

# Kirkland Middle School New Family Guide

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**Kirkland Middle School**

**PTSA<sup>®</sup>**

*everychild.onevoice.<sup>®</sup>*

# What parents & families need to know

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1. Elementary and middle school differences
2. How the school communicates with families
3. Get to know Kirkland Middle School staff
4. Keeping track of student work, assignments, grades and fees
5. Academics and tests during the school year
6. Sports and student activities
7. Get to know your PTSA
8. How to get involved
9. Frequent questions and glossary

# 1. Elementary and middle school differences

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## Elementary School

- **Curriculum:** Usually one classroom and one teacher for core classes.
- **Student responsibilities:** Students develop goals with the teacher and all (student/parent/teacher) work toward goals.
- **Teacher Communication:** Teachers send regular emails with updates on classwork and assignments. Direct parent/teacher communication is encouraged.
- **Student enrichment:** Most activities are PTSA run
- **Parent involvement:** Teacher's aide, Room parent, Art docent, etc.

## Middle School

- **Curriculum:** Many classrooms and many teachers. Students can choose electives.
- **Student responsibilities:** Students develop and manage their goals with guidance from the teachers.
- **Teacher Communication:** Parents can request a meeting with a teacher but direct communication from students is encouraged. Students work with counselors for their needs.
- **Student enrichment:** Most are school and student-run.
- **Parent Involvement:** limited in-class volunteers; mainly event-driven opportunities.

## 2. How the school communicates

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- **Curriculum Night** – opportunity to meet your student’s teachers and visit the classroom.
- **Principal’s Newsletter** – typically distributed twice a month, alternating with PTSA newsletter.
- **School Messenger emails** – all-school or all-grade email announcements usually from the office.
- **Teacher communication** – fewer emails from teachers to parents and more emphasis on student to teacher communication. Parents can also reach out to teachers via e-mail and can request meetings. Teachers appreciate students advocating for themselves before the parent steps in.
- **School website** ([kims.lwsd.org](http://kims.lwsd.org)) – Find information on club, sports, and activities, course catalogs, daily schedules, curriculum, school calendar, staff contacts and more.
- **PeachJar** – [online bulletin board](#)
- **Other** – in school video monitors, occasional paper flyers

# 3. Get to know KiMS staff

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- **Principal:** Niki Cassaro [ncassaro@lwsd.org](mailto:ncassaro@lwsd.org)
- **Associate Principal:** Julie Dixon  
[jdixon@lwsd.org](mailto:jdixon@lwsd.org)
- **Counselors:** 425-936-2423
  - Madison Granston (M-Z) [mgranston@lwsd.org](mailto:mgranston@lwsd.org)
  - Jordan White (A-L) [jowhite@lwsd.org](mailto:jowhite@lwsd.org)
- **Office Manager:** Wendy McCrain  
[wmccrain@lwsd.org](mailto:wmccrain@lwsd.org)
- **ASB & Associate Principal's Assistant:** Karla Parker [kparker@lwsd.org](mailto:kparker@lwsd.org)
- **Attendance:** 425-936-2421 Suzanne Lovas  
[sulovas@lwsd.org](mailto:sulovas@lwsd.org)
- **Athletic Director:** Megan Bricker  
[mbricker@lwsd.org](mailto:mbricker@lwsd.org)
- **Health Room:** Karter Boice [kboice@lwsd.org](mailto:kboice@lwsd.org)  
and Jess Gordon (Nurse) [jessgordon@lwsd.org](mailto:jessgordon@lwsd.org)
- **Librarian:** Liz Haggerty [ehaggerty@lwsd.org](mailto:ehaggerty@lwsd.org)
- **Registrar:** Olivia Whidby [owhidby@lwsd.org](mailto:owhidby@lwsd.org)
- See the KiMS Staff Directory:  
<https://kims.lwsd.org/about-us/staff-directory>

# 4. Keeping track of student work, assignments, grades and fees

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- **Microsoft Teams:** Used district-wide for virtual classrooms, assignments, and student communication.
- Additional systems such as ALEKS, WeNet, OneNote, Amplify, or Big Ideas Math may also be used for specific classes. Students receive training on these systems as needed.
- **Skyward:** Online gradebook and attendance system used by LWSD. [Skyward link](#)
- **School Fees:** Most fees can be paid at [payment.lwsd.org](https://payment.lwsd.org) or contact [Mrs. Parker](#). Some fees in middle school may include:
  - **ASB Fee** - Students who wish to participate in school sports and school clubs are required to pay an ASB fee (\$25).
  - **Classroom Supplies** - Some classes may require an additional fee to cover supplies.
  - **PE Clothes** - PE uniforms are required when enrolled in a PE class.
  - **Fines** - Fines may accrue due to late library books, laptop repair, etc.
  - **Lunch Accounts** - Student lunch accounts that can be replenished through the [MySchoolBucks website](#).
  - **Club or Team fees** - Fees to participate in competitive clubs and sports; these fees vary per activity.
  - **Spirit Wear** - Clothing with the school logo is typically sold once or twice per year. It is not required.
  - **Yearbook** - Annual yearbooks can be ordered for typically around \$35. They are optional, not required.

# 5. About academics & tests

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**Course Catalog:** The annual course catalog can be found on the school website. Students work with their parents, teachers, and counselors to determine the best classes each year. Parents must approve student selections. Class choices are typically submitted in January or February, final schedules are available in September at the beginning of the school year.

**Core Classes:** This term refers to classes that are required for all students to complete each year in order to move on to the next grade level including language arts, social studies, math and science.

**Elective Classes:** This term refers to classes that students can choose based on their specific interests. There are elective requirements that students must take each year. Electives give students an opportunity to explore subjects that they may not see during a typical school year. 6<sup>th</sup> graders get to choose between “Panther Academy” or a music elective.

**Curriculum and Textbooks:** textbooks are approved by the district; most books are available online. The library also has paper copies for checkout. Daily work and syllabus varies per class.

**Homework:** Homework is assigned daily but will vary by class. Parents can sign up via Skyward to [be notified of missing assignments](#). Grades can be checked on Skyward.

**Tests and Exams:** Tests will be administered periodically and will vary by class. Test and exam expectations will be clearly stated in the syllabus for each class.

**Standardized Tests:** Various standardized tests will be used throughout the school year. State testing is usually conducted in the spring and will be communicated through school communication channels.

**English Language Learning:** Classes are offered to empower new English-speaking students to both participate in classroom curriculum and attain English proficiency.

# 6. Sports and student activities

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- Sports(4 seasons) plus Intramural Session in January
  - Register for each season using [FinalForms website](#)
  - [Physical form](#) (completed by a doctor) are due once per year
  - Pay fees via [payments.lwsd.org](https://payments.lwsd.org) (\$75 with individual limit of \$150 and family limit of \$225)
  - ASB membership/card is required
  - More info and links: [kims.lwsd.org/activities/athletics](https://kims.lwsd.org/activities/athletics)
- Student Leadership or ASB, Associated Student Body
  - Coordinates service projects, events, socials and dances throughout the year. ASB advisor is Riley Roth [rroth@lwsd.org](mailto:rroth@lwsd.org)
- School / ASB clubs
  - Battle of the Books, Green Team, Yearbook, Math Olympiad, Builders Club, Technology Student Association. See [kims.lwsd.org/activities](https://kims.lwsd.org/activities)
- Honor Society
  - Open to 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders who meet criteria. See [kims.lwsd.org/activities/honor-society](https://kims.lwsd.org/activities/honor-society)



# 7. Get to know the PTSA

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Kirkland Middle School PTSA (Parent Teacher Student Association) supports the students, families and staff of Kirkland Middle School. We provide funding to the school and support programs to build community, facilitate communication and enrich educational experiences.

- **PantherGram newsletter:** twice a month email newsletter with latest dates and news. Sign up [bit.ly/KIMSnews](http://bit.ly/KIMSnews)
- **PTSA website & social media:** Bookmark or follow for timely updates. [kirklandmiddleptsa.org](http://kirklandmiddleptsa.org)
- **PTSA Membership meetings:** determine the activities; how funds are spent; attend parent education; questions and answers
- **Key PTA Programming:**
  - Back to school social, Panther Playhouse (drama program), Reflections Art Program, classroom grants for all teachers, staff appreciation, parent education events, and much more...
- **Become a Member:** We are stronger together. Join for as little as \$15 per year: [kirklandmiddleptsa.org](http://kirklandmiddleptsa.org)

# 7. Get to know the PTSA

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| • President           | Sarah Rock                    | <a href="mailto:president@kirklandptsa.org">president@kirklandptsa.org</a>         |
| • Secretary           | Cheryl Geels                  | <a href="mailto:secretary@kirklandptsa.org">secretary@kirklandptsa.org</a>         |
| • Treasurer           | Peter Madison                 | <a href="mailto:treasurer@kirklandptsa.org">treasurer@kirklandptsa.org</a>         |
| • VP Communication    | OPEN                          | <a href="mailto:communication@kirklandptsa.org">communication@kirklandptsa.org</a> |
| • VPs Outreach        | Hilary Pike & Karen Smith     | <a href="mailto:outreach@kirklandptsa.org">outreach@kirklandptsa.org</a>           |
| • VPs Programs        | Wendy Alston & Jessica Conver | <a href="mailto:programs@kirklandptsa.org">programs@kirklandptsa.org</a>           |
| • VP Ways & Means     | Heidi Wong                    | <a href="mailto:ways@kirklandptsa.org">ways@kirklandptsa.org</a>                   |
| • Advocacy Director   | Joel Ryan                     | <a href="mailto:advocacy@kirklandptsa.org">advocacy@kirklandptsa.org</a>           |
| • Membership Director | Joelle Harrison               | <a href="mailto:membership@kirklandptsa.org">membership@kirklandptsa.org</a>       |

# 8. Get involved

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While the volunteering opportunities at the middle school level are less available for parents, there are still many ways to get involved!

Some possible volunteer opportunities at the school may include:

- School events: laptop roll-out, picture day, health screening
- ASB Events
- Activity or Field trip chaperones
- PTSA programs: Reflections, Backpack awareness day, Staff Appreciation, Walkabout, Panther Playhouse.
- Have a program idea? Contact [president@kirklandptsa.org](mailto:president@kirklandptsa.org)

All volunteers (virtual or in person) must be approved by the Lake Washington School District. LWSD Volunteer Approval Process: <https://www.lwsd.org/get-involved/volunteering-in-lwsd/volunteer-application-process>

# 9. Frequently Asked Questions

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- 1. Attendance:** It is expected that students attend every school day and are on time. Vacations or other non-illness absences should be avoided during the school days. Please call the Attendance line at 425-936-2421 to excuse your student's absence. To find out more about reporting an Absence, arranging an Early Dismissal, reporting a Late Arrival, and more, see <https://kims.lwsd.org/kirkland-quicklinks/attendance>.
- 2. Bus Passes:** If your student needs to ride a bus after school, that he/she doesn't normally ride or to go home with a friend, written permission from a parent is required. Your student must bring a note from a parent/guardian to the office before school to receive a Bus Pass. KiMS bus drivers require a Bus Pass from the office, which lets them know the school has received written permission from the parent, acknowledging their student is going to a different location than normal after school.
- 3. Cell phones:** Students are only allowed to use their cell phone before and after school and during their lunch. Students are NOT allowed to use cell phones during class time, please do not call or text them during this time. This will result in confiscation of the phone.
- 4. Dress Code:** students are expected to wear clothing that is suitable for school and all school-related activities. Kirkland Middle School dress code ensures that student dress and appearance meet health and safety standards while respecting student expression and the learning environment.

# 9. Frequently Asked Questions continued

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5. **Medications:** ALL medication (prescription or over-the-counter drugs) must be brought in by the parent/guardian in a properly labeled pharmaceutical container with instructions matching your physician's order. Students requiring medication and/or epinephrine during school hours must have the proper Lake Washington School District form completed and turned into Health Room.
6. **Planners:** Students will be provided and required to use a student planner. If lost, a replacement planner can be purchased for \$5.00 in the Main Office.
7. **Schedules:** School starts at 8:35AM every day. It ends at 3:05PM on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays. It ends at 1:35PM on Wednesdays. See <https://kims.lwsd.org/studentsfamilies/daily-schedule>
8. **School Supplies:** See the list and tips at <https://kims.lwsd.org/studentsfamilies/parent-info>
9. Please see the Student Handbook for additional questions  
<https://kims.lwsd.org/studentsfamilies/student-info/student-handbook>

# What is ASB vs PTSA

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Some of the questions we receive most often are about the differences between ASB and PTSA. Both memberships directly benefit students in different ways.

PTSA	ASB
Through your PTSA membership, you support programs linked to academics and curriculum-relevant materials.	ASB membership supports athletics, student transportation to sporting events at another school, as well as initiatives that benefit the school's music department.
Parent and teacher-led organization that supports the school. Each PTA has its own budget and programs specific to the school it supports.	Student-led organization which promotes leadership. Works to give back, raise school spirit and student involvement in the community.
\$25 family or \$15 individual membership fee	\$25 student membership fee; required for sports

# 9. Glossary

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- **Why KiMS not KMS?** Because there are two K Middle Schools in Kirkland – Kirkland Middle School and Kamiakin Middle School.
- **ASB** – Associated Student Body. A student board consisting of six elected officers and a student representative council consisting of one student from each Panther Time class. This group works to promote leadership, initiative and change through the student body. They work in partnership with our leadership class to promote the wide variety of ASB activities.
- **ASB Card** – All students are issued an ID card. An ASB Fee is required to participate in sports & clubs. ASB funds go to support cultural, athletic, recreational, and social activities.
- **Big Give** – annual fundraiser for the KiMS PTSA
- **ELL** – English Language Learner, refers to students who are learning English as a second language.
- **LWSD** – Lake Washington School District
- **Panther Time** – Mixed-grade homeroom class held after 2<sup>nd</sup> period. Students will stay with the same Panther Time teacher for all 3 years. Meets daily except Wednesdays with a focus on community building, social emotional learning and academic assistance.
- **Power Hour** – After school homework and tutoring time supported by the PTSA.
- **SBA** – Smarter Balanced Assessment, the standardized tests used in Washington through 8<sup>th</sup> grade.
- **SEL** – Social Emotional Learning, the district, school and counseling department facilitate curriculum provided by the district to support student mental health and social skills development.
- **Skyward** – An LWSD website where families can check grades and attendance.