

# Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) from Incoming 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Families

## **Enrollment**

**Do I need to complete an enrollment packet?** Students already attending one of our feeder schools (Franklin, McKinley, and Roosevelt) do not need to complete an enrollment packet. You will automatically become a student at Lincoln Middle School. If your child attends a feeder school but will not be attending LMS, please let us know immediately so we can remove you from our system. Students new to SMMUSD will need to officially enroll. Please visit the school and/or contact our attendance office for more information.

## **Transition Activities**

**How do you help transition students to middle school?** We offer multiple ways for students to get comfortable at LMS. Students attending our feeder schools visit LMS in January. During the visit, students experience a PE class, attend a Q & A session with current sixth graders, tour the campus, hear performances from our orchestra, choir, and band, meet the principal, counselors and other staff members, and have lunch together. We also have Get Your Stuff Day (GYSD) in August which you can learn more about below. During the first week of school we have a special day called Camp Lincoln. All 6th graders spend a school day on campus immersed in team building and other activities designed to get students acclimated to our campus and each other. Finally, we have a special New to Lincoln lunch for those students who did not attend our feeder schools. This gives them an opportunity to meet other students who previously did not attend SMMUSD schools, interact with our student leadership and meet school staff in a smaller setting.

**What is GYSD?** Get Your Stuff Day is a chance for your child to pick up a preliminary schedule to see what her/his classes will be before the first day of school. Your child will also get assigned a locker and have a chance to pick up her/his PE clothes and Binder Reminder. She/He will get to meet some of the 6th grade teachers and have the day to walk around the school to get familiar with campus.

**What if I can't make it to GYSD?** If you can't make GYSD, it's okay!!! All students will need to pick up their official schedules in the morning prior to the start of the first day of school. Students will also be able to buy PE clothes and a Binder Reminder in our Student Store.

## **Academic Classes**

**What are the math courses for 6th graders?** Math Core 6 is the math course for 6th graders. <http://www.smmusd.org/edservices/CAstandards/math/6-CourseDescriptions.pdf> Our current district math pathways recommend acceleration beginning in 7th grade. Some 6th grade students are invited to consider taking Math 7/8 as 6th graders based on data from multiple measures including CAASPP, Fastbridge, and report card scores. Students will cover all of Core 7 and Core 8 in one school year at an accelerated pace in a class with 7th grade students. <http://www.smmusd.org/edservices/CAstandards/math-78.html> Please be aware this means your child will skip a year of math concepts which may present additional challenges in the future if they aren't ready. Ideal 6th grade candidates have a love of math and enjoy playing math games or solving problems outside of their assigned school work. They should be able to

meet the workload and master the learning standards of the accelerated course independently without the support of tutors or other assistance.

**When will I know what class my child will take?** Students who are recommended to consider taking the Math 7/8 course will be notified no later than the last day of school. If you do not receive such a communication, then your child is recommended for the grade level course, Core 6.

**My student was not recommended for math acceleration in 6<sup>th</sup> grade but I want her/him to take Math 7/8. Is this an option?** We strongly suggest you wait until 7th grade to accelerate if your 6th grader is not recommended, but there is an option to waive your child into the class. Please note that if students don't maintain a minimum grade in the course, they will be moved to Core 6.

**Are there other advanced classes?** In middle school, math is the only area where there is acceleration. Teachers differentiate for student ability across other content areas.

**What is ISPE and how do I apply?** Independent Study Physical Education (ISPE) is a program that students apply for if they participate in an approved structured program taught by a qualified individual responsible for supervising, documenting, and verifying the student's participation in the activity. Applications for ISPE are typically available around March on the Lincoln Middle School website. A District committee will review each application and determine if the student meets the requirements for participating in the program.

## **Elective Classes**

**Does my child need prior experience to take a music class?** No. There are beginner-level classes in choir, band, and orchestra.

**My child has experience. How do I get her/him into a higher-level music class?** There is an audition process in the Spring. Visit our [website](#) to sign up for a [choir](#), [band](#), or [orchestra](#) audition appointment.

**May my child take two electives?** No. We are staffed to allow each student to have one elective. Students who take an AM in 8<sup>th</sup> grade may be able to take a 2<sup>nd</sup> elective if there is space in the desired class. Students that have a required class to support their learning, such as curriculum skills or English Language Development, are able to take an elective if they make space in their schedule by taking an AM class or qualifying for ISPE.

**May my child try one elective one year and choose a different one the following year?** Each year, students submit course requests and rank their elective preferences. Students do not have to take the same elective all three years.

**What foreign languages do you offer?** We offer Spanish I for 8th grade students. This is a year-long, high school-level class that will prepare students to enter Spanish II in 9th grade. We currently offer Exploratory French as part of the 6th grade elective rotation and Exploratory Spanish as part of the 7th grade elective rotation.

**Is there a place for students to keep their instruments on campus?** Yes! Students who have instruments are able to put them in lockers in the music rooms. All rooms are open and accessible before and after school.

**My student has a large instrument. Is she/he able to have one that is kept at home and one for school?** Check with the music director for your program for your specific instrument. Typically, we have larger instruments at school so students don't have to transport them each day.

## **Social Emotional Support**

**What is the role of the counselor, and is my child able to access one?** Your child's counselor is accessible throughout the school day. Counselors provide academic, college and career, and social/emotional support to all students. Whether your child has a question about her/his schedule, has issues with her/his peers/family, or is not sure how to ask a teacher for help, counselors serve as a supportive role and help provide resources for many student/family needs.

**What is the mindfulness program?** Mindfulness is a tool that can reduce stress, improve focus, and help us make more thoughtful decisions. We teach mindfulness strategies to 6th graders during the homebase period. Visit <http://saragreenfield.weebly.com/mindfulness.html> to learn more.

## **Before & After School Options**

**What before school programs are available?** Unlike elementary schools, there is no before school care run by our district Child Development Services (CDS). Students are old enough in middle school to come onto campus and head to their classes. Some students who come earlier sit at the patio tables with friends, bring a ball to play on the basketball court or field, or go to the library when it is open. Sometimes classes are offered for a fee through outside vendors like The Coding School and Digital Dragon. Look for flyers and check our website for registration details.

**What after school programs are available?** Sports are the only programs offered on campus through CREST. Look for flyers or visit the City of Santa Monica webpage for sign up details <https://apm.activecommunities.com/santamonicarecreation/Home>. The library and computer lab are open Monday - Thursday until 4:30 pm excluding early dismissal days. Some clubs meet after school. Schedules vary so check the activities link on our webpage <http://www.lincoln.smmusd.org/clubs.html>. CDS offers supervised childcare through The Teen Center until 6:00pm for a fee. Visit <http://www.smmusd.org/CDS/Fees.html> for more information. Many students participate in community programs such as the YMCA, Police Activities League (PAL), and the Boys & Girls Club of Santa Monica. Sometimes classes are offered for a fee through outside vendors like The Coding School and Digital Dragon. Look for flyers and check our website for registration details. It is important that you have a plan for your child after school. Students who are not in the library, members of the Teen Center, or are on campus for another supervised purpose (club meeting, teacher office hours, etc.) are expected to be off campus by 30 minutes after dismissal.

**What do students typically do on late start mornings?** Some students stay home for an extended time before going to school. Some parents allow their students to meet with friends at

local businesses. Some students take classes through outside vendors that are offered on campus.

**What is the peer tutoring center?** The Peer Tutoring Center is open in the Library Classroom Mondays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays from 3:15pm - 4:15pm and Wednesday mornings from 9:15am - 9:55am.

**How do I find out what clubs are available?** Visit the LMS website for the list <http://www.lincoln.smmusd.org/clubs.html>. Clubs and afterschool activities change each year. Students can also start their own club if they are able to get a staff member to supervise and get other students to attend.

## **General Questions**

**What time should my student get to school each day?** We recommend that students arrive at least 10 minutes before the bell to start school rings. This will allow them plenty of time to go to their locker if necessary and get into their classroom and get settled. School begins at 8:20am on M, T, Th & Fri and 10:00am on Wednesday based on the school clocks.

**Do students have all of their classes every day?** Yes. Classes meet daily. The only class they do not have is Homebase on Wednesdays.

**What is the homework load?** It will vary each day but will not exceed the school board policy for homework for students (grade level x 10 +10). For 6th graders it should not exceed 70 minutes per night, Monday-Thursday for a typical student. No homework is assigned on weekends or holidays per board policy.

**Do students have enough time to make it to classes?** There are 5 minutes in between each class. There is plenty of time to get from one side of campus to the other in those 5 minutes.

**Do students change for PE?** Students will change every day for PE after the first week of school.

**What if my kid struggles with her/his locker (loses combination, can't get it open, forgot where the locker is, etc)?** We have many adults on campus ready to assist students with their lockers. Our security officers are there to help. 6th graders also have time during their homebase period to practice using their locker at the start of school.

**Will my child get in trouble if she/he gets lost or is late to class on the first day of school?** We understand that students are just learning their way around campus. There will be adults and older students available to help students find their way to class. We look for students who look unsure and offer help. Teachers are lenient with tardies the first week or so of school as students adjust to their schedule.

**My child has an IEP. When will I learn what supports they will have at LMS?** Lincoln Middle School will be hosting a parent coffee on March 6, 2019 from 8:30-9:30 am in our library classroom where you can learn about the different programs and supports we offer. Prior to the end of the current school year your child will have a transition meeting with staff from your child's current school as well as representatives from Lincoln Middle School. During that meeting, the team will discuss the appropriate classes, accommodations/modifications, and additional supports your child may require to access their education in middle school.

**My child has a 504. When will I learn what supports they will have at LMS?** If your child has a 504 Service Plan, we will receive the plan directly from the elementary school. If you are from outside of the feeder schools, please bring it in prior to the start of school. We will meet with you during the time of your annual meeting to renew/adjust/modify the plan as needed. Your child's teachers will receive all information prior to the start of school and implement all accommodations on the first day of school. Should you have questions regarding your child's 504 Service Plan, please feel free to reach out to your child's counselor at any time.

**What options are available at lunch for students?** Students can bring their lunch. There are four microwaves in the cafeteria that students can use to reheat food. Students can purchase food on campus ranging from the hot meals in the cafeteria to the salad bar to the daily BBQ grill where students can get burgers, hot dogs, veggie burgers or a rib sandwich. Pizza and other snacks are available to purchase from the carts. All food sold on campus during lunch adheres to the Wellness Policy. Visit <http://www.smmusd.org/foodservices/index.html> to learn more.

**What hours is the library open?** The library is open Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday from 8AM - 4:30PM, Wednesday from 9:30AM - 4:30PM, and Friday from 8AM - 3:15PM.

**My child rides a bike, skateboard or scooter. Is there a place for her/him to keep it on campus?** There is a storage area for bikes, scooters, and skateboards. Students need to bring their own locks. The school is not responsible for lost, damaged, or stolen items.

**What is the cell phone policy?** Cell phones and smart watches should be off, away, and out of sight during school hours. It will be confiscated if students have their phone out during school hours, and they can pick it up at the end of the school day. After two confiscations, a parent must come pick up the phone. The school is not responsible for lost, damaged, or stolen electronic devices.

**Do I need to buy my child a cell phone now that they are in middle school?** That is a personal decision that you should make based on your family needs, beliefs, and the maturity level of your child. There are phones on campus that students can use should they need to contact you before, during, and/or after school. Whatever your decision, we always advise parents to closely monitor their child's social media profiles and online activity.

**Should my child bring a rolling backpack?** Rolling backpacks are not recommended. Students can use their locker between classes to keep their backpacks from being too heavy. Further students are able to keep their textbooks at home since we have class sets of books, so their backpacks should not be heavy.

**My child splits her/his time between two homes. Is it possible to have a set of books for each home?** Parents can check out a second set of textbooks from our school librarian.

**What does my child need to do in the event of a late arrival or absence from school?** Students who arrive to school late by 10 minutes or fewer report directly to the classroom. Students who are later than 10 minutes, need to report to the attendance office for a readmit slip. After 5 tardies to school, a student will receive a 30 minute detention and 30 minutes for every subsequent violation. If your student is absent from school, they need to report directly to the attendance office on the day of their return to get a readmit slip. Your child

will need to bring a note explaining the absence with them and a doctor's note to have the absence excused.

## **Volunteer Opportunities**

**Are there parent volunteer opportunities on campus?** Yes. Please join our PTSA to stay in the loop for all the ways you can assist our community. We typically need parent volunteers for big events like Camp Lincoln, Get Your Stuff Days, Halloween Carnival, school tours, field trip chaperones, Copy Corps and Parent Eyes. Visit our website and look for email blasts. There are also more formal ways to give back by being elected to our School Site Council, joining our English Learners Advisory Committee, AVID Site Team, Special Education Support Group, and Olweus Bullying Prevention Coordinating Committee. We understand that working parents may not be able to donate time during school hours. Please know that any support you can offer is appreciated, and we are always grateful for your generous financial contributions of any amount to our Santa Monica Education Foundation (SMED) <https://www.smedfoundation.org/> and PTSA <https://www.lmsptsa.org/support>

## **Supporting Lincoln Students**

**Can I make a monetary donation to Lincoln?** In Santa Monica, parents are asked to make contributions to TWO non-profit organizations that directly support Lincoln students – the Lincoln PTSA and our Santa Monica Education Foundation. Your donation to our PTSA funds important supplies and experiences, while your donation to the Ed Foundation funds essential staff and programs at Lincoln. ANY amount that you donate to the PTSA and the Ed Foundation are greatly appreciated. To learn more and to donate, please visit [lmsptsa.org](https://www.lmsptsa.org) and [smedfoundation.org](https://www.smedfoundation.org).