



Saint Paul
PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Independent School District 625

360 Colborne Street
Saint Paul, MN 55102-3299

Murray Middle School

2200 Buford Avenue
Saint Paul, MN 55108

Phone: (651) 293-8740 | Fax: (651) 293-8742 | <https://www.spps.org/murray>

Good afternoon Murray families,

We are so very excited to welcome you to a new school year and are hopeful that you can connect with us during our opening community events! Our staff have now fully returned and are hard at work preparing for our young Pilots to walk through Murray's doors on Tuesday, September 6th for the first day of school.

Reminder about school start and end times -

Please remember that our school day times have changed from last year. Our school day is now **8:30AM - 3:00PM**.

Reminder about upcoming community events -

Camp 6 - For incoming 6th grade families

- Thursday September 1
- 9:00AM-11:00AM
- **Hard start time at 9:00AM**
- **Important Note - 6th grade families, please go online to Schoology and review with your student the name of their foundations teacher. This will be the staff member they will be working with for our event. This teacher will have a name sign in the gym. We will also have student names and their teacher information posted near the gym.**
- Students will be engaged in activities with student leaders and staff
- Adults will be with administration for an auditorium presentation and then able to access resources and tours around the building

Open House for 7th and 8th grade families (New Murray families are highly encouraged to attend)

- Thursday September 1
- 1:00PM-3:00PM
- Open window of time for families to show up when they can
- Families will have access to teachers, school resources and tours



Important Murray Policies to review with your student -

Cell Phones/Electronics Policy - Murray Middle School is putting into place a revised cell phone, headphone/earbud, and personal electronic policy for this year. Cell phones, personal electronics, and headphone/earbuds must be put away during the school day with the exception of lunch. Below is the complete policy that we will be sharing with students during the first week of school.

Cell Phones and personal electronics are not to be used from 8:30-3:00 pm with the exception of lunch. Here are our expectations:

1. Personal phones and electronics are not allowed to be used at Murray Middle School **except during lunch.**
2. Devices are to remain at home, locked in lockers, or secured and put away. This means they can't be out in classrooms, hallways or bathrooms. This would include not having them on your desk or hanging out of your pocket. If students choose to carry their phones, it must be completely off--not even on vibrate from 8:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. **except for lunch time.**
3. Here is the process if a student has their phone out in a classroom: the first occurrence their name will be placed on the front board. If they are asked a second time, their phone will be turned into the office until the end of the day. Their name will then be put on a list, and if it happens again, the student's parent or guardian will have to pick up the phone from school.
4. This process also extends to AirPods and earphones. These need to be out of student ears except for lunch.

Q: Why don't we allow cellphones in class/bathrooms/halls during the school day?

1. **We prioritize real human interaction.** We believe that learning the skills of in-person communication and collaboration are much more important. This generation has grown up with computers and cell phones. Students are already good at using electronics -- they do not need social media practice or gaming practice at school. One of the most important skills our students will learn at Murray Middle School is how to get along and work well, face-to-face, with a variety of people.
2. **Electronics are disruptive.** Cell phones ringing and buzzing disrupt both the student and the class. We want students focused on the lesson, not who's calling or texting them.



3. **They cause drama.** Students tend to say things online that they would never say out loud. We don't need extra drama at school.
4. **They get stolen.** Unfortunately, as wonderful as our Murray Middle School students are, phones are stolen. They are attractive items. Leaving them in a locked locker is best if they can't stay at home. While we try to help students problem solve, the school is not responsible for lost or stolen items.
5. **They are addicting.** This generation of students is struggling to learn to think and stay busy with just their own thoughts. Managing boredom without tools or toys is an important life skill that we have little opportunity to practice when the phone is always present. We want our students to be fully present and experience all that school has to offer.
6. **Students don't need them.** Every student at Murray Middle School is given an iPad for academic use.

We are asking you to not only review these expectations but also help out by not texting or contacting your student during the school day. Ideally, all necessary communication should occur before and after school. In the event of an emergency, please call the main office, and we will get a message to your student as soon as possible. If a student needs to contact a parent, they can ask for a pass to use the phone in the office.

Attendance Policy/Expectations -

1. Families and guardians contact Murray front office to report an absence
2. Examples of excused absences would be illness, bereavement and doctor's appointments.
3. SPPS attendance is supported by the TIP program. (Truancy Intervention Program).
When unexcused absences accumulate, the following steps are put into action -
 - a. Automated phone calls home for absences (This can happen daily)
 - b. Letters home
 - c. Family meeting with TIP team
 - d. County involvement
4. Tardies, when accumulated, can lead to unexcused absences

During the first week of school, we understand that many students will be working to navigate the building and get their system down for following their class schedule. We will have student leaders, staff and systems in place to support students during this adjustment period. Students WILL NOT be counted tardy during this time. However, the expectations will be that



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all students are using our resources to get to class in a responsible manner and are working to navigate their schedule within the four minute passing time that is allotted between classes. During the second week of school, our passing time and attendance expectations will be fully implemented. Students will be expected to navigate the building and get to class on time within the four minute passing time. We fully understand that some students (especially 6th grade students) may still have a hard time navigating the building. Please help coach your student to advocate for themselves and let a trusted staff member know that they are still needing support. We will absolutely wrap around that student and get them navigating our building in no time.

As the expectations are fully put in place, any students that continue to show us that they need support will receive phone calls home and eventually an individual attendance plan in partnership with the family.

School year 22/23 is going to be great and I want families to know that we as a staff are honored to be serving in such a supportive environment. I hope to see you on Thursday! Please feel free to reach out to Murray if you have any questions at 651-293-8740.

Your Co-Pilot,

Jamin McKenzie
Principal, Murray Middle School