

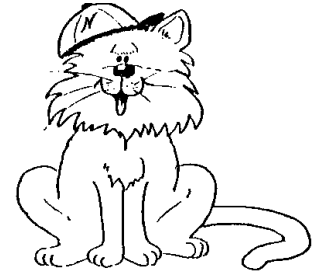
The Wildcat Word

A Guidance Department Newsletter from Nottingham West Elementary School

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The Lazy Hazy Days of Summer

Studies show that many students suffer from what is called summer learning loss. When they return to school in September, they have forgotten many of the things they worked so hard to learn last year. It's not hard to see why. Athletes and musicians who don't practice can't play as well as those who keep their skills sharp. Neither can students.

Summer learning can be fun for the whole family. Here are some informal ways to help your child keep learning over the summer:

- Read with your child every day. Read aloud. Have your child read to you. Read, read, read! Visit the library regularly.
- Plant a garden. See how seeds develop into plants. Keep a garden journal with drawings or photos of your flowers and vegetables as they grow.
- Have your child interview older family members and write a family history, using family photos to illustrate it.



- Encourage your child to keep a journal with writing, drawing and photos of fun summer activities.
- Try some fun math games on the computer (check out Student Math Tools on the NWES website).
- Ask your child to figure out how much your grocery order should cost. Get him to keep track of how many miles your car runs on a gallon of gas.
- Try an ethnic restaurant or ethnic recipes. Then have your child visit new countries in books or on the internet.

Be sure to leave plenty of unscheduled time for your child to experience the simple joys of swinging in a hammock or taking a walk in the neighborhood. When children experience unstructured time (with appropriate supervision), they are called on to use their creativity, imagination and independence. After all, what most of us remember so fondly about our own summer vacations during childhood was the sense of freedom – long days of sun and fun, stretching out from June to September.

Preparing for Middle School

Middle school can be both scary and exciting. To help your child (and you!) make the transition smooth, the key is staying connected -- keeping the lines of communication open between you, your child and the school.

Get a feel for the middle school. Watch for information about Hudson Memorial School tours which will take place in the late summer. Be sure to attend Sixth Grade Orientation Night in August.

Once students are in sixth grade, they are expected to be more independent learners. They will be changing classes several times a day, working with many different teachers, and moving books and supplies between lockers and classrooms. Being organized becomes more important than ever. You can help your child get off to a good start by checking to be sure they are recording homework in their assignment book and providing notebooks, folders or binders to organize materials by subject.

Remember that you can call your child's teacher or guidance counselor to get questions answered about academic requirements, classroom rules or behavior expectations.

One of the changes that worries parents most about middle school is the new, larger social environment. Your child may have classes with very few of their Nottingham West classmates and will be making new friends. Friendships and popularity quickly become a very important concern for middle-schoolers! You can lead your child to make good choices about their circle of peers by encouraging positive social activities such as sports, hobbies, or clubs, and getting to know your child's friends (and their parents!).

Let your child know that you are open to listening to their concerns about school or friendships. ASK! You'll get a better response by asking specific questions (Who did you sit with at lunch today? How did you like the science lab you had to do?). And keep asking!

The Hudson Memorial School staff and administration are experts at guiding adolescents during a crucial period of their lives. Call on them for support whenever you need help during the next three years of your child's education.