

Unofficial Guide to the First Year at Tilden

It's a big step for us parents between elementary and middle school. During middle school, our kids will be taking a lot more personal responsibility for their education, recreation, and social lives. At the same time, many of our kids become a lot less communicative. Sometimes it may feel like we have no idea what is going on at school. This guide is put together by the Tilden PTSA and is meant to help answer a few of the many questions you're likely to have....

How do I find out what's happening at school?

- ❖ Tilden Website: www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/schools/tildenms
 - Read each day's morning announcements
 - See the School and PTSA calendars
 - Link to Teachers' email addresses
 - Link to MCPS Parent Portal
 - Get Bell Schedules, Bus Schedules and much more

- ❖ **Join the E-Mail List:** <http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/schools/tildenms/ptsa/emailgroup.aspx>
 - Get up-to-the-minute information from the school and the PTSA
 - Get the monthly PTSA Newsletter, which contains important dates, articles by the Principal and the PTSA president, department updates from staff, and other important information. To save trees, the newsletter is only distributed to the e-mail listserv and is linked from the school website above to the PTSA page.

- ❖ Handouts given to your student at school
 - This is how important notices from school will be sent home about school pictures, ordering yearbooks, permission slips.
 - Tip: ask your child once a week if they have any handouts in his/her binder. They often "forget" to actually take the handouts out of the backpack and give them to you.

How can I check homework and test schedules?

- ❖ **MCPS Parent Portal:**

Parents/Guardians have access to their child's grades through the Parent Portal once they have created their accounts. To create an account, you will need the Access ID and Access Password sent in a letter to the student's primary address. If you did not receive a letter, contact the main office at your child's school. Go to www.portal.mcpsmd.org and follow the prompts after you click Create Account. Once in the Parent Portal, you can access your child's grades, report card data, attendance, schedule, MAP reports, and Student Service Learning hours.

- ❖ **Assignment Book:**
 - Each student receives an assignment book at the beginning of the school year. Ask your child to see his/her assignment book.
 - Encourage your child to develop good organizational skills by writing down his/her assignments and important deadlines in their assignment books.
 - School policies are listed in the assignment books. Please review these policies with your child.

What do I do if my child is sick, late, or needs to leave school early?

- ❖ Sick: Call the school (301-230-5930) on the day(s) your child is absent. Send a note with your child's name, the date(s) and reason for his/her absence, and your signature when they return to school. Your child should bring the note to the main office and handed to our Attendance Secretary.
 - Note: if you would like to get school work for your child while they are out sick, on the third day of absence contact the Counseling Office and they will coordinate with your child's teachers.
- ❖ Late: Give your child a signed note saying why they are late, and tell them to bring it to the main office so they can sign into school. The office will give them a pass to class.
- ❖ Early Departure: Give your child a signed note with the time they need to be dismissed and tell them to bring it to the main office before school. This is their pass to get out of class. When picking up your child, go to the main office to sign them out.

How can I find out how my child is doing?

- ❖ Check his/her binder: some teachers require the students to keep records of their progress.
- ❖ Check Edline (see above)
- ❖ Email the teacher
- ❖ Interims: You will receive an interim report of your child's grades by regular mail, half way through each marking period.
- ❖ Report cards: These are sent home with the students at the end of the first three grading periods and mailed home at the end of the year. Dates that report cards are sent home can be found on the Montgomery County Public School (MCPS) calendar, which is linked from the school website (see above).

What time does school start and end?

- ❖ The school day begins at 8:15 am and ends at 3:00 pm. Students should not arrive at school prior to 7:55 am. Upon arrival, students are expected to go to the gym (6th and 7th grades) or the cafeteria (8th grade).

How small are the hall lockers?

- ❖ The inside of hall lockers are 9 inches wide, and 10 inches deep. The lockers are 69 inches tall, with one 9 inch shelf at the top. Three inch binders will not fit in lockers; neither will backpacks with wheels.

Do I need to buy a lock?

- ❖ No, all lockers at school (hall and PE) come with locks whose combinations are changed each year by Tilden staff.

Tilden is a big place. How do 6th graders find all their classes?

- ❖ Most 6th grade classes are held in the D wing, so the 6th graders don't need to know the layout of the entire school to find their classes. A little confusion is perfectly normal the first week or two of school, so tell your 6th grader not to worry. Sixth graders generally are not considered tardy if they get lost finding their next class during the first couple days of school.

What if I have a question about my child's bus?

- ❖ MCPS Bus Depot at 301-469-1070

How do I pay for my child to eat in the cafeteria?

- ❖ Sign up for MySchoolBucks.com and pay on-line by credit card
- ❖ Send in a check or cash to the cafeteria with your child's lunch account PIN
- ❖ Students may pay with cash in the cafeteria

How do I find out about school closings or delays?

- ❖ TV and Radio: Local Stations: Tune in to local TV and radio stations for information.
- ❖ MCPS Web: Home page <http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org>
- ❖ QuickNotes - Weather-related messages are sent in 6 languages (English, Chinese, French, Korean, Spanish, and Vietnamese)
<http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/info/quicknotes/welcome/english/>
- ❖ Text and Email: Alert MCPS
<http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/info/emergency/sources/alertmcps>
- ❖ Text and Web: Twitter <http://twitter.com/mcps>
- ❖ TV: MCPS Cable Channels

Emergency announcements are posted on the following cable channels:

- Comcast Channel 34
- Verizon Fios Channel 36
- RCN Channel 89
- ❖ Telephone Information Line: 301-279-3673
- ❖ Telephone: Ask MCPS: 301-309-6277. **Staff takes calls from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m., Mondays through Fridays, in English and Spanish.**

What about Community Service?

- ❖ Every child entering 6th grade in MCPS must complete at least 75 hours of community service in order to graduate. Thirty of these hours are earned in middle school through in school activities. For more information on SSL, contact the PTSA's SSL coordinator or check out the Tilden, MCPS or Walter Johnson High School websites.
- ❖ Most information can be found linked from this page on the Tilden website:
<https://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/ssl/>

What opportunities exist to earn Community Service hours?

- ❖ Some community service hours may be earned during extracurricular activities, such as participating on the Student Government or participating in certain after-school activities, etc.
- ❖ Some organizations contact Tilden to find volunteers and pre-approved opportunities are announced during morning announcements or posted on the Student Service Learning bulletin board outside the counseling office.
- ❖ There are lots of opportunities listed on the MCPS Student Service Learning web page.
- ❖ Your child may come up with his/her own idea of a way to serve the community. If it gets pre-approved by the school, they can earn hours doing that activity.

How does my child get credit for the community service they perform?

- ❖ If the activity is preapproved, have your child fill out the required form (see web link above) and turn it in to the SSL coordinator.
- ❖ If the activity requires pre-approval, have your child fill out the pre-approval form before engaging in the activity.

- ❖ Don't procrastinate in turning in the forms. There are strict deadlines for turning in forms each marking period, and failure to turn your form in on time results in not getting credit for the time served.

What is MAP?

- ❖ MAP (Morning Academic Period) is a chance for students to follow up with teachers regarding questions, quiz re-takes or other matters. MAP takes place at the same time (9:58-10:21 am) every day but is held with a different teacher from your child's schedule each day on a rotating basis.

What about Special Education at Tilden?

- ❖ Tilden Middle School offers the following programs:

[Resource](#)

This program is for students with an IEP who typically receive one period of a resource class per day and up to two other special education supported academic classes.

[Learning and Academic Disabilities \(LAD\)](#)

This program is for students with an IEP who typically receive four or more special education supported or self-contained academic classes.

[Aspergers](#)

This program, for students with an autism spectrum disorder, serves students with Asperger's syndrome. The focus is to teach appropriate pragmatic, social, organizational and problem-solving skills that will allow students to participate more independently in the general education program. These students have some of their classes in a small classroom setting and others in the general education program.

[Learning for Independence \(LFI\)](#)

The Learning for Independence Program (LFI) provides a functional life skills curriculum with an emphasis on academics. This program serves students who have severe learning needs. The students receive small class instruction for academics with community reinforcement of skills learned. Students are often integrated into the general education program for their physical education and arts classes.

Contact Kathy Naimon, Special Education Coordinator, at 301-230-5996, or Katherine_L_Naimon@mcpsmd.org, with any questions regarding Tilden's Special Education Program.

What about clubs and sports?

- ❖ Clubs and intramural sports begin a few weeks into the school year. The principal holds an assembly that describes the various activities for the students that are available early in the fall. Sixth graders may participate in any club or intramural sport.
- ❖ For school sports teams, or interscholastic sports which field teams and play other schools, only 7th and 8th graders may participate.
- ❖ To participate in extracurricular activities, students must have at least a C average and no more than one E on their report card for the previous grading period, and they must pay the MCPS activity fee. Bills for this fee are sent home over the summer. Additional copies can be obtained in the office or online on the MCPS website.

- ❖ Some after-school activities, offered by other providers, may require an additional fee.
- ❖ Clubs, intramural sports and interscholastic sports generally take place on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays after school. On those days, there are two activity buses to take children home from school at 4:20 pm. These buses follow special routes and may not have a stop at your child's usual bus stop. Check the Tilden website for the routes of the activity buses.

What if I have other questions?

- ❖ Each student receives a Student Agenda Book at the beginning of the school year. Many questions may be answered there.
- ❖ Look In the Tilden PTSA Directory for important phone numbers.
- ❖ Check out the Tilden website.
- ❖ Come to a PTSA meeting (generally the second Tuesday of the month, 7:00 pm, Media Center)
- ❖ Contact your child's guidance counselor.
- ❖ Ask someone in the main office.