



The Math & Science Exploratory School

Middle School 447
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Dear 8th Grade Parents/Guardians:

Welcome back to another exciting year of Exploration at the Math & Science Exploratory School!

It is with great enthusiasm that we begin this year of Exploration with interdisciplinary enrichment opportunities in the areas of science, technology, mathematics, humanities, the arts and social consciousness. Exploration is a department consisting of six teachers who team-teach Exploration to all grades. We are committed to a deliberate, rigorous, thoughtful, responsive and thorough focus on the Exploration curriculum.

Please read over this letter as it contains important information.

CORE VALUES

*Exploration is an interdisciplinary, **project-based** curriculum. Learning is collaborative, inquiry-driven, and draws upon diverse resources both inside and outside the classroom, to develop authentic skills (meaning-real life problem solving is involved), and knowledge.*

Collaborative Learning

Collaborative learning is an integral part of Exploration culture, as seen by students relying on each other for information and knowledge and actively/appropriately engaged.

Social Justice

Our assessments allow students to interact with issues of social justice as they pertain to the unit topics. Students will use the content and skills that they have learned to analyze these issues and to grow in their social consciousness.

Diverse Learning Styles

The curriculum and classroom activities support all students learning in various ways.

Coherence of Curriculum

Each unit has an overarching aim/focus that addresses real-world issues.

Inquiry & Student Driven Learning

We are committed to providing inquiry-based lessons and units, in which students are given autonomy in solving real-world problems and questions.

Authentic Assessments

Assessments provide choice and flexibility to address a range of learning styles and abilities. Further, these assessments allow students to critically engage with the unit question in a range of ways.

EXPLORATION GROUPS

Your child will be in the _____ Group that meets on _____ day.

The primary homeroom teachers for this group are: _____

Contact your child's homeroom teachers any time you need help or have questions about Exploration!

UNITS

8th Grade Exploration is broken into three units: Inventions for a Better World, Critical Media Literacy/Perception and Service Learning.

Today is the first day of our **Inventions for a Better World** Unit. In this unit, students will:

- Learn about the design process.
- Discover why we invent: - to solve problems, to improve our world, to enjoy the creative process
- Determine what drives the need for an invention or innovation.
- Learn how inventions and innovations affect society and the environment.

Throughout the unit the students will work toward answering the essential question: *How do inventors use the design process to solve problems?*

FALL EXPO

See the **unit calendar** for a list of trips, due dates, and important information for this unit. **Our first Expo is Wednesday, December 6 for the A day group and Thursday, December 7 for the B day group.** This may seem far away, but it will be here before we know it, so mark your calendar! We would love for you to join us and support our students!

EMAIL ACCESS

All students should become comfortable with their google classroom gmail accounts. This is especially important in Exploration for the completion and submission of project work and collaboration with group members! Please work with your child to make sure they are familiar with their school account.

REMINDERS

Please read over the Exploration Policies and Procedures with your child. The following behavior is expected on Exploration Days:

- Students should **come to school prepared to learn.**
- Students are to **be respectful** to *everyone*, including classmates, teachers, parent volunteers, museum staff, and the general public.
- **Portable electronics are prohibited.** Cell phones must be turned off and out of sight during school hours. Students may be given permission to use their cell phones to take pictures during Exploration Trips, but they are to be used only when expressly permitted.
- All school and city-wide behavior policies apply off-site—if it's a rule in school, it's a rule during Exploration.
- **On off-site days**, students need to dress for walking and working outdoors. They should bring a bagged lunch and **bottle of water.**
- If a student is absent on an Exploration Day, they are responsible for determining what they missed and completing missed assignments. We ask that they do this **before** their next Exploration Day.

CHAPERONES NEEDED!

As you know, our program includes multiple off-site field trips for each unit. For every field trip, we like to bring at least one additional adult chaperone. This year we will be using **Sign-Up Genius**, an online scheduling platform. Don't hesitate to sign up to chaperone field trips for any class or grade. Be sure to double check grade and color group if you are intending to chaperone your child's class. We can bring up to three additional chaperones on most trips, however this varies trip by trip. After you sign up online, we will be in touch with all trip information you will need. Please only sign up if you are definitely able to attend the field trip.

6th Grade Unit 1 Chaperone Sign Up Link: <http://www.signupgenius.com/go/4090d4baba629a0fe3-unit9>

7th Grade Unit 1 Chaperone Sign Up Link: <http://www.signupgenius.com/go/4090d4baba629a0fe3-unit10>

8th Grade Unit 1 Chaperone Sign Up Link: <http://www.signupgenius.com/go/4090d4baba629a0fe3-unit11>

If you need any support in using this platform, feel free to reach out to Joy Canning at jcanning@ms447.org or 718-330-9328.

We appreciate your continued support of the Exploration program and look forward to working with your child this year!

Sincerely,

The Exploration Team

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