MEDICINE CROW MIDDLE SCHOOL

August 2025
NEWSLETTER

"Welcome to the Wolfpack"

Principal: Mr. Michael Thomas
Associate Principal: Mrs. Traci Doll

Dear Students & Parents:

WELCOME TO THE 2025-2026 SCHOOL YEAR!

The staff and I are excited and are looking forward to a great school year. This is our first newsletter of the year which contains the "everything you need to know" to start the year off right! During the school year, it is important to also check the website for upcoming dates. We also post important information in Parent Square newsletters which will come to your email account.

There will be an Open House for all Parents and Students on August 27th from 4:00-5:30 pm. You may pick up a copy of your schedule in the Commons Area, and wander around to find your classrooms and locker. Our Associate Principal, Traci Doll and I will be in the Gym at 4:30 pm for a meet and greet.

All 6th Graders & New Students (ones that are new to our building for the 2025-26 school year): To help students reduce their anxiety over starting in a new school, on your first day of school, **Tuesday, September 2, 2025, you will be the only students in the building! Please enter through the back Commons (behind the building) and we will begin in the Commons Area.** We will pass out class schedules, practice opening lockers, practice changing classes, and learn about middle school life!

Returning 7th and 8th Graders: you get to enjoy one more day of summer break! Existing Wolfpack, we are not forgetting you! Because you have "been there, done that" transition to middle school, you don't need the Locker 101 training or the "how to survive middle school!" You also get to enjoy one more day of summer vacation, and we will see all of you on Wednesday, September 3rd for your first day of school! We are counting on you to be the leaders and help transition the 6th Graders into a positive middle school experience!

Please remember that students are to be dropped off in the back parking lot across from the football field. Take the turn by the field, then proceed to the drop off area by the Medicine Crow Greenhouse. Students are picked up in the same area after school. Thank you in advance for driving with care and being patient in this area!

We are very excited about starting our tenth year at Medicine Crow. We want to make Medicine Crow the very best place for all of us to learn, work, play and grow together. After all, a wolfpack is a family made up of distinct individuals of all ages, skills and abilities. To create this environment, we emphasize students to be **Respectful, Accountable, Safe and Determined.** Our vision is a place for students to learn in an environment where they know the adults care for the welfare and learning of every student; where students strive for their very best, while supporting and being positive to one another, knowing that every adult in the building is pulling for their success. Please feel free to contact me about any questions or concerns you may have, and I am looking forward to a fun and successful year!

Sincerely ~ Michael Thomas, Principal

ALL SCHOOL OPEN HOUSE
Wednesday, August 27th
4:00-5:30 pm
Please come meet your child's teachers and walk through his/her day!

MEDICINE CROW MIDDLE SCHOOL

IMPORTANT DATES

AUGUST	
27	PARENT AND STUDENT OPEN HOUSE-4:00pm There will be a meet and greet with Principal Michael Thomas & Associate Principal Traci Doll at 4:30 pm. Also, the office will be collecting sports forms/fees & issuing bus tickets.
SEPTEMBER	
1	NO SCHOOL: Labor Day
2	Football Equipment pick up: 3:30-4:30 pm
2	Cross-Country, Football, Softball practices start at 3:30 pm
2	SCHOOL STARTS at 8:00 am for 6th Graders and new students only!
3	7th & 8th Graders (returning to our school) STUDENTS WITHOUT THEIR TDAP BOOSTER WILL BE EXCLUDED FROM SCHOOL
26	Fall Picture Day
OCTOBER	
10	Six Week Progress Reports/Grading
16-17	NO SCHOOL: PIR Days
23-24	Parent Teacher Conferences (Early Dismissal)

STUDENT/PARENT HANDBOOKS

Each student and parent(s) need to review the Medicine Crow Middle School Student/Parent Handbook which includes a Billings Public Schools Student/Parent Handbook as well. The Handbook contains student procedures that pertain to Medicine Crow Middle School and Billings Public Schools. We ask that you and your child read the handbook at home. You will find that most of the information contained in the Student/Parent Handbook will help you successfully navigate middle school with your child. You can access the Medicine Crow Middle School Handbook on the Medicine Crow Middle School website. Under the Parents and Students Tab and click on Student Handbook.

You can access the Billings Public School Student/Parent Handbook online at billingsschools.org under the "Parents" tab. This handbook contains every District policy and procedure approved by the school board that pertains to you and your child. An "Acknowledgement and Sign-Off Sheet" will be sent home with your student on the first day of school. This form is your acknowledgement that you have seen and read the Student/Parent Handbook. Each child and parent is asked to sign and return this sheet by Friday, September 5th to their Advisory classroom teacher.

This year each student <u>will not</u> be checking out a Chromebook for use during the school year, instead they will be available in each classroom for use. Students will receive more information about expectations on use, care, and charging of their Chromebooks. They will learn to use Google Calendars as an important organizational tool throughout the school year.

0PENING DAY INFORMATION

September 2nd, all 6th Graders and New Students **only** report to the Commons Area. Please enter through the back Commons (behind the building). On Wednesday, September 3rd, **all students** are to report to their Advisory Classroom at 8:00 am. The doors will be open at 7:50 am. Students can pick up a class schedule at Open House or staff will be handing them out on the first day. The regular hot lunch service will be available. The school day ends at 3:20 pm. If you are in Band, you do not need to bring your instrument on the first day. Also, you will not need to dress out for PE on this day.

WEDNESDAY'S 2:20 pm Dismissals

Billings Public Schools will be having an early dismissal on **EVERY** Wednesday for Staff Training. School buses will run early on Wednesdays. Medicine Crow Middle School will be dismissing at 2:20 pm on **EVERY** Wednesday.

SCHOOL BUS REGISTRATION

Free busing will be provided for all students who live three (3) or more miles from Medicine Crow. However, because of safety concerns for the students crossing Main Street, these students may have access to ride a school district bus at the cost of $150 per year. If students qualify for free or reduced lunches, this applies to the cost of busing as well. The cost will be prorated according to when the student begins riding the bus.

Students will arrive at approximately 7:30 am and will depart from Medicine Crow at approximately 3:30 pm.

Students need to pre-register at Medicine Crow for the bus. This applies to both those who ride free and those who pay a fee. Tickets will be available beginning August 18th from 7:30 am-3:00 pm in the Main Office.

Parents and students are reminded that non-bus students may not ride the bus, unless they have prior approval (three days in advance) from Lindsay Gran, Director of Transportation 281-5581. Thank you.

MET BUS TICKETS

MET bus tickets and schedule books will be available in the main office beginning August 18th. **Students now have the choice to purchase a $3 reusable card to load each month <u>or</u> load the app on their phone and pay to load the monthly ticket.** If purchasing a MET bus ticket at Medicine Crow and paying cash, please have the exact amount, as the main office doesn't usually have change. You can also pay by check. Please make checks out to MET. The price for a monthly ticket is $21.

MEDICINE CROW MIDDLE SCHOOL

MIDDLE SCHOOL ACTIVITIES PROGRAM

SESSION 1 9/2-10/15	SESSION 2 10/20-12/11	SESSION 3 1/5-2/24	SESSION 4 2/23-4/16	SESSION 5 4/14-5/26
Girls Softball 6th, 7th & 8th Grade	Girls Basketball 6th, 7th & 8th Grade	Boys Basketball 6th, 7th & 8th Grade	Girls Volleyball 6th, 7th & 8th Grade	Track 6th-(Running Events Only) 7th & 8th Grade-(All Events)
Football 7th & 8th Grade	Wrestling 6th, 7th & 8th Grade			
Cross-Country 6th, 7th & 8th Grade				

Stop by our Main Office to pick up the PHYSICAL FORM. All other paperwork is now online on the BPS Website:

- **PHYSICAL FORM-** all 6th, 7th & 8th graders must have a new physical **every year** in order to participate
- **CONCUSSION FORM**
- **MEDICAL RELEASE FORM**
- **MEDIA RELEASE FORM**
- **BPS PARTICIPATION AGREEMENT**
- **PARTICIPATION FEE $55 PER ACTIVITY (MC Shirts-required are $16.00 and Shorts-optional are $7.00)**
- **CODE OF CONDUCT**

Turn in the completed, signed forms to Medicine Crow's Main Office.

SPORTS PHYSICALS

All 6th, 7th & 8th grade students participating in a sport must have a physical which has been completed within one year of the sport. This has changed from previous years, as you will need a new physical each school year that you participate in a sport.

STUDENT ACCIDENT INSURANCE COVERAGE

The BPS Activities Office has purchased a student accident insurance policy from Hartford which covers students involved in school sponsored extracurricular activities and physical education classes. If your child is injured while participating in a sporting event, please make sure that it is reported to their coaches right away. An accident report will need to be filled out immediately by their coach and turned into the front office. If you have any questions regarding an accident, please contact Dawn in our office at 281-8601.

If you have any questions regarding the district's insurance coverage or claims please contact Brenda Cross at 281-5116.

SOFTBALL

Softball is a fall sport for all 6th, 7th & 8th grade girls. The first practice for softball will be on Tuesday, September 2nd at 3:30 pm. All paperwork as stated above, must be submitted online. In addition to the Participation Fee, you must purchase a Medicine Crow t-shirt for $16, unless you purchased one last year. The same shirt may be worn for all sports.

FOOTBALL

Football season begins on Tuesday, September 2nd at 3:30pm. Equipment will be issued for all interested 7th & 8th grade boys on Tuesday, September 2nd from 3:30-4:30 pm. Each athlete needs to make sure that all paperwork, as stated above, is submitted online. **In addition to the Participation Fee, you must purchase a Medicine Crow Football Jersey for $40.**

Football players must wear the colored mouth guards that are provided, so that officials can make sure that they are wearing them.

We are anticipating an exciting season and hope to see many of you on the 2nd in good shape and ready to play football.

CROSS-COUNTRY

The first practice for Cross-Country will be on Tuesday, September 2nd at 3:30 pm. Cross-Country is available to all 6th, 7th & 8th grade girls and boys. All paperwork as stated above, must be submitted online. In addition to the Participation Fee, you must purchase a Medicine Crow t-shirt for $16, unless you have purchased one last year.

If you haven't already begun your training for Cross-Country, you should start as soon as possible. We recommend that you start with one mile/day at least five days per week. Run in the morning if possible to avoid the heat. Be sure to drink plenty of water when you are training in hot weather. Biking and swimming are also excellent conditioning activities. Replace up to two days of running per week with either of these activities.

***TEAM PICTURES FOR FALL SPORTS WILL BE TAKEN AT PRACTICE ON WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 26th .**

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REQUIRED IMMUNIZATION

7th Grade Students: Per State law, schools must have verification that your child has received their Tdap booster immunization. **Students without proof of this Immunization will be excluded from school on September 3rd.**

RIVERSTONE HEALTH CLINIC

RiverStone Health- Medicine Crow School Clinic: Doctors, Physician Assistants, Nurses and a Mental Health Counselor are available to meet the students' and families' needs. Enrollment materials will need to be completed before students and family members can be cared for at the clinic.

Hours of operation:

- Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays: 8 am – 12:00 noon and 1:00 – 5:00 pm
- Fridays: 1:00 pm – 5:00 pm
- Phone number: 406-247-3210

Services:

- Well-child exams with immunizations
- School and sports physicals
- Behavioral health services – ADHD, anxiety, depression, developmental screenings
- Limited lab tests
- Urgent care – sore throats, tummy aches, colds, fevers
- Care for chronic illnesses – diabetes & asthma
- Referrals for dental services
- Referrals to community resources
- Assistance with health insurance
- Nutritional Services
- Allergy care

SCHOOLPAY

It's the mark of our times - the merging of the Internet with our day-to-day business. Now, the Billings Public Schools is among the first school systems in the country to bring that convenience to parents by offering an online payment processing system, "SCHOOLPAY". More and more busy people turn to the Internet every month to pay their bills online, and we saw there was a need to offer that same kind of service to the parents and community members in our district. Through this system, parents can access SCHOOLPAY through the school's website and pay for school-related fees and products online, either by e-check or MasterCard, Visa, or Discover cards. The parent will immediately receive an email receipt confirming their purchase(s). SCHOOLPAY does not save or store bank or credit card information to ensure privacy and security for users. SCHOOLPAY offers parents the ease of being able to make purchases 24 hours a day/ 7 days a week, the security of knowing the school has received payments, the protection of sensitive account information, and the convenience of having records of purchases and payments available online. Schools save significant labor costs by reducing manual processing of payments and handling fewer checks.

For more information about SCHOOLPAY, please contact Dawn at 281-8601, or visit the school's website at: www.billingsschools.org/medicinecrow

ATTENDANCE PROCEDURES

Parent verification of any absence is required. Parents are asked to call Mrs. Schaefer, Attendance Clerk, at 281-8618 each day your child is absent from school. If no phone call is made, the parent should send a note with your child when he/she returns to school the next day.

If you are planning an absence in advance (taking a trip, hunting, etc.), please send a note to school before the absence. The student may be given his/her assignments, so the work can be made up before the absence, or take it with them to have completed when they return to school. If books ar other materials are needed, please call Mrs. Schaefer at 281-8618 for assistance. Materials can be picked up after 2:30 pm. **Please understand that we do not collect homework assignments, unless the student will be gone for two consecutive days.** If your child needs to leave school during the school day for an appointment, a note (or phone call) should be given to the Attendance Desk before the 8:00 am bell rings, so we can issue a call slip for the proper time. Students are not allowed to leave the building during the school day without first checking out at the Attendance Desk. If this does not occur, the absence will be treated as an unexcused absence. Our policy for leaving school to have lunch with a parent is:

- **The student must be accompanied by his/her parent**
- **Attendance Clerk must have a parent notification by 8:20 am**

We are always concerned about your child's whereabouts and thus are diligent about verifying any absences. We appreciate your assistance!

SCHOOL PICTURES

Sixth, seventh, and eighth graders will have their pictures taken on Friday, September 26th. Flyers will be sent home with information on picture packages.

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CHECKS WRITTEN TO MEDICINE CROW

Parents and students: When writing checks to Medicine Crow, please remember:

- We cannot cash checks or give cash back
- If you are paying for an activity, breakfast/lunch, etc, please write separate checks, as the money is deposited into separate accounts
- Please put the student's name in the "memo" section of the check.

Thank you for your cooperation!

BREAKFAST AND LUNCH AT MEDICINE CROW

A computerized system for purchasing meals is used at Medicine Crow. Students will use their assigned student ID numbers to access their accounts during meal services in the cafeteria. This number can be found on their class schedules. Students will punch their number into a keypad. **Please stress to your students they must not share their ID number with other students.** The student accounts will be utilized to deposit funds for any meals and/or a la carte purchases. Depositing funds will keep lost or stolen money to a minimum If a student purchases a second meal, extra milk, or other a la carte items, they will be charged at the per item price regardless of eligibility. At the end of each school year, any remaining balance in your student's account will remain in their account for the next school year.

Meal Pricing:
Breakfast: $1.50 Reduced Breakfast: $.30
Lunch: $3.10 Reduced Lunch: $.40
Ala Carte Milk: $.75

Online Free & Reduced Applications will be available on August 18th. Families can apply for free and reduced-price school breakfast and lunch meals based on income eligibility. Those families already receiving Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Benefits do not need to apply for free and reduced price school meals. On-line Free and Reduced applications can be found at: www.billingsschools.org
Click - Parent Tab
"In This Section" Click - "MealTime Apply Online"
You will create your User Name and Password
(You must have your child's Student ID Number to complete the Online Application. This can be found on any schedule, report card, or in PowerSchool.)
If you have any questions, please call the main office or Crystal Fischer, our lunch clerk, at 281-8610.

Students are not allowed to order delivery of food themselves. With nearly 600 students, time and staffing do not allow for payment, pulling a student out of class to receive the delivery. Parents may drop off lunches at school anytime. Thank you.

BOOK FAIR

Medicine Crow's Librarian, Ms. Kale, plans to have a Book Fair the week of October 20-24th which is the week of Parent/Teacher Conferences. Students will be able to browse and purchase books at any time during this week. The library will be open from 7:30 am - 4:00 pm every day. Money raised from the Book Fair will be used to purchase additional resources for the library.

HOMEWORK

The amount of homework varies. However, the suggested guidelines are for a student to have ten minutes of homework for each year in school. Therefore, a sixth grader would have 60 minutes of homework; a seventh grader would have 70 minutes and an eighth grader would have 80 minutes. Typically, our students have math homework every night. If your child is spending more than 1 ½ hours on homework every evening, you should talk to the teacher.

Electronic Devices - Away for the Day

"Away for the Day" means just that. Student cell phones, iPods, or other electronics with Internet access are put away in backpacks and lockers from 8:00am - 3:20pm. When students are eating breakfast or come in from outside to go to lockers in the morning at 7:50am, cell phones/electronics are turned off and put in backpacks. The backpack, with the phone/electronics, is then left in the student locker. If students have their phones out between these times, they will be asked by any adult in the building to turn over their phone to that adult. The adult takes the phone to the Main Office, where the student picks it up at the end of the school day. Consequences will occur with repeated offenses.
You might be asking why, in this age of technology, would we make such a policy and fight this battle? Simple. Current research on the development of the teenage brain - especially at the middle school age - shows that too much screen time is detrimental to brain development, attention span, ability to focus, and face to face social development. The self control to avoid looking at and responding to the phone at every ding and chirp throughout the day is just not developed. The distraction to learning and social development is too great.
If you are curious about an "Away for the Day" cell phone policy, please search https://www.awayfortheday.org/ for more information.

MEDICINE CROW MIDDLE SCHOOL

MEDICATIONS AT MEDICINE CROW

Medicine Crow is committed to meeting your middle school student's health care needs. Prescription and over the counter medications are allowed at school and can either be given by the nurse, or your student can keep them at the Attendance Office with Mrs. Schaefer, and take them accordingly. If the medication is a prescription, please come in and pick up the appropriate paperwork to be filled out and signed by your prescribing provider. If your student has trouble remembering to take their prescription medications, the school nurse will give the prescribed medication at the time designated by your student's provider. If your child remembers to take their prescription medications or wants to keep over the counter medication at school, example acetaminophen/ibuprofen, it will be kept at the Attendance Office with Mrs. Schaefer and self-administer paperwork must be signed by the parent. Medicine Crow staff does not dispense any stock medications (acetaminophen/Ibuprofen). If your child needs over the counter medication for a headache and they do not have their own supply with proper paperwork filled out at the Attendance Office, they will not receive any medication.

If your child has asthma, or has allergies that need medication, please come to the Attendance Office and get the appropriate paperwork to be signed by your child's medical provider. Please have your child's emergency medications (inhalers or epipens) available on the first day of school. We ask that our students keep a back up inhaler or epipen at the Attendance Office during the school year in case of an emergency. One of the school Nurses will be calling you to update or develop your child's emergency healthcare plan.

POWERSCHOOL

Parents will be able to access PowerSchool from the Medicine Crow website. There is a ParentConnect Module that provides parents with secured internet access to a wide array of their child's school data, such as: district, school, and classroom news, student demographics, student schedules, attendance activity, class assignments, report cards and progress reports, transcripts, standardized testing results, and email links to teachers, counselors, and school administrators. Parents can access the program through any internet-connected computer or cell phone. You may stop in the office during Open House on Wednesday, August 27th if you need help with your sign-in information (Username and Passwords). Teachers will be asked to update their gradebooks by the end of the day on Thursdays (as much as possible). It is a very useful communication tool to keep up to date on how your child is doing in school.

Medicine Crow Middle School Dress Code

The Medicine Crow dress policy is designed to provide an appropriate, distraction free learning environment. Just as adults will dress appropriately for work, students are expected to dress appropriately for school as that is their "job." Please see the SD2 Handbook Dress Code Policy #3203.

Basic Guidelines at MCMS:

- Shirts will be long enough to cover the stomach.
- Tank tops-think sleeveless shirt! Straps must be at least 2" wide on the shoulder. No spaghetti strap or racer back tops.
- All undergarments - bras (sports or otherwise), boxers, briefs, etc. - need to be covered at all times.
- All shorts and skirts must be within 2 inches of mid-thigh and the pockets must not be longer than the shorts.
- No slippers or pajamas are allowed.
- Leggings with sheer panels and jeans with cut-out holes need to be school appropriate and not show any undergarments.
- Suggestive/inappropriate slogans, advertisements for drugs/tobacco/alcohol are prohibited.
- School administration reserves the right to final decisions regarding gang related attire.
- Hats may be worn to school but need to be removed and placed in my locker by 8:00. I may not wear it on my belt during the school day.
- I may not wear a coat or jacket to class. Hooded sweatshirts are O.K. but I must remove the hood during the school day.
- My backpack/purse/drawstring bag needs to stay in my locker. If I'm headed to and from my PE class I may take my drawstring bag.

TEEN FOOD PANTRY

Medicine Crow Middle School has a Teen Food Pantry for students in need. We accept non-perishable food donations any time of the year. We are in need of any non-perishable items, especially dinner items and canned fruits, but we appreciate any donations. We also appreciate school supplies (especially binders and trapper-like keepers). Have any Skyview t-shirts or sweatshirts? We love those too! Please feel free to drop them off at the main office. THANK YOU!

CASA VOLUNTEERS

Did you know that the number of children entering foster care in Montana has skyrocketed in recent years? In 2018 alone, 510 children were removed from their homes due to abuse and neglect in the Billings area, resulting in more than 900 children currently in local foster care. You could be the voice for one of these children by becoming a volunteer Court Appointed Special Advocate. Please give CASA of Yellowstone County a call at (406) 259-1233 or visit yellowstonecasa.org to learn more about upcoming information sessions and how you can make a difference in the life of a child.

Warm regards,
Ben McKee
Recruitment Coordinator
CASA of Yellowstone County
406-259-1233

6th GRADE: SOS PROGRAM

We are pleased to have the opportunity to offer students in Billings Public Schools a chance to participate in a program called Signs of Suicide (SOS), as part of our suicide prevention efforts. SOS is currently the only school prevention program listed in the National Registry of Evidence-based Programs and Practices. It provides school-based interventions that address suicide risks and prevention of suicide attempts.

Program Highlight
The program highlights the relationship between depression and suicide by teaching that most often suicide is a fatal response to a treatable disorder-depression. In addition, the program focuses on the relationship between depression, suicide, and drug and alcohol use. SOS provides information for students to recognize depression in his or herself, as well as in their peers. It also teaches action steps that youths can to take if they experience signs of depression, risk of suicide or see these signs in a friend.

SOS Goals
The goals of the SOS prevention program are:
1. To increase understanding of depression as an illness, and suicide as a behavior related to untreated or poorly managed depression.
2. To improve attitudes about intervening with peers who are experiencing symptoms of depression, and who might be thinking about suicide.
3. To encourage youths who maybe contemplating suicide to seek help.

Program Presentation
Trained school personnel will be presenting the program. The presentations will occur in the Health Enhancement classes of all 6th grade students.

SOS Core Component
A core component of SOS is the “Brief Screen for Adolescent Depression,” which will be administered during the presentation. The screening instrument asks students seven questions that require a “yes” or “no” response. Should a student score in the critical range on the screener, parents will be contacted.

Parent Information
There will be more information about the SOS Program later in the Fall. Please note that you will have the option to “opt out” your child from the presentation. More information about the SOS Program and the “opt out” forms will come home with your child in the Fall, before the students start the program.