



Poquessing Middle School

We Build Futures

August 6, 2019

Dear Students, Parents and Guardians:

Greetings from Poquessing Middle School and welcome to all students and their families, new and returning! We are Poquessing Proud and prepared to launch the 2019-20 school year. We finished the school year strong as a community of students, faculty, teachers and families working together to create positive experiences for our students. We will continue our mission to work cohesively to raise achievement and build relationships both in the classrooms, on the stage, on the fields, in the gymnasium, in clubs and through service learning. We understand the connection between academics and social and emotional health. **The Neshaminy community builds futures by empowering each child to become a productive citizen and a lifelong learner.** That is our mission.

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. SOAR stands for **SAFE, ORGANIZED, ACCOUNTABLE and RESPECTFUL.**

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 commit their time to realize your child’s strengths and needs. Poquessing parents and caretakers 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. **We ask that you:**

1. Make student attendance a PRIORITY
2. Check Home Access Center regularly with your child.
3. Communicate often with your child’s teacher or counselor (grades 5 & 6).
Foster independence by encouraging older students to communicate directly with their teachers.
4. Provide a routine/quiet place for homework.
5. Monitor students’ use of technology.

And finally, 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

Timothy S. Hunt
Assistant Principal

thunt@neshaminy.org
Attendance Office: 215-809-6211

Guidance Office: 215-809-6215

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


[Poquessing Website](#)

[Neshaminy SD website](#)

[Neshaminy SD Facebook](#)

Sign-up for the NESHAMINY APP

IMPORTANT DATES

- **Thursday, August 22nd @ 9:30am** the New Student Orientation (5th and all new students) in the Auditorium. Chromebook Technology Fee and Form Collection opportunity.
- **Wednesday, August 28th**: the first Day of School for 5th Grade Only: Students will report to the Cafeteria, sit by homeroom and then be escorted to their respective classroom. Please know your homeroom teacher's name.
- **Thursday, August 29th**: All students in All grades report to school.
- Friday, August 30th: ALL Students IN SCHOOL!
- **Thursday, September 19th**: **Back-to-School Night** – Parents and Caretakers will meet their child's teachers and learn about our program.
- **Wednesday, September 26th**: School Picture Day 

School Day Hours:

Begin 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** - 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 Poqattendance@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.** AVID's mission is to close the achievement gap by preparing all students for college readiness and success in a global society. We offer a single 8th grade AVID Elective class which requires an application process. The elective is a college readiness class held every day of the week. It is offered to students who would like to prepare to attend a college or university. The rigorous curriculum includes writing, inquiry, collaboration, organization, reading, note-taking, study skills, test preparation and test taking skills, college/career/team building activities, college visits and enrichment opportunities. The 5th and 6th grade students as well as the 8th grade AVID elective students are required to utilize a specific notebook organization system. www.AVID.org
- **ANTI-BULLYING POLICY**- As a school community we will define bullying at each initial school-wide grade level assembly, and share with students the steps for reporting bullying behavior, posting steps in each classroom and a reporting method for students and staff. We will model positive bystander behavior. We will continue to build relationships both in and outside of classrooms by integrating social and emotional

learning and co-curricular opportunities. We will continue to spread positivity and carry the Rachel's Challenge message of Kindness through service learning and random acts of kindness and as well as planned community building activities. Our SOAR program will carry out our mission to promote positive behaviors. [District Bullying/Cyberbullying Policy](#)

- **BOOK BAGS** – Student will need small a gym bag, such as a draw string bag/sling bag to carry their PE/swimsuit & towel for assigned days. Books and other school supplies may not be carried in gym bags. **Backpacks/gym bags/device carrying cases/lockers are subject to search as per School Board Policy.**
- **CANVAS** - Poquessing's Learning Management System for the 2019-20 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. Although grades are posted in CANVAS, the most reliable and up to date grades are on Home Access Center.
- **CAFETERIA CHATTER** – Visit the Neshaminy [Food Services Webpage](#) 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. [Free and Reduced Lunch Form](#)
- **CHROMEBOOKS** – We are a 1:1 device school. All NEW STUDENTS will receive a DELL Chromebook the first few weeks of school. NEW STUDENTS must submit paperwork and the technology fee at Orientation. Cash, money order or online payment only. [Technology Forms Link](#)
- **EARLY DISMISSAL PROCEDURES** – please send a note with your child to the ATTENDANCE OFFICE or EMAIL poqattendance@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-** [Common Questions](#)
- **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. [Home Access Center](#)
- **GUIDANCE- THE GUIDANCE OFFICE CAN BE CONTACTED DIRECTLY AT 215-809-6215.**
COUNSELOR assignments are as follows:
 - GRADE 5: Mrs. Lenahan*
 - GRADE 6: Mr. Passman*
 - GRADE 7: Ms. Abrohms*
 - GRADE 8 Students Last Names A—G: Mr. Passman*
 - GRADE 8 Students Last Names H—O: Mrs. Lenahan*
 - GRADE 8 Students 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, medical and transportation 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 23rd at 4:00PM.** [Home Access Center Link](#)
- **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 29th.**
Homeroom is listed on your student’s schedule. **SCHEDULES WILL BE LIVE** ON HOME ACCESS on FRIDAY, AUGUST 23rd at 4:00p.m.
- **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. [PIAA FORM](#)
- **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. As per school board policy, lockers are subject to search.
- **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.
- **MORNING ARRIVAL AND MORNING SHOOT**- What is morning shoot? Prior to homeroom, students have the ability to start their day shooting hoops, also known as playing basketball, in the gymnasium when they first arrive. This is a great way for students, it is a great way to start the day! As enrollment has increased, we need to limit the number of students who can participate in Morning Shoot. We will follow this arrival schedule:
 - 7th & 8th grade students will
 - report to the gymnasium Marking Periods 1 & 3
 - report to the cafeteria Marking Periods 2 & 4
 - 5th & 6th grade students will
 - report to the gymnasium Marking Periods 2 & 4
 - report to the cafeteria Marking Periods 1 & 3

Breakfast items will be available daily for purchase in the Gym area for the assigned grade level via a Breakfast Kiosk.

- **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! [Naviance Link](#)
- **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** – Ms. Moira Manila is our School Nurse. 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 pickup. **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.

- **PTO**- Our Poquessing PTO, under the leadership of PTO president, Nicole Higgins and committed parents (past and present), have planned activities and fundraisers throughout the coming school year to support our programs. Please visit the Poquessing PTO Facebook page for PTO sponsored events and fundraisers and discover how you can become involved. Parents wanted! We are all in this together. PTO=Parent and teachers working together!
- **SAFE2SAY SOMETHING** The program teaches youth and adults how to recognize warning signs and signals from individuals who may be a threat to themselves or others and to 'say something' before it is too late." S2SS provides a way for individuals to anonymously report concerning information through a dedicated app, website, and 24/7 Crisis Center Hotline. [Safe2Say Something Link](#)
- **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. [PIAA Physical Form REQUIRED CLICK HERE TO LINK](#)
- **STUDENT AGENDA BOOK** - Agenda books are no longer provided by the school, they are also not required by all teachers. Agenda books are a great tool to assist students in organizing and planning their learning time. Students are expected to utilize a planning tool suitable for them (online app, CANVAS calendar, agenda book, etc...) **Regardless of a student's personal choice, recording daily homework assignments, tests, quizzes and projects, students are strongly encouraged to use a communication tool for parents and teachers.**
Agenda Books (Personalized with "Poquessing Middle School") are available for purchase in the Main Office for \$5.00. Cash or check made payable to Poquessing MS Benevolent Fund.
- **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. Neshaminy School District is pleased to offer a discounted accident insurance plan for our students. The coverage is excellent and the cost is only \$27 for school-time or \$98 for 24-hour full-year protection. This is the same cost as 2018-2019 plan. The company is AXIS Insurance Company, and its agent is Alive Risk of Langhorne, 215-946-8888. Many parents do not appreciate the importance of such insurance until accidents occur and medical bills are presented for payment. Please note that the district DOES NOT carry medical insurance on 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. [Student Accident Insurance Link](#)


- **TRANSPORTATION** - Busing information will be posted on Home Access on August 23rd. 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 5:15 p.m. (Mon-Fri) for students participating in supervised afternoon activities.
- **WATER BOTTLES** – Students MAY carry a water bottle throughout the school day (this is water only, not juice, coffee, iced tea, etc...) to remain hydrated. **Glass bottles are not permitted.** 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.
- **WICOR-** Writing, Inquiry, Collaboration, Organization and Reading is our Instructional Core consisting best practice instructional practices and learning strategies guide students in comprehending concepts and ideas. [WICOR Instructional Model](#)
- **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.*

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,



Donald B. Irwin, Jr.

Business Administrator”

Please subscribe to the PTO Facebook page for PTO-related information such as PTO fundraiser and events to benefit students. Please direct all school related questions to Poquessing Middle School.

To receive reliable district communications, such as calendar events, weather notifications, and schedule changes, please rely ONLY on the following official communications: Neshaminy School District website, the Poquessing MS website or the District Facebook page for official information.

www.neshaminy.org

www.neshaminy.org/poquessing

www.facebook.com/neshaminysd

❖ 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 questions or concerns. ❖