

## **SECOND LANGUAGE DEPARTMENT'S STUDENT/PARENT HANDBOOK**

**Mission Statement:** The mission of the Mildred E. Strang Middle School is to create a school comprised of small communities of learners designed to respond to the unique and dynamic nature of the young adolescent. To do this, we will build upon the dedication and expertise of our entire staff. We will develop innovative, integrated units of study. We will design programs, activities and assessment models that reflect the emotional, intellectual, physiological and social needs of the middle school student. We will engage students in activities that develop a value for personal and civic responsibility. And, we will connect our efforts to those of the parent community. As we progress toward accomplishing our mission, we will regularly review our commitment to these tasks.

Dear Student and Parents,

Welcome back to Mildred E. Strang Middle School! I would like to welcome you to my language class. I am looking forward to working with all of you this year and hope it will be a fun year for all! I would like to provide you with this handbook that may answer questions that you might have about language class and the upcoming year. I hope you find this handbook helpful and useful and look forward to a successful year.

### **PHILOSOPHY:**

Language is our connection to the world and its surroundings. The ability to communicate in another language increases our opportunities to interact with people and understand other cultures.

### **CURRICULUM INFORMATION AND STANDARDS:**

Checkpoint A study of languages other than English is the beginning of the curriculum and is a graduation requirement for students in New York State. Checkpoint A emphasizes simple, selected sentence structures, sets the stage for oral and written communication, fosters cultural understanding, includes age-appropriate communicative activities that addresses the particular needs and interests of middle schoolers, encourages interdisciplinary connections and is the first step on the pathway to linguistic proficiency.

This is an introductory-level curriculum that will lay the groundwork for the future.

Standard 1: Students will be able to use a language other than English for communication.

Standard 2: Students will develop cross-cultural skills and understandings.

***Goals of Second Language Department:***

- To use a second language in meaningful everyday situations.
- To communicate across cultures and to appreciate global cultures.
- To connect with other disciplines in other academic and special areas.
- To develop problem solving and creative thinking skills.

**STUDENT EXPECTATIONS:**

1. ***Get to class on time.*** If you are late and do not have a valid excuse, you will make up the time. Be sure to sit in your assigned seat by the second bell and be ready to work. Courtesy and good manners are expected at all times.

2. ***Speak in as much of the second language as possible.*** Do not worry about your pronunciation. Everyone is learning. I will help you, but please ... NO GUM CHEWING or EATING CANDY! You cannot learn to pronounce a new language if there are “foreign” objects in your mouth!

3. ***Listen, listen, listen!*** Everything will be repeated several times. If you are not speaking, you need to listen and repeat words and phrases to yourself. Learning a second language takes practice and patience. Memorization is one of the keys to success.

## **HOMEWORK POLICY:**

Homework will be assigned and will be explained in class. The assignment may be to practice what we learned in class, write exercises or a paragraph, or prepare an oral activity. The homework will be posted on the homework board as well as on homework hotline, [www.yorktown.org](http://www.yorktown.org), every night, so there is no excuse for not getting the assignment. **Please take your books home and do your homework so you are prepared for the next class.** We will go over the homework in class and you will correct your errors so that you learn from them.

## **HOMEWORK TIPS:**

1. ***Set up a study area at home.*** Try to use an area that allows you to spread out your work and is not too noisy.
2. ***Schedule a daily homework time at home.*** Try to set up a time that works for you. You may like to complete homework immediately after-school or wait a little while.
3. ***Create a homework survival kit.*** Try to have materials like pens, pencils, glue, tape, dictionary, calculator, etc. available in your study area.
4. ***Write, write, write.*** If you are having trouble memorizing something, write it out several times to help you remember it.

## **ABSENCES:**

All homework, tests and quizzes must be made up according to district policy. If you are scheduled for another school activity, you must see me first so I may take attendance, check your homework from the night before and give you the current homework assignment. Making up your work is your responsibility.

## **QUARTER GRADE:**

Your quarter grade will consist of homework, quizzes, tests, class participation, projects, effort and attitude and being prepared for class on a regular basis. There will be **no** extra credit.

## **EXTRA HELP:**

I am available for extra help upon request.

## CLASS PERIODS:

PERIODS	TIME
Period 1	7:45 – 8:36
Period 2	8:40 – 9:26
Period 3	9:30 – 10:12
Period 4	10:16 – 10:56
Period 5	11:00 – 11:40
Period 6	11:44 – 12:26
Period 7	12:30 – 1:12
Period 8	1:16 – 2:00

You will attend language class every day for the entire school year as per your class period.

**You are now in a course from which you may possibly earn a high school credit.**

The high school course grade will be computed by averaging the grades from Italian 7 and 8 and the Proficiency Exam. It will then appear on the high school transcript as “Second Language 9 (MESMS)” as the student will have received one high school credit by passing the State Proficiency Exam. This course grade will be computed into the high school GPA. It is very important that you keep up to date. You need a strong foundation in order to progress. Everyone learns at a different pace. Just do the best you can!

## **Frequently Asked Questions about the Proficiency Exam:**

Question: When is the Proficiency Exam taken?

Answer: The exam is taken at the end of 8<sup>th</sup> grade. The speaking part is scheduled in May and the written part of the exam is at the end of June.

Question: How is the exam set-up?

Answer: The exam has five parts to it. There is the listening component worth 40 points, reading comprehension worth 20 points, the writing component worth 10 points, class participation worth 10 points and the speaking component worth 20 points.

Question: What is the passing score?

Answer: 65%

Question: What are the consequences of passing the State Proficiency Exam?

Answer: If the student passes, she/he will be awarded one high school credit and will be placed into Second Language 10 (Level 2) during the freshman year at the high school. The Proficiency Exam score will be posted on the student's high school permanent record, but will not appear on the student's high school transcript. The course grade will be computed according to the high school formula by averaging the grades from Italian 7 and 8 and the Proficiency Exam. It will then appear on the high school transcript as "Second Language 1 (MESMS)" as the student will have received one high school credit by passing the State Proficiency Exam. This course grade will be computed into the high school GPA.

Question: What are the consequences of failing the State Proficiency Exam?

Answer: The student will take Second Language 9 (Level 1) in the freshman year depending on the availability. The Proficiency Exam score still must be posted on the high school permanent record, but will not appear on the student's high school transcript. However, in the case the course grade will be computed according to the middle school policy; i.e. the local final counts as a test grade in the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter. The course grade will not appear on the high school transcript, as no high school credit will have been awarded.

Question: What happens if the student passes the State Proficiency Exam with a low passing grade and decides at a later date to repeat Second Language 9 (Level 1) to improve the grade?

Answer: Course grades earned in both Level 1 (MESMS) and Level 1 (YHS) will be posted to the transcript; however, the first course grade Level 1 (MESMS) will be used to compute the student's GPA.

## **Second Language Student's Expectations**

Please sign and return this form to your language teacher. Please keep these expectations and class information at home to review throughout the year.

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Parent/Guardian Signature

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Student Signature

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Date

