

WELCOME TO TALENT MIDDLE SCHOOL

Dear Parents:

The staff in the Phoenix-Talent School District loves and cares about all of our students/families and is committed to serving you as we enter another school year. Our District remains committed to “Excellence for Everyone”, which includes our students, staff and families. We know you are your child’s first and most important teacher. Working together we can achieve successful outcomes for all of our students.

Over the last 2 years, we know that parents have been tasked with many responsibilities and challenges when it has come to your child’s education. For 2021-22 school year, we are hopeful these burdens will be reduce or eliminated. Through the pandemic and devastating fires, our family outreach and connections have expanded and for that, we are grateful. Our district is committed to growing the connection and engagement from school to home.

Please feel free to contact my office to schedule an appointment with me or contact any of our schools to schedule an appointment with a principal. Together, let’s rise up to meet our challenges with clarity, calm, compassion, and courage.

Brent Barry
Superintendent

A Parent's Guide to Talent Middle School

Our Program is built on the following beliefs:

- The middle school child is unique.
- TMS will provide a safe, open, and respectful environment in which to work and learn.
- All people are responsible for the choices they make and for accepting responsibility for their actions.
- Learning will be lifelong, enjoyable, and meaningful for both students and staff.
- To promote excellence, staff, students, and parents will work together to create programs designed to meet the needs of the whole child.

We invite you to work with us as we continue to refine and improve our program to better meet the needs of our students.

General Information...

What are the school office hours?

Office personnel will generally be available to help you in person or over the phone between the hours of 7:30 AM and 4:00 PM. However, school meetings may cause these hours to vary occasionally.

What are school hours for students?

Our day runs from 9:40 to 3:10 on Mondays, and from 8:40 to 3:10 the rest of the week. Students have access to the main school building at 8:25 (9:25 on Mondays). Students arriving prior to 8:25 need to wait in the commons area. Supervision of the commons begins at 8:15 so please **do not** have your child come to school prior to that time (unless special arrangements have been made).

Who should I speak to if I have questions about...

Attendance?	Marina McCambridge, Attendance Clerk
Homework requests?	Marina McCambridge, Attendance Clerk
Progress reports?	TBA, Student Services Clerk
Lunch Program?	Julee Lockett, Secretary
Health Issues?	Carrie McDonald, School Nurse
Sports Issues?	Lisa Rullman, Assistant Principal

General Concerns?	Kent Vallier, Principal
	Lisa Rullman Assistant Principal
	Misty Hutsell, School Liaison Officer
Bus Problems?	Jonel Todd, Bus Supervisor
Family Issues?	Misty Hutsell, School Liaison Officer
My child's schedule?	Lisa Rullman, Assistant Principal

What's the best way to contact a teacher?

Teachers work a minimum of an 8 hour day. With the exception of a prep period and lunch, they are with students from 8:40 to 3:10. The easiest way to contact a teacher is to call the school office and leave a voice mail message for the teacher. The teacher will return your call at their earliest convenience. You may also contact teachers by email. Our email address pattern is firstname.lastname@phoenix.k12.or.us for example, aaron.santi@phoenix.k12.or.us.

What should I do if it looks as if school might be closed due to inclement weather or an emergency?

When there is an emergency closure, parents/guardians will be contacted by phone and/or email through our Automated Notification System. You may also listen to the radio or watch our local TV stations, beginning at 6:30 am for information about delayed openings or school closures due to inclement weather. You may also check the district website www.phoenix.k12.or.us. Please **DO NOT call the school office**. School telephone lines must be left open for school district information. Occasionally, an emergency may cause the school to be closed earlier than usual. It is important that you provide instructions in advance to your student(s) as to where to go and/or what to do in this type of emergency.

What should I do in case of a threatening situation or an emergency at the school?

Even though the chance of a life-threatening situation occurring at school is remote, we have worked in collaboration with the Talent Police Department to develop such an emergency plan for TMS. While we understand the emotional duress parents must feel when a situation like this occurs, past experience has shown that student safety is enhanced when parents DO NOT come to school, thus allowing the police and staff to work with less confusion.

Therefore, we would ask for our parents to do the following should such an emergency occur:

- Wait for a message with information and instructions from our Automated Notification System.
- Listen to the radio or TV for information
- DO NOT COME TO OR CALL THE SCHOOL
- Make sure your student knows how to contact you. We will have students call and leave a message as soon as possible.
- Parents/Guardians will be notified as to the location to pick up your student(s).

What is the lunch program at TMS?

Students may bring their lunch or purchase a lunch, provided by Sodexo Food services, in the school cafeteria. Selections include; a daily entree, hamburgers, pizza, deli bar, or Mexican/Chinese food options. A full salad bar is available to all who purchase a meal. In accordance with our healthy lunch program, a vegetarian entree is offered daily. A La Carte items (cash only) such as baked chips, fruit drinks, cookies, cheese and crackers, etc. are also available. Prices are posted in the cafeteria. A breakfast program is also provided each morning.

Students will be given a number to access their account in the computer system. Money deposited in lunch accounts may only be used to purchase school meals.

Free and reduced lunches are available upon approval of completed request forms. Lunches can also be earned by working in the cafeteria.

The district's meal charging requirements are as follows:

A charge account for students paying full or reduced price for meals may be established with the district. Students or parents/guardians of students may prepay meal costs. All students will be fed daily, upon request, with a USDA reimbursable meal no matter their meal charge balance. Nutrition staff will not share with a student their balance while serving them a meal.

If a student's meal charge account exceeds five or more meals:

1. School staff will determine if the student has been identified as being categorically eligible for free meals. The following students are categorically eligible for free meals:

- (1) Students who meet the definition of homeless, runaway, or migrant children;
- (2) Foster children under the legal responsibility of a foster care agency or court; and
- (3) Children from households that receive benefits under the:
 - i. Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP);
 - ii. Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF); or
 - iii. Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDIR).

2. If the student is not categorically eligible for free meals, then district staff must make at least two attempts to contact the student's parents or guardians to have them fill out a Confidential Family Application for Free and Reduced Meals.

3. If student is not categorically eligible for free meals, and the student’s parents or guardians have not submitted a Free and Reduced-price School Meals Application, then district staff must make reasonable efforts to contact the student’s parents or guardians and offer their assistance completing the application.

A student’s negative meal account balance at the end of the current school year will be transferred to their school account. The negative meal account balance will be the parent or guardian’s responsibility to pay. For more information regarding meal charging, please see board policy EFAA-AR.

What types of fundraising activities occur at TMS?

TMS supports a large number of clubs and school activities through various fundraisers. As a school, we try to coordinate our efforts so fundraisers occur occasionally during the year, not all at once. No child is ever required to participate in a fundraiser even if he/she directly benefits from the sale. Students should only try and sell items to people they know; we do not want or encourage students to go door to door to sell items.

Our major fundraiser is a snack and magazine drive held each October. Students sell snacks and magazine renewals and subscriptions with about 40% of the proceeds going to the school. Our TMS PTA will also organize additional fundraisers throughout the year. Additionally, the PTA sells spirit wear through the office. Money raised from these sales goes to purchase technology and other items for classroom and student use.

Clubs and teams may also do fundraisers during the year. Our Leadership Club and some Advisory classes often run fundraising events and sales during the year. These groups may also sponsor an activity night during the year to raise funds.

The Leadership Club has also been very involved in raising money for Doernbecher Hospital's *Kids Making Miracles* campaign as well as other community projects. They will have several fundraising activities throughout the year.

What sports are available at TMS?

Seventh and eighth graders may compete interscholastically with other middle schools and junior highs in the valley. There is a \$35 charge for participating in each varsity sport (family maximum is \$200, including fees paid for PHS students).

Sports available are:

Cross Country (6 th , 7 th , 8 th) (Co-Ed)	September-November
Girls Volleyball (7 th , 8 th)	September-November
Football (7 th , 8 th) (Co-Ed)	September-November
Boys Basketball (7 th , 8 th)	November-January
Wrestling (6 th , 7 th , 8 th) (Co-Ed)	January-March
Girls Basketball (7 th , 8 th)	January-March
Track (6 th , 7 th , 8 th) (Co-Ed)	March-May

Complete schedules for each sport are available in the main office and on our website during each particular season.

Is there a sports eligibility policy at TMS?

Participation in activities and sports is very important for students at TMS. These activities are important for learning at this age. We also recognize that our 6th graders are not accustomed to meeting eligibility requirements, while our 8th graders need to prepare for the more stringent high school requirements. Because of this, we have a graduated policy which allows all 6th graders to be eligible, while our 7th and 8th graders must meet certain academic and behavioral criteria. Specific criteria and policies are available in our Athletics Handbook.

What social events are held at TMS?

Many special activities are held during the school year. Some are during the instructional day while others happen after school or during the evening. These events are well-chaperoned by staff and parents. Social events held after school or during the evening are for TMS students only. Attendance at these activities is a privilege that may be withheld by the school for disciplinary or other reasons.

Your child must be in attendance at school on the day of the activity and all school rules (including dress standards) will be enforced. **It is very important that your child be picked up at the conclusion of the activity (evening activities end at 8:00 pm or earlier)** as direct supervision will not be provided beyond the ending time. Students not following the rules in place for the activity may lose the privilege of attending future events. Should the need arise, devices such as a passive alcohol sensor may be used.

What is meant by directory information?

Certain information, known as directory information, may be released by the school from time to time. The following types of information may be designated as directory information: the student's name, address, telephone number, date and place of birth, major interests, participation in school activities and sports.

At TMS, typical information released will be names for honor roll, sports, special activities, and student recognition.

You may, by notice to the school, prevent the school from releasing any or all such information relating to the child without prior written consent. However, copies of the District records should be readily available for examination by authorized parties.

If my child is injured at school, will the district insurance cover my expenses?

The district does not provide medical accident insurance for students for school-related injuries. However, the district does make available low cost student accident insurance for voluntary purchase. If you do not have medical insurance, we highly recommend purchasing this insurance for your child. We work hard to insure your child's safety, however accidents can and do happen. Accident-related injuries to uninsured students may cause financial hardship for families. All costs related to paramedic transportation, hospitalization, x-ray, examination and/or treatment are the sole responsibility of the family.

Will my child be allowed to leave the school grounds during the day?

No! TMS has a closed campus and once a student arrives at school he/she is expected to stay on the school grounds. Students leaving campus without permission are likely to receive disciplinary consequences. This also includes the lunch periods. Students living near the school may go home for lunch if a note is brought, but for safety reasons students will not be allowed to go to a friend's house for lunch.

However, under certain circumstances, a child may leave during the day. A parent, guardian, or an adult listed on the registration form may come to school at any time and check out a student through the attendance office. Relatives or other adults not listed on the registration form may not check out a student without a signed permission note from the parent.

If your child needs to leave school for an appointment, he/she needs to bring a note signed by the parent or guardian to the attendance office. Students are required to sign out when they leave school and to sign in when they return. The office monitors this list.

How do I send a message to my child during the school day?

If you need to get a message to your student please call the office before 2:00 pm. After that time we can't guarantee the message will be received. If you need to speak with your child during the day, he or she will be allowed to use the telephone at their teacher's convenience. Exceptions to both these guidelines will be made in the case of emergencies.

Every time we interrupt a classroom to give a student a message or call a student to the office, it causes a disruption in the lesson and we would appreciate your help in reducing the number of these incidences. We know and understand there are times that you need to get a message to your child or speak with him/her during the day. Unless it is a serious emergency, please allow our office staff to send the message near the end of the period and/or have your child return your call during a break or between classes. Thank you for your cooperation with this important matter!

What if my child needs to take medication at school?

If your child needs to take medication at school, a parent or guardian must fill out a medication authorization form. This form can be picked up in the office and must be filled out **prior** to any medication being dispensed. All medications are to be brought to the office by a parent/guardian and kept there. Parents may pick them up at the end of the day to take home if necessary. Prescriptions must be in the prescription bottles with dosages on the label. Over-the-counter medications such as aspirin, Tylenol, allergy medications, cough drops, etc. must be in their original containers that include the dosages. Contact our nurse, Carrie McDonald, for more information. **By law, medication left at school at the end of the year must be disposed of, so don't forget to pick up any leftover medication in June.**

Policies and Procedures...

Attendance

Regular school attendance is critical to student academic achievement. Regular attendance is a habit and pattern established in school and carried into the student's adult work life. We encourage parents, for the benefit of their child's education, to support regular school attendance. Oregon law states that a child between 7 and 18 years of age, who has not completed the 12th grade, is required to regularly attend a public full-time school of the school district in which the child resides (ORS 339.010). Failure to send and maintain your child in regular attendance is a Class C violation, which may result in a citation.

Attendance Process:

Call the attendance office at 541-535-1552 prior to any absence. You can leave a message at any time. If that is not possible, call and excuse the absence within 48 hours. If it is not called in, it will count as an unexcused absence. Students must be in attendance at school for the full day in order to participate in athletic or activity practices or competitive events (a student can still practice if they have pre-arranged a medical appointment that is not longer than one class period). Approved school activities are not counted as absences.

Excused Absences

The following absences will be considered excused:

- Illness of the student

- Medical appointment (with late start on all Mondays, we encourage parents to make student appointments on Monday mornings, non-school days, or after school in the afternoon)
- Death in the family
- Excused Pre-Arranged (see below)
- Religious observance

Prearranged Absences are arranged prior to the student's time away from school after deemed appropriate by the school's administrator and satisfactory arrangements have been made in advance of the absence. In accordance with State law, a prearranged absence may be denied, but they may be prearranged as excused if they meet the following criteria:

- Prolonged student medical issue (requires medical note)
- Serious illness of a member of the student's family
- Family emergency or bereavement
- Legal/court obligations
- Religious observation

Medical, Dental and Legal Appointments

Every effort should be made to schedule appointments outside the school day. To excuse an absence for a medical or dental appointment, please call or send your student with a note to the office on the day of the appointment. The school requires confirmation from the medical practitioner stating the date and time of the appointment. Legal appointments require confirmation from the court clerk. Students will be excused only for class periods missed during the appointment time, taking into account transportation to and from said appointment. The absence will not be excused until confirmation is received. The confirmation must be provided by the next school day. Missing class for driver education/tests, off-campus lunches, hair and personal beauty appointments, vehicle repairs, babysitting or other appointments that are not of a medical or legal nature will be considered unexcused.

Unexcused Absences

Students may not miss school, and will be marked unexcused, for the following reasons (not an exhaustive list):

- Vacation
- Sleeping in or missing the bus
- Providing care for younger or ill siblings/family members
- Driver education and/or tests
- Off-campus lunches
- Hair and personal beauty appointments
- Vehicle repairs or car problems
- Sports activities that are not sponsored by the school

- Other appointments that are not of a medical or legal nature will be considered unexcused.

Truancy Process

Any student not meeting the requirements for school attendance (attending at least 90% of the school days) as defined by ORS 339.065 will be considered truant. Please note, truancy (10% absenteeism or more) may be as little as one excused or unexcused absence per month.

Step 1: Truancy warning letter with attendance summary (and phone call when appropriate)

Step 2: Mandatory attendance meeting (interventions to help support student attendance)

Step 3: Truancy citation, court appearance and court mandated attendance agreement

Step 4: Truancy fine for failing to meet court's mandated attendance agreement

Oregon State law (OAR 581.023.0006) requires the district to withdrawal the student from school when a student reaches 10 consecutive days absent (excused or unexcused).

What is the tardy policy at TMS?

It's **very important** that students make every effort to arrive at school/class on time as entering a class after it has started can disrupt the learning process for the entire class. A student will be considered tardy if the student is not in the classroom when the tardy bell rings. Students who have three or more tardies throughout the quarter will be required to conference with the Student Services' Staff. Students who arrive at school after 8:40 will be considered tardy and will need to check in at the attendance office.

If my child is absent may I request homework?

Yes, but only on or after the second day of absence. Requests for homework should be made directly to the student's teachers, preferably via email. It is often easiest to send a group email to all of your student's teachers to simplify things for yourself and to facilitate communication between the teachers. Homework will be available to be picked up between 3:10 and 4:00 P.M. of the day following the request.

May another person or I attend classes with my child?

Parents or guardians are always welcome to visit but should check in with the office and obtain a visitor's pass before going to a classroom. Other visitors will need to be approved by the principal with at least two day's advance notice. There are times such as the end of the quarter, before a vacation, during testing, and/or near the end of the year when visitors are not appropriate. Please do not have your child ask to bring a visitor at these times.

Picking up my child during school hours?

Students will only be released to parent/guardians or individuals listed as emergency contacts on the student registration form. Releasing a student to someone else will require written permission from the parent or guardian. To minimize disruption to the critical instructional times of a class period, we ask that parents do not pull their child the first or last 10 minutes of class.

Do I need to contact the school if we move within the district?

Yes! If any change is made to the information filled out on your child's registration form, please let us know immediately. This includes phone numbers, addresses, emergency contacts, doctors, etc. This information is vital in case of an emergency and needs to be as current as possible.

What if we are leaving the area?

Please contact the office prior to the date your child will check out of school. We need to make arrangements for transfer of records, etc. Students will need to empty their locker of all personal belongings, return texts and library books, and check out with their teachers before leaving.

What if I move into a nearby school district during the year and wish my child to remain at TMS?

If a student's legal residence changes during the school year, and the student wishes to remain enrolled in the district for the remainder of the school year, the district office must be notified and the school board must give consent to allow the student to complete the school year.

How are the video surveillance cameras used at TMS?

Talent Middle School uses video cameras to ensure the health, welfare, and safety of our students and visitors. Cameras are triggered by movement and are located both inside and outside the building to record activity in hallways and other common areas 24 hours a day. A monitor in the office allows us to monitor outside entrances around the school. The recordings are reviewed when a potential violation of Board policies, building rules, or law has been reported. Violators may be subject to disciplinary action and the recordings may become part of a student's educational record.

Are students permitted to bring cell phones to school?

Yes, however it is important to remember that it is a privilege, not a right for students to bring their cell phones (or other electronic communication devices) to school. Students are permitted to bring their cell phones to school and keep them on their person throughout the school day. They may use their phones during their lunch period (other than when they are in the cafeteria) and after school. At all other times cell phones must be turned off. Cell phones are never permitted to be used in restrooms or locker rooms. Students using electronic devices to record and/or electronically share fights or other inappropriate/illegal activity will be subject to discipline. Each teacher will establish rules for when, if, and how student cell phones may be used in his/her class and will communicate those expectations to students at the beginning of the course.

If a student violates school or classroom policy with respect to cell phone usage, he/she will be subject to the following consequences:

1. For the first offense the student will be required to surrender his/her phone to the office until the end of the school day when it may be reclaimed by the student.
2. For a second offense the student will be required to surrender his/her phone to the office and a parent will be required to pick it up from the office.
3. For a third offense a parent will be required to pick up the phone and then the student will be required to check his/her phone in with the office at the beginning of the day and check it out at the end of the day for a period of 30 days.

4. Any further offenses (including refusal to check phone in/out) will result in a minimum of a 30-day suspension of privileges to bring a phone to school.
5. In any case, if a student refuses to surrender his/her phone to a staff member when requested, he/she will be subject to a minimum 30-day suspension of privileges to bring a phone to school.
6. If a student uses his/her phone in a restricted area (restroom or locker room), he/she will be subject to a minimum of a two-day suspension.

Are there items my child should not bring to school?

Yes! Please help us by monitoring what your child brings to school. Anything that is illegal, unsafe or a nuisance should not be brought to school. Nuisance items include pets, toys, stuffed animals, electronic devices, rubber bands, squirting devices, etc. Many problems arise when these types of items appear at school. Bringing them to school can lead to losing the item due to carelessness or theft and often results in student services personnel spending significant time investigating the situation. While we ask that these types of items be left at home, if your child chooses to bring them to school, please know they face the risk of losing them. Most thefts occur when a student leaves an item in a PE locker and does not lock it, or when the item is in a backpack that is left in the hall or in an empty classroom. While lockers are generally a secure place to keep items, we have had lockers broken into. And, despite being asked otherwise, students often share combinations with each other and the combination may be passed on to others. Please help us by discussing this issue with your child and monitor what he/she brings to school.

What is the dress code at TMS?

Students are expected to dress simply, neatly and in a manner that does not create disruptions. The following are the dress expectations for TMS students. All students shall:

- Wear a shirt/top that is not overly revealing.
- Wear pants, shorts, a skirt or dress that are not overly revealing.
- Wear hard-soled shoes that provide protection against rocks or other sharp objects on the bottom.

Additionally, students will refrain from wearing any clothing or accessory that promotes alcohol/drug use or other illegal activity, is profane, or is sexual in nature. Students may wear hats or other head coverings but hoods are not allowed to be worn in the school as they make identifying students more difficult when seeing them in the halls or when on camera during an investigation. All dress standards apply to evening activities as well. If your child is wearing an outfit that is considered inappropriate by an adult at the school, they may call you to bring appropriate clothes to school or choose to exchange the top or bottom with an appropriate article provided by the school for the day.

Does TMS have a policy on gangs?

Our district has defined a gang as a group of two or more persons whose purpose is to commit illegal acts or whose activities can cause a substantial disruption with school or school activities. TMS does not allow gangs or gang membership and therefore will not permit students to:

- Wear, possess, use, distribute, display or sell any clothing, jewelry, emblem, badge, symbol, sign or other things that suggest membership or gang affiliation.
- Say or do anything (gestures, handshakes, etc.) that suggests membership or gang affiliation.
- Promote gangs or gang activities by soliciting membership, intimidating others, encouraging physical violence, committing illegal acts, etc.

If your child's actions or dress lead us to believe he/she is involved in gang activity, we will contact you immediately to discuss the situation. Sometimes a student will imitate gang dress and/or behavior even though he/she is not a member of a gang. This is strongly discouraged at TMS and students falling into this category will be dealt with in a similar manner.

Working Together...

What is the basic structure of Talent Middle School?

Talent Middle School students will be assigned to six classes that they will attend every day. Four of these classes (Language Arts, Math, Science [Health for 6th Graders], and Social Studies) are year-long classes. PE is also a year-long class for 6th and 7th graders, with an Anti-Bullying/Harassment as well as Sexual Education curriculum being infused into the 7th grade PE class. 8th Grade students will take a year-long PE/Health combination class. The remaining students' schedules will be filled with an elective class. Classes will be 51 minutes in length Tuesday thru Friday and 41 minutes on Monday. Students will also attend a 25 minute advisory class during 4th period each day.

How much homework can I expect my child to have?

While the amount of homework will vary from class to class and day to day, your child will usually have some homework every day, especially in math. Thirty to sixty minutes each night should be adequate time to complete the homework.

You can help monitor your child's homework by looking through his or her calendar/organizer. Students are expected to use this book to keep track of their assignments.

If your child regularly claims to have no homework, you might want to contact your child's teachers or request a progress report. In most cases, low grades are the result of not doing the assigned work.

How do I monitor my child's progress on line?

At the beginning of the year, all parents will receive a user name and password that will allow them to check their child's attendance and grades through our on-line program, PowerSchool. At this site, you may read the school bulletin, sign up for emailed progress/attendance reports, browse through your child's grades for all subjects, and easily contact teachers through email. The site can be accessed through our district website: www.phoenix.k12.or.us

What can I do to help my child be successful at TMS?

- Be informed, involved, and keep the lines of communication open between home and school. By working together we can make your child's years at TMS successful ones.
- Stay informed! Read this handbook carefully, it will give you the big picture of how things operate at TMS. Also read your child's handbook; it is part of the spiral bound calendar/organizer that each child receives and will give you more information about school policies and procedures. Regularly check your child's progress through the PowerSchool website.
- Use the TMS website located at www.phoenix.k12.or.us and then navigating to the TMS pages.
- Get involved! Join the TMS PTA. Volunteer in the classrooms.
- Let us know how we're doing! If you have questions, concerns, or compliments, give us a call or send an email. We want to hear from you.

- Get acquainted with the school staff early in the year. Meet your child's teachers by coming to our back to school night on September 21, 2021. Plan to attend our student-led conferences on November 22-24, 2021. Take time daily to talk with your child about what is happening at school.
- Support school assignments by assisting with projects, gathering resources, and making sure your child has all the needed supplies.

My child's not doing well at school. What can I do?

A child has a greater chance of doing well at school when the school and the parent(s) or guardian(s) work together. If you have concerns about your child's progress at TMS please consider doing one of the following:

- Check over your child's calendar/organizer. They should be recording assignments in it on a daily basis. If this is not happening, encourage your child to start doing so.
- Sign your student up for ASAP (After School Academic Program). This takes place Tues.-Thur. from 3:15 pm – 4:15 pm. There is busing provided for most addresses and you must sign your student up each week by contacting our main office.
- Contact the teacher of the class(es) involved.
- Parents and students may view student grades and attendance online. Computers at school or the public library are an option for those without Internet service at home.
- Let our School Liaison Officer/Student Manager know if your child tells you about a problem at school or seems unhappy about school. Set up an appointment to discuss your child's progress at school. At this meeting, the possibility of daily progress reports, extra help from an instructional aide, and/or a behavioral or academic contract may be discussed.
- Request a staffing be held. This is an opportunity for you to speak to all of your child's teachers at one time. Because of the number of people involved, a staffing is somewhat difficult to set up. It is usually used if the above suggestions have not been successful.

Are there active parent groups at TMS?

Yes! The TMS PTA is a support organization made up of parents, staff, and administration. Through its fundraising efforts, the PTA provides support for the school by helping fund additional technology, field trips, summer workshops, classroom materials and much more. PTA activities include helping at registration, and at 8th grade recognition. Another important aspect of the PTA is to promote parent involvement at school. The PTA generally meet at the school at 7 PM on the second Tuesday of the month. To get involved, contact President Robin Parker through the school office.

Can I be involved in TMS's Site Council?

Yes! Talent Middle School's site council meets on a regular basis. The primary goal of this council is to help guide school improvement. If you are interested in serving on our council, or in receiving information about the council's activities, please contact the school office.

Does TMS make accommodations for individuals with disabilities?

Yes! The Phoenix-Talent Schools is an Equal Opportunity Employer and, in accordance with federal and state legislation, does not discriminate on the basis of race, sex, religion, age, national origin, or marital status, physical or mental disability in employment practices or education programs.

If you need special accommodations because of a disability, please contact our office manager Susy Schofield, at 535-1552 and give at least 2 days notice.

Student Conduct and Discipline...

What is the discipline policy at TMS?

Oregon State law has established the following guidelines for school discipline:

OAR 581-21-055: Students shall comply with the written rules of the school district board, pursue the prescribed course of study, submit to the lawful authority of teachers and school officials, and conduct themselves in an orderly fashion.

Students shall be liable to discipline, suspension, or expulsion for misconduct, including but not limited to:

- (a) Theft;
- (b) Disruption of the school;
- (c) Damage or destruction of private property on school premises or during a school activity,
- (d) Assault or threats of harm;
- (e) Unauthorized use of weapons or dangerous instruments;
- (f) Unlawful use of drugs, narcotics, or alcoholic beverages;
- (g) Persistent failure to comply with rules of the lawful directions of teachers or school officials

Based on this law, TMS has established guidelines for behavior at TMS. All rules are based on the following three expectations: 1) *Students will be **SAFE** by observing school and classroom rules,* 2) *Students will display **RESPECT** for and courtesy to each other, staff, visitors and our building* and 3) *Students will be **RESPONSIBLE** by attending class regularly and arriving promptly, taking the necessary supplies to class and complete assignments on time.* These expectations are posted in each room to help students make responsible decisions about their behavior.

Students are also expected to follow these guidelines at all school activities regardless where the activity is being held. Our overall school rules are:

Be Safe

- * Keep hands, feet, and objects to self

Be Respectful

- * Follow directions of staff the first time given
- * Speak and act respectful to staff and peers

Be Responsible

- * Be in class on time, prepared with materials
- * Stay on task and use class time appropriately

In most cases, the initial responsibility for discipline rests with the classroom teacher. Each teacher has established a discipline plan that clearly states both the rules for that classroom and the consequences for not following the rules.

If misbehavior persists the teacher will first meet with the student to discuss classroom expectations and help the student develop a plan to improve. If the problem continues, the parent or guardian will be contacted to ask for help in resolving the problem. If none of the above actions bring about the desired change, the student will be referred to the administration for possible further disciplinary action.

Students who consistently display inappropriate behavior may be placed on a behavioral contract. If this is the case with your child, you will be asked to come to school to help design a plan that addresses the behaviors in question.

Sometimes a student misbehaves in a way that s/he is sent immediately to the administration. This misbehavior can include fighting, vandalism, abusive language or gestures, refusal to follow directions, or use of drugs, alcohol or tobacco.

What consequences can my child expect if he or she misbehaves?

Consequences used by the classroom teacher for inappropriate behavior generally include calls and conferences with parents, detentions, and/or work around the school. If a child is referred to the office for misbehavior, consequences may include parental contact, a time out period, a verbal reprimand or warning, before school, after school, or lunch detention, work details, Saturday School, in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, and/or expulsion. Serious violations may also include the involvement of local law enforcement agencies.

What is Saturday School?

Saturday School is a four-hour detention period held approximately one Saturday morning per month from 8 AM to 12 noon. It is a consequence most commonly used for offenses such as serious insubordination or disrespect, skipping classes or school, or failure to make up detentions after repeated warnings. If your child is assigned to Saturday School, you will be notified by a phone call and by a written contract your child will bring home for your signature. Failure to attend Saturday School can result in an in-school suspension.

What is the school's and district's policy on harassment and bullying?

Harassment of students by another student, by a student to a District staff member, or by a member of the staff to a student, will not be tolerated in this school or in this District. Harassment by Board members, parents, vendors and others in this School District is prohibited.

Harassment on the basis of race, religion, sex, national origin, disability, parental or marital status or age means conduct of a verbal or physical nature that is designed to embarrass, distress, agitate, disturb or trouble students. Demeaning jokes, stories or activities directed at the student are considered forms of harassment. Sexual harassment means unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature. Examples: verbal or written harassment or abuse; repeated remarks to a person with sexual or demeaning implications; unwelcome touching. For more information about the District's sexual harassment policy please see Board Policy GBN/JBA. For information on the sexual harassment complaint procedure, see Policy GBN/JBA-AR.

The School and/or District will promptly and reasonably investigate allegations of harassment. Any student who has knowledge of or feels he/she is a victim of harassment should immediately report his/her concerns to a staff member, the building administration, or the Superintendent if the principal is the subject of the complaint. Violation of this policy may result in discipline, up to and including suspension and expulsion. The School/District has the authority to report students in violation of this policy to law enforcement officials. Retaliation against a student who has filed a harassment complaint or assisted or participated in a harassment investigation or proceeding is prohibited. A student who is found to have retaliated against another in violation of this policy will be subject to discipline up to and including suspension and expulsion.

What is TMS's policy on drugs, alcohol, and tobacco?

We believe students have a right to attend school in a safe environment conducive to learning. Since drug, alcohol, and tobacco possession or use is illegal and interferes with both effective learning and the healthy development of adolescents, the school has a fundamental legal and ethical obligation to prevent its use and to maintain a drug-free environment. To help maintain this environment devices such as a passive alcohol sensor may be used on occasion.

Students found possessing or using drugs or alcohol at school or a school activity will face serious disciplinary action including the involvement of law enforcement agencies. Students found possessing or using tobacco will be ticketed and receive consequences through the juvenile justice system. School consequences may also be issued.

What happens if my child is suspended from school?

Suspension is a serious consequence reserved for misbehaviors including but not limited to fighting, physical, verbal or cyber harassment, serious defiance or disrespect, using or bringing illegal items to school, vandalism, etc. If your child is suspended, you will be contacted at home or work and be asked to pick your child up from school as soon as possible. Students are generally allowed to make up schoolwork for time missed during the suspension but they may not attend or participate in any school activities such as sports, dances, parties, etc.

All suspensions at TMS are done under Oregon law (OAR 581-21-065). This means suspensions will generally be no longer than 10 school days, a written notice of suspension will be given, students will have an opportunity to give their explanation of the situation, parents will be notified, and schoolwork for a suspended student may be made up in accordance with Oregon law. A suspension may be appealed, but will not be postponed pending appeal. A copy of the law will be available upon request.

Are students ever expelled from Talent Middle School?

Yes, but generally as a last resort in cases of repeated or extreme misbehavior. Oregon law (OAR 581-21-070) sets the guidelines used for expulsion. These include the right to written notice (delivered in person or by certified mail) that states the charges and supporting evidence, the right to a hearing before the hearings officer (usually the Superintendent), the right to representation by counsel, the right to present evidence, and the right to appeal the expulsion to the school board. The district offers expelled students alternative educational opportunities.

What if my child needs to ride a different bus or get off at a stop other than the usual one?

For safety reasons, students are expected to ride the same bus every day and get off at the stop closest to their home. If your child needs to ride a different bus or get off at another stop, a bus pass is needed. To get a bus pass, your child needs to bring a note signed by you to the secretary in the main office and one will be issued, this is best done when students first arrive at school. In the note you will need to indicate the address of your student's destination which will be included on the bus pass. Bus drivers are not allowed to accept passengers without school notification, so please remind your child to get a bus pass when needed.

What are Oregon Bus Rules? (Rules governing pupils riding school buses must be kept posted in a conspicuous place in all school buses)

OREGON BUS REGULATIONS (from OAR 581-53-010) are as follows:

1. Pupils being transported are under authority of the bus driver.
2. Fighting, wrestling, or boisterous activity is prohibited on the bus.
3. Students shall use the emergency door only in case of emergency.
4. Pupils shall be on time for the bus both morning and evening.
5. Pupils shall not bring animals, firearms, weapons, or other potentially hazardous material on the bus.
6. Pupils shall remain seated while bus is in motion.
7. Pupils may be assigned seats by the bus driver.
8. When necessary to cross the road, pupils shall cross in front of the bus or as instructed by the bus driver.
9. Pupils shall not extend their hands, arms, or heads through bus windows.
10. Pupils shall have written permission to leave the bus other than at home or school.

11. Pupils shall converse in normal tones; loud or vulgar language is prohibited.
12. Pupils shall not open or close windows without permission of driver.
13. Pupils shall keep the bus clean, and must refrain from damaging it.
14. Pupils shall be courteous to the driver, to fellow pupils, and passersby.
15. Pupils who refuse to obey promptly the directions of the driver or refuse to obey regulations may forfeit their privilege to ride on the buses.

What if my child misbehaves on the bus?

Riding the school bus is a privilege and disciplinary action will be taken when students choose not to follow the bus rules. Video cameras may be used on the buses to help monitor student behavior; students will not be notified when the camera is being used.

Bus citations are given to students when their behavior is not in compliance with bus rules. If your child receives a citation, he or she will need your signature before he or she may ride the bus again. Generally, the first ticket is a warning, the second one will result in a short suspension from the bus, the third one in a longer suspension; the fourth one can result in a possible removal from the bus for an extended period to time. Major infractions may result in immediate loss of bus riding privileges.

The Phoenix-Talent School District contracts its bus service through First Student. If you wish to contact a bus driver or speak to the bus supervisor (Jonel Todd), please call them at 541-201-3153.

What is the 8th Grade Recognition Program?

The culminating experience for our students here at TMS is our 8th Grade Recognition. This ceremony allows us to celebrate the accomplishments of three years of hard work here at the middle school, and to wish our outgoing 8th graders well as we send them off to the high school. It is a great celebration for our students, our staff, and students' families and friends. This event occurs each year on the second-to-last day of school at 7:00 p.m. in our large gym.

In order to be eligible to participate in the ceremony 8th grade students need to have met the following criteria:

- A cumulative Grade Point Average (GPA) of 1.5 or above for their 8th grade year.
- Fewer than 10 behavior referrals and/or suspensions during the 8th grade year. There is a possibility that one or more behavior referrals can be expunged from a student's record through a restorative dialogue and process with the staff member who wrote the referral.

Parents of students who fail to meet the requirements to participate in 8th Grade Recognition will be informed of that fact the week before the ceremony. Parents/guardians can always check on their student's progress regarding these standards with our office throughout the year.

Federal/State Notices

Special Education Services

If you suspect that your child may have a disability, you may request a meeting with school staff to discuss the possibility of obtaining an evaluation to determine your child's eligibility under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. You may obtain additional information on both of these programs by contacting the District Special Education Director (541-535-7522), the building principal, or the Oregon Department of Education.

Private School Placement

While parents have the option of placing their children in a private school or obtaining additional services (such as tutoring) from a private individual or organization, the District is not obligated to cover resulting tuition or costs. The District will not pay for private services or tuition for any student unless required to do so by state or federal law. If a parent wishes for the District to consider a publicly funded private placement or private services, the parent must give the District notice and opportunity to propose other options available within the public school system before the private placement or services are obtained.

Therefore, for any regular education, 504, or IDEA student, a parent must give notice either at the last IEP or 504 meeting prior to obtaining private services, or in writing at least ten business days prior to obtaining private services. The notice must include the parent's intent to obtain private services, the parent's rejection of the educational program offered by the District, and the parent's request that the private services be funded by the District. Failure to provide notice may result in a denial of any subsequent reimbursement request.

McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act

Under the McKinney-Vento Act, homeless children and youth are entitled to immediate public school enrollment, immediate access to the free lunch program as well as other benefits. Homeless children and youth mean individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence. It includes children and youth who:

- Are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason;
- Are living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations;
- Are living in emergency or transitional shelters;
- Have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings;
- Are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings.

If you feel your child may qualify for benefits under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, please contact your child's teacher, the school principal or Phoenix-Talent School's Homeless Education Liaison at 535-7522.

Modified Diploma

In May of 2008, the state Board of Education adopted an Oregon Administrative Rule that defined the requirements for awarding a modified diploma. **Any student** who meets the eligibility criteria outlined in OAR 581-022-1134 may receive a modified diploma. A school shall grant **eligibility for a modified diploma** to a student who has: 1) a documented history of an inability to maintain grade level achievement due to significant learning and instructional barriers inherent in the student or 2) a documented history of a medical condition that creates a barrier to achievement.

A student and the parent or guardian shall be informed about diploma options when the student is in the fifth grade, but the decision to work toward a modified diploma cannot be made until the end of the 6th grade and no later than 2 years before the student's anticipated exit from high school.

The decision is made by the school team, which should include the student and MUST include a parent or guardian. When a student working toward a modified diploma completes the 8th grade, the school team must review the modified diploma information annually.

Alternative Education Programs

Alternative education program options have been established and approved by the Board to meet the individual needs of students. These programs will be made available to students who are unable to succeed in the regular programs because of alternate learning styles or needs which may include the following:

1. When two or more severe disciplinary problems occur within a three-year period;
2. When attendance is so erratic the student is not benefiting from the educational program;
3. When a student's parent or guardian or emancipated student applies for exemption from compulsory attendance on a semiannual basis;
4. When an expulsion is being considered;
5. When a student is expelled.

Examples of alternative education program options could include: on-line coursework, independent study and tutorial instruction. Individual notification of alternative education shall be hand-delivered and/or sent by certified mail. Every effort shall be made to provide parents with individual notification prior to an actual alternative school placement.

For Your Information...

MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS AT RISK

During early adolescence, many students may test the system at home and school. Truancy, substance abuse, and defiance of authority may be seen as an attempt to assert independence. Early adolescents need a supportive and secure environment in which to thrive, one that allows for some experimentation with ideas and relationships within the parameters of what is safe and responsible. Each new generation is being introduced to drugs at an earlier age. It's a problem that raises countless questions for parents - How do I keep my children away from drugs; how do I know if they're involved; what do I do if they are involved?

SIGNS OF DRUG USE

Identification with Drug Culture

- Drug-related magazines, slogans on clothing.
- Conversation and jokes that are preoccupied with drugs.
- Hostility in discussing drugs.

Dramatic Changes in School Performance

- Distinct downward turns in student's grades-not just from C's to F's, but from A's to B's and C's.
- Increased absenteeism or tardiness.

Changes in Behavior

- Chronic dishonesty (lying, stealing, or cheating). Trouble with the police.
- Changes in friends, evasiveness in talking about new ones.
- Possession of large amounts of money.
- Increasing and inappropriate anger, hostility, irritability, secretiveness.
- Reduced motivation, energy, self-discipline, self-esteem.
- Diminished interest in extra-curricular activities and hobbies.

NOTES