

AUGUST 2025 NEWSLETTER



IMPORTANT DATES

- 7TH GRADE ORIENTATION
 - THURSDAY, AUGUST 28, 12-2 PM
- SCHOOL CLOSED - LABOR DAY
 - MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 1
- FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL
 - THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 4
- CAMP MASON PARENT MEETING - 8TH GRADE
 - THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 11 5:45 PM
- BACK TO SCHOOL NIGHT - 7TH & 8TH GRADE
 - THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 11 6:30 PM
- SCHOOL CLOSED - ROSH HASHANAH
 - TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 23



A MESSAGE FROM MR. ACCARDI

Dear UMS Families,

I hope this newsletter finds you enjoying the summer and time with family and friends. Our team at UMS has been working hard to get UMS ready for the 25-26 school year. As we prepare for the upcoming school year, the UMS Administration has taken time to reflect on the growing impact of smartphones and social media on our school community. While national conversations and parent concerns have brought these issues to light, we have seen firsthand how personal devices can disrupt the learning environment, social development, and overall well-being of our students.

In response, we have engaged in conversations with families, staff, and other middle school leaders to evaluate our current practices and determine what is best for our students. As a result, we have updated our Personal Electronic Device Procedures for the 2025-26 school year. Effective this fall, all students will be expected to power down and store their personal electronic devices (including phones and smartwatches) in their school lockers for the entire school day. You can find the full policy and related procedures, including consequences for misuse, [linked here](#).

Recent research has made it clear that smartphones and social media can negatively affect adolescents' mental health, attention, sleep, and social development. Middle school students, in particular, are vulnerable to the addictive nature of many apps and the pressure of constant connectivity. The American Psychological Association notes that adolescents who spend more time on digital devices — particularly for social comparison on platforms like Instagram or TikTok — are at increased risk for poor mental health outcomes, including anxiety, depression, and disrupted sleep patterns (APA, 2023).

By limiting access to personal devices during the school day, we aim to create a safer and more focused learning environment — one where students can be fully present in class, connect meaningfully with their peers, and grow both academically and socially.

Letter Continued:

We know families may have questions about this change. Below are some answers to common concerns:

What has changed?

- Our previous procedures regarding personal electronic devices lacked clarity, resulting in confusion for students and inconsistency in enforcement. These new guidelines establish a clear and consistent expectation for students, families, and staff.

What if I need to communicate with my child during the day?

- The main office is always available to help. Students may use the office phone to call home when needed, and parents can contact the school to have a message delivered to their child.

What if my child forgets something at home?

- Forgetting a lunch, gym shoes, or homework is a normal part of growing up — and a valuable learning opportunity. These small challenges help students build resilience and strengthen their executive functioning skills. As a school community, we will ensure these challenges do not ruin their day. Students are able to use their Student IDs to purchase lunch on days they forget. Our staff will help students pivot and adjust so they can participate in class activities. We're here to support them through it. Our staff will be mindful as they conduct supportive conversations with students to help them learn and grow during these moments. We believe that between home and school, we can work together to help our students develop these essential life skills.

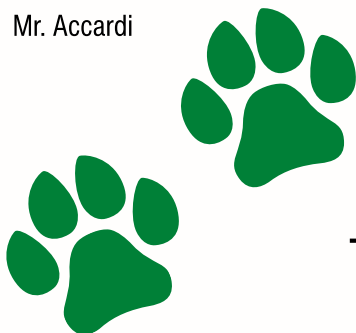
Will my child's devices be safe in the school locker?

- Yes! Students are given a locker with a combination at the start of each school year. Students will be reminded of the importance of closing and locking their lockers and of not sharing their locker combinations with peers.

We believe this update is a meaningful step forward in promoting a healthier school culture for all students. Thank you for your support as we work together to help our students thrive both in and out of the classroom.

With C.A.R.E.,

Mr. Accardi



COUGARCAST: VOICES OF UMS

TUNE IN TO OUR NEW PODCAST SERIES. EACH MONTH MR. ACCARDI AND MS. MOORE WILL BE SHARING AN EPISODE TO ACCOMPANY OUR NEWSLETTER. BE SURE TO COMPLETE THE COUGAR CHALLENGE EACH MONTH!

CLICK HERE TO LISTEN



CLICK HERE





REMINDERS

SPORTS AND EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Students will have the opportunity to join after-school activities that interest them throughout the year. These activities are led by MTSD staff members. Information about our co-curricular clubs will be shared with students at the beginning of the school year.

SUMMER READING ASSIGNMENTS

[Rising 7th Grade](#)

[Rising 8th Grade](#)

MATH PRACTICE RESOURCES

STUDENT IDs

Please have your student store their ID in a safe place over the summer, as they will need it in September to start the school year!



GIVE US A FOLLOW ON INSTAGRAM! @MONTYUMS



NEWS FROM THE NURSE



SPORTS FORMS

UMS offers Field Hockey, Soccer, and Cross Country in the fall season. Please be advised that the nurse and the athletic department must clear athletes to participate. All forms are due to the nurse's office NO LATER than September 8th. Please visit the [MTSD Athletics](#) page for all information regarding Fall Sports, including sign-up and registration details.

SCOLIOSIS SCREENING

The New Jersey State Legislature has mandated that all New Jersey school children ages 10-18 be examined for scoliosis. **Only 8th graders will be screened.** Parents of 8th graders--Please email Mrs. Cappabianca at ecappabianca@mtsd.us to OPT OUT of scoliosis screening.

