

Steps to Success

Welcome to Dover-Sherborn Middle School!

155 Farm Street, Dover, MA 02030



[#WeAreDS](#)

Principal: Ms. Dever-Keegan

Assistant Principal: Ms. Santosuosso

DSMS blends together students from Boston, Dover, and Sherborn in a nurturing learning environment. This guide was created to assist our students and their families, particularly incoming sixth graders and new students to our district, navigate the nuances of middle school. We hope this guide helps to enhance your experience at DSMS. Please remember that there is additional information available in the front of the student assignment book and throughout our school website at: <http://www.doversherborn.org>

Table of Contents

| | |
|---|----|
| 6th Grade Teams..... | 3 |
| Self Advocacy..... | 4 |
| Academic Integrity..... | 5 |
| Tips for Academic Success..... | 6 |
| Organization & Materials..... | 7 |
| Classroom Etiquette..... | 8 |
| Lockers and Lunch..... | 9 |
| After School & ExtraCurricular Activities..... | 10 |
| Digital Citizenship..... | 11 |
| School Counseling..... | 12 |
| FAQs about School Counselors..... | 13 |
| METCO..... | 14 |
| Physical Education..... | 15 |
| World Languages..... | 16 |
| Sixth Grade Program of Studies..... | 17 |
| Schedule & Best Things About Middle School..... | 18 |

6th Grade Teams

Sun & Moon

Each Team has:

- A Team Leader
- A set group of teachers
- A School Counselor

Frequently Asked Questions...

Q: Why are students split into teams?

A: For teacher collaboration

Q: What is a cross-team teacher? What are cross team classes?

A: Cross-team teachers are teachers who teach on both the Sun and the Moon teams. All world language classes and exploratory classes are taught by cross team teachers. If you are in a cross-team class, you will have kids from both Sun and Moon teams in your class.

Q: When do I see my friends on the other team?

A: Lunch, Exploratory Classes, World Language Classes, Hallways

More Teams to Come...

7th Grade Teams: Thunder & Lightning

8th Grade Teams: Fire & Ice

Self Advocacy

Self Advocacy is defined as speaking up for oneself, one's views or one's interests. As a student, YOU have the most control over your success at DSMS. If you can learn how to work with your teachers and advocate for yourself, your time in middle school will be very rewarding.

| | |
|---|---|
| <p>*Keeping Up What can I do if I am falling behind?</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Make an appointment to meet with teacher(s) or counselor <input type="checkbox"/> Ask for help prioritizing work or attend extra help after school <input type="checkbox"/> Use resources that are available (ex: Organization Station) |
| <p>*Homework A) What do I do if I forget what I have for homework? B) What do I do if I'm struggling to complete a homework assignment?</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Check your assignment notebook <input type="checkbox"/> Check Google Classroom <input type="checkbox"/> Have HW buddy for each class that you can call/text/email <input type="checkbox"/> TRY...put in effort! Any attempt with 100% effort to complete homework is always appreciated <input type="checkbox"/> Re-read directions! <input type="checkbox"/> Check back in your notes or look at handouts from class <input type="checkbox"/> Reach out to a friend in your class <input type="checkbox"/> Email your teacher with <u>specific</u> questions |
| <p>*In class work What do I do if I don't understand the directions, I wasn't listening, or I simply forgot the directions?</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Be sure you follow class routines & know the expectations <input type="checkbox"/> Listen to the questions asked from other students <input type="checkbox"/> Try to be specific when you ask a question <input type="checkbox"/> Mark up the directions! Circle action word and underline rest |
| <p>*How to be a good classmate, teammate, and friend? What do I do if I have a conflict with a friend, peer (any student at school), or a teacher?</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Talk to your friend in person <input type="checkbox"/> Visit your school counselor <input type="checkbox"/> Reach out to anyone in the building you are comfortable with (teacher, administrator, librarian, etc) <input type="checkbox"/> Talk to a parent/guardian and they can contact the school <input type="checkbox"/> Think about helpful conflict resolution strategies: communicate, try to see the other person's perspective, problem solve and manage emotions. |
| <p>*How to work in groups? How can I make sure that group work goes well?</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Become familiar with group members <input type="checkbox"/> Set shared goals <input type="checkbox"/> Be an active listener & be open to new ideas <input type="checkbox"/> Restate or reread the directions and figure out how you can share the work |

Academic Integrity

Integrity is another word for honesty. If a person has academic integrity, it means that they are honest about their schoolwork and always strive to do the right thing even when nobody's watching.

Homework & Tests

- If you are completing a homework assignment, the answers you write down must come only from your head. If you take someone else's ideas (ex: the internet, a friend, etc), this is considered cheating.
- If you are taking a quiz or test, the answers you write down must come only from your head. It is cheating to write down answers that come from anywhere else unless a teacher has clearly stated that you can use a resource.
- Show your OWN work.
- If you forgot your homework, talk to your teacher. Honesty is the best policy!

Collaboration VS. Cheating

- When collaborating, students talk through an assignment together to better understand it. Then, students individually write their thoughts and answers in their own words on their own paper.
- Cheating occurs when a student avoids doing part or all of an assignment by sharing or copying ideas or answers from other students or sources. Doing this literally "cheats" you out of the learning and practicing you were supposed to do.

Plagiarism:

- Definition: the act of presenting someone else's work or ideas as your own
- It is important to cite (list) the sources you have used for research and projects (Example: facts, information & graphics)
- Plagiarism may lead to a zero on the assignment and communication between school and home. If you ever need help ensuring that your work is your own work and does not plagiarize the work of others, see your teacher or the librarian for help

Tips For Academic Success

- Choose a consistent time and place for homework. Decide WHEN and WHERE is the most productive for you.
 - *In front of the television should not be an option!*
- Write all of your homework in your assignment book or use an online tool such as Google Keep. Studying for tests/quizzes counts as homework so write it down!
- Use a large wall calendar or online tool to organize yourself. This will help you see your daily and weekly commitments (sports, music lessons, tests, projects, family events, etc) and balance your time.
- Write down the names and numbers of TWO buddies in each class that you can call or text with a homework question.
- Break down each day into parts (what you need to do and the time you think it may take to do it). Cross off tasks that you have completed!
- Set priorities! (What do I want to do first, next, etc)
- Break large tasks into small parts. For example, if you have a book report due in two weeks, plan each step you will take to complete it.
- Clean out your backpack ONCE A WEEK. If you do this over the weekend, you will start each week organized.
- Use routines throughout the day. For example, before you go to bed lay out your clothes for the next day and pack your backpack.
- The more organized you are, the more time you have for fun!
- Be sure you take advantage of the extra-curricular activities the middle school offers!

Organization & Materials

| | |
|--|--|
| <p>To come to class feeling prepared, you should have with you:</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 1" binder (one per subject) -loose-leaf paper, 2 sharpened pencils, 2 pens -Assignment notebook -Charged Chromebook |
| <p>Assignment notebook</p> | <p>- At the beginning of class, take out your assignment notebook to copy down the homework. Write "none" if there is no homework. Each assignment should be checked-off after it has been completed</p> |
| <p>Binder Set-up</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -See teacher for specific subject binder set-up -Clean out binders frequently; leave papers from old units at home. |
| <p>Assignment format</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Write name, date and block on the upper right-hand corner -If using a google document, name the document. Put the document in the online folder of that subject area in your Google Drive. -Answers should be neatly spaced apart with all work/explanation shown |
| <p>Absences & Missing work</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Check teachers' google classroom to see what you missed -Call a friend to hear what you missed in class -Email teacher with any questions/clarification -When you return, check-in with each teacher at the start of the school day or during H block -Make up work <u>on your own</u> according to the teacher's expectations. Turn in A.S.A.P |
| <p>Time management</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Plan out long-term assignments to avoid becoming overwhelmed -Plan after-school activities so that there is ample time for homework -Leave time for breaks! -Write everything in your planner |

Classroom Etiquette

- Entering the classroom - Get to class on time! Take out your materials so that you are ready to learn when the bell rings. Chatting with friends (away from the door) is okay if there is extra time.
- Leaving your seat - If you need to leave your seat (for example, to go to the restroom, to sharpen your pencil, etc), please do so quietly. Sign out every time you leave the classroom.
- Packing up - Wait for the teacher's signal that it's okay to pack up. Waiting for the teacher to give permission to pack up is the respectful thing to do. You may miss important information if you pack up early!
- Listening- When someone is speaking, turn to face them and try to make eye contact. ACTIVE LISTENING ALSO MEANS REFRAINING FROM MAKING SIDE COMMENTS WHILE THE PERSON IS SPEAKING. In order to be a good, active listener, you need to pay attention to your body.

Here is an acronym to help you: *SLANT*

S- Sit up

L- Listen

A- Ask & answer questions

N- Nod your head

T- Track the speaker

Lockers and Lunch

Lunch Schedule:

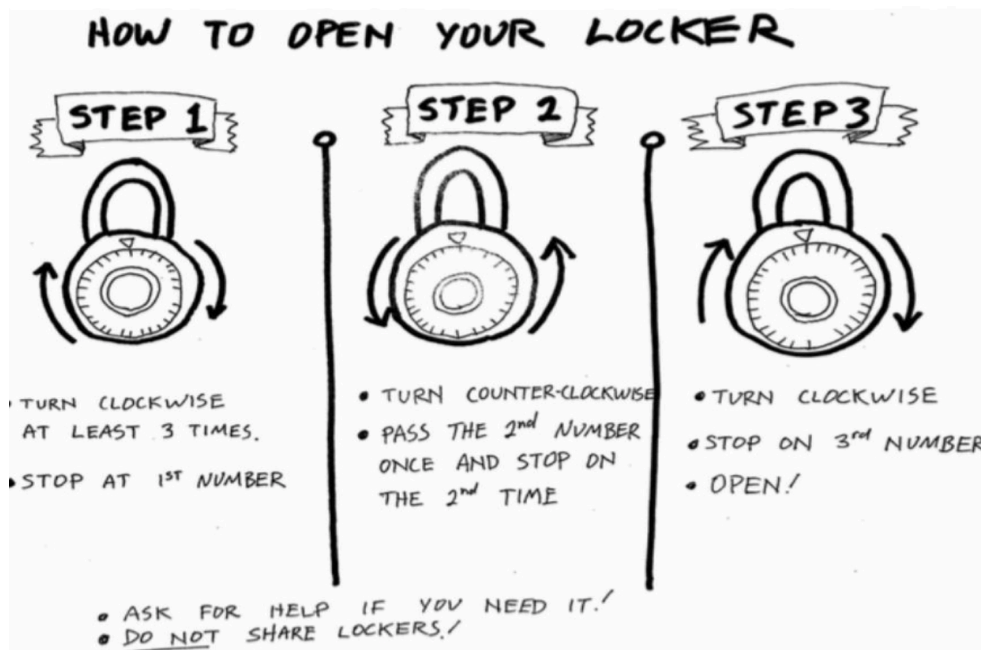
- First Lunch: Grade 6 & Grade 7 Team Lightning 11:11 am - 11:40 am
- Second Lunch: Grade 8 & Grade 7 Team Thunder 11:43 am - 12:34 pm

Fun Facts about Lunch:

- You can sit with your friends at lunch!
- There are many options - daily special, sandwiches, salads, wraps, pizza
- The last ~10 minutes are designated break time - we go outside on the turf when the weather allows!

Lockers:

- Locker combinations are given to students on the first day of school
- Best times to visit your locker
 - First thing in the morning, before lunch, @ the end of the day
- Helpful tips:
 - Practice using a combination lock before school starts
 - Let an adult know if you are having trouble with your locker - we are here to help!



After School & Extracurricular Activities

There are many opportunities at DSMS that allow you to feel more involved and connected with your school community. After school activities are offered throughout the school year, many of which are full year commitments. Extracurricular activities (clubs) are offered each quarter at DSMS. Clubs change from year to year based on interest and availability. There will be emails sent home with options and sign-up information.

| After School Activities | Past/Current Extracurricular Activities |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Student Council ● Drama Program <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Fall Musical</i> ○ <i>Spring Play</i> ● Math Counts ● Organization Station ● Help Club | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Chess Club ● Art Club ● Archery ● Storymaking Club ● Tennis ● Dungeons and Dragons ● Jewelry Club ● Dodgeball ● Lego Club ● Newbury Book Club ● Coding Club ● Morning Sports ● Badminton/Pickleball ● Robotics |



Digital Citizenship

A few tips to keep you and your information safe online:

- Keep all personal information to yourself!! Do not share passwords or important information with peers or anyone you meet online.
- Never meet up with anyone you don't already know.
- You are not obligated to fill out any "fun" questionnaires that are forwarded to you, even if they're from your friends.
- Make sure you know everyone on your friends' list.
- Only answer emails or respond to messages from people you know.
- There's no such thing as "private" or "temporary" on the internet. Once it is in writing, it can always be saved and shared.
- Be careful about posting and sending pictures of yourself. If you post, be sure it is a picture that you wouldn't mind if your parents/teachers saw.
- You should not take pictures of other people without their permission.
- Sending embarrassing pictures of other people or posting mean or hurtful comments about anyone, including classmates/friends, is not ok.
- Please only visit sites or download content with your parents' permission.
- Never share your password & username with anyone but your parents.
- You may only use the computer at school for school-approved activities.
- Talk to a trusted adult anytime you have questions about computer safety and concerns.
- For more information visit:
<https://www.missingkids.org/netsmartz/home>

School Counseling

In conjunction with the school's mission statement, the vision of the counseling department is to provide all students with the opportunities to acquire the academic, personal, social and career skills essential to successfully transition to high school and to become responsible and respectful members of the school community.

Counseling Staff:

- Ellen Rowley - Director of Guidance: Grades PK -12
- Alana Capasa - School Counselor
- Patrick Dooley - School Counselor
- Joelle Sobin - School Counselor
- Heidi Loando - School Adjustment Counselor: Grades 6-12
- Kara McAuliffe - School Adjustment Counselor: Grades 6-12
- Dan Morris- GRIT & Bridge Clinician and Program Coordinator
- Heather Olenik - Guidance Administrative Assistant

Fun Facts:

- Counselors meet with all students
- Counselors are part of the grade-level team
- Developmental counseling curriculum is taught at all grades
- Contact your School Counselor with any kind of questions or concerns!
- The School Counselor's doors are always open!



FAQs about School Counselors

Q: What is a School Counselor?

A: The school counselors at DSMS help support all students in many areas of the school. They help build relationships with students and parents. Their door is always open whether it is to celebrate an academic achievement or helping a student through a hard time. The school counselors are here to lend support to the DSMS community.

Q: Do I have a School Counselor?

A: Everyone at DSMS has a school counselor. Who your counselor is will depend on the team you're on. To find out who your assigned counselor is, look at the top right of your class schedule or stop by our office.

Q: Where do I find my school counselor?

A: The School Counselors are located in the counseling office across from the main office.

Q: How do I know if I need to see my school counselor?

A: Many reasons!

- Feeling overwhelmed?
- I'm lost... where is the lunchroom?
- How do I join a club?
- Something happening in school or at home and I need to talk to an adult confidentially.
- The list goes on! You can ALWAYS stop by if you are unsure of who to talk to

Q: Can you name a few things that students talk to counselors about?

A: Many things!

- Organization & time management
- Friendships
- Family stuff
- Life
- Stress management
- Feeling overwhelmed

METCO

Our Boston students are part of the METCO Program. METCO is a voluntary program that has been in the Dover Sherborn School District since 1968. Currently, there are 40 students in Grades K-12 that participate in our program. Students are provided with educational opportunities designed to enrich their academic, personal and interpersonal experiences. It is our belief that our entire school community benefits from an academic environment rich in cultural, educational, ethnic and racial diversity.

Additional information about the METCO Program is available at:

www.metcoinc.org



Physical Education

Our Physical Education (PE) program is for everyone at DSMS! We provide maximum practice opportunities & lessons that facilitate student learning. The goal is to help all students gain skills/habits/confidence to enjoy a lifetime of healthy physical activity and lifelong wellness.

(National Standards for Physical Education).

Students will:

- Practice, acquire and refine a variety of skills!
- Utilize principles of training and conditioning
- Learn biomechanics and exercise physiology concepts

Students should...

- Bring a change of clothes for class suitable for physical activity. This is required for good hygiene and for safety purposes.
 - Yes: sneakers, socks, t-shirts/sweatshirts, athletic shorts
 - No: sandals, heels, crocs, jeans, dress pants, large jewelry
- Store belongings in gym lockers (inset locks are provided)
- Show good SPORTSMANSHIP: Stay true to yourself and don't let bad feelings lead you to say or do something that is unkind.

Student GOOD HEALTH habits:

- Stay Fit - 8 hours of sleep, do some form of exercise every day
- Stay Healthy - Good hygiene by keeping yourself clean
- Stay Energized - Eat nutritious meals and snacks
- Stay Safe - Wear proper gear for sports, obey safety rules
- Stay Happy - Make good choices every day for yourself!

World Language

3 Languages at DSMS:

1. Spanish
2. French
3. Latin

Quick facts about World Language at the MS:

- Curriculum Leader of World Language Department: Leonie Glen
- Pick a language... Enjoy it for 3 years
- 6th grade is the only entry point for French & Latin
- There is no entry-level Spanish at the Middle School
- French, Latin, and Spanish all continue at the High School
- High School offers Spanish and Chinese at the entry-level

Sixth Grade Program of Studies

Required Courses

- English
- Math
- Global Studies I
- Science
- World Language: Latin, French, or Spanish

Additional Courses

- Literacy (Full Year 2x per week)
- Physical Education (PE) (Full Year 2x per week)

Exploratory Classes (Quarterly)

- Art
- Music
- Engineering
- Health

WIN BLOCK (WHAT I NEED?)

- Scheduling is based on what students need!
- Academic, SEL and Special Education Interventions/Services
- Time for Extension Activities

Students may choose from the following *optional* offerings:

- Band
- Chorus
- BOTH Band and Chorus

*Students **who participate** in Band/Chorus/Both: Flex Block 1-2 x per week

*Students **who do not participate**: Flex Block 3x per week

Extra-Help Sessions

- All teachers are available for extra help. Please contact your teacher directly to arrange for a time that works best for both of you.

2025-2026 DSMS Schedule

| Time | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday |
|---------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| 8:35 - 9:24 | A | G - Specials | F | D - Specials | B |
| 9:27 - 10:16 | B | H | E - WIN | F | C |
| 10:19 - 11:08 | C | A | G - Specials | E - WIN | D - Specials |
| 11:11 - 11:41 | Lunch | Lunch | Lunch | Lunch | Lunch |
| 11:44 - 12:34 | D - Specials | B | H | G - Specials | F |
| 12:37 - 1:26 | E - WIN | C | A | H | G - Specials |
| 1:29-2:18 | F | D - Specials | B | A | H |
| 2:21-3:10 | Flex | E - WIN | C | Flex | Flex |

BEST things about Middle School

- Switching classes, independence & nice teachers that challenge you
- Making New Friends! Meeting Dover/Sherborn/Boston kids
- Being in different rooms with different kids and different teachers
- Great school counselors that support me
- Bunch of teachers! If you don't connect with one, you'll have others
- Breaks between classes—lets you talk to your friends and gives you energy
- Homework that's not always long and hard
- A different exploratory class each term
- Having PE
- Being able to learn a foreign language, which is really fun
- Flex Block to ask questions, see teachers, etc...
- Spirit weeks!
- Break time after lunch!
- Lots of food choices & vending machines in the cafeteria!
- Decorating the inside of your locker
- After school activities & taking the late bus

The Dover Sherborn Public Schools do not discriminate on the basis of age, race, color, sex/gender, gender identity, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, disability, or homelessness.