

Blind Brook Middle School  
Rye Brook, New York



August 24, 2010

Dear Sixth Grade Parents,

Can you believe your child is ready to start middle school? Didn't it get here faster than you thought? As the excitement builds for the start of this unique three-year adventure, here is some information that might be helpful:

**SCHEDULES:** Student schedules have been sent and you should receive them Wednesday or Thursday the latest. You might want to make several copies of your child's schedule. One can be posted inside his or her locker when you come for the Walkthroughs on September 1, 2 or 3. (9am-3pm each day and 5-7 pm also for sixth graders only on September 2).

**LOCKS AND LOCKERS:** Locks can be picked up from the Middle School Conference Room (in the main office) during the Walkthrough times. Sixth grade lockers are all upstairs in the sixth grade hallway. Instructions will be posted to help students (and you!) get used to using the locks.

**E-PORTFOLIOS:** We are happy to say that this year's sixth graders will be the first class to pilot electronic portfolios. These e-portfolios will allow students to save examples of their work in a variety of subject areas, including art and music. Over time, a memorable and creative record of the best work done at each grade level will develop. Teachers and parents can also view past work to get a clear view of progress and growth in their subject areas. The product we are using is called Student Jotter ([www.studentjotter.com](http://www.studentjotter.com)) This web based program will allow students to upload and organize their work in a quick and easy way. We see this year as the time for students to explore the use of the Student Jotter, and we know that many students will take this opportunity to combine their ease with technology with their own creativity to create portfolios that will be special and lasting record of their middle school experience. Students will learn about how to use the Jotters as the year progresses. Thank you to Mr. Byrne for his help in getting this exciting addition to our middle school program in place for our sixth graders this year.

**OUTDOOR EDUCATION DATES:** We are looking forward to this year's Grade 6 Outdoor Education Program. This year the trip has been modified to provide two separate day trips to Sharpe Reservation in Fishkill rather than one overnight trip as in the past. On October 21, the sixth graders will spend their first day at Sharpe immersed in team building and

Project Adventure activities. These activities will help students build the foundations of team building (working cooperatively, communicating effectively, respecting differences...) that they will need to be successful in sixth grade and throughout middle school. The students will also participate in the two 'show' programs that have been enjoyed in past trips. The second day at Sharpe will take place in the spring and serve as a culminating activity that will incorporate what students have learned in their academic classes. This day will be filled with fun and challenging activities that revolve around our interactions with the environment, a barbecue lunch, and different team building and problem solving group activities. The Outdoor Education Program is often a highlight of the middle school experience, and we are confident that this format will make the program even stronger and more positive for our students. More information will be coming from the sixth grade teachers over the coming weeks.

**SLING BAGS AND STUDENT AGENDAS:** These important items will be distributed on the first day of school, September 7. Remember that any other backpacks and tote bags may be brought to and from school, but must be stored in lockers during the school day. Also remember that your child is expected to write his or her assignments in the agenda as the school day progresses. You should check it every night. Although Edline is an excellent resource when students are absent, etc, it is not a substitute for students writing down homework assignments in the planner each day.

**ORIENTATION ASSEMBLY:** Sixth graders will attend a grade level assembly during Period 3 on the first day of school. Additional orientation conversations will take place with the counselor and teachers during the first weeks of school in Activity Period locations.

We are looking forward to a great start of the school year. I look forward to getting to know you and your child!

*Karen Bronson*

Karen Bronson, Principal