

AVONWORTH MIDDLE SCHOOL GUIDE BOOK



Avonworth Middle School
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Welcome to Middle School

Dear Parents/Guardians and Students:

Welcome to Avonworth Middle School, a fantastic learning environment. Avonworth Middle School maintains high expectations both academically and behaviorally. This guidebook shows that AMS is filled with exciting and unique learning opportunities.

I believe that Middle School is such a crucial developmental stage of a student's life. Our dedicated and experienced staff will make the time spent here the best possible learning environment. Please take a moment to examine this resource and ask any questions that you may have.

I look forward to a great school year.

Sincerely,
Michael Hall, Principal

What is a Middle Schooler?

~ **Anonymous**

He is noise and confusion.
He is silence that is deep.
He is sunshine and laughter,
Or a cloud that will weep.

He is swift as an arrow.
He is a waster of time.
He wants to be rich,
But cannot save a dime.

He is rude and nasty.
He is polite as can be.
He wants parental guidance,
But fights to be free.

He is aggressive and bossy.
He is timid and shy.
He knows all the answers,
But still will ask "Why?"

He is awkward and clumsy.
He is graceful and poised.
He is ever changing,
But not to be annoyed.

What is a middle schooler?
I was asked one day.
He is the future unfolding,
So do not stand in his way.

BELL SCHEDULE

Grade 7 & 8

8:00-8:40	Mod A
8:43-9:28	Mod B
9:31-10:11	Mod C
10:14-10:54	Mod D
10:57-11:37	Activity
11:37-12:07	Lunch
12:10-12:50	Mod E
12:53-1:33	Mod F
1:36-2:15	Mod G
2:15-2:55	Mod H

Hybrid Model (2020-2021)

7th Grade	Schedule		8th Grade	Schedule
TIME	MOD		TIME	MOD
9:45-10:45	A/B		9:45-10:45	A/B
10:48-11:48	C/D		10:48-11:18	C (Specials)
11:51-12:16	Activity		11:21-11:48	D (Specials)
12:18-12:48	Lunch 2		11:51-12:16	Activity
12:51-1:19	E (Specials)		12:18-12:48	Lunch 2
1:22-1:52	F (Specials)		12:51-1:52	E/F
1:55 -2:55	G/H		1:55 -2:55	G/H

~ STAFF ~

Front Office Staff

Michael Hall, Principal
Kaitlin Remensky, HS/MS Assistant Principal
Aaron Pellicano, School Counselor
Judi Bevilacqua, Secretary to the Principal
Pamela Robinson, Administrative Assistant

Instructional Staff

Reading 7 - Amanda White - 7
Life Science - Kelly Hansen - 7
Math 7 Core – Ahmed Affaneh - 7 & Julie Tullar 7
ELA / World Cultures - Sarah Flower & Sheila Applegate - 7
Special Education - Ross Addler –7

ELA/Civics - Julie Raitano & Jason Smith - 8
Algebra - Catherine Potter - 8
Math 8 - Brody Zangaro - 8
Reading - Kathy Galecki – 8
Physical Science - Megan Campedel- 8
Special Education - Katy Straley –8

Art - Kerri Villani
Band - Will Guess
Computers - Nicole Findon
Family & Consumer Science - Rachel Sebolt
Foreign Languages - Roxana Samaniego-Grider, *Spanish*
Melissa Reagle, *Latin*
Stacy Hart, *French*
Jia Li, *Chinese*

Music and Chorus - New Hire
Physical Education & Health - Mike Mancuso, Sherah Rothman
I.D. Lab - Rachel Sebolt/Bill White
Invention Lab - Bill White
GATE - Melissa DeSimone

Additional Staff

Director of Student Services - Dr. Matt Erickson
Psychologist - Dr. Sandra Swen
Director of Athletics - Andrea Patton
Nurse - Colleen Barcaskey
Librarian - Emily Hickman

~ PROGRAMS OF STUDY ~

Grade 7

- Full Year Courses: ELA /World Cultures, Life Science, Reading 7, Math Core, Band, Chorus,Activity Period
- 6-Week Courses: Art, Media 7, Computer Applications, Health, Music 7, Physical Education, I.D. Lab*, Family and Consumer Science
**12 week course*

Grade 8

- Full Year Courses: ELA/ Civics, Physical Science, Math 8 or Algebra, Reading 8, Band, Chorus, Activity Period
- Week Courses: Art, Physical Computing, Computers 8, Family and Consumer Science, Invention Lab, Music 8, Physical Education, Latin, Spanish, French & Mandarin Chinese
- Full Year Electives: Band & Chorus

~ COURSE DESCRIPTIONS ~

7th Grade Core Classes

ELA /World Cultures 7:

This is a fully integrated course which combines both ELA and World Cultures standards. Students study basic grammar and sentence structure, spelling, and paragraph development through the World Cultures content. Students are presented with real problems. These problems drive detailed projects that engage students in deeper learning. This course explores the Middle Ages to the present. It will provide students with an examination of an up-to-date study of cultures, capturing the spirit of each age, the significance of people's efforts and achievements, and the hope that history holds for the future. Students complete authentic assessments to enhance their understanding and knowledge and enrich their historical background.

Reading 7:

This course focuses on the literature and strategies that complement the ELA World Cultures curriculum. Through guided class texts and discussions, students will learn the close reading and questioning strategies that will become the foundation of their smaller literature circles. Students choose novels based on interest and reading level with the goal of leading their own deep, literary discussions. In addition to discussion and essay writing, students will also showcase their learning through PBLs and authentic tasks.

Math Core 7:

This course is dedicated to teaching the Common Core Math 7 Content. Students learn these high level math concepts through both traditional methods and problem-based instruction. Students are tasked with grappling with content and developing deeper understanding through the application of these skills. This curriculum is developed to strengthen basic math skills as well as prepare the students for Math 8 and /or Algebra.

Life Science 7:

This course focuses on the study of life. Life Science is taught through a variety of methods ranging from fully developed project-based projects to short lecture to lab activities. Areas of study include: cellular structures/functions, genetics, ecology, and simple and complex organisms. Students will use hands-on activities including laboratory investigations and computer/internet activities to facilitate learning. Students will be expected to use critical thinking and scientific methods to solve problems. Students will complete projects ranging from three dimensional models to web pages and oral presentations. Students will also complete a comparative study of animals using dissections.

8th Grade Core Classes

ELA / CIVICS 8:

This is a fully integrated course which combines both ELA and Civics standards. Students will study grammar, composition, literature, speaking skills, research, reasoning skills, spelling, and vocabulary development through the Civics content. Students will analyze and learn about what the government does for us. This analysis will include a study of how the government protects our individual liberties and provides us with many benefits in return for certain responsibilities. Students will become informed on how government works, how it affects our lives, and how we can make it better. Current events will be examined and intertwined into the curriculum throughout the year.

Physical Science 8:

This course will provide students with an understanding of basic physics and chemistry. Half of the year entails detailed physics, including topics of forces and motion, electricity and magnetism, and light and sound. The remainder of the year focuses on aspects of chemistry, such as the structure of matter, uses of materials, and interactions of matter. Science 8 is taught through a variety of methods ranging from fully developed project-based projects to short lecture to lab activities. Emphasis is placed on hands-on learning with students gaining personal experience in the subject matter. Students will also learn about the historical influence of scientific advancements. Physics and chemistry are wide-ranging disciplines that deal with many aspects of science and other non-scientific disciplines.

Math 8:

This course is dedicated to teaching the Common Core Math 8 content. Students learn these high level math concepts through both traditional methods and problem-based instruction. Students are tasked with grappling with content and developing deeper understanding through the application of these skills. This curriculum is developed to strengthen basic math skills as well as prepare the students for Algebra 1.

Algebra 1:

This course is dedicated to teaching Algebra 1 content. Students learn these high level math concepts through both traditional methods and problem-based instruction. Students will continue to apply, learn and master the language of math and its numerous applications to our daily lives. Students will take an end of year state "Keystone Exam" at the completion of this course.

Reading 8:

This course is intended to refine students' reading skills and prepare them for the challenging reading material that they will encounter in future studies. It is primarily taught through detailed project-based projects that ask students to answer real world problems and drive deeper learning. In addition, the course is intended to be a vehicle for motivating students to read more by exploring their own interests in reading. Through the reading of essays, articles, short stories, and teacher/student-selected novels, students will increase their interest in reading, enhance their critical thinking skills, and become analytical readers.

Specials Courses

ART

Art 7 & 8: These courses include experiences involving basic drawing techniques, introductory art forms, and all media. Upon completion of this course, students should have developed knowledge of basic drawing skills, including the representation of form and space using a variety of drawing tools. Students should also have begun to discover their own aptitudes and interests in art activities, thus encouraging the continuation of their art education.

BAND

Band 7 & 8: This course will provide students with an opportunity to improve technical skills on a selected band instrument and to perform music that will explore the concert and marching band repertory.

CHORUS

Chorus 7 & 8: This course offers students an opportunity to become an active participant in a performing choral group. Special care is given to the nurturing and development of the younger voice and the changing male voice. Work in this course prepares the student for the more demanding musical compositions performed at the high school level. Participation in both day and evening choral performances is mandatory.

COMPUTERS

Computer 7: Students in this course will gain experience in both computer science and programming. The primary resources used are Code.org and Codecombat. Students will also have the opportunity to create hands-on projects to apply the skills they learn.

S.T.E.A.M./Media 7: This course focuses on the engineering design process, design thinking, and media creation. Students will be using the engineering design process to work through real world challenges. We will focus on community issues for our design projects, and utilize media platforms to present our products and ideas.

Communication Technologies 8: This course introduces students to building and delivering a broadcast package. Students build on the skills they learned in Media 7 to be able to tell digital stories through various means of broadcasting.

Physical Computing 8: Physical Computing is an approach to computer-human interaction design that starts by considering how humans express themselves physically. Physical computing takes a hands-on approach, which means that students will spend time writing programs in order to code tangible objects, such as robots and drones. Students will utilize Tynker programming with both block based and Python coding languages.

FAMILY CONSUMER SCIENCE

The objectives of this course are: to become familiar with the Food Pyramid and prepare foods from each group; to identify and know how to use large and small kitchen equipment; to learn basic sewing skills – buttons, hooks, eyes, snaps, and hemming stitches; to prepare a sewing booklet; and to focus on the positive part of personality development.

FRENCH

French Foundations 8: This course will introduce students to the French language and culture, thereby giving them the information necessary to choose which foreign language or languages they wish to study in the future.

HEALTH

Health 7: The focus of 7th Grade Health revolves around guiding students to make responsible decisions from high-risk behaviors, specifically sexual activity, drugs, and alcohol. Students will learn the importance of healthy relationships, the benefits of abstinence, and discover the differences between active versus passive decision making. Students will also learn about taking responsibility for their actions and understand the risks and consequences of those actions. Students will work on sharpening their communication skills and practice refusal skills to prepare themselves for their bright future.

LATIN

Latin Foundations 8: This course will introduce students to the Latin language and culture, thereby giving them the information necessary to choose which foreign language or languages they wish to study in the future.

MANDARIN CHINESE

Mandarin Chinese Foundations 8: This course introduces students to the basics of the Mandarin Chinese language and culture thereby giving them the information necessary to choose which foreign language or languages they wish to study in the future.

MUSIC 7

This course will provide students with the general connection of music and the real world. While students will learn the musical fundamentals of theory (rhythm, melody, harmony, solfege, etc), they will also participate in a host of activities engaging them in music as they know. This will include artist presentations, creating band projects, and the task of answering the essential question: How is music a part of our everyday life?

MUSIC 8

This course will be a continuation of connecting music to the real world. In this class, students will begin composing their own songs, based on the musical elements learned in 7th grade. Additionally, students will work in *GarageBand*, where they will practice creating music beats, and they will learn musical form and how to create lyrics to a hit song. Students will review vernacular music (songs they hear and sing from the radio), jazz, classical, and pop music, and will borrow concepts to create their own.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION 7

Students interpret how rules affect and govern team, dual, and individual sports. They will analyze the benefits of lifetime activities and fitness. Cooperation and responsibility are illustrated within teams in competitive and recreational activities. Proper use and care of equipment are taught and practiced, as well as safety, rules and procedures.

HEALTH 7

The focus of 7th Grade Health revolves around guiding students to make responsible decisions from high-risk behaviors, specifically sexual activity, drugs, and alcohol. Students will learn the importance of healthy relationships, the benefits of abstinence, and discover the differences between active versus passive decision making. Students will also learn about taking responsibility for their actions and understand the risks and consequences of those actions. Students will work on sharpening their communication skills and practice refusal skills to prepare themselves for their bright future.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION 8

Basics and tactics of team, dual, and individual sports are taught and practiced. Students assess the benefits of lifetime involvement in physical fitness activities. Proper use and care of equipment is emphasized.

SPANISH

Spanish Foundations 8: This course will introduce students to the Spanish language and culture, thereby giving them the information necessary to choose which foreign language or languages they wish to study in the future.

TECHNOLOGY EDUCATION 7

This course will introduce students to all aspects of technology education. Students learn the safety in the wood shop and how to use a variety of technologies including 3D printing. Students will work independently as well as in small groups on various problem-based activities.

INNOVATION & DESIGN LAB 7(ID LAB)

Students will define creative challenges, using the design process: identify opportunities, design, prototype, get feedback, scale and spread, and present. Students will identify sources of information, generate and select ideas, present work to users and a target audience, to show their originality, value, and style. Students will achieve standards in design, engineering, and 21st-century skills.

TECH ED 8

Students will work either independently or in teams to identify a real problem and work through the design process to design and manufacture a solution to the problem. This course allows for automated manufacturing in the scope of 3D printing or laser engraving/cutting as well as traditional manufacturing.

~ CLUBS ~

The list below is not intended to be a complete list of middle school clubs. New clubs are formed each year as student interests dictate. The clubs listed below are the ones that seem to maintain membership from year to year. For information about new clubs, please check the district website or contact the middle school office.

Art Club

The Art Club exists to help students enhance their art skills and develop an appreciation of the arts. Club activities include individual and group projects such as school enhancement projects, as assigned by the art teacher. Membership is open to all middle school students.

Environmental Club

The Environmental Club works to address the environment both locally and globally. The club investigates many environmental issues such as wet weather, sustainable energy, and activities to be done at our school.

Literary Magazine

The Literary Magazine will work with the Yearbook Advisor and exists to enhance the writing abilities of students. Membership is open to all middle school students.

Student Ambassador

The Student Ambassador club was founded with the goal of giving students the opportunity to make a difference in the world while exposing them to activities of international significance. Students also attend a field as part of the World Affairs Project. Students create a project on a specific topic and then go to the World Affairs Council of Pittsburgh.

Student Council

Student Council provides an opportunity for middle school students to become involved in leadership activities to improve the school and community. Club activities include a variety of service projects for the school and community, including Children's Hospital Auction in December; and sponsorship of several assemblies, dances, and activities to promote school spirit and student involvement. Membership is open to students with a 2.0 grade point average and good discipline and attendance records.

TSA

The Technology Student Association (TSA) is an organization which promotes the use of technology, science, math, design, engineering, and public speaking outside of the classroom. Students create projects based on specific activities in order to compete against students from other schools on regional, state, and national levels. Some of these projects include: structural challenge (where students must build bridges), graphic design, video game design, RC car, Dragster Design, Prepared Speech, Extemporaneous Speech, and Environmental Challenge. TSA also provides students with an activity to help them transition into high school, since TSA is available at both middle and high school levels. Often, currently high school students mentor middle school students with their projects, creating a collaborative working environment.

~ ACADEMIC INFORMATION ~

Academic Calendar Summary

The school calendar is divided into two semesters. In each semester, there will be two nine-week grading periods. Report cards will be issued to the student at the end of each nine-week grading period. Progress reports will be mailed to parents/guardians at the middle of each nine-week grading period.

Honor Roll

High honor roll and honor roll for the Avonworth District are based on an accumulated quality point average according to the following scale:

- High Honor Roll is a Quality Point Average of 3.50 or higher.
- Honor Roll is a Quality Point Average of 3.00 - 3.49.

Testing Information

- Pennsylvania State System Assessments (PSSA) in reading and mathematics are administered in the spring for sixth, seventh, and eighth graders.
- Pennsylvania State System Assessments (PSSA) in writing is administered in the fall for eighth graders.

Grading Scale

A: 90 - 100%

B: 80 - 89%

C: 70- 79%

D: 60- 69%

F: 59 - 0%

~ ACTIVITY INFORMATION ~

Students must meet attendance, citizenship, and academic eligibility requirements to participate in extracurricular programs. Please refer to the Student Handbook and Discipline Code for specifics.

Athletics

Note: Avonworth Middle School students participate in a Northgate School District sponsored athletic program: swimming. Please see the Athletic Director for details.

Athletic Physicals

WPIAL rules state that a physical must be done no sooner than six weeks before the start of each sport season. This means that if your child plays a sport, he/she will need a physical. If your child plays more than one sport, a recertification form must be completed. Sports physicals are performed at AGH Suburban Campus at a cost of \$10 per physical. They are done in June for the fall season, October for the winter season and February for the spring season.

Your private physician may also do a physical exam. The form is the same, and the rest of the packet still needs to be completed and returned to the Athletic Director or middle school office. Your child can pick up information packets in the middle school office during the two-week sign up period before the day of the sports physical, or you can download them off the website at your convenience.

~ POINTS OF INTEREST~

Grade Level Teaching Teams:

Teachers in each grade level work closely together as a team. Common planning/meeting time is arranged so that teachers are able to plan integrated units, discuss instructional strategies, communicate with parents, and work on meeting the needs of all students in their specific grade level.

Student Assignment Books:

All students are given a student assignment book at the beginning of each school year. A great organization tool, the book is used to help parents and students keep track of all assignments. Also used as the students' hall pass, its presence is a daily requirement in all middle school classes.

Ambassadors:

Available to all students who transfer to Avonworth Middle School anytime during the school year, Ambassadors are student volunteers who work with the principal and school counselor to help new students make a successful, less-stressful transition into AMS. New students will be given an opportunity to ask questions, tour the school, and receive an orientation to the policies, procedures, and activities offered at Avonworth.

Middle School Socials:

Roughly four times a year, the Middle School Parent Network sponsors socials for all Avonworth Middle School students. Students have the option of dancing to popular music with a DJ, participating in basketball and/or volleyball in the middle school gym, or having a snack and playing a few quiet games with friends in the middle school cafeteria. The socials are chaperoned by parents, teacher volunteers, and the principal. Notices about upcoming socials are announced on the daily announcements and on the district website. All chaperones must have valid Act 33/34 and 151 clearances. Clearance forms are available in the middle school office.

~ PARENT NETWORK ~

The Avonworth Middle School Parent Network was developed to support the educational process for our children. We do this by promoting the welfare of children and youth in home, school, and community; bringing into closer relation the home and the school so that parents and teachers may cooperate intelligently in the education of children and youth; developing, between educators and the general public, united efforts that will secure for all children and youth the highest advantages in physical, mental, and social education; educating parents on issues of concern to students and educators; providing resources for the staff to enhance the tools they have available; and promoting positive social activities for students in a safe environment.

The Parent Network is an independent, volunteer group that is dedicated to supporting the students, teachers, parents and administration of Avonworth Middle School.

Sponsor fun activities for students, including in-house socials, skating party, pool party, and pancake breakfasts.

Provide fundraising opportunities for senior year events – Did you know that each senior class pays their own expenses for their graduating class events, such as senior prom, Cedar Point trip, homecoming dance, and senior picnic? Each graduating class begins to build their account starting in 7th grade by participating in fundraising projects.

Support teachers – The teaching team for each grade has a liaison in the Parent Network who provides assistance for events and resources as needed. Parent Network sets aside \$300 per year per grade for supplemental resources requested by teachers. Parent Network ends the school year with a Teacher Appreciation Day to thank teachers for their hard work and dedication.

Support the Middle School administration – Staff the Scholastic Book Fairs and assist with the Eighth Grade Commencement.

Facilitate communications between parents and school – Meetings are held to give the opportunity to discuss topics with the principal and other parents. Communication is made via the middle school newsletter each month with important information concerning upcoming events.

DIRECTORY INFORMATION

**Avonworth Primary Center (412) 366-7171
1310 Roosevelt Road, Pittsburgh, PA 15237**

**Avonworth Elementary School (412)366-7170
1320 Roosevelt Road, Pittsburgh, PA 15237**

**Avonworth Middle School (412)366-9650
256 Josephs Lane, Pittsburgh, PA 15237**

**Avonworth High School (412)366-6360
304 Josephs Lane, Pittsburgh, PA 15237**

Avonworth Board of School Directors

Beau Blaser, President
Vicki Carlson, Vice President
Danielle White, Treasurer
Yu-Ling Cheng-Behr, Board Member
John Brandt, Board Member
Kristin Thompson, Board Member
Kathryn Monti, Board Member
Patrick Stewart, Board Member
Sandra Bolain, Board Member

Avonworth School District Administration

Dr. Thomas Ralston-----Superintendent
Dr. Jeffrey Hadley-----Assistant Superintendent
Bradley Waters -----Director of Fiscal Management and Support Services
Dr. Matt Erickson -----Director of Student Services
Brandon Gary-----Director of Technology and Information Systems
Brant Colomarino -----Interim Supervisor of Buildings and Grounds
Andrea Patton -----Director of Athletics
Keera Dwulit -----High School Principal
Michael Hall-----Middle School Principal
Kaitlin Remensky-----Assistant Middle/High School Principal
Dr. William Battistone-----Elementary School Principal
Dr. Scott Miller -----Primary Center Principal
Pharlan Ives-----Assistant Primary/Elementary Principal

The Avonworth School District will not discriminate in its education programs, activities or employment practices, based on race, color, national origin, gender, religion, ancestry, disability, union membership, or any other legally protected classification. Announcement of this policy is in accordance with state and federal laws, including Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, and Sections 503 and 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Employees and participants who have an inquiry, complaint of harassment or discrimination, or who need information about accommodations for disabled persons, should contact:

Dr. Matt Erickson, Director of Student Services
1310 Roosevelt Road, Pittsburgh, PA 15237 (412) 366-7171 X1901