

2016-2017 Saint Brigid Catholic Middle School Handbook (6 – 8 grades)

Welcome to middle school! These are transitional years for students. Together, we will build upon the foundation laid during the elementary school years while moving ahead into exciting new challenges, greater responsibility, and deeper faith experiences.

This handbook is a supplement to the *Saint Brigid Catholic School Handbook* and is designed to provide a ready resource to answer questions you may have throughout the school year. So, read it carefully, keep it handy, and...

...let the middle school adventure begin!!



Saint Brigid Catholic School
130 W. Larkin, Midland, MI 48640
Principal: Mr. Lon Medd
Phone: 835-9481
school.stbrigid-midland.org

SIXTH GRADE CORE CURRICULUM

Western Hemisphere – In this course, students will learn to read maps and identify the 5 themes of geography. They will also learn the history, culture, geography and political divisions of Canada, Mexico, and Latin America.

Science – Students will explore units in the following areas: matter, energy, Earth processes, and environmental science.

Writing – Utilizing the book *The Write Source*, students will learn the six traits of writing and apply them to the key forms of writing: descriptive, narrative, expository, argument, response to literature, creative, and research writing. A variety of activities for building mechanics (including spelling), usage, and grammar skills are integrated in every unit. Writing is incorporated across the curriculum.

Literature – Reading instruction at the 6th grade level is literature-based. Units will be structured around a variety of novels. Individual work, literature discussion groups and large group activities will all be integrated in the study of each novel. Related nonfiction reading will accompany the reading of fiction novels whenever possible.

In addition to the assigned reading, students will be expected to do independent reading at school and at home. Reading Log, where students record information about their independent reading, will be graded on a weekly basis. This will be averaged into the literature grade.

Math – The Big Ideas Math series is used in the middle school math classes. Units include number sense and operations, statistics and graphing, fraction concepts and operations, algebra, geometry, and measurement. Advanced math classes will be provided as deemed necessary.

Religion – The major theme throughout the 6th grade Religion curriculum is God's relationship with his people throughout history. The units include: Forming the Covenant, Building the Covenant Nation, Redefining the Covenant People, and The Fulfillment of the Covenant.

- In addition to the above core courses, all students will have classes in Physical Education, Art, and Spanish.
- Each student will also choose between Band and Computer Technology.



SEVENTH GRADE CORE CURRICULUM

Eastern Hemisphere – In this course, students will learn the history, culture, and geography of Europe, Asia, Africa and Australia. Text instruction will be supplemented with various medias, such as documentaries and current event articles. Technology implementation and peer cooperation are essential.

Science – Students will explore units in the following areas: cells, waves, matter, and weather.

Language Arts – Writing and Literature are highly integrated at this level. Utilizing a variety of literature and primary source reading, students will be involved in both group and independent activities that are designed to deepen appreciation and understanding of literature in its many forms. In addition to the assigned reading, students will be expected to do independent reading at school and at home. Reading Log, where students record information about their independent reading, will be graded on a weekly basis. This will be averaged into the literature grade. Utilizing the seventh grade level of *The Write Source* series, students will continue improving their understanding and application of the six traits of writing and apply them to the key forms of writing: descriptive, narrative, expository, argument response to literature, creative, and research writing. In addition, speaking and writing to learn are emphasized, and a variety of activities for improving mechanics, usage, and grammar skills are integrated in every unit.

Math – The Big Ideas Math series is continued in the seventh grade. Students will study algebraic reasoning, integers, fractions, patterns and functions, proportions, percents, data manipulation, geometry, probability, and solving equations. An Advanced Math course is provided as deemed necessary.

Religion – The major themes throughout the 7th grade Religion curriculum are review of the sacraments and church history.

Family Life is an important part of the 7th grade Religion program. It reinforces the importance and sacredness of the family. The material is organized in themes of God's gifts of family, self, life, love, and community.

EIGHTH GRADE CORE CURRICULUM

American History – In this course, students will learn the history of our nation from colonial empowerment to 1920. Various projects and multimedia resources will be used throughout the school year.

Science – Students will explore units in the following areas: Forces and Motion, Electricity and Magnetism, Astronomy, and Cells and Heredity.

Language Arts – At the eighth grade level, students will study classic as well as contemporary works of literature and poetry. In addition to novels, plays, essays, and poetry, the short story will be taught as a writing form. Students will continue to hone their writing skills, applying the six traits of writing in a variety of writing forms. In addition to the assigned reading, students will be expected to do independent reading at school and at home. Reading Log, where students record information about their independent reading, will be graded on a weekly basis. This will be averaged into the literature grade.

Math - Students will solve simple and complex equations and inequalities, work with integers, analyze data, explore geometry, apply percents, experiment with probability, graph linear and non-linear equations, and manipulate polynomials. High School Algebra is offered to accelerated students.

Religion – The major themes throughout the 8^h grade Religion curriculum are Morality, the New Testament and the Creed. Emphasis will be placed on reflection and personalization of faith. Every morning starts with prayer and the day ends with prayer. Students will recite bible verses of the New Testament and journal on passage meanings throughout the year. Study of the catechesis also supplements instruction. Students also provide service to the school through extra responsibilities.

FAITH FORMATION

(In addition to the Religion Curriculum)

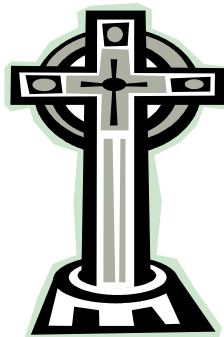
Of all the growth and learning that students will experience this year, none will be as important as the development of faith, heart, and spirit.

Liturgies – Students will take part in liturgical experiences every week. Generally, these will take place on Friday mornings. The students will continue with the ministries that they have been involved in throughout elementary school.

Circle of Prayer – At the middle school level, circle of prayer will provide another opportunity for the students to take leadership roles in the design and preparation of their own group prayer service. These will take place on Monday mornings.

Outreach – Middle school youth will have many opportunities to reach out in Christian service throughout the year.

- All students have the opportunity to be a part of the Middle School Leadership Team, which has a focus on providing service and spirit activities throughout the year.
- Middle school students are expected to be Christian role models and mentors for the elementary students of Saint Brigid School.



Choice of Electives

- **Art**

We will study different genres/artists and try our hands at each. We can explore our world through photography, looking for the hidden miracles around us. We may also write and illustrate a children's storybook. In that God is the creator, and we all have God within us, we will tap into our inherent creativity.

- **Life Skills**

The purpose of Life Skills is to prepare students for independent living. Students will explore character development concepts such as etiquette and conflict resolution through student dramatizations. They will also learn and practice practical housekeeping skills, like cooking, cleaning, and sewing. Students will participate in a survival skills course at the Chippewa Nature Center. Students will investigate different career paths, and appropriate goal setting. Resume writing, interview skills, work ethic and professional dress will be practiced. Additionally, a variety of guest speakers will be invited and interviewed. Students will also learn about basic economics, develop a personal budget and track expenses.

- **Band 6th through 8th grade**

Judyth Peterson, our band instructor, is a well-respected teacher in the Midland area. She has been the percussion instructor at Midland High School since 1983. She also has been managing director of the Midland Symphony Orchestra at Midland Center for the Arts. Ms. Peterson is the founder of the 7th and 8th grade Shamrock Band. Ms. Peterson works with the 5th grade band instructor to bring about joint concerts. These are well rehearsed and very entertaining performances. Ms. Peterson is the author of the Saint Brigid Victory song.

- **Spanish I or II**

These courses are provided for students to continue learning Spanish for our diverse world. The purpose of these courses is to understand, speak, read, and write in Spanish. This is a high school level course which fulfills the world language requirement for graduation; therefore, students should expect the rigor of this class to be challenging yet fun. There is an emphasis on culture throughout the year.

- **Healthy Habits**
(may select first OR second semester)

This course is designed with middle school youth in mind! We discuss creating positive habits in everyday decision making processes typical to middle school students. We discuss how to be proactive, creating goals both short term and

long term, healthy relationships, how to have a win-win outlook in all activities, the process of understanding and being understood, positive communication characteristics, working together and practicing life balance for physical, spiritual, and emotional well-being as well as organization for daily tasks or responsibilities. This course teaches students how to recognize their personal strengths and weaknesses so they can continually grow as responsible young Christian adults.

- **Public speaking**

In our public speaking class you will speak about yourself, your ideals, your faith, current events, and other topics. We study a mass media unit in which you will explore and create advertising. We structure a unit around the seven principles of Catholic social teaching. We also discern our spirituality by crafting a retreat for the class. We welcome guest speakers who help us realize the power of the spoken word.

Public speaking is a required course for students to take during their 7th or 8th grade year at Saint Brigid School.

- **Creative Writing**

What's going on? Why is it happening? How do you feel about it? We will explore the daily happenings in our world through the lens of faith. We will create a film and news show. Do you know the difference between fact and opinion? You will.

- **Drama**

Drama class gives you the opportunity to write and perform your own plays, study well-known works, and perform for other schools and grades, such as the puppet show we perform for our elementary students. We write and perform a play for the SPRED group at Blessed Sacrament each year. During Catholic Schools Week we host and emcee the Saint Brigid talent show. We write and film a silent movie. Improv skills are developed by creating skits performed for the class. The world, indeed, is our stage.

- **Physical Education**

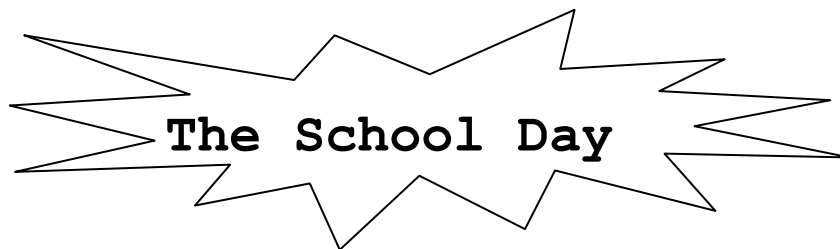
This class will provide students with the knowledge, skills, fitness and attitudes needed to lead a healthy lifestyle. Students will have the opportunity to demonstrate competence in selected motor skills, apply cognitive concepts in making wise lifestyle choices, and exhibit appropriate personal/social character traits while participating in physical activity. This course will engage students in curriculum choices that prepare them for a wide variety of lifetime choices. All students from all skill levels and abilities will be included in activities to build students' confidence and competence in physical abilities. Students will be kept involved in purposeful activity for a majority of the class period.

- **Technology**

Technology class is available to 6th, 7th, and 8th grade students. Classes are geared to advance the technological skills of individual students. Students will have the opportunity to explore various topics including digital still and video photography, digital editing, computer coding and programming, computer parts and structures, video game creation, computer-aided design, computer animation and business applications such as presentation software and desktop publishing. Through this course students gain an appreciation for the basics upon which technology is based. Project-based and often creative activities build a foundation to prepare students to be more effective communicators in our 21st century world.

- **Math Lab**

Math Lab is an elective for those students needing to spend more time working on math topics. It is designed to address skill gaps students may have, and the curriculum complements the core mathematics classes. Specific topics covered will depend on the needs of the students. In addition to intervention, advanced students may sign up for math lab as an opportunity to have more one-on-one time working on higher level topics. Students must have teacher approval to sign up for Math Lab.



ARRIVAL:

- Students will be allowed to enter their classrooms at 7:40AM. The school day begins at 7:55AM

7TH AND 8TH GRADE SCHEDULE BREAKDOWN

Core subjects	7:55-Noon
Lunch	Noon-12:30 p.m.
Electives	12:35-2:21 p.m.
Homerooms	2:25-3 p.m.

LUNCH: Students will have their lunch break from Noon – 12:30PM.

DISMISSAL:

- The last class of the day ends at 3:00PM.

If a student needs to be released from school early, written notification to the teacher is required.

CALLING HOME DURING THE DAY: Middle school students are allowed one non-emergency phone call per marking period. Calls related to school uniforms/dress up days and not having the necessary school supplies are not considered emergencies.

CELL PHONES: Cell phones cannot be used during the school day. They should be turned off and kept in the locker until the end of the day. The teacher/principal reserves the right to confiscate the phone if it is being used during the school day.

ABSENCES: Please notify the school (835-9481 ext. 48) in the morning if your child will not be in school that day. Missed assignments will be recorded and made available at the end of the school day upon request. Homework deadlines will be adjusted to meet the individual needs of the student, as determined by the teacher.

Prior notification of expected absences (i.e. vacations) is required. Projected assignments may be made available at the teacher's discretion. Much of what is done during the school day is not replicable, particularly with extended absences. Again, homework extensions will be assigned at the teacher's discretion. For each day missed, a student has one day to make up the assignment. Class time will not be available for make-up work. It is the student's responsibility to arrange time with the teacher. Extended absences will affect grade.

HOMEWORK: Students should expect homework on a daily basis. While extracurricular activities are encouraged and valuable, time should always be set aside each day for homework. The amount of time needed to complete homework will vary from day to day and from student to student. *Time will always be given during the school day to begin work, and those students who use their time wisely will naturally have less to take home. It is the student's responsibility to contact the teacher about any trouble in understanding assignments.* The teachers are happy to work with students after school. Homework will be graded as late (which will involve a grade deduction) if not handed in on time. See teacher's syllabus for individual policies on late assignments.

PLAGIARISM: Plagiarism is when you use someone else's words or ideas and pass them off as your own. If a student knowingly commits plagiarism, they will receive a zero for that assignment and parents will be notified.

Planners/Assignment books should be filled out daily by the student and parents are encouraged to review these throughout the year. Homework assignments are updated daily on the Middle School Homework page of the school website, <http://school.stbrigid-midland.org/middle-school-2/homework>.

GRADING

All grades are percentage-based as follows:

100% -93% = A
92% -90% = A-
89% -86% = B+
85% -83% = B
82% -80% = B-
79% -76% = C+
75% -73% = C
72% -70% = C-
69% -66% = D+
65% -63% = D
62% -60% = D-
Below 60% = E

All students will be given every tool and opportunity to be successful. Grading rubrics (guidelines / expectations) will be given to students whenever appropriate (projects, writing assignments, etc.) so that they know exactly what they need to do to earn the grade they desire. The teacher will be available for after school help during weekly study halls. Please see each individual teacher's syllabi for individual grading policies.

Late assignments will affect grades.

An exception to this may be made at the teacher's discretion based on extenuating circumstances explained via a parent note (for example, if there was a family emergency the night before). Late nights due to sports, Head to Head, drama performances, or other planned activities will not be considered extenuating. Please refer to class syllabi for specific late policies.

There should be no surprises at report card time, as scores are posted on Skyward. **It is the student's responsibility to share graded papers with parents, and the parent's responsibility to ask to see graded papers/tests.**

Our mutual goal is always success and learning. Students are encouraged to communicate before or after school if he or she is stuck on a problem or has a question. Parents' calls or emails are welcome if any questions or concerns arise during the course of the year.



There are multiple ways in which parents and teachers can keep the lines of communication open.

- **E-mail** – Parent communication with the teacher via email is welcome and encouraged.
- **Updates** – Hard copies of important information will be sent home as needed.
- **The Saint Brigid Newsletter** will continue to be a source of important information for middle school parents. This is published twice a month.
- **Phone** – Students and parents should never hesitate to pick up the phone and call whenever necessary.
- **Phone the School** – If you need to get a message to a teacher during the school day, phone the school office and he or she will be notified.
- **Parent-Teacher Conferences** will be held after the first and third marking periods. But don't feel you need to wait for conference time to express a concern if you have one!

PHONE AND EMAIL

School Phone: 835-9481

Ms. Bonds: kbonds@stbrigid-midland.org

Mrs. Bergman: abergman@stbrigid-midland.org

Mrs. Kuchek: kucheksheri@gmail.com

TEACHER WEBSITES

Mrs. Bergman: <http://bergmanmath.weebly.com>

Mrs. Kuchek: kuchekclassroom@weebly.com

Middle School Leadership

All middle school members of the Saint Brigid Catholic School are expected to be leaders and role models in our school. In addition to routine opportunities to take the lead, a student leadership team will be established at the beginning of the school year. Together, the leadership team will address a variety of issues to include, but not limited to, coordination of spirit and service activities, involvement in the elementary school, and fundraising for special projects/activities.



Leading the Way

Behavior Expectations

Middle school students are expected to behave with self-control; a sense of personal responsibility; respect for self, others, and property; and in a manner that is consistent with our Catholic Christian faith and values. Positive behavior will be encouraged and rewarded ("Star Student" punch cards and "Student of the Month"), and negative behavior will be discouraged by use of the following demerit system:

Negative behavior will result in a demerit. Students are allowed a total of 3 demerits per marking period, with the 4th resulting in a 45-minute after school detention.

1st and 2nd Offense: A demerit slip will be given to the student listing the reason for the demerit. It is the student's responsibility to show it to his or her parents.

3rd Offense: A demerit slip will be given that must be returned the following day with a parent signature. (Failing to return the slip will result in the 4th demerit.) This slip will list the reasons for each of the three demerits.

4th Offense: A detention slip will be given to the student and a parent signature is required. The date and time of the detention will be included.

Detention: Students will be expected to work quietly on homework without peer or adult interaction or may be given a task to complete by the teacher. A second detention for same offenses will result in a Behavior Plan.

Demerits are given for (but not limited to) the following behaviors:

- disrespectful/disruptive words or actions
- inappropriate language
- misuse/abuse of physical property
- late for class within the school day- 2nd offense
- Intentional noncompliance with uniform policy or 2nd offense of non-intentional non-compliance.
- Threatening or bullying behavior will result in an automatic detention in addition to consequences outlined in the Saint Brigid School Behavior Policy.
- dishonesty
- misuse of locker
- being unprepared for class 2 x in a week.

Habitual offenses will result in a meeting between student, parents, teacher, and principal.

Also included in this handbook is the “Middle School Behavior Consequences” rubric.

The school administration reserves the right to establish fair and reasonable rules and regulations for circumstances that are not covered in this handbook. These rules and policies apply to any student who is on school property or is attending any school-sponsored activity. The school administration reserves the right to make minor adjustments to the discipline policy as it pertains to a specific incident.

L O C K E R

Students will be assigned a locker at the beginning of the school year. Lockers are to store all items not needed for the immediate class, as three minutes will be allotted between classes for restroom and locker use. It is important that students remember that lockers are a privilege for their convenience, and need to be used responsibly.

For safety reasons, combinations are to be kept private, and lockers be locked when not in use. It is expected that students will keep their lockers neat and clean. Food should never be left in a locker overnight.

School staff reserves the right to inspect lockers at any time.

YES – students may personalize the interior of their lockers with such items as a locker shelf, mirror, or magnetic decorations.

NO – students may not decorate the exterior of the locker (exceptions include birthday or activity related banners). Tape, stickers, or markers of any kind are never to be used on lockers.

E T I Q U E T T E

Holiday Celebrations

Celebration of Halloween, Christmas, Valentine's Day, and the end of the year will look a little different from what students have experienced in grades K-5. In lieu of classroom parties, middle school students may choose to participate in a fun off-site activity for Halloween, Valentine's Day, and the end of the year picnic. Students may choose between such offerings as roller-skating, swimming, "rock" climbing, bowling, and canoeing. During Advent, just prior to Christmas Break, students will participate in a special outreach activity, such as caroling at Riverside.

How Can You Help?

Parent support and participation will continue to be a very important part of the middle school experience. Below are few ways in which you can choose to be involved in our program:

- Volunteer drivers and chaperones will be needed for our many off-site activities and field trips.
- Volunteers to help with after school activities are essential if a variety of after school options are to be made available to the students.
- Share your expertise! If you have special knowledge or interest in anything we are covering this year, please give us a call!

VIRTUS training is required of all volunteers who regularly come in contact with students (coaches, tutors, room parents, classroom aides)

Together, we can make this year the best one ever!!