

**Everything You Wanted
To Know About
Sixth Grade**

**Common Questions
of
Sixth Grade Parents**

**North Salem Middle School
North Salem, New York**

EVERYTHING YOU WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT SIXTH GRADE

Q. How can I get in touch with teachers?

A. You can call the middle school office (669-5414) and leave a voice mail message for any teacher. The extensions are listed at the close of this document, in the district calendar, and on our web page. The teacher will be happy to return your call. You can also e-mail teachers via the North Salem web page at www.northsalemsschools.org

Q. Is there any other way for me to communicate with the school?

A. Yes, there are many ways to keep in touch. Feel free to write a note to any faculty or staff member. Call the middle school guidance counselor, Mrs. Galligan. Schedule a parent / teacher conference. Attend parent / teacher grade-level meetings listed on the district calendar.

Q. How will my youngster be helped with the transition between elementary school and middle school?

A. The need for a transitional program for sixth grade students is necessary to ensure school success. The 6th Grade University program is designed to help incoming sixth grade students adjust to their new middle/high school setting. The first few days of the school year are devoted to a “crash course” in “Being a Middle School Student”—providing them with tools and experiences to promote their success in the upcoming school year and an introduction to our district Mission. During this time period, no “academic” classes are taught—rather, students follow a special schedule designed to orient them to their new environment. Student’s experience: basic organization, study skills, library orientation, introduction to computer, creative and critical thinking and school discipline and handbook awareness as part of our “6th Grade University”. All team teachers are involved in the facilitating of our university, and students have the opportunity to get to know each other and their teachers. It is the goal of our 6th Grade University to help students make sense and meaning from what is being taught, and to be more successful as they progress through their middle school experience.

Q. What is a grade-level meeting?

A. Grade-level meetings are scheduled times for sixth grade parents and teachers to meet informally as a group to discuss curriculum and program. The dates and times are on the district calendar

Q. How can I schedule a meeting with my child’s teacher?

A. The easiest way is to call the teacher directly to arrange a convenient time. Mrs. Galligan, our middle school guidance counselor, can also set up a meeting with the entire sixth grade team of teachers. She can be reached at 669-5414, ext. 2036. Conferences can be arranged at any time during the school year. There is no need to wait for Parent-Teacher Conference Day.

Q. Who can help me with other school-related problems?

A. Mrs. Galligan is an excellent resource person who can put you in touch with tutors, out-of-school counselors and other support services. You can also call Ms. Katia Castelli, school psychologist (ext. 2020); and our school nurse Mrs. Rita Driscoll (ext. 2017). Dr. George Bovino, Assistant Principal (ext. 2028) and Dr. Patricia Cyganovich, Principal (ext. 2072) are also available to help you. Mr. Jim Savarese (ext. 2137) is the sixth grade class advisor and is another resource.

Q. What should I do if my child is absent?

A. It is very important for you to call the Attendance Office at 669-5414 ext. 2165 to report an absence. Also, please send an absence note with your child when he/she returns to school. It is important for you to review the updated district attendance policy with your youngster.

Q. How does my youngster make up work when absent?

A. It is possible for students to make up work missed due to legal absences from school. Students can call a friend for homework or ask the teacher upon return to school. Missed work must be completed according to the schedule arranged between child and teacher. If a youngster was in school when a test or assignment was announced and is then absent on the due day, he or she should be prepared for the test or assignment on the day of return to school. Many teachers also post homework assignments on our web page. Students who are illegal absent are not permitted to make up work.

Q. What should I do if my youngster will be out of school for an extended period of time due to illness?

A. If your youngster will be out of school for three (3) consecutive days due to illness, we can arrange that homework be sent home. Please call the office at 669-5414, ext. 2028.

Q. Will my youngster have access to a locker throughout the year?

A. Yes. All sixth graders are assigned a locker as well as a gym locker. The sixth grade teachers are encouraging youngsters to plan ahead so they go to the locker periodically during the day and carry only the books they need rather than a large book bag. It would be helpful if students used a pencil pouch to bring pens, pencils, and supplies to class.

Q. What are Progress Reports?

A. Progress Reports are written communications used by teachers to inform parents of student progress during the period of time between report cards. Progress Reports are available to you electronically through Parent Portal; dates are listed on the district calendar. Directions for registering in Parent Portal were sent with opening of school information.

Q. How and when do students receive report cards?

A. Report cards are also sent electronically through Parent Portal. Days indicating the end of the marking period are listed on the District Calendar; the posting of report cards and progress reports are announced through Tuesday Newsday and the District Calendar.

Q. What sports programs are available for sixth grade students?

A. According to the New York State regulation, sixth grade students cannot participate on inter-scholastic teams.

Q. What other co-curricular activities are available for sixth grade students?

A. Students in sixth grade are encouraged to participate in such activities as the Middle School Student Forum, the Sixth Grade Class Government, the MS Drama Club, the Musical, the Munch Bunch, the MS Art Club, the Memory Book Club, the Book Club, and Club Español. Other activities are arranged based on student interest and availability of chaperones and advisors. The complete list of co-curricular activities is available on the district web page.

Q. How can my youngster run for sixth grade office?

A. The class meeting is held during the opening weeks of school. Duties and responsibilities of class officers are discussed. Students are asked to think about running for office. Students voice a desire to run and petitions are distributed. The need to petition class members for support is explained. Candidates are introduced and allowed to seek signatures. Campaign speeches are given. Posters are hung in the middle school and election is by secret ballot.

Q. How can my youngster get extra help from a teacher?

A. All your child has to do is ask! All teachers are available at least two days a week, Tuesday, Wednesday, or Thursday from 2:15 p.m. to 2:55 p.m. for extra help. The extra help schedule will be posted on our web site. Teachers are also available during student lunch periods through the SGA (Small Group Assistance) program.

Q. How can my child get home if he or she stays to participate in after-school activities?

A. Youngsters can take the 3:45 p.m. bus if they are remaining with a teacher after school. This bus is available on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday and a bus pass from the teacher is required. Parents often arrange to pick up their children after school. In all cases, students must be with a teacher or chaperone when staying beyond the regular school day.

Q. When is detention held and how is it assigned?

A. Detention is assigned by either the classroom teacher or a building administrator as a consequence of student behavior that violates school rules. Sixth grade students may be assigned detention during their lunch period or after-school detention. Students receive 24-hour notice if required to stay after school.

Q. Who can attend middle school parties, dances, and other middle school events?

A. These middle school events are open to students in grades 6 - 8 only. They are chaperoned by teachers, administrators, and parents, and are generally held from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. unless noted. Middle school students are not invited to attend high school dances, nor can high school students participate in middle school events. Occasionally, high school students sponsor middle school events as a service project under the supervision of a teacher or adult advisor. The cost of the event is advertised in school through posters and the morning announcements. Students can also purchase snacks at the events. Parents are asked to pick up students at the announced close of the activity.

Q. How are classes organized in the 6th grade?

A. All classes are heterogeneously grouped with students of all abilities. There are also special classes based on the individualized needs of special education students.

Q. Are there opportunities for acceleration in 6th grade?

A. There are no accelerated classes in 6th grade. There are opportunities for enrichment, however, within the regular classroom, through Math and English 6 Extended, and through the Gifted and Talented Program.

Q. What opportunities are there for acceleration in grades 7 and 8?

- A. Acceleration to high school courses begins in grade 8. The criteria for admission is as follows:

North Salem Middle/High School, in keeping with the Mission of the North Salem District, seeks engage students to continuously learn, question, define and solve problems through critical and creative thinking. To that end, the criteria for enrollment in accelerated courses at North Salem Middle School encourage the participation of capable learners in the challenges of the accelerated curriculum beginning in grade 8.

CRITERIA FOR ADMISSION TO ACCELERATED COURSES

To enroll in the Accelerated Middle School courses, students must qualify by earning a minimum of 2 points according to the rubric outlined below:

- A. Earn a minimum of 85% of a summative assessment in the previous course or earn a score of 4 on the New York State Assessment (if applicable)
1 point
- B. Earn minimum of 90% in previous course
1 point
- C. Earn the recommendation of the teacher based on teacher developed criteria
1 Point
- D. Demonstrate mastery on a placement test developed by the department
1 point

Total points required to enroll = 2 points

Student placement in Accelerated courses will be reviewed at the end of the marking period. Students must maintain a minimum average of 80% to remain in the Accelerated course. Students failing to maintain this minimum average will be rescheduled for a non-accelerated course.

Q. What is the Advisory Program?

- A. North Salem Middle School has a long tradition of including an advisory program in which students are connected with an adult mentor as an integral part of our middle school program. The objective of advisory is to make a child feel comfortable with an adult whom they can come to in times of trouble if they so choose. The goals of the program are as follows:

- ∞ To provide each student with regular, compassionate and supportive counsel from a concerned adult about his or her academic progress, adjustment to school and personal adjustment
- ∞ To provide a consultation system that gives sixth grade students assistance with their problems
- ∞ To provide an alternate adult in a different setting to assist sixth graders

- ∞ To aid students in the transition from elementary school to middle school
- ∞ To provide a place where a mixture of students can communicate with each other in a non-threatening way.

Advisory is held throughout the year. Students meet with their advisors in small groups of approximately 12 students. All advisors are members of our professional faculty. Our advisory program has a special focus on the principles of Project S.T.A.N.D. (Stand, Think, Accept and Do the Right Thing), our school-wide effort to address the issues of bullying and peer pressure.

Q. What is the 6th Grade Mentoring Program?

- A. This is a program where carefully selected Junior and Senior students will, on a rotating basis, mentor 6th grade. These high school students will be in the 6th grade lunches and make themselves available to 6th graders. This is strictly a volunteer program. No 6th grader will be forced to have a mentor – they are there if needed or wanted.

Q. How will my child identify the adults available to assist and support him or her in Middle School?

- A. The middle school adult mentoring learning environment encourages all students to begin the process of independently managing and balancing the academic demands placed upon them. While students are learning to become more self-sufficient, the school community is acutely aware of the need to foster adult mentoring relationships to help ensure that students do not feel they have to make this transition on their own. To ensure that each child knows and understands that school personnel also want to help them, adult mentoring lessons have been developed and are introduced to all middle school students through 6th, 7th, and 8th grade STAND advisory groups. Students are taught about the concepts of adult mentoring through stories, and the small group setting provides each student ample opportunity to become an active participant in the discussions. At the conclusion of each lesson, all students are able to define what the characteristics of adult mentors are, ways in which adult mentors can help them, as well as identify the adults they feel they can reach out to both within the school and in the community.

Q. Where can I get additional information about school programs, practices and policies?

- A. At the start of the school year, you will be asked electronically to review and accept various policies through Family ID. The Middle School Parent - Student Handbook and the Middle School Curriculum Guide is available through the district website. These documents together with the district calendar will serve as excellent references throughout the school year.

Q. How can I learn more about what is happening at the middle school/high school?

- A. Tuesday/Newsday continues at the middle/high school to keep parents updated on school events. Invitations to meetings, information and special activities are all posted on the district website on Tuesday. The website is also an excellent source of information celebrating the achievements of students and faculty.

