

## **FAQ for Transitioning to Nagel Middle School**

### **Who is the case coordinator, what is their role, and how is this different from elementary school?**

- Joy Jackson is the case coordinator at Nagel. She will oversee special education and 504 plans. She will also facilitate and lead your child's ETR, IEP and 504 meetings at Nagel. Your Intervention Specialist will schedule and communicate with you about IEP meetings which the case coordinator will attend. The case coordinator will communicate and schedule 504 meetings. If your student is up for re-evaluation for special education services, Chele Valentine, school psychologist, will communicate with you for the planning of the Evaluation Team Report (ETR).
- The case coordinator role in the elementary buildings was usually the principal or the assistant principal. In some cases, like in preschool or in social communication classes, it may have been an administrator from Central Office

### **Who do I contact when I have questions/concerns regarding my child?**

- For general questions typically your first point of contact will be your child's advisory teacher who will also be one of your child's core teachers. Advisory is what the elementary refers to as Homeroom.
- Depending on your question or concern your child's Intervention Specialist or Case Coordinator may also be the first point of contact. Your child's Intervention Specialist will be able to discuss with you any specific concerns or questions related to your child's IEP progress, services, support, etc.
- Your Intervention Specialist will be your main contact if you want to schedule an IEP meeting.
- For questions regarding your child's classroom grades you would contact the teacher that is providing the grade for that subject.
- For scheduling questions or concerns or for social/emotional situations your child's counselor would be the person to contact.

### **What does a typical day look like at Nagel?**

- Students begin to arrive at Nagel between 8:10-8:30. If students arrive prior to 8:15 they will report to the PE until they are dismissed to go to their advisory.
- Advisory is a time for students to build relationships with peers and teachers in a caring student centered atmosphere. Advisory time provides time for teachers to build relationships with all students in their advisory. Advisory occurs every day of the week for 15 minutes in the morning.
- Students will then attend core and encore classes (see below for more information on these) and lunch.

- The academic day ends at 3:15 pm but there are always activities, sports, a variety of clubs, and 24-7 learning going on after school (see more details on clubs and 24-7 below)

**What are some extracurricular opportunities and activities in which my child may become more involved at Nagel?**

- Nagel has a variety of opportunities for students. Along with a variety of sports there are also many clubs. To see a list of extracurricular activities at Nagel, please go to the “student life” tab on Nagel’s webpage.

**What is the 24-7 learning program?**

- This program provides after-school computer access, tutoring and enrichment for students as well as transportation home after the tutoring session. Funding for this program is provided by the Forest Hills Foundation. This program is currently offered after school on Tuesdays and Thursdays. This is not intended to be a 1 on 1 tutoring program, students are self-guided and adults are present to answer questions when necessary. Bus service home is provided.

**What are the core classes?**

- Language Arts, Math, Social Studies, and Science.

**What are the Encore classes?**

- Nagel offers a diverse set of Encore classes. Please refer to the 2021-2022 course guide for all Encore options with descriptions.

**How often will my child have PE (Physical Education)?**

- Your child will have PE 2 quarters (1 semester) out of the year for 5 days a week. Students will change into PE shirts in the locker-room unless circumstances warrant a different plan. Students are permitted to use a drawstring type backpack to transport PE clothes from the classroom to the locker room. These can be purchased in the Nagel bookstore if you don’t already have one.
- Some students will participate in the regular PE class and some students will have an adapted PE. This is an IEP team decision and is based on the student’s individual needs.

**My child participated in band, orchestra or chorus in elementary. How will this work at Nagel?**

- Band, orchestra, and chorus are offered as encore classes. If your child is participating in one of these classes they will take them every day for the entire school year or for a semester, depending on the course. Instruments will be stored during school hours in the band or orchestra rooms in a locker that will be assigned the first week of school.

### **What is resource time and how is it used?**

- Students with IEPs may require specially designed instruction in the regular or special education classroom. This is dependent on student need and is an IEP team decision. Students whose needs require specially designed instruction in the special education classroom will have time built into their day in order to access the specially designed instruction outlined in their current IEP.

### **Nagel is so large and has so many students. What does teaming mean at Nagel and how does that affect my child?**

- The organization of teams allows us to make a very large building seem smaller and provides a structure for teachers to really know their students as learners and individuals.
- Each student on a team has 4 core teachers they see throughout the day. All of those classrooms are in the same hallway.
- Every team has a common planning time, which is designed for teachers to share, collaborate, and provide consistency with their instruction. Teams meet weekly with school counselors and administrators to discuss student needs and provide support for one another.

### **How does lunch work at Nagel?**

- Students eat together in houses. Each house has their own designated lunch time.
- Some parents fear their child will not have anyone to sit with at lunch. Staff ensures all students will eat with peers so no one is left out.
- The bookstore is open during lunch times so students have the opportunity to purchase school supplies including the books required for language arts classes, PE clothes and spirit wear.

### **How will I receive information on my child's grades and progress?**

- Progress book will update your child's grades, missing assignments, and schedule.
- You will receive IEP progress reports at the same times you receive report cards and interims.

### **Will I still be able to attend conferences?**

- Conferences are scheduled online and are typically with two separate core teachers for 10 minutes each. If more time is needed, arrangements can be made for a team meeting or an IEP meeting. In addition, conferences may also be scheduled with most core teachers and your intervention specialist. Conferences for the 2021-2022 school year occur in the fall and winter. Date to be determined.

### **How can I support my child with this transition?**

- Transitions to middle school can be tough so don't be afraid to contact your child's advisory teacher, counselor, or Intervention Specialist if your child is having a hard time.

- To help alleviate anxiety and for a smoother transition it may be helpful to bring your child up to Nagel before school starts to walk through their schedule/open their locker/acclimate to the building. If you have concerns about locker location or schedule you can contact your child's counselor.
- It takes time for teachers to get to know your student so don't hesitate to share information that may help that process along and try to be patient in the process.
- Middle school students are going through a lot of changes physically, emotionally and socially. Connect with other parents for support and always contact the school for support.
- Have your child get involved in something extra at Nagel to help them feel part of the school and to connect with peers.

Contact one of our BRIDGES parent representatives or the Parent Resource Coordinator (Alycia Champion) for support, just to talk, or to ask questions. They have been through these same transitions and may have suggestions from the parent perspective that you may not have thought of yet.

#### **What are some transition activities that occur that will help my child transition smoothly to Nagel?**

- In the spring of your 6<sup>th</sup> grade year, the Nagel team begins planning for your child's transition to Nagel. The Nagel team meets with each elementary team and will take that information back to Nagel to help with team placement and preparation for 7<sup>th</sup> grade.
- WEB (Where Everybody Belongs) is a transition program that happens before school and during the year. 8<sup>th</sup> grade students are paired up with incoming 7<sup>th</sup> grade students to help them with this transition and with acclimating to Nagel. More information to come about dates.

#### **Why will my child be invited to IEP meetings while at Nagel?**

- At the age of 14 students are invited and encouraged to attend and participate during the IEP meeting. Their voice is important and it is critical to help each student learn to advocate for themselves. This is a great beginning step in the process.

#### **How will Nagel teachers help foster independence in my child?**

- Middle school teachers are trying to foster independence in your child to prepare them for high school, therefore; they will have higher expectations for independence and self-advocacy than in elementary. They may expect the student to begin speaking up more often and communicating directly with the teacher when they need support, have questions, missing assignments, etc. Even though parents are still a very important part of the equation they will likely want more input from students than what parents are used to from elementary school. For a parent this is sometimes hard to adjust to but teams will work with you and your child to build success. Don't be afraid to contact the school if you have concerns.

**How can I help foster independence in my middle school child? Tips for parents to teach independence in their child!**

- Encourage your child to try new things and do things by themselves if at all possible; even though it may take longer.
- Avoid doing for children what they can do for themselves. Develop a plan with fading assistance.
- Help your child develop passions and activities they can master. Feeling a sense of competency in one area means your child will be better able to handle difficulties in other areas as they arise and will also build self-confidence.
- Encouragement: make encouragement behavior specific, mentioning the skill used. Encourage/Praise what your child can control like effort & concrete results of their work.
- Once you identify skills to work on with your child, do a task analysis: Break complex tasks into small steps and teach your child to do one step at a time. Once they master the first step you can then move on to the next step.
- Be patient and practice! Learning new skills and tasks may be slow at first but with practice they will get better. Focus on positive reinforcement and consistency.
- Consider how your child learns best (by watching? listening? doing?) when teaching a new skill. Use methods tailored to their preferred learning style and ones that are age appropriate to increase chances of success.
- Use adaptive equipment when needed to allow for increased independence.
- Allow your child to make choices and decisions.
- Allow your child to make mistakes and experience the consequences. When we rescue our children we rob them of an important learning opportunity and they will not learn to cope on their own.
- If possible encourage children to solve their own problems. Avoid the temptation to offer a quick solution or give unsolicited advice and when intervening is necessary help your child brainstorm possible solutions to a problem, evaluate options, and then let them decide which ones they want to try.