

Transition to 7th Grade at Heritage Academy Q & A

Welcome! The transition to the seventh grade at the high school can often cause feelings of trepidation and fear of being lost in a larger, unknown environment of Middle School. The sixth graders have participated in several activities and programs at the high school, toured and met the seventh grade teachers and coaches, and have mentors to help them in adjusting to this new educational journey that they are embarking on in the seventh grade. There are often questions that rising seventh graders would like answered to help in the transition. Below are a series of practical questions that have been gathered from students, parents and teachers regarding the transition to seventh grade. It is our hope that the answers are beneficial in the transition to seventh grade. Certainly other questions may arise, and these can be addressed during new student orientation and with students at the beginning of the school year. We are looking forward to another outstanding year at Heritage Academy, and are committed to helping seventh graders flourish at our school.

Middle School...”the best of times, the worst of times,” and I choose the BEST!!

I. General – Parent Perspective

- i. **How can I help my child prepare?** Initiate conversations to provide a plan for success and start relieving some of the stress before school begins in August. Ask your seventh grader about their fears or concerns and talk through these. The attitude you project will be the attitude they absorb.
- ii. **Will students be in a safe environment?** Each teacher implements a management and procedure plan for his/her classroom, and there are school wide safety plans for emergencies. These emergency plans are practiced throughout the year.
- iii. **How will my child’s academic load be different?** Certainly classrooms and procedures along with new schedules will be established. Each day is spent focused on serious academics; however, this is done with enthusiasm. Courses and material are more challenging, but students can and will succeed if they are prepared each day.
- iv. **As a parent, what is the best way to communicate with my child's teacher?** The best way to communicate with a teacher is by email. They are also available for conferences as needed. We ask teachers to respond in a reasonable time frame – one business day. Please keep in

mind that most teachers serve more than one hundred students each day.

- v. **Homework rule of thumb:** On average students should expect to complete 70 minutes of homework per night in total (10 minutes times the grade level they are in). Some nights may be more as they prepare for tests or major projects. Research suggests that, “**Studying or doing homework while sitting in front of the TV, using social media or texting, makes it more difficult to learn and retain the information, increases the time it takes to complete homework, and may ultimately result in lower test scores.**” The following link provides further insights into managing distractions while studying and doing homework: [Distracted by Technology \(see attached\)](#)

II. General – Student Perspective

- i. **How do I find my “place” in a new school?** Students are different in many ways, but one commonality is the desire to belong and feel safe. Over time, you will find that Heritage is one big family and as students begin to connect in classrooms, extracurricular activities, and clubs that “place” becomes apparent. My advice: Get involved!
- ii. **How can I succeed in my classes?** Get a good night’s rest! The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) endorses the recommendation of the American Academy of Sleep Medicine (AASM) guidelines that, “Teenagers 13 to 18 years of age should sleep 8 to 10 hours per 24 hours on a regular basis to promote optimal health.” Come to class prepared ready to work each day. Do your homework, read the assignment, and participate in class. Ask questions. Teachers are available often to provide extra help before school and after school – just set up an appointment. A student is their own best advocate!
- iii. **Do I need to read my summer reading assignments?** Are you really asking that question? Yes, if you want to pass the test! Be proactive, and read early and often.

III. School Arrival

- i. **What do I do if I arrive early for school?** Report to the Student Activity Building (SAB). Students may use that time as a study hall.
- ii. **Where do I go when I arrive at school?** Students are dropped off in the

lane way by the front office of the school. They then enter the school through the main building and take the side exit that leads to the SAB. This pathway will help ensure that students remain out of traffic lanes. Students may remain in the main building if they have a pre-arranged appointment with a teacher or to drop items off in the basketball locker room.

- iii. **Will I have a first period homeroom where roll will be taken?** Roll is taken in all classes and posted in Powerschool. Parents are encouraged to regularly review student attendance through access to Powerschool. Second period is classified as a student's Homeroom. Daily intercom announcements are made at the beginning of 2nd period and pertinent items are distributed or collected through Homeroom.
- iv. **What happens if I am late for class?** Students who are tardy should report to the front office to receive a tardy slip from front office personnel. Refer to handbook for details regarding the tardy policy.

IV. Lockers

- i. **Will I need a combination lock for my school locker?** Some students elect to use a lock on their locker, however, the use of a lock is not a requirement.
- ii. **Are there any items that I can buy to help me have an organized locker?** Often student will utilize foldable locker shelves. These help create extra shelf space in the locker. They can purchased at most stores that carry school supplies.
- iii. **If I would like to decorate the inside of my locker, may I decorate it before school starts?** Yes. Locker numbers can be found on the student's class schedule. They may also decorate the inside of the locker following class on Monday, August 6. Note: August 6 is an early release day with students being dismissed at 11:30 am.
- iv. **Do I need to decorate my locker on the outside?** Many students elect to decorate the inside of their assigned locker – this is not a requirement. Outside of lockers are typically not decorated. Students will notice that a baby picture of Seniors is placed on the outside of Senior lockers – a fun tradition. Cheerleaders and some Clubs will often post inspiring quotes or verses on student lockers at various times throughout the year.
- v. **Do I take my book bag to each class or is it safe to leave it in my locker?** Students are permitted to take their book bag to class. Most

students do not leave their book bag in their locker. Book bag storage shelves are available in the hallway for storing book bags during break and lunch.

V. Procedures

- i. **How long do I have between classes?** There are five minutes between each class. Students are encouraged to use the bells to their advantage.
 - A bell rings for 5 seconds to signal the end of time for a class period. Students are dismissed only by the teacher though (not the bell).
 - A tardy warning bell sounds for 3 seconds one minute prior to the start of class.
 - A bell sounds for 5 seconds to signal the beginning of the next period. Students are expected to be in the classroom sitting in their assigned location ready for class. **Note:** The 7th grade classrooms are primarily housed in one hallway. Thus, five minutes gives students ample time to move between classrooms, go to the restroom or get something out of their locker. However, they need to do these things with purpose.
- ii. **Am I allowed to have my phone in class?** Cell phones are an excellent communication device with much computer power. At times teachers may ask students to access their cell phone with an educational purpose. Otherwise, students are to deposit their cell phone in the designated storage location upon entering class. Between classes students are to have phones put up and powered off. Students may access cell phones during break and lunch. Of course, students who choose to use cell phones during these times are to reflect the *HA Technology Responsible Use Agreement for Students*. Otherwise, should a student need to make a call during the school day, they may request permission from a teacher to go to the front office and make a call either from the school phone or their cell phone.
- iii. **Am I allowed to go to the restroom during class?** Teachers may give students permission to leave classroom during class. The student needs to be issued a hall pass and sign out from class and sign back in upon their return. This helps ensure that the location of students is known at all times for safety and security purposes. Students are encouraged to use the restroom between classes. **Note:** Parents are asked to provide the counselor or school administration with a physicians note should there be a medical condition that requires frequent access to the restroom.

- iv. **What happens if I get in trouble?** Our experience is that our students respectfully comply with the requests of teachers and are actively engaged in the learning process. In the event that a student is in violation of a school or classroom rule (which we anticipate will be seldom or never), a student will be addressed according to the classroom and school rules. In the extreme case, a student will be written up and sent to the office to meet with an administrator. **Note:** The 2018-2019 *Heritage Academy Junior and High School Student Handbook* will be available on the school website (www.heritagepatriots.com) by August 1. Students and parents are asked to become familiar with all aspects of the handbook and indicate they have read and understand it by signing and returning the agreement form by the end of the first week of school (Friday, August 10, 2018).
- v. **What happens if I miss a test?** Make arrangements to make up the test with teachers. Let teachers know in advance, if possible, when a test may be missed.
- vi. **What is “Wednesday School” that I have heard about?** Wednesday School is an opportunity for students to make up tests and major assignments when they have missed school. Typically Wednesday School is used as a last resort when no other time is available for the make-up. All Wednesday School Testing will take place from 3:20 – 4:00 pm in the assigned classroom and by the assigned instructor - this includes student athletes who have an athletic event at this time.
- vii. **How do I stay organized (do I need a planner)?** Seventh grade students often use a planner or insert planning sheets/calendars in the front of their binders. This helps students keep up with important deadlines, test dates, and other items.

VI. Break

- i. **What time will I have break?** Break is scheduled each morning for 15 minutes beginning at 9 am. Students go to the Student Activity Building (SAB) during this time. Hot breakfast items, drinks and other snacks are available for purchase from the Patriot Café.
- ii. **Can I bring a snack from home to eat at break?** Students are welcome to bring snacks and lunch from home. Due to the licensure agreement with the Patriot Café, we ask that food and drinks from home be in generic containers. Microwaves are available in the SAB to heat food items up during break and lunch.

VII. Lunch

- i. **How much money should be budgeted for cafeteria expenses?**
Parents are encouraged to set up a budget with their child. Students who purchase food for break and lunch on average spend \$10 to \$12 per day. This amount will vary based on the types and quantity of items purchased.
- ii. **When do 7th graders go to lunch?** Students in grades 7 to 9 attend first lunch. Students are taken to first lunch once attendance has been recorded at the beginning of 4th period. Lunch lasts 30 minutes and is eaten in the Patriot Café located in the Student Activity Building (SAB).
- iii. **What is available for lunch?** The Patriot Café provides tasty, nutritious hot and cold lunch options for purchase.
 - The Patriot Café monthly menu is posted on the school website (www.heritagepatriots.com).
 - A plate lunch may be purchased for \$5.00 – this includes the menu entrée of the day and a fountain drink.
 - A salad bar, soup bar, potato bar, sliders, non-fountain drinks and other items are also available for purchase.
 - Once again, students are welcome to bring lunch from home. Due to the licensure agreement with the Patriot Café, we ask that food and drinks from home be in generic containers. Microwaves are available in the SAB to heat food items up during break and lunch.
 - **Note:** Each student is issued an account for use in the Patriot Café. Monies may be added to the account through the *My Payments Plus* app (a fee applies), by check to the HA cafeteria, or cash at the checkout register.
 - *My Payments Plus* app also allows parents to monitor what students have purchased each day and view the account balance.

VIII. Dismissal

- i. **Where do I go when school is over for the day?** Students who have after school practice report to the practice location. Otherwise, students assemble at the front of the school to wait to be picked up.
- ii. **Where do I go if my ride is late in picking me up?** Students may wait on the benches outside the front of the building or the benches in the hallway near the front office. They may use the front office counter phone as needed to contact their ride.
- iii. **What happens if I forget something? Can I get back in the school building?** We encourage students to be organized and have all the items

they need for the night when leaving school. Nevertheless, some school personnel are in the Instructional Complex until 4 pm and are happy to assist students.

IX. Teacher perspective:

Each teacher has high expectations for student learning. And each teacher develops a classroom culture to support the learning process. This culture is guided by the procedures, routines, and rules that the teacher develops for the class. Over the first month of school students will be introduced to and become acquainted with these procedures, routines, and rules for each teacher. Below is a glimpse into how one of our teachers runs her classroom. Mrs. Gore is our 7th grade mathematics teacher.

Questions/Answers for Mathematics:

1) For which math class will my child be prepared after the seventh grade?

College Prep track:

- Students in General Mathematics 7 are being prepared for Pre Algebra in the 8th grade, Algebra 1 in the 9th grade, then Geometry in the 10th grade, Algebra II in 11th, and Pre-Calculus or Algebra III/Trigonometry as Seniors.

Honors track:

- Students in Advanced Mathematics 7 (Pre-Algebra) will be prepared for Algebra 1 in the 8th grade, Geometry in the 9th grade, Algebra 2 in the 10th grade, Pre-Calculus in the 11th grade and Calculus as a Senior.
- **Students in Advanced Mathematics 7 (Pre-Algebra)** who do not maintain an 85 average or above for the year will be recommended for Pre-Algebra in the 8th grade.

2) How often can assessments be expected?

Weekly quizzes are given each Wednesday or Friday. These will cover the lessons for that week and may include material from previous weeks. Tests are also given on Wednesdays or Fridays when major concepts have been completed or a chapter has been completed.

3) If my child is not strong in math should I hire a tutor?

No, your child has been placed in a math class in which he or she will be successful if they keep up with their assignments. The teacher is available for extra help and for necessary tutoring if needed. Only under very special circumstances is tutoring recommended.

4) Will my child have to take the mid-term exam and the final exam in all of his classes?

All students in a year-long class are required to take the mid-term exam which is given the week before Christmas Holidays. Students are eligible for exemption from final exams if the following criteria are met:

- Students may have no more than 7 non-medical excused absences for the calendar year
- 90 or above average plus good Citizenship grade
- No unexcused absences, ISS or OSS infractions
- No more than 3 unexcused tardies during the 4th nine weeks for the individual course in which the student is seeking exemption
- Students with an unexcused absence are not exempt

Please regularly check student attendance in Powerschool. Should an attendance entry error be found in Powerschool, this must be rectified with the appropriate documentation by the end of the nine-week period in which the absence occurred.

5) Will it be possible for my child to be moved from the class in which he/she is assigned to another math class?

Changes are made only for academic purposes NOT social.

6) How much help should I offer my child with his/her homework?

Ideally, just checking that your child has completed his/her assignment is all that should be necessary. However, I realize we do not live in an ideal world. A check of their work and identifying errors *for them to correct* is quite acceptable. ***Please, do not teach your child a math concept if they say they do not understand.*** Ask them to come in first thing in the morning (7:30 A.M.) and let me know they do not understand. I will gladly reteach the concept to them one-on-one.

X. 7th Grade - First Period Athletics (see XI below for 3rd period)

Junior High boys who play sports at Heritage Academy have their athletic period during 1st period. During the season, this period serves as their

practice time. During the off-season, this period serves as their strength and conditioning time. It is up to each individual coach to set what time student athletes need to be at practice (i.e. football practice starts at 7:30 AM). If the sport is not starting until the 1st period bell rings, students will report to the SAB until that bell rings. Students are given ample time at the end of the period to shower and change into their school uniforms before reporting to break.

XI. 7th Grade – 3rd Period Athletics – Girls Basketball/Tennis

- Students need to have athletic clothes to change into and be prepared to practice during this time.
- If a 7th grader is just playing tennis, they will be allowed to go to the Magnolia Tennis Club during third period - per Coach Clark.
- If they play basketball and tennis, they will be allowed to go to the tennis club after basketball season (in February).
- Basketball student athletes will change clothes and report to the gym court shortly after the tardy bell rings.
- Tennis players will change and report to the tennis club.
- All students will have a dressing room available to change clothes.
- Basketball and tennis players have separate dressing rooms.
- Each student will have a locker for their clothing. These are open lockers that do not have a door or lock on them. If for some reason a student has something of value that they need secured, they may make arrangements with Coach Harris and he will secure the items.
- The dressing rooms are open from 7:30 a.m. to the end of first period. It is reopened for girls athletics from 10:00 a.m. to 11:20 a.m. It is also opened from 2:30 p.m. to 3:45 p.m.
- **STUDENTS SHOULD ONLY STORE THEIR ATHLETIC GEAR/APPAREL IN THE DRESSING ROOMS. THIS EXCLUDES ITEMS SUCH AS SCHOOL BOOKS, BOOKBAGS, LUNCHES, ETC.**
- 7th grade basketball players will be given a list of what needs to be purchased for basketball. We order the supplies from Sports Specialty after Labor Day. The only required items are reversible practice top, shorts, and shoes.
- Students are allowed to wear any athletic shoes until we order our team shoes.
- All students participating in athletics need to have a completed physical examination form, concussion form, and proof of insurance filed with the Athletic Director before the first day of school. They will not be allowed to practice without these forms.

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