

A Parents Guide to the Skills for Success

The transition to middle school is one of many developmental leaps in your child's life.

There is newfound freedom, an increase in academic and social demands, and an emerging independence that can make parenting difficult. Adolescents want and need more independence yet they also must have clear boundaries and guidelines from adults. The following summary details our approach at Summit, which is to promote student development of the Skills for Success.

1. Time Management/Balanced Schedules

- Be realistic about the amount of time available during the week for extracurricular activities and homework.
- Ensure your child makes time to complete homework and engage in activities that are restful and fun.
- Maintain a reasonable bedtime schedule and avoid late Sunday night schoolwork, which results in increased student stress.
- If your child does not use time effectively, help him/her to estimate the time needed for assignments (each and cumulative).
- Encourage using Study Hall time effectively.

2. Skills for Success

- Cross-curricular skills taught and emphasized at Summit
- Proven strategies & guidelines for learning & achieving to one's potential
- Skills and techniques parents can support & reinforce at home
- Take the long view-Your child will develop lifelong habits and skills that will promote his/her success in high school and beyond.

3. The "Right" Amount of Support

- Provide support that gives your child the message that he/she can "do it."
- Students learn from mistakes, and as adults, we should allow this to happen.
- Encourage personal responsibility and persistence.
- Remind students of cause and effect-choices and actions affect outcomes and the student is in control
- Establish routines that promote good study habits and a balanced lifestyle.
- Parents can support students by asking to see completed homework and ensuring students have completed everything in their planner.
- Encourage self-advocacy in your child.
- Help your child establish expectations relative to his/her ability and academic goals.
- Encourage your child to access available supports such as Math/English Lab and Office Hours.

3. Keeping Track of Assignments

- Teachers use numerous methods to inform students and parents of upcoming assignments and due dates:
 - Calendars, syllabi, and unit outlines are distributed at the start of the unit
 - Complex projects like History Day and Science Fair have published timelines with all due dates spanning weeks or even months
 - Daily & weekly: teachers write on board and students are expected to begin class by copying into the planner; teacher websites are also available by day or week and many archived as well.
- Encourage your child to show you his/her planner and cross-reference with teacher websites as needed.
- Teacher websites include assignments with due dates as well as dates for upcoming assessments.
- Encourage your child to check teacher web pages as a first step if there are questions about assignments and due dates. If your child remains unsure of an assignment, encourage him/her to check in with teachers during class or after school the next day (please no emails on homework clarification).

4. Monitoring Progress

- Teachers post all grades on Infinite Campus (IC) every 2-3 weeks. Assignments are not entered on a more frequent basis for the following reasons:
 - to minimize undue stress over each task, especially as students are adjusting to new challenges
 - to guide students away from thinking “I need to earn an 87 on this quiz to keep my A” and toward, “how well do I know this content and what might I do to learn it better?”
 - to find a balance between keeping parents and students informed and inadvertently encouraging perfectionism and overemphasis on grades; we at Summit try to focus on the value of hard work and growth, not having to get 100% on everything
 - to send the message that Summit is a place for developing skills and knowledge, not simply for acquiring points.
- Missing assignments are calculated as zeros in IC. If your student is missing an assignment because of an absence, the grade will be entered when the assignment is submitted.

5. Managing Materials

- Discuss and develop a plan for organization and system of writing down homework, bring homework home, completing homework, returning homework to school, and finally, turning in homework.
- Create one homework folder for all classes, with one side labeled “To do” and the other “Hand in”. With each night of homework, the “stack” should rotate. (Note: homework from previous days or weeks will clog this system. Causing confusion and disorganization.)
- Check in with your child and their Homework Folder nightly, as needed.

- Discuss what turning in homework “looks like” in each class.
- Check in with your child and their planner daily, weekly, or monthly as needed
- Collaboratively organize your child’s backpack on a daily, weekly, or monthly basis depending on the support they need.

7. Self-Advocacy

- Encourage students to talk over issues and clarifying questions directly with teacher. Remind them that teachers are there for support and guidance. Perhaps practice the conversation with them if the student is feeling hesitant.
- Summit Faculty does not respond to student e-mails because it is expected that students approach teachers before/after school or before/after class for short inquiries, office hours for more thorough inquiries and tutoring.
- Summit Faculty will respond to parent emails within two working days.