

What Every New Kid Needs to Know About Mill Valley Middle School (Frequently Asked Questions and Answers!) 2014 - 2015

www.mvschools.org/ms

1. How big is Mill Valley Middle School?

MVMS has three grade levels (6, 7, & 8) and has approximately 1050 students.

2. Who are the principal and the assistant principal?

Ms. Anna Lazzarini is in her fourth year as Principal of Mill Valley Middle School. Prior to becoming the Principal, Ms. Lazzarini was the Assistant Principal for six years, and a Core teacher at the school for nine years.

Mr. Mark Nelson is in his fourth year as Assistant Principal of Mill Valley Middle School. Before becoming Assistant Principal, he taught 8th grade U.S. history for nine years in San Diego.

Ms. Laura Myers is in her second year as Dean of Students at Mill Valley Middle School. Before becoming Dean of Students, she taught 6th grade Science for 11 years at MVMS.

3. Will I get a locker?

MVMS no longer has lockers. As we've grown we no longer had the space for lockers. In researching similar middle schools in the area, we found that a majority of middle and high schools do not have lockers. We kept three locker units in the main hallway for students who need a locker on an occasional basis when bringing extra things to school. Students need to bring their own locks to use a locker. These lockers should not be taken as a year-long locker. Students have always stored sports bags, skateboards, or other types of items either in their first session classroom (under the counter) or if space, in the front office area by Ms. Canepa's desk area.

4. What are the school mascot and colors?

The school mascot is the panther and we have a student who dresses up in the mascot costume on special occasions. The school colors are blue and silver.

5. Do we have sports teams at MVMS?

Yes, MVMS has teams for the following sports: Cross Country and Volleyball in the fall, Basketball and Wrestling in the winter, and Track in the spring. The teams have MVMS uniforms and compete against other middle schools in Marin County.

6. Are there other teams or clubs students can join?

Yes, there are a number of clubs students can become involved in before or after school, or during lunch. There is a Club Fair/Community Service Fair in September that takes place during lunch. Students can sign up and get information on the various club options like:

Student Council, Journalism, Robotics, Yearbook, Calligraphy, Mathletes, Eco Club, Cooking Club, Juggling - to name a few. If you want to begin a special interest club, ask a teacher to be the teacher advisor/supervisor and then present your proposal to the assistant principal, Mr. Nelson.

7. What are intramural sports?

Intramural sports are team sports with students forming their own teams during sign-ups. Teams compete against other school teams, during lunch. In the past we have had flag-football, basketball, and cone ball as intramural sports.

8. How does a student join an extra-curricular class, club or sports team?

There will be a Club Fair/Community Service fair hosted by all the clubs and service organizations during lunch during the first few weeks of school. Listen for the morning announcements. Go to the Fair to find information and details about the club/s you might be interested in and sign up if you want to join.

9. Where will our classes be located?

Most of your classes will be located in a pod. Each of the pods have different names: Earth (primarily 6th grade), Sea (primarily 6th grade and Special Education Classes), Sun (primarily 7th graders), and Wind (primarily 8th graders). Three of the pods have two levels, which are referred to as "upper" and "lower," while one pod (Sea), only has an upper level. Students are assigned to a team of teachers; your math, science, social studies, and language arts classes will typically be in the same pod, but not always. You will have to travel to other areas of the school for the wheel class, PE, Foreign Language , Art and Music.

10. Middle school has two counselors - who are they and what do they do?

The Middle School counselors, Mrs. Josephson and Ms. Goodman are on campus to help students when there is an issue with a schedule or a particular class or teacher. They also help students when they have concerns about their social or personal life.

Students sign up for an appointment in the counseling office. The counselors also lead different support groups throughout the school year. Ms. Josephson works with students whose last names begin with A - J and Ms. Goodman works with students whose last names begin with K - Z.

11. Where should students go if they don't feel well?

If you don't feel well during class, let your teacher know and he or she will give you a pass to see Ms. Canepa or Ms Palmer, in the front office. They will help you and decide

whether you need to lie down for a while, or call your parent/guardian or someone on your emergency card, to pick you up from school.

12. Are report cards at Middle School the same as elementary school? When do we get them?

Mill Valley School District uses the trimester system at all of its schools. This means that once every 12 weeks you will receive an end of term report card that shows your progress in all of your classes during the trimester. However, unlike the elementary schools, students at Middle School receive letter grades for each of their courses. All the work you do (homework and class work) during the trimester helps you earn a letter grade. It is important to keep up with each assignment in order to be more successful during your middle school years. Half way through each trimester, mid-term progress reports are sent out to all students.

13. Do students have recess at Middle School?

Yes, all students at MVMS have a morning recess after their second session of the day. Students usually hang out near their pod area and enjoy social time with friends and a snack, before going to their third session class. The area outside the 6th grade pod is specifically designated for 6th graders only, during recess and lunch.

14. What do kids do during lunch break?

Kids usually choose a place to eat with their friends during the first 15-20 minutes of lunch, and then either hangout with friends on the school yard, attend a club meeting, go to the large field for some field sports, or go to a teacher's classroom or the library to finish work or study. In addition to the regular schoolyard and field, sixth-grade students have a special climbing structure, tether ball and basketball courts available to them in the sixth grade area. There are also intramural sports students can get involved in during most trimesters.

15. Where are the computer labs and what are they used for?

Each pod has a group of desktop computers in the center area and one iPad cart that can be utilized by the teachers and students. There is also a set of computers in the library that can be used to do class work after school, at lunch and at recess. School computers may not be used for listening to music, watching DVDs or playing games.

16. Who is the library media teacher and when can students go to the library?

Ms. Jonna Palmer is our MVMS Library Media Teacher. She and her assistant, Ms. Kathy Savastano, are available to help students in the library. Students and teachers use the library frequently throughout the year. Teachers bring classes to the library for lessons, book talks or project research. The library is also available to all students during recess, at lunch and after school. Students use their ID card to check out library books during the school year.

17. What is Panther Time?

Panther Time is a class of 20-23 students that meets twice a week for 30 minutes. Most students will be assigned to a teacher they have during the day (in some cases, a student may have an unassigned teacher). The purpose of Panther Time is twofold: 1) To provide space and time for students to work on homework, seek help from a teacher, or quietly read; and 2) To build a community within a school, creating (and sustaining) the small school feel that has made MVMS a great school.

18. Does MVMS have a dress code?

Yes. We have a dress code that is enforced by staff. Students will be asked to change into appropriate clothing if found to be wearing shorts or skirts/dresses that are too short or tops that are too revealing. Being out of dress code will be accompanied by disciplinary consequences as well. Please check the Student / Parent Handbook (also found online) for a more specific description of our dress code.

18. Do students dress out for PE?

Yes! Students take PE twice a week and are required to change into their PE uniform. The PE Complex (two large classrooms and two changing rooms) is located on the blacktop outside the school building. Students may purchase MVMS PE uniforms through T & B Sports in San Rafael. T & B Sports will also be on campus a couple of times a year to sell PE uniforms. If students choose not to purchase the MVMS PE uniforms, they are required to wear a logo-free, solid gray t-shirt or an MVMS Spirit Wear shirt and logo-free, navy blue, mesh basketball shorts along with tie or velcro® athletic shoes. For chilly days, students can wear logo-free navy blue or gray sweatshirt or MVMS Spirit Wear sweatshirt and sweatpants.

19. What is the rule about cell phones at Mill Valley Middle School? All cell phones are to be turned off at 8:15a.m, and are to remain off until the end of the school day. Students may only access their phones if under the direct supervision and with permission of the teacher, and are using the phone for educational purposes, or if in the office and needing to call home- with permission of the office staff.

