

**William Alexander Middle School 51**  
**Grade 6 Orientation**  
**Questions Most Frequently Asked**

**1. *What happens on the first day of school?***

- Students will have received a notice in the mail of their new *official class- homeroom* designation
- Students follow their new official classes their programs to copy on program
- Teachers will give their official class a weekly schedule
- Students will receive other documents in class. (Blue cards, lunch forms, SUNY Downstate medical forms)
- A discussion of the routines, rules and expectations will take place
- The official class teacher will take the students on a tour of the school.

**2. *What is an official Class?***

- An *official Class* is the room to which students report at **8:40 A.M., 11:38 A.M., 12:24 A.M., and 2:53 A.M.**
- Official class teachers take attendance. In addition, it is the location of lockers used for books and coats, special memos are distributed for parents/guardians and announcements are made. Official class teachers are also one of the subject teachers for their class.

**3. *What is an Agenda Book?***

- Agenda Books are distributed in school on the first day and contain the student handbook, contract, goal setting and planner. These books are paid by your class dues. These books are essential to our student's success. All assignments and projects should be copied into the agenda books.

**4. *What is Project R.E.A.L? (Reading Enriches All Lives)***

- All students and staff stop everything and read silently for 20 minutes in their official class after lunch.

**5. *Why do we have lockers? When and how do we use them?***

- At 8:40 A.M., when students go to their official class, they place their coats and their P.M. books in their lockers. They take only their A.M. books with them.
- At 11:38 A.M., official class, students place their A.M. books in their lockers and get their coats and then they go to lunch.
- After lunch, at 12:24 P.M., they report to official class. They get their P.M. books and place their coats in their lockers once again. Students then take out a book to read and prepare for Project R.E.A.L from 12:32 – 12:47 P.M.
- At 2:53 P.M. Students return to their official class to pick up their coats and books. At approximately 2:55pm, their official class teacher escorts them to the street exits.

**6. *Where do I get a lock for my locker? Do I leave the lock on when I leave School?***

- Students can purchase a lock on their own
- Students must purchase a **Master combination lock only**.
- **Students must record the combination and lock serial number** in a private spot (in a planner or notebook.) In addition students must give their official class teacher these numbers as well.
- **Locks are left on lockers at all times.** In order to protect belongings, students should be sure to close locks before leaving their official class.

**7. *When and where is lunch?***

- Lunch is at 11:42pm.
- Students can have lunch in the school cafeteria
- Students can eat lunch in Washington Park next to the school.
- Students can eat in a restaurant near the school
- Students can go to the library after eating their lunch or join a teacher for special lunch time clubs. Students will not be permitted upstairs to the library or to any classroom after 12:00pm. In addition, students cannot go into any classroom during lunch unless a teacher invites them and remains there.

**8. *How do I get help if I am lost?***

- Go to the closest teacher.
- Go to the main office – Room 138.
- Go to the guidance office – Room 131
- Go to a school supervisor.
- Go to the official class teacher
- Go to the Parent Coordinator – Room 133
- Go to a school safety/security officer.
- Follow the schedules posted on the hall bulletin boards, and official classroom doors.

**9. *What do I do with my copy of my class program?***

- Tape one copy of the inside of the locker door.
- Paste or write on inside your Agenda Book.

**10. *What are the rules of Middle School 51?***

- See “[School Community Responsibilities](#)” on the first 7 pages of the Agenda Book. Please be aware the following items are prohibited hats, gum, soda, candy, electronic toys, iPods, and cell phones permitted in school.

**11. *What is a Section Sheet?***

- It is used for each subject to check attendance and record behavior – positive and negative.
- It is carried by a class Section sheet monitor.

**12. When is attendance taken?**

- Morning arrival 8:40 A.M.
- After lunch at 12:24 P.M.
- Teacher attendance survey at 3:00 P.M.
- Each subject teacher notes attendance on section sheets for each period

**13. Do I stay with the same students all day?**

- Students in the same official class stay together for all subjects except for talent and possibly second language.

**14. Do I have to wear a uniform for Physical Education? How do I get one?**

- Yes, we request that all students wear the William Alexander P.E. uniform. Uniforms can be purchased from the P.E. teachers (you need a separate lock for the locker in the P.E. dressing room). The Physical Education teachers will explain all information in detail and distribute written information as well.

**15. Do I have to pay for anything?**

- Talent classes request a fee. Fees are required by most trips. Students will purchase PE uniforms and a supply box. Students will receive information both orally and in written form if fees are requested.

**16. How do I know what materials I will need for my classes?**

- Students will purchase a school supply box from the PA at orientation or online over the summer.
- Each subject teacher will discuss the books and any other material needed for that class.

**17. How can I register for the After School Programs?**

- Registration takes place at the beginning of the year. Check our website for more information over the summer, MS51.org. The After School Program runs from 3:00-5:30 P.M., daily, Monday - Friday. Programs include academic help, study hall, sports, recreation, test prep, cooking, knitting, French and other clubs.

**18. How am I chosen for a talent?**

- Students audition and are selected for one of the six talents. They audition for two in May and then if they have not made a selection they audition for others in the fall. They meet the teachers and have discussions about their choice. We try to accommodate all requests. If there is an overabundance of students selecting one specific talent, some may receive their second choice.

**19. Do I have to stay in a talent all year?**

- Yes, we discourage students from switching talents. Students stay in one art (talent) for three years. In this way students develop their craft. In addition, talent teachers produce shows. They cannot develop the desired level of performance if there is movement in and out of their talent.

**20. How do I select a second language?**

- Students will select a language at the orientation. We offer Spanish or French. If there is an overabundance of students requesting one language some students may receive their second choice.

**21. What do I do when I get sick? How do I get homework?**

- When students are sick and cannot come to school they should call a student in their class so they can get the homework assignments. It is a good idea to get at least 3 numbers on the first few days of school. Students should write them in their notebooks or planner. Students may check the class website as well. If students are out for an extended period of time, parents should let the official class teacher know by writing a note, bringing a doctor's note and or calling the school. Official class teachers can gather homework from the other teachers and a parent can pick up the work.

**22. What happens if I am absent a lot?**

- It is important for students to be in school every day. Students miss a lot of work when they are absent from middle school. In addition, attendance is one of the promotional criteria and high schools may assess middle school attendance.

**23. What happens if I get sick in school?**

- We have the [SUNY Downstate School Based Health Program](#) on premises. If parents register their child, they will receive health care for free. It does not matter if the parents have other health coverage. The clinic can administer the appropriate medication according to the information supplied in the completed forms. It is important that all students register for this free health service.

**24. Am I permitted to go home during the day if I am sick?**

- Students are not permitted to go home without a parent or guardian. However, students are permitted to go out during lunch. If a parent consents, the student may go home **at that time only.**

**25. What if I get injured and need to use crutches?**

- Upon return to school, a note from a doctor stating that the student may be present in school with crutches and use the elevator, must be given to the main office.