



**CIVIS**

*Survival Guide*



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# **ABOUT CMS SURVIVAL GUIDE**

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*The CMS Survival Guide is an informative guide written by kids for kids with tips and tricks to help everyone at CMS survive middle school! This guide is designed to not only help you at the beginning of the year, but also throughout the school year and your whole middle school experience. Whenever you need to you can look back to this guide for some helpful tips. Middle school is a very exciting time, but you may have questions. Especially if you are new to the school it can seem very scary and daunting. Hopefully this guide*

*will help you get through middle school and thrive in the new environment. We hope that we can give you insight on what we have learned and things that were helpful for us in our three years at Concord Middle School. If you have any suggestions for the guide let Ms. Beattie know. Good luck with your years at CMS!*

*- Madi & Erin  
Class of 2018*

## **THE FIRST DAY**

*The first day of school can be quite scary. Especially coming into middle school! The best*

*way to deal with the first day is to think of it positively.*

## **Tips:**

- *During the first day: just relax, be yourself and don't panic!*
- *Try to get to know your teachers for the year.*
- *Be on your BEST behavior, you want to make good impressions.*
- *Familiarize yourself with the layout of the school and find out where all your classes are.*
- *Set goals for yourself to accomplish during the school year.*
- *If you're new, don't sweat it, talk to some people. Chances are you will find somebody else who's in the same boat as you! Remember everyone in sixth grade is in a new school.*
- *Make sure you have all your school supplies. Write down if your teachers request you have something else that you don't have and get it quickly.*
- *Pick out clothes that show who you are and are comfortable to make a first impression.*
- *Pay attention to the rules and learn them. Make sure you read the handbook when the teachers tell you to. The*

*expectations sheets that your teachers give you are also very helpful and make sure you get them signed.*

- Create a designated place to write down homework.*
- Although it is tempting to stay with people you know for the whole day, try and talk to some new people and make new friends.*
- Feel free to ask questions if you're confused about something. Teachers will be happy to answer them.*

## **STUDYING**

*In order to have a successful middle school experience studying is key. Even if you think you know all of the material that will be on the next test or quiz, it never hurts to at least review notes and worksheets.*

*Chances are there will be something you will not know and you'll find yourself in a bit of a sticky situation. It is also very important to develop good study habits early.*

### **Tips:**

- Make a plan of how and when you will study for more efficient studying.*

- *Flashcards are always a big help in every subject.*
- *Study the night before or also a few nights before. Don't wait until the last minute to study.*
- *Take good and organized notes so that they will be easier to study for later on. A suggestion is to write the date on the top of the page of your notes so you know when you wrote them.*
- *Find a quiet and comfortable place to study. Stay away from distractions such as the TV or your phone.*
- *Find a friend to study with. This can make studying more fun, as long as you don't goof off! Make sure you find that balance of school and fun.*

- *Try to color code your notes for easier studying later.*

# **RUMORS**

*We have all heard of rumors and have maybe dealt with them before. You may find yourself running into, or getting involved more rumors in middle school. Keep in mind that rumors are not true and shouldn't bring you down.*

## **Tips:**

- *If you are part of the rumor, ignore them and chances are they will go away.*
- *If you hear a rumor, don't spread it! Try imagining yourself in the situation where you were having rumors spread about you.*

*You wouldn't want other people to spread them.*

- If you heard a rumor that you know is a lie, don't worry about it or make it a huge deal.*
- Just because you heard it from a friend or another student does not make it true.*
- If you hear a rumor many times and it becomes an issue, try telling an adult or confronting the person who is lying. Make sure you talk to them in a calm manner. Never bring it to physical or verbal abuse!*
- Don't start a rumor about someone you dislike just to get back at them.*

# MERROWVISTA

*Merrowvista can be a very fun and exciting time to bond with your classmates and make new friends! You will find that you remember and cherish the memories you make at Merrowvista for a long time.*

## **Tips:**

- If you have a friend in your group don't spend all your time with them. Merrowvista is a time to meet new people!*
- Have fun with all the group activities and bond with your group.*
- Don't be afraid of trying new things and stepping out of your comfort zone.*

- *Try to stay clean and healthy throughout the trip!*
- *People can get sick during Merrowvista, so if you or someone you know feels sick make sure you tell someone (probably the nurse). The trip will be much more fun if you are not sick the whole time.*
- *Make sure you arrive on time in the morning that you need to leave!*
- *Bring appropriate clothing for the weather.*

## **TEACHERS**

*The teachers in middle school are very different than the teachers in elementary school, mostly because you will have more of them! However, even if they are different it does not mean they are scarier or meaner. All of the*

*teachers at CMS are very nice and open to any problems or concerns you may have.*

## **Tips:**

- Try to do as much homework as you can in class if they give you the opportunity so that you don't have much to do at home, but do not rush through assignments.*
- Always listen when the teacher is speaking or explaining something. You don't want to find out that you missed something because you weren't paying attention!*
- Helping the teacher out doesn't make you a "teacher's pet". You don't have to be a teacher's pet to make a good impression.*
- Don't be afraid to raise your hand. It doesn't mean you're dumb when you get a question wrong.*
- It's a good habit to take notes when the teacher is talking about important subject matter.*
- Always try to be the best student in your class.*

- *Due dates are closer than they appear, be sure to do your projects and homework on time.*
- *If you are struggling in a class, ask your teacher if there is a time you can meet with them to discuss it.*
- *Never be afraid to ask your teachers things or ask for help!*
- *Respect substitute teachers as if they were your regular teacher.*

# **HOMework**

*It can be a change from elementary school to middle school in regards to homework because you will get more. It may seem difficult at times, but you will soon find it gets easier. As long as you plan accordingly and complete all your homework, you will not have any problems.*

## **TIPS:**

- *Make sure wherever you plan to complete your homework that you have all the supplies you need (ex. textbooks, colored pencils, notebooks).*
- *If you have more than one day to complete an assignment it's probably because this assignment takes a long time to complete. Do not save it all for the last day!*
- *If you get homework passes use them sparingly! Save them for a night when you are really busy not when you just don't feel like doing it.*
- *Do not get in a habit of not doing homework. It is okay if you forget every once in a while, but it's never good to get into a habit.*
- *If you are sick or out of school make sure to email your friends or teachers about assignments you missed. Your teachers have Google calendars with assignments posted on them.*
- *Write down all of your homework assignments and their due dates in a planner or on your Google calendar even if you think you'll remember them.*

- *Set a time to do your homework during the day that allows you to complete it to the best of your ability. Maybe not right when you get home, but don't wait until midnight.*

## **LUNCH**

*Lunch is a fun time during the day where you can relax and catch up with your friends. Lunch on the first few days can be very nerve wracking. There are many things you can do during lunch such as go outside, go to the library, or just relax.*

### **Tips:**

- *Don't be afraid to sit with new people! Sitting with new people at lunch is a great way to make new friends.*

- *If you are very busy and don't have time to get your homework done one night, going to the library during lunch is a great time to do it.*
- *Lunch is also a great time to run around outside and get some energy out. So take advantage when you have the option to go outside.*
- *Lunch groups are a great way to get to know your guidance counselors and your classmates. Lunch groups happen once a week and you and some of your friends go up to your guidance counselor's office and chat or play games.*
- *Listen to the teachers on lunch duty and see if it is your job to clean the tables.*
- *Clean up after yourself when you are done eating. Don't leave a huge mess for the people on table duty.*

# **WHAT TO BRING**

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*You have all received a list of things to bring to school and your teachers have told you as well.*

*However, there are a few things some people might not tell you about that are good to have.*

- **SNACK:** If you know you get hungry easily bring a snack. Being hungry during class won't help you learn. There are specified snack times for each grade, and if you ask a teacher nicely, they might let you eat during class. Make sure you ask to eat snack earlier if you know you have a science lab during snack period.*
- **WATER BOTTLE:** Having a water bottle with you will keep you from getting dehydrated and keep you focused. Try to fill up your water bottle between classes so you don't miss important things. Water bottles are also good to have for gym class.*

- **PROPER ATTIRE:** *Whether you have gym class or a science experiment, it is always important to be dressed properly for the day ahead. Be aware that there are dress codes (They list them in the CMS handbook p.14).*
- **EXTRA PENCILS:** *Pencils always seem to disappear and you can't be properly prepared for class without one. You may see people asking for them and you'll be happy you came prepared.*
- **DEODORANT:** *Especially when it comes to the warmer months, the buildings are not very cool and things start to smell. Deodorant is another thing that is good to have for gym class. Just make sure you don't go too overboard with strong smelling perfumes or body spray.*

## **ORAL REPORTS & PROJECTS**

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*Do not get too stressed out about oral reports!  
Everyone gets nervous about speaking in front*

*of people. As for projects they can also be stressful. The best way to handle them is to follow a few simple tips.*

**Tips:**

- If you are allowed to use note cards do not put your whole speech on the cards, or you may end up staring at your notecards the whole time instead of looking at the audience.*
- Try and relax as much as you can so your presentation flows.*
- If you have a large research project to do make sure you get each step done on time. Research projects can be very intimidating so doing every step on time will help you in the long run.*
- To beat nerves, rehearse your speech or presentation as many times as you can. This will help you become more comfortable with*

*what you're saying and make it seem more natural.*

- If for some reason you find you need an extension on a project, telling the teacher sooner is better. You don't want to wait until the day before it is due that you need more time.*
- If you find yourself spending too much time on one aspect of a project, skip it and come back. It is not good to waste your time on something that is taking too long.*

## **TRUE LIFE**

*Real questions from incoming middle schoolers; now answered.*

**How will I find time to get all my homework and studying done?**

*Time management is definitely more difficult in middle school. You just have to make sure you always put school work first and not to over schedule yourself. Think of the word procrastination as a “bad word”. You never want to procrastinate in anything because procrastination is one of the worst and hardest habits to break.*

### **What kinds of new responsibilities will I have now that I'm in middle school?**

*Homework and grades are the top two responsibilities that you will have in middle school. It is expected that you finish your homework and get good grades because your grades follow you into the next steps of school and life. Not only do your teachers grade you on homework and tests/quizzes, but also*

*participation. Make sure you raise your hand and participate in group discussions.*

**Will teachers expect a lot more out of students now?**

*Teachers will expect more from you now that you are in middle school verses elementary school although they will not expect too much from you. If you find a teacher is being too hard on you, tell them! They will most likely be understanding and change some things to make you more relaxed and comfortable.*

**Can I get involved with school teams and clubs, even if it means staying at school longer?**

*Yes! Of course you can get into after school activities! There are late buses every day (except Tuesday) after school to take you home. A list of all after school activities are listed on*

*the CMS website and you will be noted in the daily announcements when signup sheets are placed in the office.*

**Will there be time to have fun with my friends?**

*There will be lots of time to have fun with friends! During class you should try and keep it serious, but during times like lunch and homeroom you can have lots of fun with your friends. Also, if you find you have free time after school, try inviting over some friends!*

**Will there be chances to make new friends?**

*In middle school you are with so many great new people that it's a great time to make friends. Keep in mind there are three schools coming together and even more people coming from places other than Concord. You can make*

*friends practically anywhere in middle school especially in your classes or at lunch.*

### **Who should I talk to at school if I'm having a problem with something?**

*If the problem is school work related you can talk to your teachers. If the problem is something more personal your guidance counselors are always the best people to talk too. The guidance counselors are very understanding and from our experience, they seem to solve almost every issue we might have had. Even if they cannot particularly solve it, they can give you tips or refer you to talk with someone else.*

### **Is Middle School fun?**

*Although it may not seem like it at times, middle school is lots of fun! You get much more freedom than elementary school, but you still don't have the responsibility of high school! You will always remember the fun that you have in middle school.*

## **BUSES**

*Every morning all of the buses will first go to Peabody then Sanborn. This is why Sanborn has a different time than Peabody.*

*In the afternoon some of the buses go to Peabody then all of the buses go to Sanborn. Do not be scared if you go to Peabody and your bus isn't at Peabody. Just get on a*

*bus that is there and then there will be time to get on your usual bus once you get to Sanborn. When you get off the bus at Sanborn or leave Sanborn, the crowd of students getting to their buses can seem scary or intimidating. In order to find your bus first look at the whiteboard which will be by the bench at Sanborn. This whiteboard will have a list of all of the buses in order of where they will be parked. If you look at the whiteboard and walk all the way down the row of buses and cannot find your bus do not panic! Wait down by the mods because more buses will come.*

*If you want to go home with a friend just have you and your friend bring a note signed by a parent then you will get a bus pass in the front office that you can give it to your bus driver.*

## **Late buses:**

*The late buses leave at 3:40 and 4:30, but only 4:30 for Boston residences. You use the late buses if you want to go home from an after school club or sport. For the late*

*bus not all of the buses come, only two come for concord residents and one for Boston residents. In order to find out which bus to go on just try going on one and tell the bus driver where you're going and they will tell you if they're going that way. You can also look on the late bus routes in the main office.*

# **ORGANIZATION**

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*Organization is very important to being successful in middle school. Without being organized school can be very overwhelming and your grades may start to fall.*

## **Tips:**

- Make sure your locker is organized. It is very easy to stuff extra papers in the bottom of your locker and forget about them.*
- Make sure you have a system of organization that works for you. Whether it is folders binders*

*or something else it usually doesn't matter what you use as long as it works for you.*

- Avoid the “everything” folder where you just stuff everything into one place.*
- Have an organized place at home to do your work.*
- Try cleaning out your binder every once in a while, and having a place at home to keep things you may need later.*
- If you have problems with organization tell a teacher and they will be happy to help you out.*
- Organization is the foundation of everything in middle school it will be very difficult to get assignments done, do well on tests, and keep up with projects if you are not organized.*
- Get organized the night before school so you aren't rushing in the morning.*

# **PLACES TO STUDY**

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*Concord has some great places to hang out with your friends. It also has many places to hang out with friends and be productive by studying. Studying can be much more fun and rewarding if you do it with your friends and get out of the house.*

## **PLACES:**

- . Either one of the libraries*
- . A bench or table in Emerson park*

- . Somewhere in town (find a bench or a nice patch of grass)*
- . A quiet restaurant or cafe*
- . Rideout Playground*

## **BIKE SAFETY**

*If you live near CMS, you may choose to ride your bike to school. It is important to make sure you understand all the rules of the road before you decide to bike the trek to school.*

### **RULES:**

- *Always signal when turning.*
- *Ride in the same direction of traffic.*
- *Follow all the rules of the road (stopping at stop signs and red lights).*
- *Always wear a helmet that is buckled and fits.*
- *Obey all traffic laws and signs.*
- *Wear brightly colored clothing.*
- *Never wear a hat underneath your helmet.*
- *Check your brakes before you go out.*
- *Make sure your backpack straps are not too loose so they do not get caught in your bike chain.*
- *Always wear close toed shoes when you ride*
- *Don't wear headphones while you ride music may distract you.*
- *Ride single file on the road with friends.*

- *Stop for buses when you see their red lights flashing.*

# **COMPUTERS**

*You will get laptops within the first two weeks of school. Although it is very exciting, it is important to remember a few things to make sure you take good care of your laptop.*

## **Tips:**

- *Always make sure you have your charger with you.*
- *Always make sure your laptop is charged.*
- *Laptops are for school use only.*
- *Make sure whenever you are carrying it that it is in its case.*

- . Keep your name on the tag connected to the laptop case.*
- . Only take the laptop out in safe places.*
- . Do not use your laptop on the bus.*
- . Keep food and drinks away from the laptop.*
- . Limit your time you spend on your computer. Make sure to go outside and take breaks!*
- . Keep all of your files organized.*
- . Don't change any of the settings on your computer you are not supposed to.*
- . Store your laptop in a safe place, and don't leave it unattended.*

# **THINGS TO DO AROUND CONCORD**

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*Are you looking for something to do outside of school? Luckily for you we live in a town with lots of activities always going on. Feel free to try new things and have a bit of fun!*

## **Ideas:**

- Fowler Fridays: watch movies with your friends after school.*
- Play a game with your friends at Emerson field or Rideout.*
- Volunteer: there is a website called 2Volunteer with great volunteer options.*
- Support CCHS: Go to a high school sporting event and cheer Concord on!*
- Go out to ice cream: Bedford Farms and Reasons to be Cheerful have great ice cream.*

- *Join a club in School: There are so many options for clubs and you can take a bus home afterwards.*
- *Take a Hike!: Go to the National park and take advantage of all the trails. There are maps of trails on the Concord website.*
- *Get to Know Concord: Visit some historic spots and museums.*
- *Take a class!: There are many different art, dance, music etc. that Concord Recreation and other organizations offer.*
- *Join a team!: If you are not interested in school sports there are many other sports teams you can join around town.*

# **SCHEDULE**

*The new schedule can be very intimidating coming from elementary school. Just learn how it works, and you'll be fine!*

## **Tips and info. on the schedule:**

- . It is a six day schedule.*
- . You will have 4 elective blocks.*
- . Remember check every morning to see what day it is.*
- . There is no homeroom on Tuesday.*
- . There is a calendar on the CMS website that has the days for the whole year.*

- *If you have problems with your schedule talk to a guidance counselor, secretary or a principal.*
- *Remember that just because you have a study doesn't mean you can go find a teacher whenever you want. They have busy schedules too. Always ask a teacher if they are free before meeting with them.*

## **STRESS MANAGEMENT**

*Sometime during middle school you are going to get stressed. Whether it's about school or something outside of school, too*

*much stress is never good and it is good to learn how to manage it.*

**Tips:**

- . A little stress is okay and can actually help you get things done.*
- . Do not procrastinate or wait until the last minute.*
- . Stay out of drama and rumors.*
- . Try not to over-schedule yourself. Always leave time to study, but also to relax.*
- . Accept that stress will happen, but have a positive attitude about it.*
- . Plan things that will de-stress your life such as yoga or reading a book.*
- . Get your required hours of sleep.*
- . Seek out support if stress gets to the point that it rules your life.*

- *Eat healthy! The foods you eat can have an impact on not only your physical health but your mental health and mood.*

## **TESTS, QUIZZES & STANDARDIZED TESTING**

*Before you freak out about the above title, take a step back and think about tests and quizzes in a positive way. Test and quizzes are helpful for you because you understand what you know and do not know.*

### **Tips:**

- *Try process of elimination for multiple choice questions*
- *Get a good night sleep before all tests and quizzes. You will not do well if you're tired.*

- *Take your time during all tests and quizzes including ones online. Don't worry if people finish before you.*
- *Make sure to read all of the instructions and answer all parts of the question.*
- *Check over all of the answers before you pass the test or quiz in.*
- *For open responses brainstorm and plan out your response first.*
- *Come prepared with the materials you need for tests.*
- *If you have a long day of testing bring a water bottle to stay hydrated.*
- *If you don't know an answer skip it and come back*
- *Your first answer is probably right. Don't waste your time changing your answer over and over again.*

# **LAST DAY OF SCHOOL**

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*Congratulations! You have finally completed a full year at CMS! Although it is the last day, there are still some things that you need to finish before you leave.*

## **Tips:**

- . Make sure you clean out your locker and throw away trash that might have collected throughout the year.*
- . Check the lost and found and the locker rooms (at Sanborn) to make sure you haven't lost or left anything.*

- . Collect any projects you want to take home from your teachers.*
- . If you ordered a yearbook, feel free to walk around and get it signed.*
- . Check to see if you have any summer homework so you have plenty of time to complete it.*
- . Say goodbye to friends and think of making some summer plans to hang out with them.*
- . Also say goodbye to your teachers!*