

## Unofficial Guide to the First Year at Tilden

It's a big step for us parents between elementary and middle school. During middle school our kids will be taking a lot more personal responsibility for their education, recreation, and social lives. At the same time, many of our kids become a lot less communicative. Sometimes it may feel like we have no idea what is going on at school. This guide is put together by the Tilden PTSA and is meant to help answer a few of the many questions you're likely to have....

### **How do I find out what's happening at school?**

- ❖ Tilden Website: [www.mcps.k12.md.us/schools/tildenms](http://www.mcps.k12.md.us/schools/tildenms)
  - Read each day's morning announcements
  - See the School and PTSA calendars
  - Link to Teachers' email addresses
  - Link to Synergy (student/parent portals)
  - Get Bell Schedules, Bus Schedules and much more
  
- ❖ Join the E-Mail List: <http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/schools/tildenms/ptsa/emailgroup.aspx>
  - Get up-to-the-minute information from the school and the PTSA
  - Get the monthly PTSA Newsletter which contains important dates, columns by the Principal and the PTSA principal, department updates from staff, and other important information. To save trees, the newsletter is only distributed to the e-mail list and is linked from the school website above on the PTSA page.
  
- ❖ Handouts given to your student at School
  - This is how important notices from school will be sent home about school pictures, ordering yearbooks, permission slips.
  - Tip: ask your child once a week if they have any handouts in their binder. They often "forget" to actually take the handouts out of the backpack and give them to you.

### **How can I check homework and test schedules?**

- ❖ **Synergy:**
  - **Synergy** is an on-line tool used by the school staff, students and parents to keep grades, assignments, handouts and other important information
  - Access codes are given to parents and students at the beginning of the year. Need help activating your account? Please contact the main office.
  
- ❖ **Assignment Book:**
  - Each student receives an assignment book at the beginning of the school year. Ask your child to see his/her assignment book.
  - Encourage your child to develop good organizational skills by writing down their assignments and important deadlines in their assignment books.
  - School policies are listed in the assignment books. Please review these policies with your child.

### **What do I do if my child is sick, late, or needs to leave school early?**

- ❖ Sick: Call the school (240-740-6700) on the day(s) your child is absent. Send a note with your child's name, the date(s) and reason for their absence, and your signature when they return to school. Your child should bring the note to the main office. Ms. Jeannette Herrera is our attendance secretary.
  - Note: if you would like to get school work for your child while they are out sick, on the third day of absence contact the Counseling Office and they will coordinate with your child's teachers.
- ❖ Late: Give your child a signed note saying why they are late, and tell them to bring it to the Main Office so they can sign into school. The office will give them a pass to class.
- ❖ Early Departure: Give your child a signed note with the time they need to be dismissed and tell them to bring it to the Main Office before school. When picking up your child, go to the Main Office to sign them out.

### **How can I find out how my child is doing?**

- ❖ Check their binder: some teachers require the students to keep records of their progress.
- ❖ Check the student/parent portals
- ❖ Email the teacher
- ❖ Interims: You will receive an interim report of your child's grades by regular mail, half way through each marking period.
- ❖ Report cards: These are sent home with the students at the end of the first three marking periods and mailed home at the end of the year. Dates that report cards are sent home can be found on the Montgomery County Public School (MCPS) calendar which is linked from the school website (see above).

### **What time does school start and end?**

- ❖ The school day begins at 8:15 am and ends at 3:00 pm. Students who arrive at school before 7:55 are expected to go to the gym (6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grades) or the cafeteria (8<sup>th</sup> grade).

### **How small are the hall lockers?**

- ❖ The inside of hall lockers are 11.5" wide, and 10.5" deep. The lockers are 46" tall, which includes one 8" shelf at the top. Three-inch binders will not fit in lockers; neither will backpacks with wheels.

### **Do I need to buy a lock?**

- ❖ No; all lockers at school (hall and P.E.) come with locks whose combinations are changed each year by Tilden staff.

### **Tilden is a big place. How do 6<sup>th</sup> graders find all their classes?**

- ❖ Most 6<sup>th</sup> grade classes are held on the third floor, so the 6<sup>th</sup> graders don't need to know the layout of the whole school to find their classes. A little confusion is perfectly normal the first week or two of school, so tell your 6<sup>th</sup> grader not to worry. Sixth graders generally are not considered tardy if they get lost finding their next class during the first couple weeks of school.

**What if I have a question about my child's bus?**

- ❖ MCPS Bus Depot at 240-740-6580
- ❖ Contact Assistant Principal, Aaron Williams at Tilden 240-740-6700.

**How do I pay for my child to eat in the cafeteria?**

- ❖ Sign up for myschoolbucks.com and pay on-line by credit card.
- ❖ Send in a check or cash to the cafeteria with your child's lunch account PIN.
- ❖ Students may pay with cash in the cafeteria.

**How do I find out about school closings or delays?**

- ❖ TV and Radio: Local Stations: Tune in to local TV and radio stations for information.
- ❖ MCPS Web: Home page <http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org>
- ❖ Email: QuickNotes: Weather-related messages are sent in 6 languages (English, Chinese, French, Korean, Spanish, and Vietnamese): <http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/info/quicknotes/welcome/english/>
- ❖ Text and Email: Alert MCPS <http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/info/emergency/sources/alertmcps>
- ❖ Text and Web: Twitter <http://twitter.com/mcps>
- ❖ TV: MCPS Cable Channels

**Emergency announcements are posted on the following cable channels:**

- ❖ Comcast Channel 34
  - ❖ Verizon Fios Channel 36
  - ❖ RCN Channel 89
- Telephone Information: (301) 279-3673
- Telephone (Ask MCPS): (301) 309-6277 Staff takes calls from 8:00 am to 6:00 pm, Monday-Friday, in English and Spanish.

**What about Community Service?**

- ❖ Every child entering 6<sup>th</sup> grade in MCPS must complete at least 75 hours of community service in order to graduate. Thirty of these hours are earned in middle school through in school activities. For more information on SSL, contact the PTSA's SSL coordinator or check out the Tilden, MCPS or Walter Johnson High School websites
- ❖ Most information can be found linked from this page on the Tilden website: <http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/schools/tildenms/departments/guidance/ssl.aspx>

**What opportunities exist to earn Community Service hours?**

- ❖ Some community service hours may be earned during extracurricular activities such as participating on the Student Government, participating in certain after school activities, etc.
- ❖ Some organizations contact Tilden to find volunteers and pre-approved opportunities are announced during morning announcements or posted on the Student Service Learning bulletin board outside the guidance office
- ❖ There are lots of opportunities listed on the MCPS Student Service Learning web page

- ❖ Your child may come up with their own idea of a way to serve the community. If it gets pre-approved by the school, they can earn hours during that activity

### **How does my child get credit for the community service they perform?**

- ❖ If the activity is preapproved, have your child fill out the required form (see web link above) and turn it in to Susan Gabele.
- ❖ If the activity requires pre-approval, have your child fill out the pre-approval form before engaging in the activity.
- ❖ Don't procrastinate in turning in the forms. There are strict deadlines for turning in forms each marking period, and failure to turn your form in on time results in not getting credit for the time served.

### **What is MAP?**

- ❖ MAP (Morning Academic Period) is a chance for students to follow up with teachers regarding questions, quiz re-takes or other matters. MAP takes place at the same time (9:58 – 10:21) every day but is held with a different teacher from your child's schedule each day on a rotating basis.

### **What about Special Education at Tilden?**

- ❖ Tilden Middle School offers the following programs:

#### [Resource](#)

This program is for students with an IEP who typically receive one period of a resource class per day and up to two other special education supported academic classes.

#### [Learning and Academic Disabilities \(LAD\)](#)

This program is for students with an IEP who typically receive four or more special education supported or self-contained academic classes.

#### [Aspergers](#)

This program for students with autism spectrum disorder serves students with Asperger's syndrome. The focus is to teach appropriate pragmatic, social, organizational and problem-solving skills that will allow students to participate more independently in the general education program. These students have some of their classes in a small classroom setting and others in the general education program.

#### [Learning for Independence \(LFI\)](#)

The Learning for Independence Program (LFI) provides a functional life skills curriculum with an emphasis on academics. This program serves students who have severe learning needs. The students receive small class instruction for academics with community reinforcement of skills learned. Students are often integrated into the general education program for their physical education and arts classes.

Contact Kathy Naimon, Special Education Resource Teacher, at 240-740-6650 or [Katherine\\_A\\_Naimon@mcpsmd.org](mailto:Katherine_A_Naimon@mcpsmd.org), with any question regarding Tilden's Special Education Program.

**What about clubs and sports?**

- ❖ Clubs and intramural sports begin a few weeks into the school year. Opportunities are broadcast during the morning announcements. Sixth graders may participate in any club or intramural sport.
- ❖ For school sports teams, or interscholastic sports which field teams and play other schools, only 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders may participate.
- ❖ To participate in extracurricular activities, students must have at least a C average and no more than one E on their report card for the previous grading period.
- ❖ Clubs, intramural sports, and interscholastic sports generally take place on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays after school. On those days, there are two activity buses to take children home from school at 4:20 pm. These buses follow special routes and may not have a stop at your child's usual bus stop. Check the Tilden website for the routes of the activity buses.

**What if I have other questions?**

- ❖ Check out the Tilden website.
- ❖ Come to a PTSA meeting (generally the second Tuesday of the month; 7:00 pm; Media Center).
- ❖ Contact your child's guidance counselor.
- ❖ Ask someone in the main office