



Poquessing Middle School

We Build Futures

August 1, 2018

Dear Students, Parents and Guardians:

Greetings from Poquessing Middle School! Welcome to new and returning students and their families! We are enthusiastically preparing for your arrival and we hope this newsletter will provide you with valuable information for the 2018-19 school year.

Our district mission statement: The Neshaminy community builds futures by empowering each child to become a productive citizen and a lifelong learner.

The district mission carries with it four beliefs that drive the actions of the Poquessing faculty.

- Children are the future.
- All people can learn.
- All people have worth.
- A quality education is a right.

Poquessing Middle School students will share in experiences and challenges, which the faculty believes will empower each child to become productive and will help them grow academically, physically, and emotionally. **Our expectation is that our students will “Be Kind” to one another. We believe being kind is easily accomplished. We will reinforce this through activities, Rachel’s Challenge and modeling.**

Within the first few days of school, we will introduce our **SOAR program** to our new students and reintroduce it to our upperclassmen. This is a K-12 positive approach to school-wide behavior through support and interventions. SOAR stands for **SAFE, ORGANIZED, ACCOUNTABLE and RESPECTFUL**. Similar to teaching reading, writing and math, we will teach the expectations through mini-lessons. And, we will randomly reward students for exhibiting those behaviors as well and collect data to measure our efforts and reteach as needed.

All students will receive a take-home electronic device. Grade seven students will continue with the use of iPads. Fifth, sixth and eighth grade students will receive a Chromebook, all devices will be distributed in September. Students new to the Chromebook will receive instruction on the use of the device.

We anticipate an exciting new year of growing and learning. Our accomplished staff endeavors to maintain an excellent educational program for your children. This team will dedicate their time to understand your child’s strengths and needs. Poquessing parents and guardians have been extraordinarily supportive through the years and we look forward to continuing this relationship. We are TEAM Poquessing!

It is not news that the middle years can be difficult transitional years, but they are rewarding as well! Parents who have “survived” the middle years know that keeping students engaged is one key to success. Frequent home and school communication is also key. No issue is too big or too small to be addressed. We look forward to open communication as we facilitate the growth and development of your child through middle school. Please contact us with any concerns. Welcome to Poquessing!

Joann Holland
Principal
jholland@neshaminy.org
Main Office: 215-809-6210

Don Palmer
Assistant Principal
dpalmer@neshaminy.org
Guidance Office: 215-809-6215

Attendance Office: 215-809-6211

IMPORTANT DATES

- New Student Orientation--Thursday, August 23, 2018 at 1:00 p.m. in the Auditorium. Chromebook Technology Fee and Form Collection Opportunity.
- First Day of School for 5th Grade Only: Wednesday, August 29th. Fifth Grade will report to the Cafeteria, sit by homeroom and then be escorted to their respective classroom by their homeroom teacher.
- All Students in all grades report to school on Thursday, August 30th.
- Back-to-School Night – Thursday, September 20th. Meet your student’s teachers and learn about our program.
- School Picture Day – Wednesday, September 26th.

School Day Hours:

Begins at 7:55 a.m. (doors open at 7:25 a.m.)

Dismissal 2:55 p.m. (buses depart approx. 3:05 p.m.)

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

- **ABSENCES:** **IMPORTANT CHANGE** - Absence excuse notes must be received within three days of the absence and may be handwritten and signed by the parent/guardian to the HOMEROOM teacher OR emailed to pog-attendance@neshaminy.org. The ATTENDANCE POLICY has CHANGED significantly. After **15 days of excused absence, a medical note is required.** Reasons of acceptable absences are outlined in the NSD School Board Attendance Policy found on the NSD website.
- **AVID: Advancement Via Individual Determination.** We are continuing our implementation of the AVID program at Poquessing. AVID's mission is to close the achievement gap by preparing all students for college readiness and success in a global society. We will raise the rigor and expectations to prepare our students for competitive careers and college entrance through teaching strategies which will develop student academic skills, specifically writing, inquiry, collaboration, organization, and reading. Some notable examples of AVID which will be observed include: the 5th grade requirement of one large 3-ring binder, the 8th grade AVID Elective class, Focused Note Taking, and College and Career Days. www.AVID.org
- **BOOK BAGS** - **IMPORTANT CHANGE** – **Book bags are permitted during the school day.** It has become evident with the introduction of the 1:1 technology devices that students can better manage their textbooks and supplies in a backpack and their devices in the assigned case. To limit the weight of the book bag, students should carry only those items required for the first three classes. Two 5-minute locker breaks are provided each day (10:30 a.m. and 12:41 p.m.) During locker break students will exchange their materials for the next assigned classes. **NO book bags on wheels.** Small gym bags containing a change of clothes on days when students have an assigned PE or swimming class will be permitted. These must be kept under the student’s desk during regular classes. Books and other school supplies may not be carried in gym bags. Backpacks/device carry cases/lockers are subject to search as per School Board Policy.
- **CANVAS** - Poquessing’s Learning Management System for the 2018-19 school year. All teachers are using Canvas. Canvas is the learning management system used by the Neshaminy School District. This is a one-stop shop for information. The only information you will not be able to access is student grades. Parents will still use Home Access to view grades.

- **CAFETERIA CHATTER** – Visit the Neshaminy web site for detailed information about menus, nutrition and prepayment options. All Neshaminy cafeterias have the computerized “Point of Sale Payment System.” Each student has an account for the prepayment of all purchases made in the cafeteria. Prepayment can be made with cash or by a check made payable to **Neshaminy Food Service**. You may also prepay for your student's meals online or by phone safely and conveniently. Access meal account balances online, or by phone. Choose Visa, MasterCard, Discover, electronic check or debit card. www.schoolcafe.com
We strongly encourage you to take advantage of the prepayment system, as all children will benefit from quicker lunch lines, giving them a quality lunch time. **Lunch prices: \$3.10 for secondary schools. Breakfast is \$1.60.** Please plan accordingly. Visit <https://www.neshaminy.org/Page/165> for free and reduced lunch forms, menu and more.
- **EARLY DISMISSAL PROCEDURES** – please send a note with your child to the ATTENDANCE OFFICE or EMAIL pog-attendance@neshaminy.org. Include the date/time of the pick-up as well as WHO is picking up your child. The person picking up your child (including parent/guardian) MUST be listed in the Home Access Center and have a PHOTO ID. Safety First!
- **FIFTH GRADE COMMON QUESTIONS**- Please see the attached document.
- **Grades: Grades can be accessed from the Home Access Center.** This is a valuable communication tool for sharing information between the school, parents, students and teachers. View GRADES, teacher GRADEBOOKS, REPORT CARDS and INTERIM PROGRESS REPORTS. Also view attendance, medical, contact and transportation information. [The Home Access Center](#)
- **GUIDANCE: THE GUIDANCE OFFICE CAN BE CONTACTED DIRECTLY AT 215-809-6215.**
COUNSELOR assignments are as follows:
 - GRADE 5: Mr. Passman
 - GRADE 6: Mrs. Abrohms
 - GRADE 8: Mrs. Lenahan
 - GRADE 7 Student Last Names A—G: Mr. Passman
 - GRADE 7 Student Last Names H—O: Mrs. Lenahan
 - GRADE 7 Student Last Names P—Z: Mrs. Abrohms
- **HOME ACCESS CENTER** – The Home Access Center (HAC) is a valuable communication tool for information between school, parents, students and teachers. Student schedules, attendance, discipline, contact, transportation and medical information, as well as, teacher gradebooks, interim progress reports and report cards may be found on the Home Access Center. **Student schedules will go live on the HAC on Friday, August 24th.**
- **HOMEROOM** - Students must be aware of their **homeroom room number**. 5th Grade students will report to the cafeteria on the first day of school. **6th, 7th and 8th grade STUDENTS WILL REPORT TO Homeroom on their FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL, Thursday, August 30th.** **Homeroom** is listed on your student’s schedule. **SCHEDULES WILL BE LIVE ON HOME ACCESS on AUGUST 24th.**
- **INTRAMURAL AND EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES** - We offer a comprehensive intramural program as well as extracurricular activities for students after school. Some of these activities may include: cheerleading, band, chorus, orchestra, student council, school store, yearbook, Reading Olympics, Science Olympiad, basketball, weight training, street hockey, computer club, etc. Programs are offered based on student interest and demand. **No physical exam is required to participate in the extracurricular or activity programs.** A signed parent permission slip is required.

- **IPAD/CHROMEBOOKS** – All 5th, 6th and 8th grade students will receive DELL Chromebooks the first few weeks of school. Re-distribution of iPads for grade 7 will occur during the first week of school. Fifth grade, eighth grade and students NEW to the school must submit paperwork and the technology fee at Orientation. Cash, money order or online payment only. **NO CHECKS, PLEASE!** Technology forms will soon be available on the Poquessing website and additional information will be sent out via email.
- **LOCKERS** - A hallway locker and lock will be assigned to each student. Each student is responsible for the cleanliness and care of the interior and exterior of his/her locker. **The security of the locker is the responsibility of each student.** Do not allow other students to use your locker. **Lost or damaged locks can be replaced for \$5.00.** **GYM LOCKERS - Students are REQUIRED to provide** a lock for use during gym class. The lock needs to be removed at the end of the PE class period. Students are advised that they should not bring valuable items into the gym area. The school will not assume responsibility for lost or stolen items. Lockers belong to the school and will be checked periodically to ensure the safety and well-being of all our students at Poquessing.
- **LUNCH WITH THE PRINCIPAL** – Students will be given a choice early in the school year to indicate whether or not they would like to have “Lunch with the Principal.” Student names are selected by a random drawing. Lunch includes pizza and soda or water. Students may bring their own lunch. Parents will be notified if their student’s name is selected.
- **NAVIANCE** - All Poquessing students have (and new students will receive) a *Naviance.com* account. The goal is to assist students to discover their individual strengths, goals, skills and interests and connect those to career planning. *Naviance* is a tool that will help students learn self-discovery and connect to future goal-setting and exciting careers. Stay Tuned for *Naviance* for parents and guardians!
- **NOT A “NUT FREE” SCHOOL** - There are members of our building that have severe allergies to food and environmental antigens. Please help us continue to promote an environment that all can enjoy without allergic reactions by instructing your child that food cannot be shared in the classroom, the lunchroom, on the bus or at the bus stop or at after school activities. Because the consumption of certain foods or even the scent of certain foods may cause complications that may leave children and or adults in compromised conditions requiring health care, children are asked to bring their own snacks for the various special celebrations when permissible throughout the year. Please contact your child’s teacher before you send food to school for special events. Students should wash their hands after they eat snacks and lunch. We are also asking students to refrain from bringing scented body sprays, perfumes, hand sanitizers, or any scented items. Similar unwanted reactions can occur to those within the building.
- **NURSE INFORMATION** – We welcome a new nurse to Poquessing this year, Ms. Moira Manila! Please send documentation of your child’s immunizations to the nurse. **All students in all grades are required to have two measles vaccines.** See the nurse’s web link on our Poquessing site for updated information throughout the year. [School Nurse](#)

All immunizations MUST be up to date. [New VACCINATION REQUIREMENTS](#). The School Health Law requires medical examinations for all children in 6th grade and dental examinations for all children in 7th grade. It is recommended that these examinations be done by your family physician and dentist. Please see the Nurse’s webpage on Poquessing’s website for the appropriate forms for these examinations. The completed forms should be in the Nurse’s office by October 1st.
- **ONE-WAY TRAFFIC PATTERN** – Parents/guardians dropping students off are asked to enter the main driveway on Heights Lane and proceed left around the building for drop-off at the gym door then continue out the Poquessing Way exit. To help insure the safety of students and drivers, **one-way**

patterns are in effect at all times. Parents/guardians dropping off and picking up students during bus transport times cannot use the main bus port.

- You will be able to use the rear entrance near the gym for morning drop-off and afternoon pick-up. **Doors will open at 7:25 a.m.** We ask that you pull close to the curb to avoid blocking the drive. **DO NOT DROP OFF ON THE CURB OPPOSITE THE BUILDING OR AT THE STOP SIGNS ON POQUESSING WAY BY THE PARKING LOT EXIT.**
- During non-busing times (8:00 a.m. – 2:35 p.m.), early dismissals and late drop offs may use the front entrance/bus circle. Signs are posted and arrows painted on the drives to assist motorists with directions.
- **AFTERNOON PICK-UP – 2:55 p.m.** Parents may park in the **Ferderbar bus circle** or **at the back entrance of Poquessing** to pick- up Students. Please plan ahead, communicate with your child, and have a routine.
- **PEST CONTROL** The Neshaminy School District contracts for pest control and elimination throughout the district and each of our buildings. The contracted service complies with all areas of the concept of Integrated Pest Management (IPM). IPM controls the use of pesticides so that sites are monitored for pest activity before any chemicals are used for treatment purposes. If an area becomes necessary for treatment and use of chemicals, only the safest product can be used. These products must be applied when the areas to be treated are vacant by students and staff for a required period of time. Notification must be given throughout the process both prior to the treatment and following any treatment. Records are kept both on site and in the Operations office as to all treatments.
- **SECURITY SYSTEM at ENTRANCE** - Please be aware of our security management check-in system. The system will allow the school office staff to track who is entering and exiting the school. The system improves security by identifying who is in the facility quickly and accurately, especially in emergency situations. **A STATE ISSUED Driver's License or STATE ISSUED PHOTO ID are required for entrance to the building.**
- **SPORTS** - Students interested in participating in a fall sports activity such as football, girls' field hockey or coed soccer must have a physical on file in the physical education office **prior to tryouts.** A PIAA physical card must be signed by a doctor and parent in order to participate. **The form can be obtained online (see our website).** Students who participate in any athletic activity must be covered by school insurance or personal insurance through your family plan.
- **STUDENT AGENDA BOOK** - An agenda book will be provided for every student. **The agenda book is a REQUIRED tool** to assist students in organizing and planning their learning time. **Students are expected to take this assignment book to every class. We strongly encourage students to bring the agenda book home each evening for parents to look over and respond as needed. The agenda book is a great communication tool for parents and teachers when used regularly. Student will record daily homework assignments, tests, quizzes and projects.**
- **STUDENT DROP-OFF TIME** - To ensure student safety and supervision, students are not permitted to enter the building before **7:25 a.m.** unless they are involved in a scheduled co-curricular program. Between 7:30 and 7:50 a.m., the cafeteria will be open for students to enjoy a nutritious breakfast and the gymnasium will be open for warm-up activities. At 7:50 a.m. daily, students are permitted to enter the classroom/locker areas. *In the event of a two-hour delay the times above would reflect a two-hour change.*

- **STUDENT HANDBOOK** - Found on the Poquessing Middle School website under *Our School*.

STUDENT INSURANCE - Neshaminy School District does not carry insurance for students.

This is a reminder to parents with a child or children **attending** school in our School District that we do not carry medical insurance on students, but do provide parents with the opportunity to select a primary excess group insurance plan for students. Student accident insurance can help you eliminate the possibility of out-of-pocket expenses, since many group insurance policies no longer pay full hospital and medical expenses and may require a deductible or co-insurance. There are two plans available for your consideration:

- **Plan #1 School Time Coverage** – Costs \$27 per student – This will cover injury occurring while the student is traveling to and from school, while attending school sponsored activities such as plays, assemblies, class trips, interscholastic sports other than Sr. high football, intramural sports, gym and physical education classes, etc.
- **Plan #2 24 Hour Coverage** – Costs \$98 per student – This will cover all of the above, plus accidents occurring away from school, in the evenings and on weekends, vacations, etc.

Please note that the plans should be considered in conjunction with any other family medical insurance you may have.

The student accident insurance information and application is available on the district's website under the PARENTS tab: Student Accident Insurance.

PLEASE DO NOT SEND CASH! Completed applications should be returned by mail with a check or money order for the correct premium, directly to:

A&H Lockbox, P.O. Box 45731, Baltimore, MD 21297

DO NOT RETURN THE APPLICATION& PAYMENT TO YOUR STUDENT'S SCHOOL

Parents enrolling more than one child must fill out an application for each child, write a separate check or obtain a money order for each child/student being enrolled and mail in separate envelopes to the address above. Your cancelled check or money order receipt is your proof of payment. Thank you!

For the 2018-2019 School Year, contact Alive Risk directly at (215) 946-8888 between 8:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. options. If you have any questions, please call an Insurance Broker. This insurance can be purchased anytime during the 2018-2019 school year.

- **Transportation** - Busing information will be posted on Home Access on August 24th. Students should be at the bus stop *ten minutes before* the scheduled time. Students who walk to school should plan to arrive at school by 7:45 a.m. The after school bus runs are 4:15 p.m. (Mon-Thurs) and 5:00 p.m. (Mon-Fri) for students participating in supervised afternoon activities.
- **WATER BOTTLES** - As we know, there are health benefits to staying hydrated throughout the day. Students MAY carry a water bottle throughout the school day (this is water only, not juice, coffee, iced tea, etc...). **Glass bottles are not permitted.** Containers must be clear. Classroom teachers will communicate their individual classroom procedures regarding water bottles near electronic devices with students. We ask that our students, as always, show respect to their teachers regarding individual classroom rules. We must ensure that our investment in technology is not compromised by spills, our students remain healthy and learning in the classroom continues.
- **W.I.N.** – W.I.N. is a 30-minute period at the end of the school day. W.I.N. is an acronym for **Whatever I Need**. It allows students to use this time to receive extra assistance from a teacher, study for a test, review an assignment, make-up missed classwork, complete a project or go to the library. Teachers and students also use the W.I.N. class period for academic interventions, peer mentoring, student council, NJHS, music and announcements. *During the first few weeks of school, students will report back to their homeroom for W.I.N.*

To stay informed throughout the year please check the following information sites:

Neshaminy.org

Sign-up for the NESHAMINY APP, Twitter, Instagram and Facebook

The AHERA requirements include a notification to the parents of registered students, faculty and staff of the existence of the Management Plan and subsequent additions to the management plan. It is mandatory that the notice below be distributed to all parents.

“Neshaminy School District has engaged Eagle Industrial Hygiene Assoc., Inc., to fulfill the requirements of the Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act (AHERA), 40 CFR Part 763, Subpart E. This law requires that each Local Education Authority (LEA) engage EPA accredited individuals to initially inspect and subsequently reinspect every three years all student and staff accessed areas for the presence of both friable and non-friable asbestos containing materials (ACM) and to develop an Asbestos Management Plan from the information developed from the building inspections. All areas of our facilities were inspected for asbestos-containing materials.

The Management Plan provides a description of the amount, type, location and condition of all ACM found in these areas. The Plan also contains a detailed schedule of responses and activities for handling the ACM. The Management Plan is available for review by interested parents, faculty and staff in all school offices during business hours.

Sincerely,



Barbara Markowitz
Business Administrator”

❖ This document is not all inclusive, but is meant to acquaint you with Poquessing Middle School. Please refer to our online student handbook, student discipline policy and the Neshaminy School District’s School Board Policies. Parents/guardians/caretakers may attend New Student Orientation, Back-to-School Night and contact teachers or the school office with your questions or concerns.