



Tilden Middle School PTSA

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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 to help answer some of the questions you may have....

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Communication

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

- Download the Synergy App (also known as ParentVue)
 - View grades, attendance, class schedule, report cards, and communicate with teachers and staff
- Tilden Website: www.mcps.k12.md.us/schools/tildenms
 - See the School and PTSA calendars
 - [List of Teachers' email addresses](#)
 - Link to Synergy (student/parent portals)
 - Get Bell Schedules, Bus Schedules, Principal's Newsletter, and community notices and much more
 - Report absences
- Emails from school
 - These should be coming directly to all parents/guardians listed in the student's file. If not, contact main office
 - Daily announcements (most days)
 - Weekly updates via the Principal's newsletter, Timberwolf Connections sent every Friday
 - Special announcements about events
- Join the PTSA E-Mail List:
<http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/schools/tildenms/ptsa/emailgroup.aspx>
 - Get up-to-the-minute information from the school and the PTSA

How do I check on assignments and grades?

- **Synergy/ParentVue:** Synergy is an on-line tool used by the school staff, students and parents to keep grades, assignments, handouts and other important information
- Access codes are given to parents and students at the beginning of their time at MCPS and should remain the same year-to-year. Contact the main office for help activating your account.

How do I let the school know if my child will be late, absent, or will need to leave early?

- **Absence or Late:** Report absences on [this form](#) (or find on the school website). You can also call the school (240-740-6700) on the day(s) your child is absent. You can also send a note with your child's name, the date(s) and reason for their absence, and your signature when they return to

school. Your child should bring the note to the main office and hand it to the Attendance Secretary, Tabitha Davis. If you use the [form](#), you do not need to also send a note.

- 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. They will then get a pass to leave at that time. When picking up your child, go to the Main Office, have your ID on you, and sign them out.

How do I find out how my child is doing or communicate about any concerns?

- Check Synergy/ParentVue
- [Email the teacher](#) and/or your child's counselor (check the school's website to identify the grade level counselor assigned to your child)
- Interims: You will receive an interim report of your child's grades by regular mail or on ParentVue, half way through each marking period.
- Report cards: These are sent home with the students at the end of the first three marking 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](#).

School Day

What time does school start/end on a typical day?

- The school day begins at 8:15 am and ends at 3:00 pm. Students who arrive at school before 8:15 are expected to go to the designated locations (6th in the 2nd floor gym, 7th grade in the main gym, and 8th grade in the cafeteria).

What time does school end if there is an early release?

- On early release days school ends at 12:30 for Tilden. Students will get an early lunch period and attend all classes for a shortened period. Times can be found on the bell schedule listed on the school website.

How do I get information about bus routes and schedules?

- Bus routes can be found on the [Tilden Website](#) or [MCPS Transportation website](#).
- MCPS Bus Depot at 240-740-6580 is available for questions and concerns.

Can my student take a bus that they are not assigned to for a "playdate"?

- Students are not allowed to take buses that do not align with their home address unless they turn in a **signed note** from their parent/guardian to the main office. However, we do not

guarantee that your child will be able to take another bus to their friend's house. Almost each bus route for Tilden is filled to capacity. If you request for your child to take a friend's bus home for a playdate, they must bring a signed note to the main office in the morning. On occasions, an administrator might need to approve the request and/or speak with the driver.

- **However, if the desired bus route is full, your child will not be able to ride the requested bus route to their friend's house. Priority will be given to students who take the bus route home.**
- We recommend that your student goes to their own house after school and is then driven to their friend's house by their parent/guardian.

Can my student order uber eats or other delivery services to be delivered to the main office?

- For the safety and security of Tilden students and staff, no third party or non-family members will be permitted to bring or deliver food to Tilden students. All guests to Tilden MS are welcome for school-related business ONLY.
- Food deliveries will not be accepted by Tilden MS Main Office staff.

1st incident: A warning will be provided and food will be held until dismissal.

2nd incident: The Main Office will contact parents/guardians to come pick up the food or it will be discarded.

3rd incident: Delivery will be refused by Main Office Staff.

School lunches are available to all students.

How do I find out if there is a delay or early release due to weather or other emergency information?

- Text and Email: Alert MCPS
<http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/info/emergency/sources/alertmcps> (updated by 7am)
- MCPS Web: Home page <http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org>
- **Email: QuickNotes:** Weather-related messages are sent in 6 languages (English, Chinese, French, Korean, Spanish, and Vietnamese):
- TV and Radio: Local Stations: Tune in to local TV and radio stations for information.
- Text and Web: Twitter <http://twitter.com/mcps>
- TV: MCPS Cable Channels

In the Building

Does my child need a lock for their locker?

- No; all lockers at school (hall and P.E.) come with locks whose combinations are changed each year by Tilden staff. All students will be given a new locker and new code at the start of each year. 6th graders and new students will have a chance to learn how to use the lockers.

How will 6th graders learn to navigate the school and find their classes?

- Most 6th grade classes are held on the third floor, so the 6th graders don't need to know the layout of the whole 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 two weeks of school.

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

- Sign up for myschoolbucks.com which tracks lunch balances for all MCPS students.
- Families may apply for Free and Reduced Meals on the myschoolbucks.com app or website.
- You can add to your child's account by paying on-line by credit card, by sending a check to the school, or by using cash in the cafeteria. You can also set it up to add money to the account whenever it goes below a specified dollar amount.

What is AST (Academic Support Time) and Homeroom Advisory?

- AST (Academic Support Time) is a block after the second period during which students rotate daily between their various academic classes in order to complete outstanding work or get help from the teacher. For instance Monday they will go to Period 1, Tuesday to Period 2, Thursday to Period 3, Friday to Period 4, the following Monday to Period 5, etc. This is announced daily so that students know where to go.
- On Wednesday during this block, all students will have Homeroom Advisory (previously called Timberwolf Time) instead of AST. The advisory will include SEL (Social Emotional Lessons), Assemblies, etc.

Does my child need to order a PE uniform?

- You do not have to order a PE uniform. All students will be required to change for daily PE classes and can either choose to wear items found on the PE uniform page, or can simply wear black or gray bottoms and white or gray tops. Depending on the weather and activity PE classes may be held inside or outside. Students will need to either wear or bring sneakers for PE.

- PE uniforms/clothes, sneakers, and deodorant may be kept in the student's PE locker. Clothes from the PE locker are sent home at the end of the week for laundering - so make sure they remember to bring them back on Monday!

How do gym lockers work?

- Gym lockers are located in the PE locker rooms and have a lock provided by the school. Every student will have their own locker with a combination provided to them.
- Please note that no cell phones are allowed in the PE locker rooms.

Other

What are the service learning (SSL) requirements?

- 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 (e.g. Outdoor Ed). For more information on SSL, contact the school's SSL coordinator or check out the [Tilden](#), [MCPS](#) or Walter Johnson High School websites.

How should my child find opportunities for SSL hours?

- SSL opportunities are everywhere! The school and/or PTSA often has opportunities that will get posted via daily notices. For outside opportunities a great place to look is the [Montgomery County Volunteer Center](#), which lists organizations looking for help throughout the county.

How do students report SSL hours to get credit?

- Often the organization will provide a form, but if not they can be found [here](#), along with all of the rules and other information. Make sure these forms are signed by the sponsor and the student then fills out the bottom section with a parent signature.
- SSL forms must be submitted to the Tilden SSL Coordinator before the end of the school year. Hours can be checked on ParentVue.

What clubs can my child participate in after school?

- Most clubs are open to all students in all grades and will be announced by the school through Daily Announcements. More information can be found here: <https://www2.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/schools/tildenms/activities/>
- Clubs and activities are usually held Tues - Thurs from 3:15 - 4:20. Some activities, like Tilden Drama, may have different schedules and require auditions/tryouts.

Can my child participate in a school sponsored sport?

- MCPS sponsored sports are open to 7th and 8th graders only. More information can be found here: <https://www2.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/schools/tildenms/activities/athletics/>
- Official Tilden sports include Softball, soccer, basketball and cross country.

How does a student sign up to try out for a team sport?

- There are a number of steps to take to sign up for a sport try out and it is recommended you do this with plenty of time to spare! Information can be found here: <https://www2.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/schools/tildenms/activities/athletics/>
- Required steps include a permission form, health inventory form (signed by physician), medical card, and transportation form.
- Official Tilden sports include Softball (boys & girls - fall), Cross Country (fall), Basketball (boys & girls - winter), Soccer (boys & girls - spring).
- For more information regarding team sports, please contact athletic director, [Robert P Polley@mcpsmd.org](mailto:Robert_P_Polley@mcpsmd.org).