

Welcome  
to  
**Gorham Middle School**

2018 - 2019

# The Code of Conduct

The Code of Conduct is a K-12 set of meaningful terms that serve as a context to discuss expected behavior and positive human qualities within our school. All students are well versed in the district's Code; Respect, Responsibility, Honesty, Compassion and Courage. As our 6th graders transition into middle school, a new developmental level for them, we help them to understand their new context and how to live The Code at GMS. Our handbook spells out our Code of Conduct and what each term means for expected student behavior.

In all our interactions and discussions with students we reference their actions to The Code. We understand that it is natural for students at the middle school level to make mistakes, lose control of themselves, and want to push the limits, yet we use the Code consistently to debrief situations, talk about alternative actions, choose consequences, and to think ahead to the next situation.

We display the key terms of the Code throughout the school so that we will all be reminded of what is valued and expected of all of us on an ongoing basis.

**RESPECT \* RESPONSIBILITY \* HONESTY \* COMPASSION \* COURAGE**

# GMS FAST FACTS

There are about 700 students at GMS.

We have three grade levels, each grade has its own wing of the school.

At each grade level there is a 2 person, 3 person, and a 4 person team.

Each student is in an advisory group, and each advisory has an advisor.

Students have a 7 period school day. Each period is 51 mins in length.

The content areas are: English Language Arts (ELA), Math, Science, Social Studies and Allied Arts.

An average class size is 24 students.

A A offerings for 6th graders are: Art, Physical Education, Music, and Health.

Our 7th period of the day is WIN (what I need).

# School Attendance

Solid school performance is vital at the middle school level in order to set a student up for success while they are here with us now as well as for high school, college and the world of work. One way to make sure that students are receiving the education they deserve and need is to make sure they are ***in school everyday and that they arrive on time.***

When a student is absent they miss daily announcements about school-wide and specific activities that are going on during the day and after school at the school. Missing that information makes students feel less connected to their school community when developmentally they crave to belong to their advisory, team, grade level and peer group.

When a student is absent from school they miss essential daily content, the opportunity to internalize information through various modes of presentation by their teacher and through active group work with their peers. Missing days of school also keeps a student from getting the help and support they need during classes and our tutorial periods.

What develops shortly and over time due to absences are **gaps**:

- a) in their content understanding
- b) in their study habits and skills
- c) in their ability to demonstrate what they know and are able to do.

Before long the effects of absence from school are reflected in their grades, their attitude about school, and their motivation as a student. Following district protocol, we send out Attendance Letters are sent from the school at the 10 and 15 day mark, and at the 20 day mark we set up a meeting to put in place an Attendance Plan.

# GMS ADVISORY PROGRAM

Each advisory and team serve as a close-knit community for students. We want to ensure that each student has a close connection with at least one adult at our school. ALL adults at GMS (except the nurse) serve as an advisor at GMS. Each advisor has no more than 14 students.

## **When do advisories meet?**

- Advisories meet every AM (announcements, attendance), and PM (dismissal).
- Advisories also meet on Wednesdays and Fridays @ 10:36 - 11:02 for advisory period.

\*\* on Monday, Tuesday and Thursday we have Silent Sustained Reading (SSR) across the whole school 10:36 - 11:02.

## **What is the purpose of Advisory?**

The year-long curriculum of the GMS Advisory program includes teaching and supporting schooling and learning skills needed for middle school, teamwork and community building, and community service.

Also, Advisors schedule and hold conferences with their advisees and their family 2 times a year.

# What is WIN?

There is another period in the school day beyond the (4) core content classes and the Allied Art offering, and it is called WIN.

## **WIN is a multi-purposed period:**

- It is when GT excursions happen. (Enrichment)
- It is when many of our students receive support from either our Learning Labs teachers or our Special Education faculty. (I)
- It is when the Band and Chorus meet during the school day.

The students have a **tutorial** where they can go to get help from teachers, make up work, take assessments they have missed, and do their homework.

## **Chorus with Mrs. Williamson**

The 6th graders of the GMS Chorus meet Mondays & Tuesdays. In Chorus we will prepare a variety of styles of choral music from Classical to Jazz, Broadway and Pop written especially for young and changing voices. The Chorus will perform two formal concerts in December and May and attend many other exciting performance opportunities throughout the year. In the past we have sung the National Anthem to open Sea Dogs, Red Claws and Portland Pirates games, we've sung for our state representatives at the state house in Augusta, we've participated in competitions and showcases at Funtown, Canobie Lake Park and Six Flags New England. This year we are doing an exchange concert with Cape Elizabeth Middle School and we are working on an all-Gorham Chorus night.

## **Steel Band (after school) with Mrs. Williamson**

The GMS steel band(s) meets after school. In Steel Band we learn the history of the instrument and some basic music theory including chord progressions, rhythm patterns, and scales. We work with the Musical elements of Melody, Harmony, Pitch & Rhythm and we will play a variety of pieces arranged specifically for Steel Band. We have several performance opportunities throughout the year both in the school and in the community. This group is offered to a maximum of 18 students on a first come, first serve basis.

# **Proficiency Education**

## **Proficiency Based Handbook**

### Using the JumpRope System - ALL 6th GRADE

The JumpRope system can:

- help you see the grades they have been given to date
- help you set goals with your child for improvements
- help everyone prepare for conferencing

Teachers are expected to update the system once a week!

BEST CONTACT for help with the portal is Terry LaMontagne, Guidance Secretary 222-1247

## Help us Teach Organization Skills

Key Skills developed during Middle Schools are: Readiness with Materials, Using Systems of Organization, Assignment Completion, Note-Taking Skills, Homework Completion, Flexibility, Work Habits, and Time Management!

- Expect your child to use their school provided planner and check it.
- Create a consistent and effective spot to do homework.
- Estimate with your child how long each assignment might take.
- Increase your child's concentration time, yet take a break every 30 minutes.
- Circle the verbs in their instructions.
- Pre-read non-fiction readings for headings, picture captions, tables, charts and graphs.
- Help determine the meaning of unfamiliar words.
- Help them to create outlines or web what they have read.
- Studying involves reviewing class notes, re-reading text(s), and discussing content with you.
- Proofread and check their work for accuracy and quality.
- Pace long term projects out over time, take manageable steps each day to get a big project in.

### Classic 6th Grade "Lines"

"We didn't have any homework."

"I did it all at school."

"They didn't tell me when it was due."

"I left my textbook at school."

"They said we could download any game onto our laptops."

"I can't ask my science teacher for help in math, she only knows science stuff."

"School's not open now".



## After School Clubs

In the past GMS has offered a wide variety of After School CLUBS such as:

Guitar Hero Club	Makerspace	Art Club	iTeam	X- Country
Culture Club	Cooking Club	Chess Club	Student Council	Homework Club
Pokemon Club	Magic the Gathering	Comic Club	Cookie and Milk Society	Tennis Team

Each year we have a different mix of clubs. Teachers, Ed. Techs, Interns or Parents who have gone through a volunteering orientation will be able to offer clubs. Clubs will post the offering on the cafeteria windows for student sign-up, and clubs will be announced through our daily announcements. The adult decides the day of the week the club will meet, and how long the club will run.

If your child would like to start a NEW CLUB, they need to come to the office and talk with Mr. Smith about how to get a club started.

## DRESS CODE

Students are to dress in a manner that will not distract themselves or others, disrupt the learning environment or be hazardous to their safety and well-being.

(GMS handbook is found on the school's website)

### **Rules of Thumb:**

Check the length for dresses, skirts, and shorts for boys and girls.

All garments of this sort should be at the student's mid thigh.

Shoes are to be on feet at all times.

We don't want to see your underwear- spaghetti straps, camisole, bra straps!

Hats, caps, chains, headbands, and bandanas cannot be worn in the building.

Clothing or jewelry that depicts or promotes weapons or drugs or sex do not belong in school.

# Helpful Reminders from the GMS Clinic

## **Immunizations:**

Students MUST have current immunizations on file to attend school in Maine. Exemption forms (philosophical or medical) need to be annually updated. If your student is on a 'catch-up' vaccination schedule, they still need a completed exemption form until fully immunized in accordance with Maine law.

## **We want your child in school UNLESS they:**

They have a fever (100 degrees or over).

They can return when they are 24 hours fever-free without the use of medicine.

They have vomited in the last 24 hours.

They can return when they have been 24 hours vomit or diarrhea free.

\*\* Refer to the handbook for other reasons to keep your child home (conjunctivitis until treated, chicken pox, a skin infection that is untreated (impetigo)... or similar)

## **Allergy and Asthma care plans:**

- Must be on file for each student who has these conditions
- Each year must be updated
- Must be signed by Physician & parent
- Medicine provided to the school

## **Medication (prescription and OTC):**

Permission is required annually, signed by physician and parent, and all medication must arrive in its original container. Students may not carry medication, unless it is an Epi-pen or Inhaler (with physician and parent written consent)

## **Sport Physicals:**

To play a school sport, an up-to-date physical must be on file at the nurses office. They are good for 2 years. No participation without the physical on file.

**Concussions:**

We create carefully written and communicated health plans for each student who has a concussion, individualized for that student, based on physician orders. Students return to academics first, and then return to sports in time.

**Change in health?**

Notify the nurse if your child has a fracture, is using crutches, needs to miss PE class or similar, call and let me know so I can communicate needs with the staff (fire safety and personal safety issues).

Notify the nurse of illnesses, so the clinic can track common illnesses and monitor for any possible disease outbreaks.

**Incoming 6th grade package with all forms**

# Placement and Step Up

## **Parent Questionnaire for School Year 2016-17**

Please answer the following questions concerning your child as completely as possible, perhaps a million words or less.

1. What do you believe were your child's greatest challenges in the current year, academic, social, emotional?
2. In the coming year, what are your greatest concerns for your child's experience at GMS?
3. What can you tell us about your child's learning style that will help us better understand him/her in the classroom?

**Please return to Gorham Middle School by May 15, 2017**

## **The Gorham School District Placement Change Factors**

1. Prior (first hand) negative experience with the teacher.
2. Prior negative experience with a student's sibling.
3. Peer conflicts (i.e. restraining orders, etc...); difficult combinations to avoid
4. Some significant connection out of school that mitigates them not being together (he's my uncle)

**SO MUCH TO LOOK FORWARD TO!!!!**

Step Up Block Party and Dance is June 1!

Step up Day is June 18th!

First day of MIDDLE SCHOOL!!!! August 28th