

TOP 10 Grade 6 Parent Questions

On October 6th Mr. Foot and Mr. Hewlett met with groups of grade 6 parents to discuss how the beginning of the school year went for their children and themselves. Parents were encouraged to ask questions and provide feedback regarding the school and the start of the school year. The following is a list of Hillcrest's Top 10 grade 6 parent questions and answers. Also included are some feedback quotes from parents. Thanks very much to all parents who attended these information sessions.

1. Why are students organized into teams? Do all teams have the same activities and can students travel outside of where there team classes are?

Teaming is one of the pillars of Middle School. At Hillcrest we have 5 teams, 3 grade 6/7 teams (Green Blue, Red) and 2 grade 8 teams (Orange, Yellow). Typically a team is four classes (approximately 120 students and their teachers) who work together and share a similar schedule. For example, all students on Green team have Explorations in D Block. The students from the four classes are mixed together for explorations. The four classes are paired with a switch class which allows us to teach Math to a straight grade (the grade 7's from 2 classes combine and the grade 6's from the 2 classes combine). Teams usually plan field trips and events together and we use our team structure for school spirit activities. Of course students continue to socialize with their friends from other teams at Nutrition Break and Lunch time.

2. Is it normal to have a large number of special needs students in a middle school?

Hillcrest is a typical Middle school in that we have diverse students with a variety of needs. When we develop classes we try to balance gender, student leaders and student needs. Some of our students have specific identified learning needs which may require that student receives extra support. Our Student Services teachers and the classroom teachers work together to support these students.

3. If my child experiences bullying, how do I deal with it and how does the school help?

Firstly, we need to know about it so we can deal with it. So please let your child know that they need to tell you, a teacher, Mr. Hewlett or Mr. Foot. Often kids fear that telling someone will make the situation worse. In our experience this is extremely rare. When we receive a report we investigate by talking with the students involved and other students. As every situation is unique, consequences vary, but our goal is to ensure that all children at Hillcrest feel safe. We hope that the consequences applied lead to appropriate behaviour. The consequences rise with repeat offences.

4. How can my child work on homework in the school after dismissal time?

Many teachers in our school are available after school to assist students with work. Some students come at regularly scheduled days to get help with homework whereas other students come on an as needed basis. Teachers also make arrangements with switch teachers to provide classroom space for students to work on homework. It is best if parents check with the classroom teacher regarding what days and times they make their classroom available for students.

5. How do I get my school supply list sooner and are there specific supplies that individual teachers request?

Generic school supply lists are available on our school website and are posted in April/May for the following school year. Some teachers require very specific supplies for their classes such as Art etc.. and choose to inform students directly of these specialized supplies at the beginning of the school year.

6. How do I get information on grade 6 activities and clubs and where can my child sign up for them?

All student clubs have sign up times and dates selected and scheduled by the sponsor teacher. Sponsor teachers post these sign up times and dates onto our daily announcements and activity times and dates are usually posted onto our school calendar.

7. How does a teacher cover curriculum in 6/7 blended classroom?

As mentioned in the teaming question, Math is covered in a straight class format. Math is sequential and builds from grade to grade and should be covered in a specific sequence. The skills covered in Language Arts curriculum are quite similar in grade 6 and 7. The goal for reading and writing is to take students from their current level as far as possible over the 2 years. In Science and Social Studies we use an A / B plan to cover the units of grade 6 and 7 over the course of 2 years.

8. How do you monitor the use of technology in the school?

Classroom use of technology is monitored by the classroom teacher. Many teachers in our school implement the use of technology into their weekly and daily lessons and during the school year your child's classroom teacher may have students using laptop computers, i-pods or other handheld digital devices for researching information or compiling items for a presentation. Our school also has two computer labs as well as 20 desk top computers in our library that students use during class time to conduct research and work on projects for class. All students in our school district are expected to comply with district policy 140, the district wide network and internet appropriate use policy found on page 12 of your child's planner. During non classroom times it is expected that students comply with our school policy regarding electronics found on page 8 of your child's planner.

9. How much homework should my child be getting and are there specific study skills that teachers cover with students?

The amount of homework a child receives is generally linked to how productive the child is during class time at school. Most teachers assign some level of homework which may include nightly reading, studying for tests, finishing daily assignments, working on larger projects or doing research for projects and assignments. As a general rule middle school aged children should have about 45-60 minutes of homework each night although this may vary from teacher to teacher and at different times of the year. Many teachers choose to address specific study skills as part of their Health & Career Education program and some teachers choose to post specific study skills onto their classroom sites.

10. When is the best time to pick up by my child from school and where is the best place?

You may have noticed that our parking lot is a bit crazy at 2:55 pm and you often have wait for your child. Some students stress about having to meet you and often forget homework and supplies in their rush. Others need their social time to say goodbye to friends. Either way if they have a few minutes to end their day in a calm fashion things seems to go more smoothly. By arriving to pick up your child between 3:10 and 3:25 not only can your children be ready but there will be far less traffic to deal with. Make sure you have a specific meeting spot for you and your child to meet.

Comments from parents

I liked the first day and the lollipop activity that you did for the students.

I like the smoothness to the start of the school year and how the students got right into classes on the second day.

I like how many activities are open to students.

I thought that the first day was super organized and the students knew where to go.

I would like to see a tour for the grade 6 students at the beginning of the year.

Could you please show the grade 6's where the bathrooms are so my kid doesn't have to hold it for a week.