

JOHN LEWIS INVICTUS ACADEMY



Making the **JUMP** to Middle School

Transition Plan for Students
Transitioning from Elementary to
Middle School

JOHN LEWIS INVICTUS ACADEMY

Mr. Ramon Garner, Principal

#ReNEW

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Dear Scholars and Parents,

The transition from elementary to middle school is often an exciting, yet nerve-racking time for students. Best case scenario would be that each rising 6th grader feels prepared to enter middle school. As educators or parents, we can greatly enhance students' comfort level with this change by exposing them to common concerns that arise in middle school and equipping them with skills necessary to be successful. Making the JUMP to Middle School Guide is created in an effort to support 5th grade scholars and their families in this endeavor.

Sincerely,

The Transition Guide Team

Tonetta Green, 6th grade Assistant Principal

Tanya Ellis, 6th grade Counselor

Tanya Green, Lead Counselor

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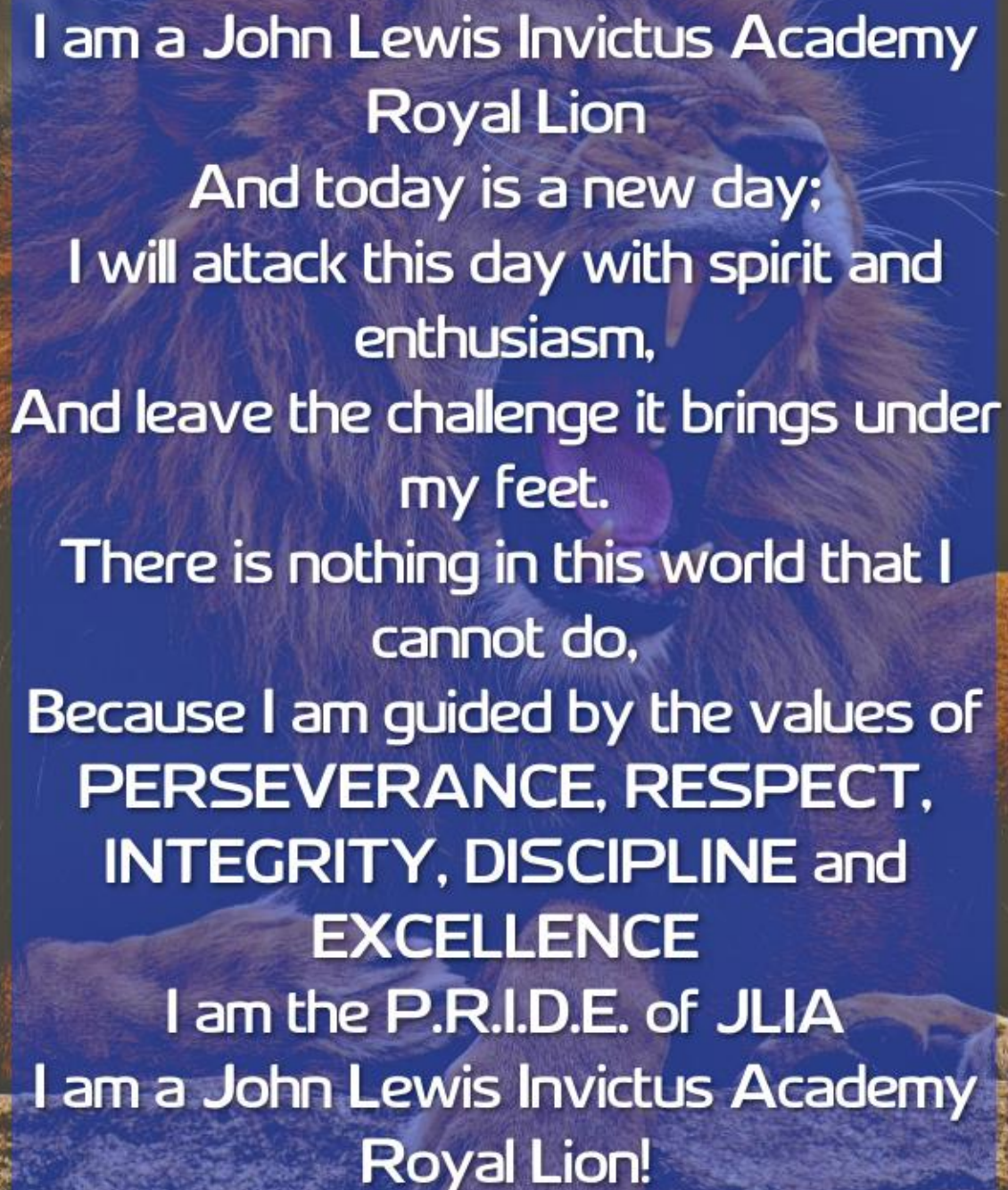
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GENERAL INFORMATION

JLIA DAILY STUDENT AFFIRMATION

A close-up photograph of a lion's head, looking slightly to the right. The lion's mane is a mix of brown and orange. A semi-transparent blue rectangular box is overlaid on the center of the image, containing white text. The text is a daily student affirmation for John Lewis Invictus Academy (JLIA) Royal Lions.

I am a John Lewis Invictus Academy
Royal Lion
And today is a new day;
I will attack this day with spirit and
enthusiasm,
And leave the challenge it brings under
my feet.
There is nothing in this world that I
cannot do,
Because I am guided by the values of
**PERSEVERANCE, RESPECT,
INTEGRITY, DISCIPLINE and
EXCELLENCE**
I am the P.R.I.D.E. of JLIA
I am a John Lewis Invictus Academy
Royal Lion!

The transition to middle school can be challenging for students due to differences in middle and elementary school settings. It is important for parents' transition, as well as their child. One adjustment for parents and students is to know that in most cases students have to adjust and know that in most cases, students no longer have one core teacher, but six or seven. This section will provide general information about the functioning of the middle school.

WHO'S WHO IN MIDDLE SCHOOL?

Students may notice when they get to the middle school that there are several adults around, but they are not always sure what those adults do and who to ask for help.

TEAM LEADER

This person is one of the core teachers that schedules conferences, facilitates meetings, and manages the team's activities. He/she is the first point of contact when a student's school performance needs to be addressed.

GRADE LEVEL COUNSELOR – TANYA ELLIS

One very important thing for students to understand is that their middle school counselor is there to help them, just like their elementary counselor. For some middle schools within Atlanta Public Schools, there is one counselor for every grade level in middle school. For many schools that counselor rotates with their students for all three years, but for some the counselors remain in the same grade level from year to year. Your 6th grade counselor Ms. Tanya Ellis will typically not be in the classroom as much as the elementary counselors, but she is available for individual and group sessions. **Click [here](#) to view a message from your 6th grade counselor, Ms. Ellis!**



GRADE LEVEL ADMINISTRATOR – TONETTA GREEN

The administrative layout of a middle school can be very confusing to some students. They have a principal of the whole school, but they also have a grade level administrator (or Assistant Principal). Mrs. Green, the 6th grade assistant principal will be the one to handle safety, disciplinary, and/or facility situations within the 6th grade. **Click [here](#) to learn more about your assistant principal!**



GLOSSARY OF MIDDLE SCHOOL TERMS

CORE CLASSES

All middle schools require each regular education student to take English Language Arts, Social Studies, Math, and Science.

AGENDA

One of the most important objects a student will possess in middle school is his/her agenda. The agenda is essentially a planning book in which students can write down homework assignments, upcoming projects, dated activities, or any other important information. Using an agenda can help students with short-term and long-term goal-setting and planning. Some schools have agendas

available for parents to purchase. Others allow students to use their preferred method for keeping up with assignments, etc. Be sure to talk with your students about the best method for organization. Because 6th graders will have many different classes and teacher expectations to keep track of, writing everything down is essential.

ELECTIVES

These are classes that students take in addition to core classes that allow for variety in their day. The electives here at JLIA include P.E., Dance, Spanish, Audio Visual, Career Exploration, Health, Theatre, General music, Band, JROTC, Visual Arts, and Engineering. Classes can be held quarterly, semesters or year-long.

POSITIVE BEHAVIOR INTERVENTION & SUPPORT (PBIS)

Here at JLIA, we are a PBIS schools. This is a program established within the school for teaching and rewarding positive behavior. Additionally, essential to students' growth and development, teachers incorporate character education lessons into their classrooms. The following traits are emphasized (courage, good judgment, integrity, kindness, perseverance, respect, responsibility, self-discipline).

TEAMS

At JLIA, students will be assigned to a team. The team is traditionally composed of four core teachers. Teaming is an important component to the middle school concept. Teaming allows the teachers to work together to create interdisciplinary units, which enhances student learning. We try to balance teachers on teams such that teacher personalities are diverse. Having a mix of different personalities hopefully ensures that each child can almost always find at least one teacher on their team with whom they connect. In addition, students are placed on teams in a way that promotes academic and demographic equity.



TEAM AREA

This area may also be referred to as Team Hallway, Pod, or Zone. This is the designated area of the school in which the student's core classes are located. Students will spend the bulk of the school day in their team area.

TEAM CONFERENCE

Parents can request to schedule a conference with their child's core teachers to discuss their child's performance and/or express concerns. Teams are great for parents because the parent can contact one teacher and get information to, or from, his or her child's whole team of teachers. In most schools, the team leader is responsible for scheduling the conference. However, counselors can be asked to schedule conferences and/or invited to attend team conferences. Teachers do like to meet as a team but individual teacher conferences can be requested and scheduled as well.

TRANSITION TIME

The time between classes is usually very short ranging between 3- 5 minutes. This is plenty of time as long as students do not continuously stop in the halls and engage in long conversations with friends.

ACADEMICS

LETTER GRADING (MIDDLE SCHOOL)

In middle school, students earn letter grades of A, B, C, D, or F on their report cards. They may also be assigned a grade of "I" for "Incomplete" if, because of an emergency, they do not complete work by the end of the grading period. The "Incomplete" becomes an "F" if work is not finished by an assigned time. Letter grades have the following numerical values:

A	90 – 100
B	80 – 89
C	70 – 79
D	60 – 69
F	Below 60

In addition to academic performance requirements, students must meet the requirements of the Atlanta Public Schools attendance policy. Failure to meet the requirements of the attendance policy may result in failure of a class and grade retention.

HONOR ROLL RECOGNITION

Most middle schools recognize students who have made the honor roll and here at JLIA, we do! An honor roll is a list of students who have made either all A's (the A honor roll) or have made a combination of all A's and B's (the AB honor roll) on their report card during each quarter's marking period. Middle school recognitions may include certificates, rewards, names being read on announcements, and/or awards ceremonies.

TIME MANAGEMENT/STUDY HABITS

In middle school, time becomes a precious commodity. Students normally have at least six classes in a school day- with six different teachers, six different expectations, and sometimes six different homework assignments! Along with being responsible for all of the above, students must also be responsible for managing time; both at school and at home. One major academic process that students must fit in to their busy schedules is homework whether completing homework assignments, major projects, or studying for tests. Learning and utilizing study skills will both qualify and quantify time for a 6th grader. Students should use completed work as a study guide along with notes from class. When studying ahead, students should review notes each night.

DESCRIPTION OF CORE CLASSES

Sixth grade students study language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies.



ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

All students in grade 6 continue to build their English/Language Arts skills in the areas of reading, writing, speaking, and listening. Students practice the conventions of language (grammar, spelling, punctuation, capitalization, etc.) through targeted practice and required writing assignments. Varied writing assignments include narrative writing, argument essays, response to reading, and technical writing. Reading comprehension skills, such as questioning the text and other strategies, are explained and practiced. Students practice speaking and listening skills through formal speeches, conversations, individual and group presentations, and small and large group discussions.

MATHEMATICS

In Grade 6, mathematics instructional time should focus on four critical areas: (1) connecting ratio and rate to whole number multiplication and division and using concepts of ratio and rate to solve problems; (2) completing understanding of division of fractions and extending the notion of number to the system of rational numbers, which includes negative numbers; (3) writing, interpreting, and using expressions and equations; and (4) developing understanding of statistical thinking.



SCIENCE

The Sixth Grade Georgia Standards of Excellence for science are designed to give all students an overview of common strands in earth science including, but not limited to, meteorology, geology, astronomy, and oceanography.

SOCIAL STUDIES

Sixth grade is the first year of a two-year World Area Studies course. Sixth grade students study Latin America, Canada, Europe, and Australia. The intent of the geography domain is for students to begin to grasp the importance geography plays in their everyday lives. The government/civics domain focuses on selected types of government found in the various areas. The economics focus shifts from the United States to how other countries answer the basic questions of economics. The history domain focuses on major events in each region during the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.



ELECTIVE COURSES

Elective courses may be offered in nine-week, trimester, semester, and/or year-long formats. See below for our Elective course offerings:

Click each link available to learn more about each elective course and meet a few of the teachers!

[P.E.](#)

[Career Exploration](#)

[Band](#)

[Dance](#)

[Health](#)

[JROTC](#)

[Spanish](#)

[Theatre](#)

Visual Arts

Audio Visual

[General Music](#)

Engineering

SOCIAL

PROBLEM-SOLVING, MAKING GOOD CHOICES, AND RESPONSIBILITY

It is important to remember that students' first priority in middle school is to learn! That being said, social skills can greatly enhance their chance of having a positive environment in which to learn. Efforts and choices will directly affect grades, opportunities to participate in sports and/or other extracurricular activities, peer interactions, and relationships with adults both in and out of school. Part of growing up and gaining independence involves gaining the trust of both teachers and parents. To do so, students must demonstrate responsibility and the ability to make good choices across settings. The students' ability to problem- solve and choose positive ways to interact with parents, teachers, and peers will aid in making their middle school experience successful.

MAKING/CHOOSING FRIENDS

One of the cool but scary things about middle school is seeing all of the new faces. Knowing how to make new friends will be extremely important in the middle school setting. Several different elementary schools feed into one middle school, and students are assigned randomly to teams. As a result, students may not be on the same team with their friends they may have had while in elementary school. Some students might already know a lot of students from their old elementary school, but many students do not know anyone at all because they were the only ones from their elementary school to come to a particular middle school. Going to middle school is a great opportunity to make new friends. Some tips for making new friends are:



- Get involved in school activities
- Introduce yourself to students who sit around you in your classes
- Choose different partners during group work assignments in your classes
- Sit with different groups of people at lunch
- Make an appointment with the school counselor for help with making friends.

PEER PRESSURE

Middle school is a time of great transition emotionally, physically, and socially. All of these changes can either be nurtured, or hindered by peers. Remember, peer pressure can be either positive or negative. Examples of positive peer pressure might include encouraging friends to study by offering to study with them or motivating them to work hard at a sport. Examples of negative peer pressure might include someone encouraging students to spread rumors, be disruptive in class, or skip school. In order to best handle social pressure, the following tips might be helpful:

- Find friends with similar interests, values, and beliefs
- Be assertive—tell friends what you like/don't like
- Don't use alcohol or other drugs
- Avoid situations in which you know that you could get into trouble
- Learn to handle conflicts in a positive way
- Talk with trusted adults about situations that you don't understand and/or that make you feel uncomfortable

BULLYING

Bullying is unfair (meaning the —bully uses some sort of power over his/her victim) and one-sided (meaning only one person or one group of people is engaging in bullying behavior in the situation). Bullying happens when someone keeps hurting, frightening, threatening, or leaving someone out on purpose. Bullying can include behaviors such as:

- Physical violence and attacks
- Extortion and theft
- Taunts, name-calling and put-downs
- Peer group exclusion
- Threats and intimidation
- Cyberbullying

Help is available to students who feel that they are being bullied. If a student witnesses a bullying situation, they have the power to be part of the problem or part of the solution depending on their reactions to the situation. They can exacerbate the situation by doing nothing, encouraging the bully, or pretending not to see. Students can help the situation immediately reporting the situation to an adult, by helping the victim to get out of the situation and encouraging the victim to get help.

It is imperative that every student knows at least three appropriate things to say and/or do when they are victims of bullying. Another aspect of bullying involves forming cliques. Groups of friends with similar interests are healthy and natural. However, cliques are formed when students gather together and begin excluding other students from their group based on superficial reasons (i.e. not pretty enough, not smart enough). Stereotyping, discrimination, and negative social interactions with other groups are possible outcomes of joining cliques.



CYBERBULLYING

Cyberbullying occurs when students use a data device such as a computer or cell phone to bully or harass other students. This may occur in various ways including text messaging, using social network sites to message each other, and via email.

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES/GETTING INVOLVED

SPORTS

An activity that rising 6th graders often look forward to in middle school is the opportunity to represent their school in athletics. In order to participate in any of the sports at JLIA, a physical on file with the Athletic Director, Coach Spriggs, is required. Here are a couple of ways 6th graders can get involved in supporting their school athletic programs:

Fall – Cheerleading, Softball

Winter – Basketball, Cheerleading

Spring – Track, Soccer, Baseball, Girls Flag Football

MUSIC/BAND/THEATER

Band, Chorus, and Theater are a few other ways for middle school students to get involved in their school culture. If rising 6th grade students wish to participate in band or orchestra, most schools require students with no prior experience to start playing an instrument in 6th grade. Other programs such as Honors Chorus, school plays, and productions may require that students try out to participate. Many of these programs require after school and evening commitments for performances.

REGISTERING FOR MIDDLE SCHOOL

REGISTRATION INFORMATION

Managing paperwork for registration can be a large task to complete. Typically, 5th grade counselors access registration forms through Atlanta Public Schools website located under the registration tab. Math recommendations are completed by 5th grade teachers prior to elementary counselors sending the registration packet home.

MAKING INFORMATION ACCESSIBLE

Parents and students transitioning to middle school have a lot of questions. How do we register? What electives do you offer? When can I have a tour of the school? To address these questions and concerns, counselors should consider posting information for new parents & students on the school's website. JLIA has a section on our website dedicated to 6th graders and it centralizes information and makes it more readily accessible to rising 6th graders and their parents. Please check out our site here: <https://www.atlantapublicschools.us/domain/15202>



TIPS FOR MIDDLE SCHOOL PARENTS

Parent participation in education is closely related to student achievement. Both of you will be affected by this change to middle school. The key during adolescence is to balance your support while promoting responsibility and independence in your child.

- Become informed about your new school by attending orientations, going to open houses, reading school guides and student handbooks, create a Parent Portal account in Infinite Campus to monitor student grades.
- Moving into a new building can be a bit scary sometimes. Being familiar with the school building before the first day of school can help lessen your child's anxiety. Since we are unable to do physical tours at this time, check out the virtual tour of JLIA here - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5hycmlQlu7o>
- Consider your child's feelings. Your 6th grader may not want you joining them for lunch, but you can stay involved by volunteering in your child's school, chaperoning on fieldtrips and/or joining the PTA.
- Know the name of your child's team, the homeroom teacher, the team leader and the school counselor for his/her grade. Students of all ages benefit when family and school cooperate and have a positive relationship. If you have questions or concerns don't hesitate to call or email the school staff.
- Decide on the best method of keeping up with homework and projects for your child.
- Balance after-school recreational activities, provide a quiet study area and set the expectation that your child will be working regularly on homework and long-term projects. Set rules about technology. Organization and time management skills must be developed so students will be prepared and not feel overwhelmed.
- Know the dress code and uniform policy for your school. Be cognizant of the need of increased personal hygiene as developmental body changes occur.
- Check the calendar for your specific school. Know when interims and report cards go out, dates of early release days and any dates of special activities (e.g. Picture Day, athletic events, EOGs).
- Be sure the main office has current contact information. Don't assume your child will know or share changes in phone numbers or addresses. Provide updated information to **Business Manager, Ms. Breasia Kirkpatrick or Counselor, Ms. Tanya Ellis.**
- Talk to your child about school and peers. Listen for comments that reflect how they are feeling and what they are thinking. Expect your child to make mistakes and have personal struggles. Give them time to think and make decisions about how to handle their problems and deal with the consequences.
- Provide opportunities for your child to develop their interests and socialize with friends, but be sure to monitor their choices. Peer acceptance and self-esteem issues become increasingly important in middle school.

STAY CONNECTED

SCHOOL WEBSITE AND CONTACT INFORMATION

WEBSITE : <https://www.atlantapublicschools.us/Page/3910>

ADDRESS: 1890 Donald Lee Hollowell Pkwy NW, Atlanta, Ga 30138

CONTACT INFORMATION:

Main Office – (404) 802-6100

Principal – (404) 802-6105, Mr. Ramon Garner

6th grade Assistant Principal - (404) 802-6142, Mrs. Tonetta Green

INFINITE CAMPUS PARENT PORTAL

Parents of students in grades K–12 have access to class schedules, attendance records and grades through the Parent Portal, an easy-to-use, secure communications tool for the district. Additionally, the Parent Portal enables parents to verify household information, including email, home address and telephone numbers. If you are not familiar with how to access Parent Portal, please see the link here for directions: <https://www.atlantapublicschools.us/Page/48412>

ONLINE COMMUNICATION TOOLS

Find out what new communication tools your child’s teachers will use. Many times you will find out that middle school teachers use websites to give a weekly or daily update of what is being taught in their classrooms, including test and quiz dates or project due dates. These tools are easily accessible and usually linked straight from the school’s website or a teacher’s own website and are very helpful in keeping parents and students informed of what’s going on in the classroom.

ACTIVITIES

ACTIVITY 1: MIDDLE SCHOOL WEBSITE SCAVENGER HUNT

This activity is designed to help students find out important information about the middle school they will be attending. A good time to use this activity in the classroom or computer lab would be at the end of 5th grade to help the students learn more about their new school for the fall. Students will explore and learn information about their school such as important dates (i.e. school dances and sporting events), school mascots, extracurricular activities, teacher emails, and school procedures.



MATERIALS

- computer for each student/access to computer lab
- pencils
- scavenger hunt questions

SCAVENGER HUNT QUESTIONS

1. What is JLIA's website address?
2. What is the phone number to reach JLIA?
3. What is the mission, vision, and values of JLIA?
4. What sports does your new school participate in?
5. What is the name of the principal at JLIA?
6. What is the name of the 6th grade counselor at JLIA?
7. Who is the 6th grade assistant principal? **BONUS:** Where is he or she from?
8. What is schools mascot for JLIA?

ACTIVITY 2: THE 5 W'S OF STUDY HABITS

This activity will help students to think about and record the best way to study, tailored specifically to them.

DIRECTIONS

Ask students to write the 5 W questions down the left- hand side of a paper- who, what, when, where, and why. Students will be writing down study habits for each question that is specific to them. Ask each of the questions separately, explaining each and asking students to provide answers that are specific to their studying style.

1. Who? (Who can help you when you need it- teachers, parents, classmates)
2. What? (What to study? Take home all materials needed.)
3. When? (Best time to study- as soon as you get home, after a snack, etc.)
4. Where? (Best area to study in- free of distractions, plenty of space)
5. Why? (Why should you study?)

If you can, have students add a last question, How? How? This can be used to start a discussion about learning styles or ways to study (lighting, snack or no snack, noise level, etc).

ACTIVITY 3: MIDDLE SCHOOL TRANSITION

This activity is designed to gradually introduce middle school and address middle school concerns for students that are about to transition to middle school.

ANSWER THE FOLLOWING:

- What are you excited about when you think about being in middle school?
- What worries you when you think about being in middle school?

Have student share what they are excited about and what they are worried about. Themes that are common in these discussions include older students, harder classes/work, getting lost in the new school, bullying, different expectations, not being able to open a locker, and having more responsibility. Assure student that they are not alone in having these feelings, and then give any factual information that you have that can allay fears. The goal is to get students to become comfortable and confident in moving on to middle school. If a student asks a question that you cannot answer, try to get the answer from a middle school counselor or other school staff members, and then relay the information to students during the next lesson.

RESOURCES

MIDDLE SCHOOL WEBSITES

The Parent Toolkit www.parenttoolkit.com

Social/Emotional Support, Developmental Support, Diversity Resources

Kids Health www.kidshealth.org

Advice on Children's health, behavior and growth before birth through teen years

USAGOV www.usa.gov/education?source=kids

Government information on activities related to school, careers, and recreation

National PTA www.pta.org

Family Engagement resources, College & Career Readiness, Health & Safety

Parent Guide to K-12 Success www.greatschools.org

School Quality resources, Community Action & Parenting Tips

MENTAL HEALTH AND SOCIAL EMOTIONAL WEBSITES

National Mental Health Association www.mhanational.org

Addresses the needs of those living with mental illness

National Mental Health Information Center www.nimh.nih.gov

Understanding mental illness and treatment of mental illness

Bullying Resources www.stopbullying.gov www.pacer.org/bullying/resources

Tips on how to support your child and communicate with your child's school

CALMING FIRST DAY JITTERS

Middle school is complicated—just ask any tween. The changes in routine and growing school demands can be stressful. Here are things you can do ahead of time to help ease those first-day jitters.

HOW DO I GET OVER THE FIRST DAY OF MIDDLE SCHOOL NERVES?



Boost your child's confidence.

Lots of middle-schoolers are hard on themselves. They might start the school year expecting to fail or worrying that other kids will think they're not smart. You don't need to downplay your child's challenges, but it's important to talk about your child's strengths and passions, too. Give praise in a way that boosts your child's confidence. And find ways to help your child stick with it when middle school gets tough.



Go over the schedule together.

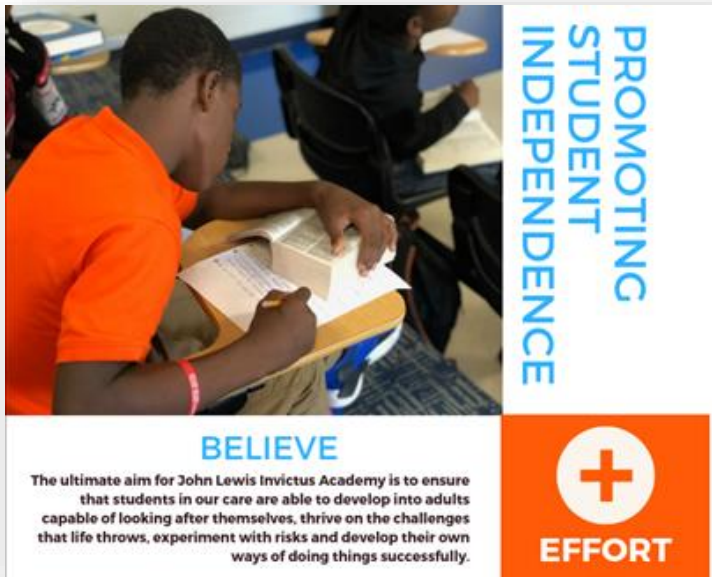
Talk through the class schedule together. Then visit the school and practice walking from class to class. (Kids returning to middle school might want another walk-through, too.) Either way, let your child know that most teachers are understanding when kids show up a few minutes late to class—especially during those first few days.

Talk about what's scary.

At this age, it can seem like kids think about themselves all the time. But that doesn't mean they're self-aware. They might not know yet what's making them nervous and they might have trouble expressing their feelings. Don't wait for your child to start the dialogue. Instead, get the conversation going yourself. If your child doesn't know or doesn't want to talk about it, don't push it. Now that you've opened the door, your child may come back to talk about it at another point.

Make an action plan.

Some kids worry they won't have anyone to sit with at lunch. Coming up with an action plan ahead of time can help your child feel more confident. For example, help your child learn more about teasing and how to help them cope with it. Keep in mind that you might not be able to come up with a solution for everything your child is worried about. In those cases, it can help to reach out to one of your child's teachers or another trusted adult for advice.



We are SO excited to meet each and every one of you. We look forward to a fun, safe and successful school year!



Sincerely,

The Faculty and Staff of
John Lewis Invictus Academy

#RENEW