

New to Hommocks? Here's What Parents of Sixth Graders and New Students Can Expect

Welcome to Hommocks! Whether you are coming from one of our four Mamaroneck elementary schools or whether you just joined our community from another school district, there is always a sense of anticipation that accompanies change. In order to make your child's transition to Hommocks as smooth as possible, here is some helpful info.

This **July**, you should have received a summer reading list, your child's team assignment, the name of his or her guidance counselor and a list of courses your child will be taking. Visit the **Hommocks** website home page from www.mamkschools.org and click the **School Supplies** link to see what your child will need for September. That's right! You can do most of your school supply shopping in advance.

In late **August**, you will receive your child's period-by-period schedule with his or her locker assignment and combination from your child's team of teachers. Once you receive this information, we recommend that you and your child visit Hommocks, walk through your child's schedule, find each classroom, and practice opening the locker. It may be helpful to bring along an older sibling or Hommocks student neighbor to serve as a tour guide.

On **September 1st, 2nd and 3rd**, seventh and eighth grade student council members will be on-hand to lead tours of the building.

Important: *The building will be open for tours from 8:00 a.m. until 12 noon.* Building maps will be available in the main office.

The first day of school (for sixth graders only) is Tuesday, September 8th. Sixth graders report to their first period classes at 8:10 a.m. Many parents choose to park in the school lot and escort their children to class. On this day only, sixth grade students will then start the day with their period three class. Don't worry; many teachers will be stationed in the hallway to point our newest students in the right direction. To help sixth grade students acclimate themselves to school, seventh and eighth grade students do not begin school until the next day.

During day one, sixth grade teachers will introduce themselves, confirm locker assign-

ments (helping students practice opening them) and take the students on a tour of the building. That day, students are dismissed at 11:45 a.m. Over the next few days, teachers will have ice-breaker activities to help sixth graders get to know their classmates.

On the second day of school (and every day thereafter) Hommocks will open at 8:00 a.m., leaving children ten minutes to visit their lockers and get to first period classes before the 8:10 a.m. bell. Dismissal takes place at 2:45p.m.

Sixth graders eat lunch at 12:37p.m. The cafeteria offers a broad array of hot and cold lunch items, including deli food, a salad bar, and favorite hot foods such as pizza, pasta and French fries. There is also an option to prepay for lunch which you will hear more about in a separate mailing at the end of August.

Every student in Hommocks will be provided with a **Hommocks Planner**. Students are expected to record their daily homework assignments in this planner. It is very helpful if parents periodically take time to view their child's planner. Some parents use the planner as an avenue to communicate with teachers. You can write a note in your child's planner and then remind your child to show it to a teacher during a specific class.

Your child will be taught by a **grade-specific team**. Each team consists of four primary subject teachers for English, mathematics, science, and social studies, a guidance counselor, and, usually, a special education teacher. There are approximately 100 students on a team. Each team is part of an academic house, comprised of a sixth grade, a seventh grade, and an eighth grade team.

As an introduction to **foreign language**, each sixth grader will sample three languages: Chinese, French and Spanish. Each language is introduced in an eight-week class offered every day. In addition to foreign language, sixth graders take two other eight-week classes: Computer and Library/Guidance.

Band, orchestra and chorus will be part of your child's schedule every other day, if he

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What to expect . . . (cont'd)

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or she chose one of these performing music classes last spring through his or her elementary music teacher.

If your child is accidentally enrolled in the wrong music class, report this to his or her counselor. If your child is not taking performing music, he or she will be enrolled in physical education every day. Children in band, orchestra or chorus take physical education every other day.

Sixth graders also participate in the following "quarter courses" which change each marking period: Art, Media, General Music and Technology.

Guidance counselors are an important part of every middle school student's experience. Get to know your child's guidance counselor and encourage your child to speak to a counselor if there are any concerns. Two programs are scheduled in the fall to help parents become familiar with counselors and the services they offer.

On **Back to School Night, September 15**, from 7:00 - 7:25, each counselor conducts a separate "Meet Your Counselor" meeting with parents whose children are assigned to the same team, and therefore share the same counselor. In addition, the **6th Grade Parent Community Dinner on October 15th** is a great opportunity to introduce yourself to your child's counselor, as well as listen to the counselor share tips to ensure your child's success in sixth grade.

Now that your child is in middle school, **parent-teacher conferences** are held by request. If you feel the need to meet with any of your child's teachers, you are encouraged to call or e-mail the teacher or the guidance counselor directly to set up an appointment.

Your child will receive four **report cards** per year. Report cards have numerical grades on them. Halfway

through each marking period, progress reports are mailed home. Teachers will let you know how your child is performing and send comments relating to any concerns they have.

Hommocks administrators Nora Mazzone, Edgar McIntosh and Seth Weitzman welcome e-mail, telephone calls, and parent conferences. You may also attend Principal Coffees held twice each year for each grade in the daytime and evening. These meetings delve into school issues and leave ample time for parents to ask questions and air concerns.

There are **extracurricular activities** available to meet the interests of students before and after school. Take time to learn about clubs, intramural sports, and the school musical. The **Student Handbook** contains descriptions of these programs, as does our website. Remind your child to listen carefully to morning announcements for more info regarding these activities. Be sure to read **HMXpress**, the weekly bulletin emailed to parents every Friday, which regularly updates information about extracurricular activities, important information and district-wide events.

The **library** is open to students before school beginning at 7:30 a.m. and after school until 3:30 p.m. with extended hours after school Monday through Thursday. The computer labs are open after school everyday until 4:00 p.m.

We understand that the increase in the number of teachers and classes is an adjustment for new students. Your child may need an extra ten minutes each night laying out supplies that he or she must remember for the next day. **If you need to get a message to your child**, or if you need to bring a forgotten item to school, call 220-3300 to leave a message or bring the item to the main office. A secretary

will post your child's name on the message board in the commons (main lobby near the building entrance) asking your child to stop in the office.

Important: Encourage your child to check this message board at least once a day.

There are **several options getting to and from school**. Due to an increase in traffic volume, it may be more convenient for students to walk, carpool or take the bus. Public transportation is available from the Bee-Line Bus Service if you live in their service area. For more info, call the Bee-Line at 813-7777 or find them online at www.westchestergov.com. Bus tickets cost \$1.75 one-way for students and can be purchased at the Chase Bank or the Corner Store in Larchmont.

There will be a late bus available on Monday through Thursday starting the second or third week in September. It leaves the Hommocks at 4:30 p.m. and makes one stop at Mamaroneck Avenue school. There is no charge for this bus.

We look forward to seeing you on **September 8th!**

PLEASE JOIN THE HOMMOCKS PTA

The annual PTA dues are \$15 per household.

You can use the enclosed tally sheet to pay your dues as well as pay for PTA sponsored activities for the school year. We hope this makes for less paperwork for your family.

Thanks for your support!

Welcome New Hommocks Faculty!

It has become a tradition to share brief biographies of new teachers hired as of mid-July in this issue of **Hommocks Happenings**.

Eighth grade Earth Science teacher **Vassili Frantzis** previously taught earth science, physics, mathematics and computer science in high schools from the Bronx to the Virgin Islands over a ten year period. He holds a Bachelor of Science degree from SUNY Binghamton with a dual major in Geological and Environmental Sciences, and a Master of Arts in Geology from SUNY Buffalo. Other accomplishments in the field of Earth Science include authoring educational software used in geology classes and serving as a graduate teaching assistant in a geophysics laboratory.

Health teacher **Louis Kail** will be replacing Julie Santoiemma while she is home with her baby the first half of the year. Mr. Kail recently completed Bachelor of Science and Master of Science degrees from Ithaca College, majoring in Physical Education and Health Education. While at Ithaca, Mr. Kail earned awards for academic achievement and the Health Promotion and Physical Education Award for Professional Excellence.

Technology teacher **Ronald Nobles** also taught technology in the Spackenkill school district, planning units on automation and robotics and other topics. Outside the classroom, Mr. Nobles applied his knowledge to "green" technology during a summer internship with the Solar Energy Consortium. He worked with research engineers inventing technology to convert street lights to solar power, and analyzed opportunities to use solar, geothermal and wind power in farming communities. Mr. Nobles holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Technology Education and a Master of Science in

Special Education.

Lilian Nosaci will teach Spanish the first half of the school year, while Lori Gacio is home with her newborn baby. Lillian held a similar position last school year with a middle school in Goshen, New York. She earned a Bachelor of Arts and Master of Arts degree in Foreign Language and Literature from Moldova State University in Eastern Europe. Ms. Nosaci speaks five languages fluently: English, French, Romanian, Russian and Spanish; and two more languages, Italian and Latin, at an intermediate level.

Spanish teacher **Bruno Ribeiro** earned a Bachelor of Arts from Iona College, majoring in Spanish. He taught sixth, seventh and eighth grade Spanish in Rockland County. His Master's thesis examined whether age is a factor in a person's ability to learn a foreign language. Last spring and summer was an eventful time in Mr. Ribeiro's life: He was hired to begin a new teaching job at Hommocks; completed a Master of Science degree from Iona College; was married and later honeymooned in South America.

Mrs. Jeannie Godley will serve as a leave replacement English teacher, substituting for Lorraine McCurdy during her maternity leave the first half of the 2009-2010 school year. Mrs. Godley holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in English from SUNY Stony Brook, and a Masters degree in English education also from Stony Brook. She taught last year in a similar eighth grade leave replacement position at a Long Island middle school.

In addition to teachers brand new to the Mamaroneck school district, children and parents may recognize some familiar faces in new places, including:

Two faculty members moved from Central School to Hommocks, Assistant Principal **Edgar McIntosh** and special education teacher **Jane Piscitelli**.

Mamaroneck High School teachers last year,

English teacher **Lisa Manheim** (nee Goldstein) and science teacher **Rachel Vincent** will join Hommocks in September.

A mathematics coach last year helping Mamaroneck elementary school teachers improve their skills, **Barbara Dean** will now teach mathematics in a sixth grade classroom.

Elementary chorus teachers **Kayo Matsu-shita** (Central School) and **Erica Zimmerman** (Chatsworth) will teach Hommocks youngsters to sing.

Welcome to Hommocks! We look forward to a terrific year.

For Hommocks students: Reaching out to your teacher

Hommocks teachers are happy to answer questions or provide help.

Students who have questions or need extra help can see their teachers at lunch time and after school until 3:30 p.m.

E-mailing your child's teacher

Each Hommocks teacher's e-mail address is their first initial, followed by their last name and @mamkschools.org

Example - Jane Doe would be: jdoe@mamkschools.org

You can also call the main office to request a teacher's e-mail address or e-mail from the District website under Staff Directory.

6th Grade Community Dinner

The 6th grade Community Dinner is your opportunity to build a Community within your child's Middle School. The evening starts with an informal buffet dinner in the Hommocks Library. Parents are encouraged to sit with other parents from their child's "team" as a way to begin to put faces with names, meet parents you might not already know or catch up with parents you haven't seen in awhile.

Hommocks Guidance Counselors and Administrators also attend the dinner and will be available for casual conversation. This is a wonderful time to get to know the people responsible for the day to day operations of the Hommocks.

Following dinner, our four Guidance Counselors will discuss their special role in our Middle School and how they can help you and your child navigate the Hommocks. Counselors will share tips for sixth grade student success.

Sixth grade is the time when our children often become more independent and form new friendships. Come to the Sixth Grade Community Dinner to meet the parents of your child's new friends!

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 15th

6:45 – 8:45 P.M.

HOMMOCKS LIBRARY

For more information about the dinner or to RSVP, please contact Liza Mason at 834-4351 or email: mason.liza@gmail.com

SAVE THE DATE!!

Back to School Night

6th Grade—Tuesday, September 15th

7th & 8th Grades—Thursday, September 17th

For important school information
and key dates, visit
www.mamkschools.org
click on **The Hommocks Website**

*School supply lists for each team are on the website.

¿Quiere leer esto en español?
contacte la oficina principal para
copias en español

Mamaroneck Larchmont Council of
Parent-Teachers Association
Mamaroneck, New York 10543