly, it is for the safety of our children.

3. We plan to have a Brooklyn Schools booth at the Brooklyn Fair, where we will have copies of the school calendar, bus routes/times, and you can purchase/order school spirit wear from the PTO.

4. A copy of the Middle School calendar is on the last page. Please save it for your reference for it has report card dates, conference dates, etc.

Please do not hesitate to contact us, if you have any concerns or questions.

Sincerely,

Alan Yanku

Heather Tamsin