

2020-2021

# Draper Middle School

## Parent-Student Success Guide

Welcome to Draper Middle School!

This guidebook has been developed to give parents and students useful information that will help everyone navigate the middle school years with confidence and success.

Bookmark this guide, you'll probably find yourself coming back to it when questions or problems arise. If we left something out that would be useful for parents or students to know, please tell us so that we can include it in future handbooks. Contact the district Communications Office at (518) 356-8250 or [communications@mohonasen.org](mailto:communications@mohonasen.org). Please also keep in mind that the information contained in this guide is subject to change.

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Produced by the Mohonasen Central School District in cooperation with the Capital Region BOCES Communications Service. 7/2020

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# Contact Information

## Communication Tools

### Online notification System: SchoolMessenger

The district utilizes a communications system known as SchoolMessenger to provide parents with important announcements and timely emails, text messages and phone calls. There are alerts for general district news, weather-related closings, School Board news, Continuing Education, athletics and more.

Parents will be automatically connected to SchoolMessenger through SchoolTool, which is the district’s student information management system and Parent Portal. Please take a moment to make sure your contact information is up-to-date in SchoolTool, as this will be vital to you receiving important messages through School Messenger. If you need to gain access to your SchoolTool account, please go to your school’s main office to fill out the paperwork. Please bring your driver’s license or a valid form of identification.

### “Like” us on Facebook; Follow us on Twitter, YouTube

Mohonasen sends news and information out through social media, including Facebook and Twitter. Visit us at: [www.facebook.com/Mohonasen](http://www.facebook.com/Mohonasen) and on Twitter, follow [@MohonCSD](https://twitter.com/MohonCSD) and [@DraperMiddle](https://twitter.com/DraperMiddle) to start receiving news and updates from the district and Draper Middle School today! Find Mr. Arket on YouTube by searching his name.

## Key Contacts at Draper Middle School

2072 Curry Road, Schenectady, NY 12303  
(518) 356-8350

### Principal

Richard Arket  
(518) 356-8357

### Assistant Principal

Kristy Goergen  
(518) 356-8351

### Dean of Students

Erin Degnan

### Guidance Counselors

Kyra Grimsley  
Alicia Loveland  
Angie Santabarbara  
Debbie Wood

(518) 356-8370

### School Psychologist

Tia Lomax-Driscoll  
(518) 356-8361

### School Social Worker

Paola Cummings  
(518) 356-8375

### School Librarian

Mary Gorton  
(518) 356-8380

### School Nurse

Jeanette Greklek  
(518) 356-8360

## Draper Middle School Faculty by Department

All teachers have voice mail. Parents who wish to contact a teacher should call the school's main number (**518-356-8350**) and ask to be connected with the teacher's voice mail.

### Alt. Ed.

Josh Sawicki

### Art

Steve Blais  
Tina Mathieu

### English

Lauren Berezowski  
Melyssa Burega  
Kim Coelho  
Lisa Daviero  
Erin Degnan  
Cheryl Donovan  
Faith Faas  
Rachel Geracitano  
Danielle Grainer  
Marissa Gordon  
Erika Pangburn  
Esther Vrooman  
Kathy Fiozzo

### Family and Consumer Science

Jennifer Fritz-Walbroehl  
Amy Stott

### Foreign Language

#### French:

Maureen Geagan

#### Spanish:

Linda Breen  
Amanda Jasinski

### Health/Physical Education

Kevin Daviero  
Melissa Gregg  
Douglas Hallberg  
Nicole Schaap

### Mathematics

Terri Black  
Casey Coffey  
Renee Gandrow  
Christie Lee  
Jenn McGuire  
Mary Ann Nickloy  
Matt Rider  
Rebecca Sokolowski  
Susan Weinberg  
Brenda Stahl

### Music

Nancy Felberbaum  
Nicole Gabriel  
Daniel Jones  
Kim Kondenar  
Stephanie Rosselli  
Renee Poutre  
Gail Sparlin  
Jason Varga

### Science

Sara Bach  
Joanna Keith  
Carolyn Lundy  
Jenna Niles  
Brenda Stahl  
Laura Gallelli  
Rose Dorado

### Social Studies

Mark DiCocco  
Rose Dorado  
Cheryl Donovan  
Faith Faas  
Marissa Gordon  
Rebecca Sokolowski  
Fred Saccocio  
Kim Coelho  
Josh Sawicki  
William Van Wie  
Josh Whipple

### Special Education

Amanda Brooks  
Lori Giattino  
Kelly Fahrenkopf  
Jennifer Fahsel  
Amanda Kuhn  
Amanda Rider

### Technology

Mark Lajeunesse  
John Winters

## District Contacts

### Superintendent of Schools

Mr. Shannon Shine  
(518) 356-8200  
[sshine@mohonasen.org](mailto:sshine@mohonasen.org)

### Assistant Superintendent for Business

Christopher Ruberti  
(518) 356-8210  
[rubertich@mohonasen.org](mailto:rubertich@mohonasen.org)

### Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction

Laurel Logan-King  
(518) 356-8205  
[lking@mohonasen.org](mailto:lking@mohonasen.org)

### Director for Special and Alternative Education

Sara Lewis  
(518) 356-8221  
[kempie@mohonasen.org](mailto:kempie@mohonasen.org)

### Academic Administrator for Science & Technology

Matthew Hubbell  
(518) 356-8254  
[mhubbell@mohonasen.org](mailto:mhubbell@mohonasen.org)

### Academic Administrators for APPR, Data, State Reporting, Mentoring, Instructional Leaders

Deborah Kavanaugh-Farnan  
(518) 356-8256

Tasha Anderson  
(518) 356-8253

### Aquatics Program Supervisor

Katherine Streeter  
(518) 356-8240

### Business Office Supervisor/District Treasurer

Tracey Freemantle  
(518) 356-8230

### Central Registrar

Vanessa Gannon  
(518) 356-8222

### Communications Coordinator

Jim Smith  
(518) 356-8250  
[communications@mohonasen.org](mailto:communications@mohonasen.org)

### Continuing Education

Patricia Hopkins  
(518) 356-8303

### Director of Facilities

Joseph Mayo  
(518) 356-8228

### Director of PE, Athletics & Health Education

David Bertram  
(518) 356-8270

### Food Service Program Supervisor

Kimberly Gagnon  
(518) 356-8225

### School Safety & Security

(518) 356-8355

### Transportation Department Supervisor

Randy Jerreld  
(518) 356-8260

## **Mohonasen's Schools**

### **Bradt Primary School (Grades K-2)**

2719 Hamburg Street  
Schenectady, NY 12303  
Leslie Smith, Principal  
(518) 356-8400

### **Pinewood Intermediate School (Grades 3-5)**

901 Kings Road  
Schenectady, NY 12303  
Jason Thompson, Principal  
(518) 356-8430

### **Draper Middle School (Grades 6-8)**

2070 Curry Road  
Schenectady, NY 12303  
Richard Arket, Principal  
(518) 356-8357

### **Mohonasen High School (Grades 9-12)**

2072 Curry Road  
Schenectady, NY 12303  
Craig Chandler,  
(518) 356-8301

### **Center for Advanced Technology (Grades 9-12)**

400 Warrior Way  
Schenectady, NY 12303  
Bill Vacca, Administrator  
(518) 356-8461



# What is Middle School?

## Importance of Middle School and Draper’s Philosophy

Middle School represents one of the most important transitions in a student’s academic career since the transition from home to school, way back in kindergarten. Think about it — students enter middle school as products of their elementary school environment — and when they leave in three short years, they are expected to be high schoolers!

### At Draper Middle School, our vision, mission and norms direct our philosophy toward education:

#### Vision:

Together, we achieve success.

#### Mission:

We do whatever it takes to achieve our full potential in teaching and learning.

#### Norms:

- **Dedication** – We encourage all students and staff to reach their personal best.
- **Respect** – We value and admire the uniqueness in each of us.
- **Adaptability** – We are continuously working to create a culture of acceptance.
- **Pride** – We are proud of our students, our colleagues and our community.
- **Excellence** – We aspire for the best in teaching and learning.
- **Resourcefulness** – We do whatever it takes.

Middle school is intended to provide students with a solid foundation in the core curriculum subjects of math, English language arts, science, and social studies, as well as providing opportunities for experiencing exploratory subjects such as Family and Consumer Science (FACS), technology, foreign language, and the arts. Physical education and health are also cornerstones of the middle school experience.

Accountability is important at DMS. Just as the school and its teachers are accountable to the New York State Education Department, we expect our students to be accountable as well. We do this by holding the students accountable for their own success.

Because DMS emphasizes mastery of the core subjects and exploratory content, all subjects have “Success Indicators” that must be completed as evidence of understanding.

## Part 1: Success Indicators

Every class that Draper students are enrolled in has Success Indicators. These are the assignments, tests and projects that **MUST** be completed satisfactorily in order to receive credit for the course. It's as simple as that. The grade that the student earns above passing will depend on the timeliness and quality of the work. If a student does not pass the course for the quarter or semester, the student has five weeks to make up the missing/unsatisfactory Success Indicators. If they are not completed, the failing grade for the marking period stands. If the missing/unsatisfactory assignments are completed, the grade received will be averaged in for that marking period.

### Frequently Asked Questions

#### How will parents know what the Success Indicators are?

A good rule of thumb is for parents to think back to when they went to school. If an assignment is a quiz, test or project, then it is probably a Success Indicator. If you're not sure, please e-mail the teacher or contact the Guidance Department at **(518) 356-8371**.

#### Can the Success Indicator be a test or quiz?

If a student does not pass that test or quiz, there will be complete instructions on how the student can satisfactorily complete the test or quiz. We cannot allow the student to simply fail the test and move past it. He/she must work to demonstrate at least a basic understanding of the material presented in the course.

#### Do all classes have Success Indicators?

At DMS, core area (math, ELA, science, social studies and foreign language) and special areas (music, art, FACS, etc.) have Success Indicators. Students have ample opportunity to make up assignments during Advisory and after school for five weeks after the marking period ends.

#### What if a student is failing at the end of the quarter?

A student who receives a failing grade on his or her report card will have five weeks to improve his or her grade. It is recommended that the student utilizes morning academic support, lunch support group, period 10, advisory and/or afternoon academic support. If work is not made up in a timely manner (5 weeks into the next marking period), the previous grade or zero is factored into the student's quarterly average.

#### What if a student fails a course?

If a student ultimately fails a core-area class (math, ELA, science, social studies), he or she will be required to retake the course during the six-week summer school session. For students who fail non-core area classes, students will have to make up the missing/incomplete Success Indicators for those courses.

### What if the Success Indicators are too hard for the student?

All of the Success Indicators are designed to prepare students to meet the 6th-8th grade standards set forth by New York State. We are mandated by New York State to assist every student to meet these standards. If the Success Indicators are too hard, we provide assistance in the form of:

- After-school help (Period 10 Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday each week)
- Morning and afternoon tutoring
- Lunchtime academic support
- Academic Intervention Services (AIS)
- Special Education Services (if qualified)
- Alternative Education Program

## Part 2: Character Education

At Draper Middle School, character education is a way to support students in making responsible and life-changing choices. While we want to foster independence, we also want to ensure that students have the tools necessary to make good decisions. One of the key ideas school leaders focus on at this level is that “with freedom, comes responsibility.” Therefore, through the daily DMS Television Morning Show broadcasts, as well as daily interactions in the classrooms and hallways, Draper staff members focus on modeling and encouraging positive traits throughout the school year. These traits include:

- Respect
- Responsibility
- Attitude
- Perseverance
- Service
- Teamwork
- Mindfulness
- Growth Mindset

The Mohonasen Central School District and Draper MS have also implemented practices and policies in order to comply with the Dignity for All Students Act, which took effect on July 1, 2012. The goal of this state law is to provide students with a safe, supportive educational environment that is free from discrimination, intimidation, taunting, harassment and bullying (including cyberbullying). Some of the law requirements include establishing anti-harassment and discrimination policies, creating school training programs and including a course in civility, citizenship and character education in the curriculum for every grade level. For more information, please visit [www.mohonasen.org](http://www.mohonasen.org).

## Part 3: Child Success Team

As we require success of all students, it becomes critical that we have a plan for helping individual students who are struggling with success. While mindfulness practices and strategies for self-regulation can give the students the personal tools needed to become more effective and successful students, there are often problems and situations that fall out of the student's circle of control.

Some students may struggle due to external circumstances, barriers that prevent them from reaching success. Others may struggle because there are services or assistance that they need but are not receiving. Even the strongest of students may have a time when external variables impact their ability to succeed.

For this reason we have developed the Child Success Team. The team consists of a group of educators and professionals within the school, each of whom has his or her own area of expertise. The team is charged with pooling members' expertise and resources to remove the barriers and bridge the gaps that are preventing individual students from succeeding academically, socially, and behaviorally. The team meets weekly to develop a plan for the success of any student referred to the team.

Referrals to the team can be made by parents, teachers or administration. For more information about the Child Success Team, or to make a referral to the team, please call your son's or daughter's Guidance Counselor at **(518) 356-8370**.

### Members of the Child Success Team:

- Administrators
- Faculty
- Guidance Counselors
- School Social Worker
- School Nurse
- School Psychologist
- Outside Agencies

## A "Crash Course" in Draper's Block Schedule

Draper Middle School operates on a modified 80-minute "block schedule" with core subjects (math, English, science and social studies) meeting every other day for 80 minutes. Here are some key things to know about Draper's block schedule:

### The Schedule Follows an Alternating Cycle: A Day; B Day; C Day And D Day.

There are signs posted around the school to remind you what day it is in the cycle. Monthly schedules are posted online. *Note: The schedule is planned around scheduled holidays. If a snow day falls on an A day, the next day is an A day.*

- **Homeroom** runs from 7:36 to 7:44 a.m. for all students (morning announcements)
- **Period 1-2:** 7:47 to 9:09 a.m.
- **Period 3-4:** 9:13 to 10:35 a.m.
- **Period 5:** 10:39 to 11:18 a.m.
- **Period 6:** 11:21 a.m. to 12:01 p.m.
- **Period 7:** 12:02 p.m. to 12:44 p.m.
- **Period 8-9:** 12:48 p.m. to 2:10 p.m.

### Lunch

Each grade level will have a 40-minute lunch (period 5, 6, or 7). Each lunch period is split into two halves. Half of the grade will begin eating lunch, while the other half will have recess. Halfway through the lunch period, the groups switch. The lunch groups within each grade level will be mixed up on a periodic basis throughout the year.

### Advisory period takes place every other day for 80 minutes.

Advisory is a time for students to get extra help from teachers, start homework assignments, make up past-due work and/or do some free reading. This is also the time when our band, choir, orchestra and AIS Labs are offered.

**Period 10 is held after the regular school day Tuesday through Friday from 2:15-2:50 p.m.**

Busing is provided at 3 p.m. and 4 p.m. on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday ONLY.

This is a designated time for:

- Additional academic help, when needed, with teachers;
- Scheduled meetings of school clubs and other extracurricular activities;
- Homework, particularly for student athletes;
- Detention, if assigned; and
- Parent-teacher conferences.

**Be on time to class!**

There are only four minutes between the end of one class and the start of another. In many cases you will not have time to stop at your locker, so plan accordingly. If you get detained by a teacher, ask for a pass. Otherwise, if you're not in your class by the time the bell rings, you are tardy.

**Questions about your schedule?**

Don't be afraid to ask a teacher or a friend or to stop by the Guidance Office for help deciphering your schedule.

# Academically Speaking...

## The “Middle Years” lay the foundation for High School

For many kids, preadolescence can be challenging. Peer pressure becomes a significant factor, and new relationships take on major importance as many children look for peer acceptance. With all this going on for preteens, is it any wonder that their desire to focus on academics might wane?

Students face rigorous academic standards and challenging high school graduation requirements. All students in grades 3-8 must take state exams in English and math, while fourth and eighth graders also take a state science exam.

According to the New York State Education Department, a quality middle school program should offer academics that are comprehensive, challenging, purposeful, integrated, relevant and standards based. Middle school should have a philosophy and mission that reflect the intellectual, social-emotional and developmental needs and characteristics of children who are 10-14 years old. This is our aspiration at Draper Middle School.

So how do you, as a parent, spark an interest in academics when Fortnite is your child’s greatest interest? Or the lure of hanging out with friends dwarfs all interest in school work? The ideas at right take time but they’ve worked for many parents — and they can work for you, too!

- **Be a positive role model.** When talking about your own work, emphasize not only the frustrations, but also the satisfactions that go along with reaching a goal or finishing a tough job. This is a great way to show your children that achievement has its rewards. Too many kids think school success comes from being “born smart” instead of from hard work.
- **Foster a “growth mindset.”** Challenge your student to push his or herself. A growth mindset values effort over fixed results.
- **Give your children lots of support.** Although the middle years are a time when children crave more independence, they still need daily encouragement and clear expectations from their parents. Let them know that struggling with a task is not necessarily a bad thing.
- **Tap into your child’s interests.** Subscribe to a preteen or sports magazine to promote reading. Build research skills by using the Internet together to plan a vacation or learn more about a favorite musician. Visit museums, bookstores, theaters, etc. Enjoy cooking? Do some research and host ethnic theme dinners with family or friends. Be creative; show your kids that learning can be fun!
- **Make school the topic of daily conversations.** Ask questions of your children and their teachers, participate in school activities and check on homework, test grades, etc.
- **Stay connected.** Many Draper teachers utilize Google Classroom, class websites and other education apps to connect with parents. Make sure to access the SchoolTool Parent Portal where you will have access to grades and teacher email addresses.

## Academic intervention services (AIS)

The faculty and staff at Draper Middle School are committed to helping all students succeed in challenging course work. A wide range of Academic Intervention Services (AIS) are provided to students who would benefit from extra support in order to meet grade-level expectations in math and ELA.

For example, students falling below state standards in English language arts and/or math will be scheduled for ELA/math every day. Extra help may also be provided by remedial teachers within a regular class or during advisory.

Students who are in serious academic jeopardy may also be placed in smaller classes for English or math where they have more time on tasks and more concentrated supports. Counseling services are also available to help at-risk students deal with peripheral issues that may be getting in the way of their school success.

If you would like more information about Mohonasen's AIS programs or wonder whether or not your child qualifies, call your school principal or guidance counselor.

## Advisory

In the middle school block schedule, all students have an 80-minute advisory period every other day.

This time is a much-improved alternative to the old practice of mass "study halls" where very little studying ever took place. Instead, students are now assigned to a particular classroom and teacher for their advisory period. However, students don't necessarily stay in that classroom for their entire advisory period. In practice, advisory time is meant to be flexible and accommodating to students' needs and interests.

### Advisory is a time when:

- Students can arrange to meet with any of their teachers for extra help.
- Students can get a start on homework assignments or make up past-due work.
- Students in the band, choir or orchestra programs practice and perform as a group.
- Students can relax and enjoy some time for free reading, if they are up to date in all classes.
- Living Environment labs meet.

## Awards and Awards Ceremonies

The achievements of Draper Middle School students are recognized annually.

In 6th and 7th grade, students are recognized at the classroom level.

In 8th grade, all students are recognized at the 8th Grade Moving-Up Ceremony each June. The date, time and location of this event is published in the annual district calendar, which is mailed home at the start of each school year. It can also be found online.

## Character Education

Mohonasen works in partnership with parents to maintain an environment that will reflect and reinforce core ethical values such as honesty, tolerance, personal responsibility, respect for others, observance of laws and rules, courtesy and dignity. Students are strongly encouraged to get

involved in the many school sponsored clubs, activities and service projects that support positive character development.

## Course of Study

The course of study is generally the same within each grade level. Students who opt to participate in musical groups do so during advisory periods. Honors courses are also offered in certain subjects for academically advanced students. (See [Honors Classes](#)).

### Sixth-grade Courses

#### Full-year classes:

- Computer Skills
- English/Language Arts
- Health
- Math
- Physical Education
- Science
- Social Studies
- + Advisory

#### Quarter-year classes:

- FACS
- Technology
- Art
- Music
- Wellness Seminar

### Seventh-grade Courses

#### Full-year classes:

- English/Language Arts
- Math
- Physical Education
- Science
- Social Studies
- + Advisory

#### Half-year classes:

- Art
- Music
- FACS
- Wellness Seminar (*Quarter-year seminar*)
- Technology

### Eighth-grade Courses

#### Full-year classes:

- English/Language Arts
- French or Spanish
- Health
- Math
- Physical Education
- Science
- Social Studies
- + Advisory

#### Quarter-year classes:

- Art
- Music
- FACS
- Technology

## Course Weighting

Several middle school courses are weighted. This means that certain higher level courses will be multiplied by 1.025. For example, a grade of an 80 in Honors English language arts would be multiplied by 1.025 and would calculate as an 82. This weighted grade would be used toward the student's weighted GPA and would also be used for honor roll and National Junior Honor Society eligibility.

Course weighting pertains to all Honors courses at Draper, as well as the Living Environment and Algebra Regents courses (for accelerated 8th graders). Regents courses are counted toward a student's HS GPA.

## Google Classroom

Many teachers post assignments and resources on their Google classroom. Students will receive information to access this resource from individual teachers.



## Dropping a course

There are no “elective” courses in the middle school course of study, so courses may not be dropped.

The only exception is for accelerated eighth graders enrolled in high school living environment or algebra. Those students may drop the accelerated course and enroll in the regular eighth-grade course for math and/or science. Parents should contact their child’s guidance counselor to learn more.

## Homebound Instruction

Homebound instruction — or home tutoring — is a service schools are required to provide to students who are unable to attend school due to medical, emotional or disciplinary problems.

Middle school students who qualify for homebound instruction may receive two hours of home tutoring per subject up to 10 hours per week for all subjects.

If the inability to attend school is due to a medical condition, parents should call their child’s guidance counselor as soon as possible and provide a written medical request for homebound instruction from the child’s physician. The counselor will then submit the doctor’s note along with additional paperwork to the superintendent of schools for approval of home tutoring.

Once approval is given, the counselor will secure tutors for each of the child’s core subjects. The turnaround time between providing the doctor’s note to the counselor and tutors contacting the family is generally 48 hours.

## Homework

(Also see [Organization & Homework](#))

Homework helps students practice and reinforce what they learned in class. It also teaches self discipline, time-management skills and responsibility.

According to district guidelines, middle schoolers should be spending — on average — one to two hours on homework and/or reading daily.

It is the responsibility of each student to find out and complete homework assignments — even when absent from school. With a little planning and follow-through, students can avoid falling behind. For example:

- Visit Mohonasen’s website at [www.mohonasen.org](http://www.mohonasen.org) for teacher web pages or the teacher’s Google Classroom.
- Find a reliable friend in each class that you can call if you have a question about the homework, need to copy notes that you missed, etc. (Offer to do the same for him or her, too!)
- Get in the habit of writing down the week’s assignments in the student agenda book.
- Know each teacher’s rules (including deadlines!) for making up missed class work.
- Students are encouraged to use advisory periods and Period 10 if they have questions or have missed work due to an absence. In some cases a student may be scheduled to remain after school with the teacher to complete past due homework. If this request is made, it takes precedence over all other school activities.

- Students who will be absent (excused) for several days can call the Guidance Office to get homework worksheets. Allow 24 hours before pick up.
- Students who need to be out of school for an extended period, may — with a doctor’s note — be eligible for home tutoring.

## Accelerated and Honors Classes

All incoming students in grades six, seven and eight are eligible to apply to the middle school's Honors classes.

These classes are for academically advanced students who meet specific requirements in those subjects. Criteria includes high benchmark scores, strong classroom performance, teacher and guidance counselor recommendation and the child’s desire to participate in a more demanding program.

Honors English language arts (ELA) is offered to students in grade seven eight. Accelerated science is offered in grades 7 or 8. Accelerated math is offered at all three grade levels.

The Accelerated Math class in grade 8 is the same course typically offered to high school freshmen. Accelerated 8th graders take the Algebra Regents Exam in June of their 8th grade year – one year ahead of schedule.

Similarly, the 8th grade Honors Science curriculum is the high school-level biology course leading to the Living Environment Regents exam at the end of grade 8.

Students who pass either exam earn one high school Regents credit per exam.

## Honor Roll

Four times each year, after report cards are issued, an honor roll is released based upon grades received during the preceding quarter. All classes with numeric grades are counted when computing honor roll standings.

- **HIGH HONOR ROLL** will be awarded to students who achieve a grade point average of 94.5 or above.
- **HONOR ROLL** will be awarded to students who achieve a grade point average of 84.5 to 94.4.

The honor roll and high honor roll are posted on Mohonasen’s website. Each quarter, high honor roll students are celebrated and receive an incentive, provided by the Draper PTSO.

## Junior Honor Society

Membership in Draper Middle School’s National Junior Honor Society is open to 7th and 8th graders.

To be eligible for induction, students must meet established academic criteria. Students who meet the criteria will receive letters in March inviting them to apply for membership. Application also requires participating in at least two school and/or community activities and teacher recommendations.

A special induction ceremony is held each spring and parents are invited to attend.

## Keep these in your locker:

- Draper students are not allowed to wear hats, hoods, headphones, earbuds or carry iPods, hand-held video games or mp3 players during the school day. This includes hand-held speakers.
- Backpacks need to be stored inside lockers during school hours.
- If you have a cell phone, it has to be turned off and stored in your locker during school hours.

## Library

Draper Middle School's library is open during school hours: 7:30 a.m. to 2:50 p.m. The library has a good assortment of books, magazines, newspapers and encyclopedias — as well as 15 computers for students to use when working on school projects.

Draper's library web page is set up to help students with on-line research and provides access to the on-line library catalog.

Students may borrow up to four books and/or magazines at any given time. Students are also invited to stop in and renew a book if they haven't finished reading it by the time it's due.

All students are responsible for the materials they borrow. Please do not loan them to others!

## Music Lessons

Students who participate in band and orchestra take small group lessons during the regular school day. Lessons are scheduled on a rotating basis to avoid conflicts with any one class. Students must report to their regular classroom teacher first, before going to a scheduled lesson. Students are also responsible for completing missed classroom assignments when they are pulled out for a music lesson.

Band, orchestra and choir students meet regularly to practice and perform as a group. Large group sessions are always scheduled to coincide with advisories.

Students are given monthly schedules, in advance, for both lessons and large group sessions. It is recommended that students record the dates and times in their assignment books to avoid forgetting!

Music students are required to keep their instruments in lockers in the music room.

## Parent Conferences

Parents may make appointments for conferences with teachers and/or their child's guidance counselor by calling Draper's Guidance Office (**518-356-8370**) any time they have questions or concerns. School officials may also call parents to request a conference as needed.

If a parent or student is unhappy with an interim report or report card, a conference can help get at the root of the problem.

A conference is also a good opportunity to set up an improvement plan — for behavior and/or academics. In almost all instances, students will be expected to participate.

Guidance counselors can also set up and facilitate a group conference involving one or more teachers. The focus is always on problem-solving.

Most people, including students, say they feel relieved at the end of a conference. That's because once the nature of the problem is clearly understood, it's much easier to address it — particularly when everyone is working together.

Keep in mind things don't have to be desperate before parents step in. Any drop in grades is a good reason to call the school.

## Physical Education

All students take physical education (PE) classes. Classes meet once every four days for 80 minutes. Students receive a grade based on their participation, attendance, effort, citizenship and skill development.

The main focus of the middle school physical education program is on developing an understanding of physical fitness and cultivating life-long fitness habits.

Appropriate dress for PE classes includes sneakers, T-shirts, shorts or sweatpants.

### Team Building and PE

All students take part in an annual team building/cooperative activities unit in their physical education classes. The focus is on building interpersonal and team problem-solving skills. In grades seven and eight, the team building unit culminates with students climbing Draper's popular "rock wall" and taking on other high elements that challenge students in nontraditional ways.

### Medical Excuses and PE

Students who are unable to participate in physical education for any reason will need a signed note stating their limitations from their doctor. Students will be given a zero grade for each missed day unless they submit this written medical excuse to the school nurse (not the PE teacher). If a student ends the school year with a medical excuse, he or she needs to submit either a new excuse or a release note from their physician for the next school year.

## Progress Reports to Parents

There are four marking periods in the regular school year. Report cards are available online, through SchoolTool, approximately 1-2 weeks after the close of each marking period. Interim reports are available in SchoolTool approximately halfway through each marking period. Combined, parents can expect to access eight reports, all through SchoolTool, on their child's progress in a typical school year. In addition, teachers will update grades and attendance information in SchoolTool on a regular basis.

**Paper report cards will be distributed to students at the end of each quarter.** Parents who do not yet have a SchoolTool account should contact the main office.

Specific dates are noted on Mohonasen's annual district calendar that is mailed home at the end of August each year and are available on the district's website. Parents are advised to note these dates. If, for any reason, they are unable to access their child's reports, parents should call the middle school main office.

## Requests/Non-requests for Teachers

Requests for particular teachers cannot be honored since there are too many scheduling variables to consider and such requests could create imbalances in class sizes. Students are assigned to “teams” of teachers, not to one particular teacher.

If a parent or student has had a negative past experience with a particular teacher, a non-request may be submitted to the guidance office.

Where appropriate and scheduling permits, the school will do its best to honor such requests.

## SchoolTool: Mohonasen Parent Access

For the 2020-2021 school year, all middle school parents can continue to use SchoolTool to access their child’s attendance, academic and discipline records online. The middle school has gone “paperless,” meaning that interim reports and report cards are available only through SchoolTool. In addition, teachers will update grades and attendance information in SchoolTool on a regular basis. To sign up for SchoolTool, or if you are unable to access the Internet, please contact the middle school main office.

## Standardized Tests

In grades six, seven and eight, students take the New York State tests in math and English/language arts.

Eighth graders also take a proficiency exam in French or Spanish, as well as a NYS science exam. These exams measure whether or not a student is on-track to achieve the challenging Regents requirements in high school.

Parents are advised to pay close attention to their child’s standardized test results. These are shared with parents annually.

## Student Agenda Books

Student Agenda Books serve several important purposes at Draper Middle School!

Agenda books are an essential tool for helping students get organized and keep track of multiple homework assignments, music lessons, activities and other commitments or deadlines. These books are also an effective way for parents to learn about their child’s homework, communicate with teachers, etc. For example:

- Parents can tell, quickly, whether or not students are recording daily homework assignments in the student agenda book. All students will be provided with an agenda book and are required to have it.
- Parents can see if their child has been assigned a “Period 10” appointment by a particular teacher. This information is noted at the bottom of the assignment page.

All students are issued an agenda book at the start of each school year and they are required to have it with them every day.

Talk with your children about how to use it and why. Suggest they open it at the beginning of each class and leave it on their desk until they have written down their assignments. Encourage them to

review it before leaving school to be sure they bring home the books and other materials they will need.

## **Summer Reading**

All students entering grades six through eight are required to complete a summer reading assignment. Details about the reading assignment are generally sent home in June and can also be found on the web at [www.mohonasen.org](http://www.mohonasen.org).

## **Tutors**

Students or parents who wish to obtain a private professional tutor can contact their guidance counselor for the names of qualified tutors in various subject areas. The cost generally runs between \$20-30 per hour.

Draper offers morning and afternoon tutoring in a small group setting at no expense. Contact your child's counselor for more details.

## Organization & Homework

One of the biggest challenges students will face during their middle school years will come from an unexpected source. It isn't making the basketball team or having to memorize a long list of mathematical formulas. According to counselors and teachers, it's learning how to manage their time and stay organized.

For the first time, all students are faced with having multiple teachers, each with their own set of assignments and expectations. Juggling these new academic relationships (not to mention their extracurricular activities and social lives) can be overwhelming for some kids. Helping children learn to keep track of their commitments will save them a lot of frustration and will put them on the road to success in school — and life!

### Three Common Pitfalls—Watch Out for These Traps!

#### 1. NOT WRITING DOWN ASSIGNMENTS.

Guidance counselors at Draper Middle School say this is a huge issue for students. Successful students get into the routine of copying down homework assignments from the chalkboard as soon as they enter the classroom. Unfortunately, many kids think they can trust their memories — and quickly get into trouble.

#### 2. NOT BRINGING THE RIGHT THINGS HOME.

At the end of each day, students should refer to their student agenda books when packing books and other supplies for home. Again, memory is not always reliable! However, when kids do forget needed books or papers, parents are encouraged to come back at night — with their children — to get what they need from the locker. After a couple of nights doing this, kids almost always get better at packing the right supplies before leaving school.

#### 3. NOT DOING ASSIGNMENTS THE FIRST NIGHT.

Draper's block schedule means students actually have two nights to complete homework in most subjects. But guidance counselors and teachers emphasize it's important to get into the habit of doing homework the FIRST night. Parents can help by insisting upon this and asking to see completed work. This system automatically breaks homework into manageable chunks: three core subjects one night, two the next and so on. Also, if students attempt to do an assignment the first night and discover they need help or have questions, they still have an extra day to see the teacher — either in advisory or after school — before it's due.

## More Homework Tips for Parents

### Make expectations clear & consistent!

Parents are the key to making homework a positive experience for their child at home. But, where do parents begin?

- **Schedule a structured time period for homework** (e.g., 6:30-7:30 p.m.) and keep this time consistent. Designate a quiet place without distractions or interruptions like phone calls.
- **Look at their assignment notebook every night.**

- **Do not accept excuses.** (e.g., “I have no homework.”) Your child will always have something he or she can work on during their scheduled homework time: written homework, free reading, studying for tests, reviewing notes, organizing notebooks, etc. Insist that if “they did it in school,” they still have to bring it home to show you.
- **Help your child get organized and stay organized.** Take 10 minutes each night to clean out notebooks and loose papers, three-hole-punch papers and insert them where they belong in a binder.
- **Establish a place at home to store backpacks, packed before bed with completed homework and all necessary supplies for the next day.** In the morning it will be easy to grab on the way out.
- **Discipline the negative, and reward the positive!**

### Common homework excuses...and some effective responses!

- **I don't have any homework.**  
Let me look at your Agenda Book, or, let's go to [www.mohonasen.org](http://www.mohonasen.org) and see if your teacher posted it on his/her web page.
- **I already did it!**  
Show me.
- **I left it in my locker.**  
Let's go back to school and get it. The building is open until 9 p.m.
- **I handed it in already.**  
Have the teacher sign your agenda book to confirm it was handed in.
- **My book is lost or stolen.**  
Call a friend.
- **I don't need (or want) you to help me.**  
OK, but I will be checking your work every night.
- **I do my homework but I always lose it.**  
I'll help you get your notebooks organized. We can work together each night to help you keep your binders clean.
- **I don't understand the work.**  
Well, you have two days to complete the assignment, so see your teacher tomorrow during advisory or Block Five.
- **I forgot to write my assignments down.**  
Call a friend or see if it's on your teacher's web page at [www.mohonasen.org](http://www.mohonasen.org).



## Student support at Draper

Ensuring students feel safe and welcome is a primary goal at Draper. Conflicts between students, both in person, and online, is a serious issue all schools face. The majority of issues between middle school students are conflicts, not bullying.

Please refer to the Mohonasen Code of Conduct for the district definition of bullying. While bullying may involve a single incident, bullying is most often repeated over time, and involves a power imbalance (physical, social, emotional) between bully and victim. Bullying can be in person, or online.

### Here is a helpful table that shows the difference between conflict and bullying:

Characteristic	Conflict	Bullying
Relationship between parties	Often friends or acquaintances (example: on-again, off-again friends)	Usually not friends
Balance of power	Usually equal	Unequal
Expression & atmosphere	Neutral face, sometimes friendly	The inferior party: often sad, depressed, crying, angry The superior party: may vary, but often laughter and scornful smiles, serious, not friendly
Activity repeated with same partners	Varies	Yes
Role switching (who wins & loses)	Yes	No
Relations immediately after episode	Parties often participate in new, common activity	The participants leave each other

### Strategies for Students Engaged in Conflict

1. Stay cool
2. Talk it out
3. Walk away
4. Seek out help
5. Report to an adult

### Don't be a Bystander

A Bystander is a witness to bullying. Bystanders can play a powerful role by positively influencing a potentially harmful situation. There are many ways to deflect bullying.

- You can be direct and address the situation.
- You can distract the situation by redirecting attention to another topic.
- Another way is to delegate and work with someone else.

Stand up for someone that is in a potentially harmful situation. If you see something, say something.

## **No Place for Hate**

Draper strives to provide a safe and secure learning environment for all students that is free from bullying and harassment, and provides students the tools necessary to resolve conflict peacefully.

In 2019 and 2020, Draper was recognized as a No Place for Hate school by the Anti-Defamation League. Below are a sample of the character education and social-emotional programs offered at Draper.

- Student assemblies in the Fall and Spring
- Start with Hello Week
- The Great Kindness Challenge
- Beautiful Me Program
- Wellness Seminar
- Mindfulness and Growth Mindset messages on DMSTV morning announcements
- Mediation
- Restorative circles

## The Guidance Office

Draper employs three full-time guidance counselors — one for each of the three grade levels. As students progress from one grade to the next, their counselor moves with them, providing continuity and time to really get to know students and their parents.

Guidance counselors are often the first people students and parents contact with questions or concerns. They take a holistic approach to making sure each student has a positive experience at Draper Middle School and that they are well-prepared for the challenges of high school and beyond.

Some of the key things counselors typically help students with include:

- **Helping each student know him or herself.** This includes helping students explore interests, capitalize on strengths and develop plans to address weaknesses.
- **Educational Guidance and goal setting.** Counselors meet with students and parents to help select courses and review standardized test results. Counselors will also act as a “go-between” with teachers, students and parents to facilitate solutions to academic and/or behavior problems.
- **Personal Counseling and/or referrals** for students experiencing any number of problems — academic, social, family, etc.
- **Helping students balance the demands of school, family and friends.** Special attention is paid to teaching “life skills” such as organization, study skills, time management, responsibility, cooperation, teamwork and other habits and attitudes that will serve students well in any classroom, job or social situation.
- **Organizing and facilitating parent-teacher conferences** where the focus is on problem-solving — not playing the “blame game.” (See [Parent Conferences](#))
- **Communicating regularly with parents** to build strong and effective partnerships between home and school.

## Your counselor is here to help!

Students: Make an appointment whenever you have questions or concerns. Parents: Call our office at **(518) 356-8370**.

### Debbie Wood

(518) 356-8370

[debwood@mohonasen.org](mailto:debwood@mohonasen.org)

*During the 2019-20 school year, Mrs. Wood works with the 7th graders. In September 2020, Mrs. Wood will move to 8th grade with her students.*

### Angie Santabarbara

(518) 356-8370

[asantabarbara@mohonasen.org](mailto:asantabarbara@mohonasen.org)

*During the 2019-20 school year, Mrs. Santabarbara works with 8th graders. In September 2020, Mrs. Santabarbara will move to the 6th grade with new students.*

### Alicia Loveland

(518) 356-8370

[aloveland@mohonasen.org](mailto:aloveland@mohonasen.org)

*Serving as Mrs. Grimsley's replacement until early October.*

# Attendance & Behavior

## The Warrior Way:

1. Be Safe
2. Be Kind
3. Be You

## Attendance, Absences & Tardiness

As standards are raised, students really can't afford to miss school. Even the best students will quickly fall behind when attendance drops or there is chronic tardiness. Parent support on this is essential.

### Written Excuses are Required Within Three Days

Students in grades K-12 who are absent from school must submit a written excuse, signed by a parent/legal guardian, within three days of the student's return to school or their attendance record will permanently reflect an unexcused absence after this time. (In other words, no backdating of excuses will be allowed after these three days.) The excuse should indicate the reason for and the date(s) of the absence.

### The difference between "excused" and "unexcused" absences

Absences, tardiness and early departures will be considered excused or unexcused according to the following standards:

- **Excused:** absences due to personal illness, illness or death in the family, extreme weather conditions, medical appointments, religious observances, quarantine, required court appearances, music lessons and approved school-sponsored trips or activities.
- **Unexcused:** any absence that does not fit the above categories, e.g., family vacation, hunting, babysitting, hair cut, obtaining a learner's permit, oversleeping, etc.

When a student needs to miss school, parents are still asked to notify the school that day by calling the main office at **(518) 356-8352**. Upon their return, students should give their written excuses to their homeroom teacher or the attendance clerk at the start of the school day.

Students arriving late to school must sign in at the main office. If a student is late for a legitimate reason, parents are asked to provide a note within three days. Otherwise, unexcused lateness will result in detention.

School officials will take legal action when students are chronically late and/or absent. That said, guidance counselors at Draper Middle School are more than happy to work with parents of children with serious attendance problems. Don't hesitate to call for ideas or assistance!

## Period 10 Appointments and Detentions

### Period 10

Period 10 runs Tuesday through Thursday from 2:10 to 2:50 p.m. This is a time when many students voluntarily stay after to get extra help from teachers, organize their notebooks or make up past-due work.

Teachers may also assign a “Period 10” appointment to students who owe work or did not follow class rules. The teacher will schedule the Period 10 appointment in the student’s agenda book. This helps students remember when their Period 10 appointment is scheduled and communicates to parents why it has been assigned.

### Detention

Students who exhibit more serious or chronic behavior problems may be assigned a one- or two-hour after-school detention by the dean, assistant principal or principal. This is also noted in a student’s agenda.

On Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays late buses are provided for Period 10 appointments and detentions, so transportation home will not be a problem for students on the assigned days.

## 1:1 Chromebook

All Draper students will be provided a Chromebook for school use only. For details, please refer to the 1:1 Agreement Form, Chromebook Student Handbook, and Acceptable Use Policy on the district website.

## Computer Use Code

Student use of school computers and other learning technologies is contingent upon them abiding by the district’s acceptable use policy.

All students must abide by the rules spelled out in the Computer Use Code. It is very simple for network administrators to pinpoint misuse of computers — down to which computer, at what time and who was using it. So do yourself a favor and don’t horse around on the school computers.

## District Code of Conduct

*(Please visit <http://www.mohonasen.org/notifications-policies> to view the complete District Code of Conduct.)*

In compliance with the state’s Safe Schools Against Violence (SAVE) legislation and the Dignity for All Students Act, the Mohonasen Board of Education has adopted a Code of Conduct (i.e., rules and regulations) for all people on school property.

This district-wide Code of Conduct was developed in consultation with teachers, parents, students, administrators and other school/community representatives and is updated annually. It is available online at [www.mohonasen.org/notifications-policies/](http://www.mohonasen.org/notifications-policies/) or in the Draper Middle School main office.

Mohonasen’s Code of Conduct sets high standards for student conduct and academic integrity. The Code of Conduct outlines clear consequences for students who break the rules. It specifically addresses consequences for infractions such as bullying, intimidation, harassment, swearing,

plagiarism and cheating. The Code of Conduct also outlines the student Dress Code and Electronics Policy, as well as what is expected of students involved in extracurricular activities.

The Code of Conduct will serve as a standard for consistency and fairness that protects students' rights while promoting responsibility. We are committed to holding high academic standards of integrity.

Parents play an important role in the maintenance of good discipline in Mohonasen schools. Parents are encouraged to review the Code of Conduct and discuss it with their children on a regular basis.

Parents should encourage students to be "school ready" every day. This includes ensuring students arrive on time, dress appropriately, bring all needed materials and present an attitude of respect. It is essential that parents contact the school with any information that can help avoid problems during the school day.

## **Dignity for All Students**

New York State's Dignity for All Students Act (The Dignity Act) took effect on July 1, 2012, and was amended in July 2013 to include a cyberbullying component. Just as with the district's Code of Conduct, the law seeks to provide the State's public elementary and secondary school students with a safe and supportive environment free from discrimination, intimidation, taunting, harassment, and bullying on school property, a school bus and/or at a school function.

The Dignity Act includes, but is not limited to, acts of discrimination and harassment based on a student's race, color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, disability, sexual orientation, gender, or sex.

School officials understand the impact bullying and harassment can have on a school environment. More than a physical threat, bullying creates a climate of fear and makes learning difficult for all students. The law calls for each school to appoint a Dignity Act Coordinator who is trained to address issues in areas protected by the law and is accessible to the school community. The Dignity Act Coordinators at Mohonasen are the principals of each school.

### **Cyberbullying amendment to DASA**

The New York State Legislature passed an amendment to the Dignity for All Students Act, which took effect July 1, 2013 to specifically address cyberbullying not only within schools but also incidents that occur off school property that could "foreseeably disrupt" the school environment.

# Extracurricular Activities

## Join a club...go out for the team...get involved!

Extracurricular activities are a great way for kids to meet new friends, learn new things or give something back to their community. Best of all, studies show that students who are involved in after-school activities earn higher grades and are more successful — both academically and socially.

Details about meeting dates and times are generally provided over the morning announcements and via notices posted around the school.

Parents and students should also feel free to contact their guidance counselor or club advisor for more information.

## Athletics

All students at the middle school (grades six through eight) are encouraged to take part in intramural athletics that are offered throughout the school year. They are designed to appeal to students of all abilities and diverse interests.

Students in grades 7 and 8 may also compete at the interscholastic level on modified teams in football, wrestling, baseball, soccer, diving, lacrosse, basketball, cross country, girls volleyball, softball, track and field, lacrosse and swimming. Registration for these sports will be done online through FamilyID. (See below.) Questions? Contact the Athletic Director at **(518) 356-8270**.

### Online Sports Registration with FamilyID

New as of Spring 2018, athletes must for their sports online through [FamilyID.com](https://familyid.com). All athletes must complete registration prior to each sports season.

FamilyID is a secure registration platform that provides an easy, user-friendly way to register to participate in an athletic team. Mohonasen also uses FamilyID for swim and other program registration.

For information and a link to register, visit [www.mohonasen.org/familyid/](http://www.mohonasen.org/familyid/) Question? Please call the Athletics Office at **(518) 356-8270**.

## Color Guard

**Advisor: Dan Jones**

Mohonasen's Color Guard accompanies the Marching Band at competitive field shows and parades. Guard members add a lot of pizzazz to the band by flashing and twirling batons, flags and rifles and dancing while the band performs. Members also compete against other color guards in New York state and beyond.

Students have the option of participating in the Indoor Guard during the winter months. It is also possible for instrumental students to participate in Color Guard.

Students are usually asked to attend meetings before the school year is over and are expected to attend practices beginning in July and participate in Band Camp, held the last two weeks of August.

## DMSTV Club

**Advisors: Kim Coelho and Erica Pangburn**

Students run the tech portion of DMSTV and provide daily on-air reporting.

## Mohon Masque Jr.

**Advisor: Erica Pangburn**

Get involved in a school play — center stage or behind the scenes. Mohon Masque's big spring musical involves students in elementary grades through high school. Tryouts and rehearsals are announced at least a week in advance to give students time to prepare. Even if acting, singing and dancing aren't for you, there are many other ways to get involved in the plays. Stage crew, set building, costumes, fund-raising and lighting are just a few of the behind-the-scenes opportunities for students.

## History Club

**Advisor: Mark DiCocco**

Take exciting field trips (like recent visits to Gettysburg, PA and Baltimore, MD) while expanding your understanding of history. Students watch historical movies, visit local museums, host guest lecturers and have lots of fun. Open to middle school students in grades 7-8.

## Library Book Club

**Advisor: Mary Gorton**

The Draper Library Book Club is devoted to connecting students to books in an ongoing effort to create lifelong readers. Members meet on a weekly basis to discuss various books that are selected as a group. In addition to weekly book discussions and other activities that promote reading, members also attend field trips, as well as participate in community and school events. All students are welcome to attend. All that is required is an appetite for reading. Meetings take place every Friday after school in the Library Media Center.

## Musical Performing Groups

- **Band Gr. 6-8:** Jason Varga
- **Choir Gr. 6-8:** Nicole Gabriel
- **Orchestra Gr. 6:** Nancy Felberbaum
- **Orchestra Gr. 7-8:** Kim Kondenar

Band, choir and orchestra members practice regularly with their group during advisory periods. Each group performs at the winter and spring concerts, two school assemblies, annual school budget vote, Strawberry Festival and other special events that may vary from one year to the next. Serious students are also encouraged to prepare music and play for the New York State School Music Association Music Festival held each spring.

## National Junior Honor Society

**Advisor: Marissa Gordon**



For 8th graders who meet requirements: i.e. academic average, prior community service, etc. (See [Junior Honor Society](#))

## Odyssey Of The Mind

**Program Coordinator: Jason Varga**

Creative problem solving comes from teamwork, cooperation and risk-taking. That's the principle behind Odyssey of the Mind, an international problem-solving competition that is both fun and challenging. Students team up to work on one of several open-ended problems that the international OM organization poses each year. For example, one problem may require students to build a structure that meets specific guidelines. Another problem may require a theatrical solution that is written and performed by students. There is a regional competition each spring and, depending on how students score, they may proceed to the state level or beyond. Each team has its own volunteer coaches. (Parents are always needed to fill this important role!)

## Peers For Peace

**Advisors: Angie Santabarbara and Paola Cummings**

Peers for Peace is offered at both the middle school and high school. The goal of this student group is to raise awareness about human rights and increase tolerance and respect for diversity within the school and community.

## School Yearbook

**Advisor: Mary Gorton**

Students in grades six through eight are encouraged to contribute to the many aspects of creating a lasting record of their middle school years. Yearbook staffers structure layouts, take pictures, write captions, and document special events that take place throughout the school year. If you're responsible, good at managing your time, hard-working and dedicated to producing a yearbook that reflects middle school life — then this is the club for you!

## Science Club

**Advisor: Jenna Niles**

Environmentalists will enjoy the many outdoor activities (hiking, field trips, etc.) as well as recycling efforts that club members are spearheading. There are also plans to participate in competitions that combine science and technology. Joining this club will allow students to explore different aspects of science while having lots of fun.

## Ski and Snowboard Club

**Advisors: Fred Saccocio and Rob Buehler**

Take to the slopes at various mountains in the northeast from January to March. Lessons and rentals available. Round-trip transportation is included. Open to students in grades 6-12 on a first-come, first-served basis. There is a fee of approximately \$225 to cover the cost of lift tickets and transportation.

## Student Council

Advisors: Erin Degnan

Student Council membership provides an avenue for students to discuss ways to improve their school and have a voice in school operations. Two student representatives from each homeroom (grades 6-8) are chosen annually; these students must maintain a grade average of at least 80. Each September the eighth-grade class elects a slate of officers. Student Council Officers are required to maintain a minimum grade average of 85. Meetings are held approximately twice a month.

The Student Council sponsors several dances each year and helps organize the eighth-grade farewell dance. Other activities include an annual flower sale, various service projects and fundraisers that help support student field trips at all grade levels. This is a great way for students to get leadership experience while having a positive impact on their school.

## Technology Club

Advisor: Mark Lajeunesse

This club takes what students are learning in technology class to the next level. Projects include robotics demonstrations, hydroponic gardens and mouse-trap powered vehicles.

## Teen Town

Coordinator: William Van Wie

The extremely popular “Teen Town” program gives Draper Middle School students a fun night out where they can socialize with friends in a well-supervised setting. Teen Towns are held on Friday evenings, approximately 5 times during the school year, from 7 to 8:30 p.m. at the middle school. Dates are published in the district calendar.

At Teen Town, students can dance to music provided by a disc jockey in the school cafeteria and play basketball in the gym. Pizza, soda and other snacks are sold throughout the night.

There is a \$3.00 admission fee for students to cover the cost of the disc jockey, dance contest and door prizes. Parents who would like to help chaperone should ensure their contact information is up-to-date in SchoolTool to receive notification through the new School Messenger system (see p. 33) when volunteers are needed.

Please note that Teen Town, Student Council Dances and the 8th Grade Moving Up Dance are for Draper Middle School students only; no guest passes are allowed.

All Teen Towns are chaperoned by several school officials including either the principal or assistant principal, teacher(s) as well as parent chaperones.

Participation in Teen Town and other student dances is a privilege, not a right. Any student arriving after 7:30 p.m. must be walked to the door by a parent or guardian. Students who leave the building during Teen Town will not be allowed to re-enter. Any student evicted from Teen Town will not be allowed to participate in Teen Towns/dances for the remainder of the year. Students suspended (internal or external) from school since the last general student dance or Teen Town will not be permitted to attend the next event.

## **The Warrior Way School Newspaper**

**Advisor: Marissa Gordon**

Draper Middle School's student newspaper, The Warrior Way, is published three to four times each year. Students in grades 6 through 8 are encouraged to get involved in one or more of the various aspects of producing a newspaper. These include reporting, editing, layout, artwork and photography.

## “This & That”

### Change of Address or Phone Number

Any change of address or telephone number must be reported to the Guidance Office (518-356-8370) and the school nurse’s office (518-356-8360).

The school must have daytime phone numbers where parents can be reached in the event of an emergency.

### Closings/Early Dismissals

The superintendent of schools may close schools or dismiss students and staff early when hazardous weather or other emergencies threaten health or safety.

School closings and delayed starting times will be reported to local television stations and radio stations. Closing information is also posted on the Mohonasen School District website at [www.mohonasen.org](http://www.mohonasen.org) and on the district’s Facebook page.

Sign up to receive e-mail and/or text message alerts through SchoolMessenger (in the case of a closing/delay or early dismissal by updating your information in SchoolTool at the District’s website.

Parents are asked to avoid calling the school office for this information in order to keep phone lines open.

### Dress for Success

Guidelines for School Dress: We tell students to come to school dressed as if this were their “job.” Studies show that students perform better if dressed the part.

If school and home work together on student attire, your child will understand what is acceptable and appropriate.

### Field Trips

Students must have prior written permission from a parent or legal guardian for all school-sponsored field trips. A permission/health form must be obtained from the teacher coordinating the trip, signed and returned to the school prior to the trip.

Additionally, in order to participate in field trips, students must have on file with the school nurse an *Activity/Field Trip Medication Form* along with a *Student Health Card*. (Both cards are sent home at the start of each school year.)

Keep in mind that participation in field trips is a privilege, not a right, and may be revoked based on behavior, attendance or school performance.

Students are representatives of their school while on field trips and should behave accordingly by following all school rules. Students are also responsible for making up any course work they missed while on the trip.

## Lockers & Locks

All students are assigned their own locker, as close to their homeroom as possible. Students may go to their locker any time during the school day provided they are not late for class. If a student loses a lock, s/he may purchase a new one for \$5.

### To Unlock Your Locker:

- Turn the knob right two or more complete turns, stopping at the first number of the combination.
- Then turn the knob left, one complete turn, past the first number of the combination and stopping at the second number of the combination.
- Finally, turn the knob right to the third number of the combination and stop. Pull the locker handle to open.

Students should NOT share their locker combination or their lockers with other students.

Students must make sure their lockers are closed and locked before leaving them. (Do not leave it in a ready-open position!) The school is not responsible for items reported missing from school lockers.

Be advised that student lockers are the property of the district and, like textbooks, are loaned to students for their use during the school year. To ensure student health and safety, the school reserves the right to inspect locker contents. This inspection may include, but is not limited to, locker clean-out days, the use of trained drug dogs and individual locker inspections.

## Lost and Found

Any student who has lost something or believes it may have been stolen, should report this to the office. School officials will make a reasonable attempt to find lost or stolen property, but the district is not responsible for its replacement.

Students who find property belonging to someone else are asked to bring it to the main office.

## Morning Announcements

Each day during homeroom, morning announcements give students valuable information via DMS TV about things like athletic team tryouts, club activities, various deadlines and school news. Listen carefully and have a pencil ready to jot down notes!

Morning announcements are also available at [www.mohonasen.org/draper-middle-school/ms-morning-announcements/](http://www.mohonasen.org/draper-middle-school/ms-morning-announcements/)

## Passes

A student must have a signed pass anytime he or she is in the hallway during class time.

## Public Concerns

Public concerns about any facet of school life should generally follow a chain of command, starting with the person closest to the source of the complaint.

In most instances concerns will be directed to the building principal or his assistant if the matter cannot first be resolved by the teacher, coach or other staff member involved.

If an issue is not satisfactorily resolved at the building level, the concern may be carried to the superintendent of schools or one of her assistants.

## Release of Student Directory Information

From time to time, student directory information is released for use in school publications, on school web pages and to the media, depicting activities of the Mohonasen School District.

Parents who object to the release of their child's directory information must notify both the superintendent of schools and their building principal — in writing — on or before September 15 in any given school year.

For more details, see the "Release of Directory Information" notice on the district website at [www.mohonasen.org/notifications-policies/release-of-student-directory-information/](http://www.mohonasen.org/notifications-policies/release-of-student-directory-information/).

## School Resource Officer (SRO)

Thanks to a partnership with the Rotterdam Police Department, a police officer works full-time in the Mohonasen School District when school is in session. The district also has a Chief of Security who is housed at Draper.

Mohonasen's SRO provides a visible law enforcement presence on the campus. He is also a resource for students, parents, faculty and staff. The SRO is involved in counseling, teaching, participation in extracurricular activities as well as safety and security issues. His office is located at Mohonasen High School.

## School Social Worker (& Luna the Therapy Dog)

Draper Middle School has a Social Worker who is available to help students who are dealing with personal problems such as depression, drug or alcohol abuse, a family crisis, etc. Students may contact the Social Worker directly at **(518) 356-8375** (office in main office suite) or they may be referred to her by a parent or school personnel.

Parents are also welcome to call the school social worker for information and referrals to community and social service programs.

## School Supply Lists

School supply lists for each grade level are provided online at [www.mohonasen.org/drapers-middle-school/drapers-school-supply-lists/](http://www.mohonasen.org/drapers-middle-school/drapers-school-supply-lists/).

## Security Cameras at the Middle School

Surveillance cameras to help deter violence and vandalism are in place in all Mohonasen schools.

These closed-circuit TV cameras monitor student activity in high-traffic areas both inside and outside of our schools. Security cameras record people as they enter and exit each building and sensors notify staff when there has been an unauthorized entry at selected doors. (There are NO surveillance cameras in student bathrooms or physical education locker rooms.)

The presence of cameras is designed to serve as an added deterrent to fights and other misbehavior, vandalism and violence. Video recordings also provide powerful evidence in disciplinary or criminal investigations.

## Signing Students In and Out

When picking middle-school students up early for doctor appointments, etc., parents are asked to observe the following procedures:

- Parents are asked to write an early dismissal note for their child to bring to the office the morning of the appointment. This note should state the student's full name, reason for having to leave early, the time he or she will be picked up and include a parent's signature. The office will then issue an early dismissal pass, which students simply need to show to their teacher at the time of dismissal. The student is then free to report to the main office to meet his or her parent.
- Parents need to come INSIDE the school to meet their child and physically sign him or her out for the appointment. For safety reasons, students are not allowed to sign themselves out of school.

## Student IDs

All middle school students are issued a student identification card by the company that takes student pictures each year.

## Student Records

The Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) gives parents (not stepparents) and students over age 18 the following rights:

1. The right to inspect and review your (or your child's) education records within 45 days of the day the district receives a request for access. Parents or eligible students should submit to the building principal a written request that identifies the records they wish to inspect. The principal will make arrangements for access and notify you of the time and place where the records may be inspected.
2. The right to request the amendment of your (or your child's) education records that you believe is inaccurate or misleading. Parents or eligible students may do this by writing the principal, clearly indicating the part of the record they want changed, and specifying why it is inaccurate or misleading. If the district decides not to amend the record as requested, it will notify the parent or eligible student of the decision and advise them of their right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided at this same time.
3. The right to consent to disclosure of personally identifiable information contained in your (or your child's) education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent.

## Student Transfers

If a student is going to transfer to another school district, parents should notify the current school counselor as far in advance as possible.

Early notice will help make the transition smoother for all concerned. School records need to be transferred and processed and schedules need to be adapted when students leave one school for another. Whenever possible, it's best to time the move to coincide with the end of a marking period or the beginning of a new school year.

## Swimming Pool

In addition to its use in Physical Education classes, students can take advantage of a growing number of pool programs and courses.

For example, Mohonasen now offers a competitive swim program for students in primary school through high school where the emphasis is on preparing students for competitive swim at the high school level.

Students can also take lifeguarding courses at Mohonasen. Once they receive their certification, students age 15 and older can be employed as lifeguards at the pool — a fun and lucrative part-time job.

Early birds can also participate in the morning lap swim or open swim sessions for just one dollar per session. A calendar of pool classes is posted on the district web site (swimming pool pages) and mailed home with the Continuing Education course guide.

Students on the boys' and girls' swim teams also use the pool for practice and meets.

Mohonasen's Aquatics Department is always looking at new and more specialized classes, so visit the website for the latest offerings and opportunities.

## Telephone Calls by Students

The main office has a telephone for student's emergency use only (i.e., to call home for forgotten books, physical education clothes, etc.) Students are not to use this phone to make social plans or to call parents for a ride home when they don't want to wait for the late bus. Cell phones are to be kept in lockers until the end of the school day. **Please do not call or text message your child on his cell phone during the school day.** The first time a student is found using a cell phone to call or text message during the day, the phone will be taken away until the end of the school day. The second time it happens, a parent/guardian will have to come and pick up the phone at the school.

## Textbooks

Textbooks and, in certain cases, other school supplies and materials, are provided to students on a loan basis. Such property is generally intended for use by a number of students over a period of years and should not be abused. All textbooks are to be covered.

Students are responsible for the return of all loaned property. Each book is checked by the teacher when issued and its number and condition are registered upon student receipt. With reasonable care, books can be returned in June in about the same condition as when issued. If a book is lost or damaged, the student will be required to pay a fee based on the cost and condition of the book when issued.



## Visitors to the Middle School

For security reasons, all visitors during school hours are required to first report to the middle school office for a visitor's pass and present a photo ID. This includes parents.

## Website for Mohonasen

[www.mohonasen.org](http://www.mohonasen.org)

The Mohonasen School District website provides news and information on all kinds of topics—from what's making news in the district to what's for lunch each day, along with some new features.

Draper Middle School also has its own section on the district website and many teachers have classroom or department-level pages where visitors can learn about homework policies, see student work or find helpful instructional links.

### Things you'll find on the district website include:

- Access to SchoolTool for student academic, discipline and attendance information, as well as Essential Tasks, interim reports and report cards;
- School news and important reminders;
- Teacher and department-level web pages;
- Information about programs and academic-related news;
- A link to the district Facebook page;
- Budget and school advocacy information;
- Athletic news and sports pages;
- Information about adult education programs;
- A variety of district forms are available for your convenience;
- Information about swim classes for kids and adults;
- A searchable staff directory;
- School closing/delay information;
- School lunch and breakfast menus;
- Board of Education news, meeting agendas and minutes of prior meetings;
- Employment opportunities in the school district;
- An online calendar; and
- Archives of district newsletters and publications.

Information is updated regularly so check in frequently!

## Working Papers

Any students under the age of 18 who want to work must first get working papers from the Guidance Department. This requires a parent's written permission to work, proof of age and a certificate of physical fitness.

"Blue cards" are issued for students under the age of 16. When students turn 16 they must reapply for "green card" working papers.

The following laws apply to underage workers:

- 11-, 12- and 13-year-olds can work as newspaper carriers and can also hand-harvest fruits and vegetables up to four hours per week.

- 14- and 15-year-olds can work for three hours on a school day and eight hours Saturday, Sunday and holidays – up to an 18-hour work week. During the summer, they can work from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.
- At age 16, teens can work four hours per day, Monday through Thursday, and eight hours per day Fridays, weekends or holidays. They can work up to 28 hours per week, between 6 a.m. and 10 p.m. With parental permission, they can work until midnight on Fridays and Saturdays.
- No minor can work in the construction industry and teens are not permitted to operate machinery that could prove dangerous.
- Teens must be paid minimum wage.

Teens and parents should be mindful that while working offers a number of clear benefits, studies show that working 15 hours or more each week during the school year often requires students to sacrifice sleep, homework and family time.

# Special Areas

## The Food Service Program

It's a fact. Students who are well-nourished are shown to have increased problem-solving abilities, memory, verbal fluency and creativity.

With that in mind, Mohonasen offers a food service program at the middle school that is designed to fuel learning *and* offer a variety of choices that appeal to adolescents.

### How Much Does Breakfast & Lunch Cost?

Middle school students are offered a full breakfast for \$1.50. School lunches at the middle school cost \$3.25 each.

Students can pay for meals as they go. Parents can also prepay as much (or as little) as is convenient into their child's lunch account. Those who pay \$65 up front will get 20 prepaid lunches — plus one free one. To prepay, parents can mail a check to the Mohonasen Food Service Program at 2072 Curry Road, Schenectady, NY 12303, send payment to school with their child, or pay online at [www.PayPAMS.com](http://www.PayPAMS.com).

Breakfast is available each school day from 7:17-7:36 a.m.

### Charging Policy

Due to new "No Shaming" regulations required by New York state, cashiers are not allowed to discuss account balances with students. Unless a student specifically asks about their account balance, cashiers are not permitted to tell students if their account balance is low or in arrears. Parents are encouraged to sign up for PayPams so they are able to monitor student accounts.

It is the District's goal to provide students with access to nutritious no- or low-cost meals each school day and to ensure that a student whose parent/ guardian has unpaid meal charges is not shamed or treated differently than a student whose parent/guardian does not have unpaid meal charges.

Unpaid meal charges place a financial burden on the district. The purpose of the district policy is to ensure compliance with federal requirements for the USDA Child Nutrition Program and to provide oversight and accountability for the collection of outstanding student meal balances to ensure that the student is not stigmatized, distressed, or embarrassed.

The intent of this policy is to establish procedures to address unpaid meal charges throughout the District in a way that does not stigmatize, distress, or embarrass students.

The provisions of this policy pertain to regular priced reimbursable school breakfast, lunch and snack meals only. Charging of items outside of the reimbursable meals (a la carte — or "snack" — items, adult meals, etc.) is prohibited.

For details on specific charging policies at the elementary, middle school and high school levels, please visit the district website at [www.mohonasen.org/food-service-program/](http://www.mohonasen.org/food-service-program/).

## Free and Reduced-price Meals

Students may be eligible for free or reduced-price meals if their families meet federal income guidelines. The application takes only minutes to fill out and can be done at any time during the year.

Beginning July 1, 2019, students approved for reduced price meals will receive breakfast and lunch at no charge.

Eligible students are given pin numbers — just like everyone else — so their peers and food service workers are not aware which students are receiving free or discounted meals.

A copy of the application is mailed home each August as part of the Food Service Newsletter. The application can also be obtained online or by calling the food service office at **(518) 356-8225**.

A new application must be completed for the current school year. All previous applications expire on Sept. 30.

## Pay for lunches online using PayPAMS

Parents can pay for their child's meals from the comfort of their own home using PayPAMS — an online service that let's you pre-pay for meals online. With PayPAMS parents can also view and manage their child's meal account, schedule automatic payments and view a report of daily spending and cafeteria purchases for free. Get started by logging onto [www.PayPAMS.com](http://www.PayPAMS.com).

## Health Services

A full-time registered nurse is on staff at Draper Middle School to serve student health needs, along with a part-time health office assistant.

## Accident Insurance

Mohonasen provides supplemental student accident insurance that serves as secondary coverage. Benefits will not be paid for medical expenses covered by a student's primary insurer. In order to receive benefits from Mohonasen's student accident policy, parents must first submit all medical bills to their own health insurance carrier. In the event no health insurance exists, the district has elected to self-fund the \$100 deductible for this coverage. Insurance forms are available from the school nurse.

## Health Cards

At the start of each school year a Student Health Card is sent home for parents/guardians to fill out and return ASAP to the school.

The information on this card is kept on file in the nurse's office throughout the year. It includes emergency contact numbers for parents and medical information concerning each student. Parents are urged to call the school nurse immediately if any of this information changes during the school year.

## Illness

Students who become ill or injured during the school day need to report to the school nurse before calling or texting a parent to come get them or leaving school on their own. Any student leaving school due to the above reasons must be released by the school nurse.

## Immunizations

New York State law requires that all incoming 6th graders who have reached their 11th birthday by September 1, have a Tdap booster immunization before the beginning of school. The physician's documentation of this shot must be presented to the school nurse. Any child who has their 11th birthday after September 1 will have two weeks following their birthday to get this NYS required booster.

Effective July 1, 2014, a second dose of Varicella (chickenpox) is now required for 6th graders. Please note New York State now requires all students entering seventh grade to be vaccinated against meningococcal disease.

For more information, contact the school nurse at **(518) 356-8360**.

## Medications in School

Students, with the exception of diabetics, may not have any medication (prescription or over the counter) on their possession during the school day (i.e., not in pockets, lunch boxes, backpacks, lockers, etc.). The only medication exceptions are an asthma inhaler or Epi-Pen, which may be carried by the student if they have a physician order and parent consent, along with the approval of the school nurse.

### **The following guidelines must be met before administering any medication during school hours:**

- All medication, over the counter and prescription, must be brought to school by a parent or responsible adult in the original labeled container (prescription medication must be in a pharmacy labeled container). Stock Acetaminophen and Ibuprofen are available in the nurse's office and can be given by the school nurse with a physician order unless the parent chooses to provide the student's own Acetaminophen/Ibuprofen. All other over the counter medication must be provided by the parent.
- A written physician order including name, dose, duration, and reason for prescribing the medication and possible adverse reactions.
- A written note from parent/guardian giving the school nurse permission to administer the medication as prescribed by the physician.
- Any discontinued or unused medication will be disposed of at the end of the school year if not picked up by the parent by July 1.
- All medication orders must be renewed by the physician each school year.

## School Physicals/Dental Certificates

NYS regulations require new students to the district as well as students entering 7th grade shall submit a health physical certificate signed by a licensed physician or nurse practitioner. This certificate shall be submitted within 30 days of entrance into the district or before January 1 of their 7th grade school year. Such examinations shall be accepted if it is administered not more than 12 months prior to commencement of the school year in which it is required. If the student does not submit a current physical from his/her own physician, a physical by the district physician will be scheduled to meet this requirement.

Dental certificates are also required for 7th grade students.

Please see the district website (<https://www.mohonasen.org/student-services/health-services/>) for information on the state-required health form.

## **Sports Physicals**

To play on a team, or even practice, students must — by law — have a sports physical on file with the school nurse. The physical must be dated within the past calendar year of the current sport season.

The physical can be performed by a student's family doctor, but Mohonasen's health physical form for Grades 6-12 — which is also available from the school nurse or online at <https://www.mohonasen.org/student-services/health-services/>—must be filled out.

Prior to each sports season, students also have the option of having a free sports physical performed by the school physician. Students will be given advanced notice throughout the year of the physical dates.

Students must obtain and complete a Sports Packet (provided by coaches prior to each sports season).

Note: In order for all students to participate on a school sports team, a Sports Health Update Form must be filled out, signed by a parent and turned in to the school nurse. This form can also be obtained from the school nurse or at [www.mohonasen.org](http://www.mohonasen.org).

## **Parent Groups**

Participation in parent organizations is a natural way to stay connected to your middle schooler. It's also a way to get involved in some of the many fun and worthwhile activities that these groups support. Get involved and you'll also get to know your child's friends — and their parents — a little better, too!

Draper Middle School sponsors two parent nights each year. Past events have covered math, guest authors, social-emotional topics and other presentations.

## **Volunteers Needed**

We are in great need of PTSO (Parent-Teacher-Student Organization) volunteers for the following activities:

- Teen Town chaperones (sign up for one or all!)
- 8th Grade Farewell Dance Committee
- 8th Grade Awards Coordinator (can be shared position)

We would love to tap your area of expertise! There may be other events throughout the school year for which we could use your help. Please call Draper Middle School at **(518) 356-8350** if you are interested.

## **Music Parents Association**

The Mohonasen Music Parents Association is a parent group that supports ALL student musical performing groups, grades 3-12.

The group organizes several events each year, helps with the annual concerts and chaperones at special events — from local parades to out-of-state competitions.

The group meets monthly during the school year. Check the district calendar for dates and times.

- **President:** Michael Adamec
- **Vice-President:** Steve Redmond
- **Treasurer:** Hope Messersmith (518) 894-1429
- **Recording Secretary:** Kristine Jenks
- **Corresponding Secretary:** Sarah Colon (518) 421-3218
- **Music Parents Email:** [mohonmusicparents@yahoo.com](mailto:mohonmusicparents@yahoo.com)

### Band Boosters

- **President:** Jaclyn Paul 518-928-7113
- **Band Boosters Email:** [mohonbandboosters@yahoo.com](mailto:mohonbandboosters@yahoo.com)

## Students with Disabilities

Draper Middle School students with disabilities work side-by-side with their peers in inclusive classrooms and are actively involved in all aspects of middle school life. Students often receive additional services or participate in specialized programs to accommodate their disabilities while facilitating success in school and life.

What follows is a BRIEF explanation of some of the district's programs, plans and resources for students with disabilities. For more information, parents should contact Mohonasen's Director for Special and Alternative Education at **(518) 356-8221**.

### Consultant Teachers

Since the goal is to provide a quality education in the least restrictive environment, most students with disabilities learn side-by-side with their peers in general education classrooms. Consultant teachers are special education teachers who work with the regular classroom teacher to help "integrated" students find success in the general education environment. Consultant teachers, for example, may co-teach lessons, restructure assignments, provide special accommodations and follow-up with students and/or teachers after class.

### Resource Room

Special education teachers are available to meet with students in small groups outside the general education classrooms to make sure students receive the supplemental supports needed to meet high academic standards. The nature of these supports is spelled out in each student's Individual Education Plan (IEP).

The resource room is staffed by special education teachers who provide additional instruction to strengthen the skills of students with disabilities. Resource room teachers also work to provide students with necessary accommodations and modifications.

### Special Class

While all students with disabilities are encouraged to participate in general education classes, for some this environment proves to be very restrictive. Some students require the additional support and structure of special classes designed to address their unique instructional needs. These "self-contained" classes have low student-to-teacher ratios and allow for more individualized instruction.

## **Individualized Education Plan (IEP)**

The Committee on Special Education must develop an Individual Education Plan (IEP) for all special education students. In developing the IEP, the committee considers evaluations, student strengths, concerns of the parent and where appropriate, student performance on state and district assessments.

An IEP documents the following: present level of performance; how the student’s disability impacts his/her participation in the general curriculum; classification of the disability; annual goals; recommended programs and services; eligibility for state or alternate assessments; a list of any alternative accommodations; a list of any assistive technology devices; and transitional goals at the appropriate time.

## **Program/Testing Accommodations**

Students with IEPs or 504 Plans often have testing or classroom accommodations as part of their middle school program. Accommodations may include: additional strategies for participating in class activities, for acquiring class notes or for completing homework. Testing accommodations are provided only as the result of a recommendation by the Committee on Special Education (CSE) or 504 Compliance Committee.

## **504 Plans**

“504 Plans” are developed to support students whose physical or medical needs have a significant negative impact on their success in school. Special accommodations are written into 504 Plans to ensure that students with disabilities receive a free and appropriate education — just as non-disabled students do. Accommodations, for example, may include providing additional time and/or alternative locations for tests or special strategies for participating in class activities. A 504 Plan is not the same as an IEP (Individual Education Plan), which is generally much more intensive.

## **Psychological Testing**

At the request of the Pupil/Child Study Team and/or the parent/guardian, a student can receive psychoeducational testing, which may include tests of ability and/or achievement level. A psycho-educational evaluation must be authorized by Mohonasen’s Office of Student Services. Testing is conducted by the school psychologist. Students with an IEP are required to receive an updated evaluation at least every three years.

## **Transition Planning**

All students age 15 and older who have a disability receive transitional planning as part of the annual review of the special education program. The student’s case manager, in consultation with the transition specialist, will work annually to address post-secondary education, employment and community living goals. As students move closer to graduation, representatives from Adult Career and Continuing Education Services-Vocational Rehabilitation (formerly known as VESID) and other community-based services may be included in the process.

## **Web Resources**

The Internet is a helpful source of information for parents and students who want to learn more about a particular disability, find resources, network with others, etc. What follows are a few sites that address some common disabilities:



- Adult Career & Continuing Education Services-Vocational Rehabilitation (formerly known as VESID)  
<http://www.acces.nysed.gov>
- Aspergers Syndrome Education Network  
<http://www.aspennj.org>
- Children and Adults with Attention Deficit Disorder (CHADD)  
<http://www.chadd.org>
- Learning Disabilities  
<http://www.ldonline.com>
- National Attention Deficit Disorder Association  
<http://www.add.org>
- Center for Parent Information and Resources  
<https://www.parentcenterhub.org/ourcelibrary/>
- Obsessive-Compulsive Foundation  
<https://iocdf.org/>
- New York State Talking Book and Braille Library  
<http://www.nysl.nysed.gov/tbbl/index.html>
- Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services  
<http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ose/index.html>

## Transportation

Mohonasen transports approximately 3,000 students more than a half million miles annually. Staff in our Transportation Department work hard to provide safe and efficient service to all students.

Post cards are mailed home notifying students of their **assigned** bus stop approximately two weeks before the start of each new school year. Students are asked to report only to this stop.

Please be patient the first few weeks of school to allow drivers to adjust bus routes and times. Pick-up and drop-off times may vary 5-10 minutes either way.

If parents have a transportation-related issue or concern, it's important they contact the transportation office (**518-356-8260**) or their child's school directly rather than approaching a school bus driver.

### Bus Notes

Parents wishing to have their student picked up or dropped off at a location other than their home must complete a request form that can be found on the district website, [www.mohonasen.org/transportation](http://www.mohonasen.org/transportation). Please contact the transportation office at (**518**) **356-8260** with any questions.

If a student wants to ride an alternate bus other than the one he or she is scheduled to ride, (i.e., to go to a friend's house after school), parents are required to send a written note that must be turned in at the front office in the morning. Bus drivers will ask students to produce the approved note before allowing them to board a bus they are not scheduled to ride.

### Bus Rules

The safety of all students is the district's primary concern. All buses are school property and are subject to all rules set forth in the Code of Conduct. Each student has an individual responsibility to help ensure the safety of all students on the bus by following the rules.

Coming to school, going home and riding buses for extracurricular events or field trips, all students are expected to listen to and obey all instructions from transportation personnel and adhere to the following rules:

1. Behave in a safe and orderly manner at the bus stop, school bus port and on the bus.
2. Look both ways if crossing a road AND wait for the driver's hand signal or directions before crossing.
3. Enter and exit the bus in an orderly fashion.
4. Ride in your seat, facing forward.
5. Keep the bus clean and free of litter.
6. Keep all parts of your body inside the bus at all times.
7. Be responsible for your own belongings.
8. Respect others' property.
9. Speak quietly, using appropriate and respectful language.
10. Refrain from activities that may damage the bus.
11. Use of illegal substances (alcohol, tobacco and drugs) is prohibited.
12. Refrain from bringing objects (like skateboards, large musical instruments or school projects) onto the bus that may present a safety hazard.
13. No eating or drinking on the school bus. Many students have food allergies and food on the bus could cause a medical emergency.

The Code of Conduct spells out clear disciplinary rules for students who violate bus rules.

### Changing an Assigned Bus Stop

If you want to request a change in an assigned bus stop, contact the Transportation Office by phone at **(518) 356-8260**.

Mohonasen's policy is to try to honor change requests to existing bus stops — provided there is enough room on the bus.

For obvious safety reasons, the district's goal is to have no students forced to stand on buses. During the first two weeks of school, bus routes may need to be adjusted to meet this goal.

For more information about the Mohonasen Transportation Department, visit [www.mohonasen.org/transportation](http://www.mohonasen.org/transportation).

### Activity Period Buses

Late buses are provided on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays. Buses arrive at the school between 3:25 and 3:35 p.m. so transportation home will not be a problem for students participating in extracurricular activities or period 10 appointments and main office detentions on those days. A list of late run bus letters and assigned stops can be found on our website, [www.mohonasen.org/transportation](http://www.mohonasen.org/transportation).