

THE SCHOLAR'S ASCENT

Middle School Survival Kit

Everything You Need to Thrive in Grades 6-8

Reminiscent Road Media LLC • Founded by Dr. Ijezie-Desbois, PharmD

thescholarsascent.org

Welcome to Middle School!

Middle school is a major transition -- new building, new schedule, new expectations. This survival kit has everything you need to stay organized, manage your emotions, communicate with teachers, and track your progress. You've got this!

What's Inside Your Kit

Section	What You'll Learn
1. Locker Organization	Set up your locker like a pro
2. Emotional Regulation	Manage stress and big emotions
3. Transition Checklists	Navigate the shift from elementary
4. Email Templates	Communicate with teachers professionally
5. GPA Tracker	Track and calculate your grades
6. Planner Setup	Organize your time and assignments

Section 1: Locker Organization

Your Locker = Your Command Center

The 3-Zone Locker System

Zone 1: Daily Essentials (Top Shelf)

- Books for morning classes
- Pencil case / supply pouch
- Hand sanitizer
- Mirror (small, magnetic)
- Emergency snack (non-perishable)

Zone 2: Core Materials (Middle Area)

- Binders organized by subject (color-coded)
- Textbooks standing upright
- Folders for handouts and homework
- Magnetic whiteboard for reminders

Zone 3: Extras (Bottom)

- Gym clothes / PE bag
- Extra jacket or hoodie
- Lunch bag (if not in cafeteria)
- Backup supplies (extra pens, paper)

Color-Coding Your Subjects

Subject	Suggested Color	Your Color
Math	Blue	_____

English/Language Arts	Red	_____
Science	Green	_____
Social Studies	Yellow	_____
Elective	Purple	_____

Pro Tips: Clean out your locker every Friday. Keep a small trash bag taped inside the door. Use magnetic hooks for your jacket. Put a copy of your schedule on the inside of the door.

Section 2: Emotional Regulation Toolkit

Strategies for Managing Big Feelings

Middle school brings new social dynamics, academic pressure, and emotional challenges. Having a toolkit of coping strategies helps you respond thoughtfully instead of reacting impulsively.

The Emotion Thermometer

Level	State	What to Do
Level 5	Crisis	STOP everything. Use emergency strategies.
Level 4	Heated	Remove yourself. Ask for a break.
Level 3	Frustrated	Use coping strategies before things escalate.
Level 2	Mild	Acknowledge the feeling, use a quick reset.
Level 1	Calm	This is your goal state. Practice staying here.

Coping Strategy Menu

Strategy	How To Do It	Best For
Box Breathing	Breathe in 4 sec, hold 4 sec, out 4 sec, hold 4 sec. Repeat 4x.	Anxiety, test stress
5-4-3-2-1 Grounding	Name 5 things you see, 4 you touch, 3 you hear, 2 you smell, 1 you taste.	Panic, overwhelm
Journaling	Write freely for 5 minutes about what's bothering you. Don't edit.	Sadness, confusion
Movement Break	Walk, stretch, do 10 jumping jacks, or squeeze a stress ball.	Anger, restlessness
Positive Self-Talk	Replace "I can't" with "I'm still learning." Reframe the negative.	Self-doubt, frustration
Talk to Someone	Find a trusted adult -- counselor, teacher, parent. Say "I need to talk."	Any Level 4-5 situation

My Personal Coping Plan

When I feel stressed, I will: _____

My trusted adults at school are: _____

My trusted adults at home are: _____

My go-to coping strategy is: _____

Section 3: Transition Checklists

Your Step-by-Step Guide to a Smooth Start

Before School Starts Checklist

- Attend orientation day or tour the building
- Practice your locker combination at least 10 times
- Walk your schedule route (classroom to classroom)
- Meet at least one teacher before the first day
- Set up your binder and folder system (color-coded)
- Practice opening and closing your locker in under 60 seconds
- Learn the lunch system (how to buy, where to sit)
- Get your student ID and bus information
- Set up your planner or digital calendar
- Establish a morning routine that gets you out the door on time

First Week Survival Checklist

- Write down every teacher's name and classroom number
- Copy your schedule into your planner
- Find the bathroom, counselor's office, and nurse's office
- Introduce yourself to at least 2 new people
- Write down homework assignments every single day
- Ask one question in class (even if it's scary!)
- Eat lunch (don't skip -- your brain needs fuel)
- Go to bed 30 minutes earlier than usual
- Talk to a parent/guardian about how the day went

Give yourself grace -- it's okay if it's not perfect!

Key Differences: Elementary vs. Middle School

Elementary	Middle School
One main teacher	6-8 different teachers
Stay in one classroom	Change rooms every period
Teacher reminds you	You're responsible for remembering
Cubby or desk storage	Locker with combination
Less homework	More homework from multiple classes
Grades less formal	GPA starts mattering

Section 4: Email Templates

How to Email Your Teachers Like a Pro

Email Format Rules:

- ✓ Always use a clear subject line • Start with "Dear Mr./Ms./Mrs. [Last Name]" • State your name and class period • Be specific about what you need • End with "Thank you" and your full name
- ✗ Never use slang, emojis, or ALL CAPS • Never send when angry -- wait 24 hours

Template 1: Asking About a Grade

Subject: Question About [Assignment Name] Grade -- [Your Name], Period [#]

Dear [Mr./Ms. Last Name],

My name is [Your Name] and I am in your Period [#] [Subject] class. I noticed that I received a [grade] on [assignment name] and I would like to understand what I could improve. Would you be available to meet during [lunch/after school/office hours] to discuss this?

Thank you for your time,
[Your Full Name]

Template 2: Reporting an Absence

Subject: Absence on [Date] -- [Your Name], Period [#]

Dear [Mr./Ms. Last Name],

My name is [Your Name] from your Period [#] class. I was absent on [date] due to [brief reason]. Could you please let me know what assignments I missed and when they are due? I want to make sure I stay caught up.

Thank you,
[Your Full Name]

Template 3: Asking for Help

Subject: Need Help Understanding [Topic] -- [Your Name], Period [#]

Dear [Mr./Ms. Last Name],

I am having trouble understanding [specific topic] from our recent lesson. I have tried [what you've already tried], but I'm still confused about [specific part]. Could I come in for extra help during [time]?

Thank you for your help,
[Your Full Name]

Template 4: Late Assignment

Subject: Late Assignment -- [Assignment Name] -- [Your Name], Period [#]

Dear [Mr./Ms. Last Name],

I want to let you know that I was unable to complete [assignment name] by the deadline. [Brief, honest reason]. I take responsibility and would like to submit it by [proposed date]. Is there anything I can do to minimize the impact on my grade?

Thank you for understanding,
[Your Full Name]

Section 5: GPA Tracker

Know Your Numbers, Own Your Future

Understanding the GPA Scale

Letter	Percentage	GPA Points	What It Means
A	90-100%	4.0	Excellent
B	80-89%	3.0	Good
C	70-79%	2.0	Average
D	60-69%	1.0	Below Average
F	Below 60%	0.0	Failing

How to Calculate Your GPA:

Step 1: Convert each grade to GPA points using the table above

Step 2: Add up all your GPA points

Step 3: Divide by the number of classes

Example: $A(4.0) + B(3.0) + A(4.0) + B(3.0) + A(4.0) + C(2.0) = 20.0 / 6 \text{ classes} = 3.33 \text{ GPA}$

Section 6: Planner Setup

Master Your Time, Master Your Success

Weekly Priority System

Priority	Description
URGENT	Due tomorrow or overdue. Do these FIRST.
IMPORTANT	Due this week. Work on these daily.
UPCOMING	Due next week+. Plan and start early.
ONGOING	Study habits, reading, long-term projects.

After-School Time Block Template

Time	Activity
3:00 - 3:30 PM	Snack + Decompress (no screens)
3:30 - 4:30 PM	Homework Block 1 (hardest subject first)
4:30 - 4:45 PM	Break (move your body!)
4:45 - 5:30 PM	Homework Block 2 / Reading
5:30 - 7:00 PM	Free Time / Activities / Dinner
7:00 - 7:30 PM	Review + Pack Bag for Tomorrow
8:30 - 9:00 PM	Wind Down (no screens 30 min before bed)

You've Got This!

Middle school is a journey, not a destination. Every day you show up, try your best, and learn something new -- you're winning. Use this kit as your guide and remember: asking for help is a sign of strength, not weakness.

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