

# Urbana Middle School Frequently Asked Questions 2017-2018

## MISSION

The mission of Urbana Middle School, a community of learning, is to engage and inspire students while promoting their intellectual, social, and emotional growth.

La misión de Urbana Middle School, una comunidad de aprendizaje, es involucrar e inspirar a los estudiantes mientras promovemos su desarrollo intelectual, social y emocional.

La mission du Collège d'Urbana, une communauté d'apprentissage, est d'engager et d'inspirer nos élèves pendant qu'on favorise leur croissance intellectuelle, sociale, et émotionnelle.



## IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS

Attendance	384-3688
Main Office	384-3685
Extension 1	Attendance
Extension 2	Deans
Extension 3	Counselors
Extension 4	Nurse
District Nurse	384-3564
Fax	367-3156
USD 116 Central Office	384-3600

Address: 1201 South Vine Street  
Urbana, IL 61801  
Web: [www.usd116.org/ums](http://www.usd116.org/ums)  
Twitter: @UMSTigers

## Table of Contents

<a href="#">Key People</a> .....	3
<a href="#">Student Transportation</a> .....	4
<a href="#">Grade Reports &amp; Honors</a> .....	5
<a href="#">Promotion/Retention</a> .....	6
<a href="#">After School Activities</a> .....	7
<a href="#">Academic Support Programs</a> .....	8
<a href="#">Athletics</a> .....	9
<a href="#">Safety</a> .....	10
<a href="#">Breakfast &amp; Lunch</a> .....	11
<a href="#">Health</a> .....	12
<a href="#">Absences</a> .....	13
<a href="#">Parent Involvement</a> .....	14
<a href="#">Discipline Concerns</a> .....	15
<a href="#">Middle School Philosophy/Structure</a> .....	16
<a href="#">Mission, Vision, and Beliefs</a> .....	17-18
<a href="#">Restorative Practices</a> .....	19-20

## Who are key people that can assist me?

<b>Administrators</b>	
6 <sup>th</sup> grade Administrator and Special Education	Shawna Scherer, Associate Principal sscherer@usd116.org
7 <sup>th</sup> grade Administrator and Athletics and Facilities	Patrick Russell, Assistant Principal prussell@usd116.org
8 <sup>th</sup> grade Administrator	Scott Woods, Principal swoods@usd116.org
<b>Counselors</b>	
6 <sup>th</sup> grade Counselor	Andrea Kirkland akirkland@usd116.org
7 <sup>th</sup> grade Counselor	Terri Medwed tmedwed@usd116.org
8 <sup>th</sup> grade Counselor	Cynthia Sikes csikes@usd116.org
<b>Deans</b>	
6 <sup>th</sup> grade Dean	Heather Jacobs hjacobs@usd116.org
7 <sup>th</sup> grade Dean	Melani Ferchow mferchow@usd116.org
8 <sup>th</sup> grade Dean	Kevin Helmick khelmick@usd116.org
<b>Parent and Community Liaisons</b>	
Community Connections Coordinator	Thomas Howley thowley@usd116.org
Latino Family Liaison	Lucia Maldonado lmaldonado@usd116.org
Parent Community Outreach Coordinator	Janice Mitchell jmitchell@usd116.org

[Table of Contents](#)

## Student Transportation

### ***Where can I drop-off and pick-up my child?***

The following locations can be used to drop-off or pick-up your child before and after school:

#### Before School

- Michigan Street
- Vine Street (southbound only—between Fairlawn and Michigan )

#### After School

- Michigan Street (one-way going west)
- Vine Street (southbound only—between Washington and Fairlawn)

*(Note: Please do not use the Vine Street north parking lot to pick up students at dismissal. Pick up in this area creates a safety hazard and increased congestion on Vine Street.)*

### ***What transportation is available for my student?***

#### ***If you live beyond one-and-a-half miles from school...***

##### Mass Transit District (MTD)

- If you live on an MTD bus route, your child will be issued school ID that indicates the route. Your child must board these busses at school dismissal time on Vine Street.
- Please contact MTD at 384-8188 for more information such as specific bus stops in your neighborhood and pick up times.

##### First Student

- If you do not live on an MTD bus route, your child will ride First Student (the yellow school busses). Your child must board these busses at school dismissal time in the south, Michigan Street, parking lot. .
- Please contact First Student at 344-4586 for more information such as specific bus stops in your neighborhood and pick up times.

#### ***If you live within one-and-a-half miles from school...***

Generally, the school does not provide transportation for students living within one-and-a-half miles from the school.

#### [Table of Contents](#)

# Grades & Honors

## ***How can I access my student's grades from home?***

- You can view your child's grades and attendance records through Skyward Family Access, which can be found at the UMS website under the Information section.
- You will receive your username and password at registration. You may also receive your access information at any time during regular office hours. The parent/guardian must present a valid photo ID in order to obtain access.
- Please contact the main office if you have further questions.

## ***How are Progress Reports and Report Cards handled at UMS?***

- Progress Reports are issued half way through each quarter to show your child's academic progress.
- Report Cards are issued at the end of each quarter to show your child's final academic grades for that period.
- Typically, both are mailed home.

## ***How can my child make Honor Roll?***

- Any student who earns a Grade Point Average of 4.0 or higher and does not receive any C, D, or F grades is an honor student for that quarter.
- Students may achieve one of three levels of Honor Roll:
  - Honor Status (GPA: 4.0-4.4)
  - High Honors (GPA: 4.5-4.9)
  - Highest Honors (GPA: 5.0)

## ***How can my child become a Student of the Month?***

- Each team and elective department chooses one student a month to represent this award based on academic and behavioral expectations.
- Students may receive this award one time while at UMS.

[Table of Contents](#)

## Promotion/Retention

### *How can I make sure my child is promoted to the next grade level?*

It is the policy of Urbana Middle School to promote students to the next grade or retain students in the same grade based primarily on academic performance in all classes. Students will earn one point for each passing quarter grade they earn in each class. In general, there are 32 points possible. A student must earn at least 26 points (80%) to be promoted automatically to the next grade level. If a student has fewer than 26 points, that student will be considered for summer school. If a student is found in need of attending summer school, the student may be required to attend summer school. A student found in need of attending summer school, may be retained in the current grade for failure to attend and/or successfully complete summer school.

*(Note: There are various opportunities for students to recover points throughout the school year.)*

Detailed retention procedures are available in the student handbook.

Please contact your child's counselor if you have any questions.

[Table of Contents](#)

## After School Activities

### ***What after school programs are available for my child?***

*\*Please note that some activities are not offered every year, and some activities may be added.*

#### Students Playing and Learning After School Hours (SPLASH)

SPLASH offers a wide variety of after school activities including games, classes, clubs, and academic supports.

#### Broadway on Vine

Broadway on Vine is part of the SPLASH program and has been producing musicals for six years. Auditions begin in late November and occur twice a week. The musical performance occurs in April.

#### Student Council

The UMS Student Council is an organization in which members plan for and make decisions for the betterment of the student body.

#### Yearbook Club

Students in this group get experience in a journalism related field by chronicling the events of the school year through photos and text to be published as the school's annual yearbook.

#### U-STEM

This program is for students interested in accelerated math and science. This group has selective participation requirements.

#### [Table of Contents](#)

## **Before & After School Academic Support**

*What programs are available to help my child be successful at UMS?*

### Morning Jumpstart

- The Morning Jump Start program is held most mornings before school when SPLASH is in session. Teachers and volunteer tutors help students check their Daily Planners, complete homework assignments and prepare for the school day.

### Homework Lab

- Offered through SPLASH, Homework Lab is held after school Monday – Thursday. Teachers and volunteer tutors work one-on-one with students to help them complete homework assignments.

### Academic Team (A-Team)

- Offered through SPLASH, A-Team is held after school Tuesday – Thursday. Teachers work one-on-one with students to help them complete homework assignments and improve organizational skills and study habits.
- Students who attend regularly are able to recapture points lost as a result of F grades.

### [Table of Contents](#)



## Athletics

### ***What athletic opportunities are available for my child?***

#### Fall Sports

- Baseball (July-September)
- Softball (July-September)
- Boys and Girls Cross Country\* (August-October)
- Girls Basketball (August-December)

#### Winter Sports

- Boys Basketball (October-February)
- Girls Volleyball (December-March)

#### Spring Sports

- Boys and Girls Track (February-May)

*\*Cross Country involves competing in a two-mile run over a course marked out on natural terrain.*

### ***Do I have to pay any athletic fees?***

- Yes, there is a \$50.00 fee per student for each sport, with a maximum of \$100.00 for the school year. *(Note: Students who qualify for free or reduced-priced lunch will have this fee discounted or waived.)*

### ***Does my child need to have a Physical Examination to participate in sports?***

- Yes, all student athletes must have a current Sports Physical before they are allowed to try-out or practice.

### ***How is eligibility handled at UMS?***

- Students must be passing all classes on a weekly basis to be eligible to participate in athletics.
- If a student has at least one failing grade at the time of the weekly report, they will not be eligible to participate the following week.

#### [Table of Contents](#)

## Safety

### ***How do I find out about the rules of UMS?***

- The school rules can be found in the Urbana Middle School Student Handbook included in your child's Daily Planner and on the UMS website.
- School district information, that is also related to discipline, may be found in the Board Policy and Procedure Manual that is issued to parents at registration.
- Please contact your child's Dean if you have any questions.

### ***What do I do if my child is being bullied?***

- We encourage all members of the school community, including students, parents, volunteers, and visitors, to report any act of bullying behavior directly to a school official. A Bullying Behavior FAQ is available on the UMS website.
  - Each reported incident of bullying behavior is fully investigated by a staff member and appropriate actions are taken.
  - Students who demonstrate bullying behavior or are victims of bullying behavior are offered services through a counselor, social worker, or community agency.
  - All staff and students receive instruction on bullying prevention through our Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) program.

### ***Will I be contacted in case of an emergency or drill at UMS?***

- In the case of an actual emergency Urbana School District will send parents an automated message, utilizing voice, text, and e-mail. In order to receive these alerts, it is important that you keep your family contact information up-to-date in Skyward.
- UMS is required to conduct various drills during the school year including fire (3), bus evacuation (1), tornado (1), and "active shooter" (1). The school does not notify parents of all drills. When UMS conducts the "active shooter" drill, parents are notified after the drill has occurred.

[Table of Contents](#)

## Breakfast & Lunch

### *How can I pay for Breakfast and/or Lunch at UMS?*

- All students are eligible for one no-charge breakfast and lunch per day.
- Additional breakfast and lunch or ala carte items are purchased on a prepay system using your child's student ID card. *It is extremely important that students have their ID cards with them every day at breakfast and lunch.*
- Parents or students can make deposits into your child's meal account by mailing a check to UMS or delivering a check or cash payment to the cafeteria.
- Aramark provides food service. Contact Aramark at (217) 384-3694 with questions or concerns about food quality, service, or your child's meal account.
- Please make checks payable to Aramark c/o Urbana Middle School and be sure to include your child's name. *(Note: No cash payments are accepted in the lunch line.)*
- Applications for the free/reduced-priced meal program are located in the main office.

### *When is breakfast?*

- Breakfast begins at 8:10 and ends at 8:30. Breakfast is served every day. Cold lunch only is served from 8:38-9:05.
- Students who plan to eat breakfast should report to the cafeteria between the times of 8:10 and 8:30. Students should go directly to the cafetorium via door #1 upon arriving at school without going to their grade-levy lines. After 8:30, the serving line will be closed to all students. Students are to remain in the cafetorium until dismissed by the supervisor. The cafetorium is open only for students eating breakfast during this time.
- Students arriving after 8:30 who have not already received a no-charge breakfast may pick up a "cold breakfast" prior to attending class (served from 8:38 to 9:05).

[Table of Contents](#)

## Health

### ***What health and wellness care is available for my child?***

- The Urbana School-Based Health Center provides medical, dental, mental health and prevention services for all students of Urbana School District.
- The Health Center is located at Urbana High School and is open Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., and Wednesday 8 a.m. to 12 noon.
- Appointments are needed for medical visits and school physicals or immunizations.
- Students may access the health center for services with parental consent. *(Note: Parental consent is not needed for students to obtain confidential health services such as treatment of sexually transmitted diseases, mental health treatment, and substance abuse treatment.)*
- Please contact the Urbana School-Based Health Center at 239-4220 for more information.

[Table of Contents](#)

## **Absences**

### ***What do I do if my child will not be at school?***

- To report an absence, call the Office at 384-3688 between 7:30 a.m. and 9:30 a.m. each day of the absence with the reason for the absence.
- If a parent or guardian does not call in, students must bring a signed and dated note to the attendance office stating the reason for the absence(s) when they return.

### ***How can I request homework when my child is absent?***

- If your child is only absent for one or two days, it is the parents responsibility to contact the teachers directly to request homework. It is recommended that parents check the teachers' homework blogs on-line, email teachers, or call teachers directly.
- During an extended absence (three days or more), parents may call the Office to request homework assignments before 10:00 AM. Assignments for students will be available for pick-up in the Office at the end of the following school day. If assignments are not requested prior to the student's return to school from an absence, it becomes the student's and/or parent's responsibility to contact each of the student's teachers to determine what assignments need to be made-up and the deadline for turning them in. A student will have at least one day to make up work for each day of absence. Teachers are not expected to reteach information missed by students during an absence.

### ***Will I be notified if my child does not show up to school?***

- Yes, if your child is absent without parent or guardian authorization, an automated service will call home by 10:30 a.m. to report your child's absence from school. It is important that you keep your family contact information up-to-date in Skyward.

[Table of Contents](#)

## Parent Involvement

### ***What is the school's Parent Involvement Policy?***

Urbana Middle School shall promote parent involvement and work as equal partners with parents in providing quality learning experiences for every student, every day, without exception. Urbana Middle School administration and staff believes and acknowledges that parent involvement raises the academic achievement level of students. Additionally, parents become empowered, teacher morale improves, and communities grow stronger when parents take an active role in educating their children. To this end, Urbana Middle School will actively seek to involve parents in the education of their children at all grade levels.

### ***What is the school's classroom visit policy?***

- Parents are always welcome and are encouraged to visit UMS and to attend classes with their students. Please make arrangements at least one day in advance of your visit and register in the Main Office upon arrival.
- Teachers may not be available to meet with you during these visits, but if you wish to attend team or individual conferences with teachers please call the school to arrange specific meeting times.
- 

### ***What is the expectation for family-school communication?***

- In general, the school may communicate information about a specific student only with persons listed in Skyward as the parent/guardian or as an emergency contact for that student. If a parent/guardian needs to communicate with the school, please call the school or come to the school's main office. Office staff will make every effort immediately to connect the parent/guardian with the most appropriate staff member to address the parent's/guardian's needs. If office staff is unable to connect the parent/guardian with an appropriate staff member, office staff will give the parent/guardian the option to leave a message (voice or written) for the appropriate staff member. A parent/guardian should receive a response to the message within one school day (please allow a minimum of 24 hours). If a parent/guardian does not receive a response within one school day, the parent/guardian should contact the school principal, associate principal, or assistant principal. If a parent/guardian does not receive a response within one school day from the school principal, parents/guardians may contact the Urbana School District by calling 217-384-3600.

[Table of Contents](#)

## Discipline Concerns

### *What can I do if I have a concern with a discipline decision?*

- If you do not agree with or have questions about a classroom discipline decision, please first contact that teacher. If speaking with the teacher does not resolve your concern, please contact your child's Dean.
- If you do not agree with or have questions about a discipline decision from your child's Dean (suspensions, Alternative Day Assignment, detentions, etc...), please first contact that Dean.
- If speaking with the Dean does not resolve your concern please contact one of the Assistant Principals.
- At any time you may contact the Community Outreach Workers, Lucia Maldonado or Janice Mitchell.

[Table of Contents](#)

## **Middle School Philosophy/Structure**

### ***What is the middle school's philosophy?***

Urbana Middle School subscribes to a philosophy that the unique needs of students in grades sixth through eighth can best be met when provided an education that is student-centered and responsive to their developmental needs. A fundamental component of this philosophy is are several organizational components including having students grouped on academic teams, providing grade-level counseling services, and a homeroom/advisory period during the school day.

### ***What are middle school teams and how are they structured?***

- Teams involve a group of core academic teachers and special education teachers that work with the same group of students the entire school year.
- This structure allows students to feel a sense of belonging to ease social and emotional transitions during their middle school years.
- During the 2017-2018 school year, each grade level will have three teams. Each team will include one each of math, science, language arts, and social studies along with at least one support program such as special education or English as a Second Language. All academic teams offer the same core curriculum.

[Table of Contents](#)



## **UMS's Mission, Vision, and Beliefs**

### ***What is the mission of UMS?***

The mission of Urbana Middle School, a community of learning, is to engage and inspire students while promoting their intellectual, social, and emotional growth.

### ***What is UMS's vision for the future?***

UMS promotes its mission through a vision for academic excellence, developmental responsiveness, and social equity.

**ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE.** Urbana Middle School is academically excellent. UMS challenges all students to use their minds well, providing them with the curriculum, instruction, assessment, support, and time they need to meet rigorous academic standards. UMS recognizes that early adolescence is characterized by dramatic cognitive growth, which enables students to think in more abstract and complex ways. Our curriculum and extra-curricular programs are designed to be challenging and engaging, tapping young adolescents' boundless energy, interests, and curiosity. Students will learn to understand important concepts, develop essential skills, and apply what they learn to real-world problems. Every adult in our school maintains a rich academic environment by working with colleagues in our schools and community to deepen our knowledge and improve our practice.

**DEVELOPMENTAL RESPONSIVENESS.** UMS is developmentally responsive. UMS creates small learning communities of adults and students in which stable, close, and mutually respectful relationships support all students' intellectual, ethical, and social growth. UMS provides comprehensive services to foster healthy physical and emotional development. Students have opportunities for both independent inquiry and learning in cooperation with others. Students have time to be reflective and numerous opportunities to make decisions about their learning. UMS involves families as partners in the education of their children by keeping them well informed, helping them develop their expectations and skills to support learning, and assuring their participation in decision-making. UMS is deeply rooted in the community while providing students opportunities for active citizenship. Students and staff use the community as a classroom, and community members provide resources, connections, and active support.

**SOCIAL EQUITY.** UMS is socially equitable. UMS seeks to keep students' future options open. UMS has high expectations for all students and is committed to helping each child produce work of high quality. UMS makes sure that all students are in academically rigorous classes appropriate to the child that are staffed by experienced and expertly prepared teachers. UMS acknowledges and respects students' histories, cultures, and previous life experiences. UMS works to educate every child well and to overcome systematic variation in resources and outcomes related to race, class, gender, and ability. UMS engages their communities in supporting all students' learning and growth.

## UMS's Mission, Vision, and Beliefs (cont.)

### *What are the beliefs of UMS?*

To Achieve UMS's Mission and Vision, We Believe...

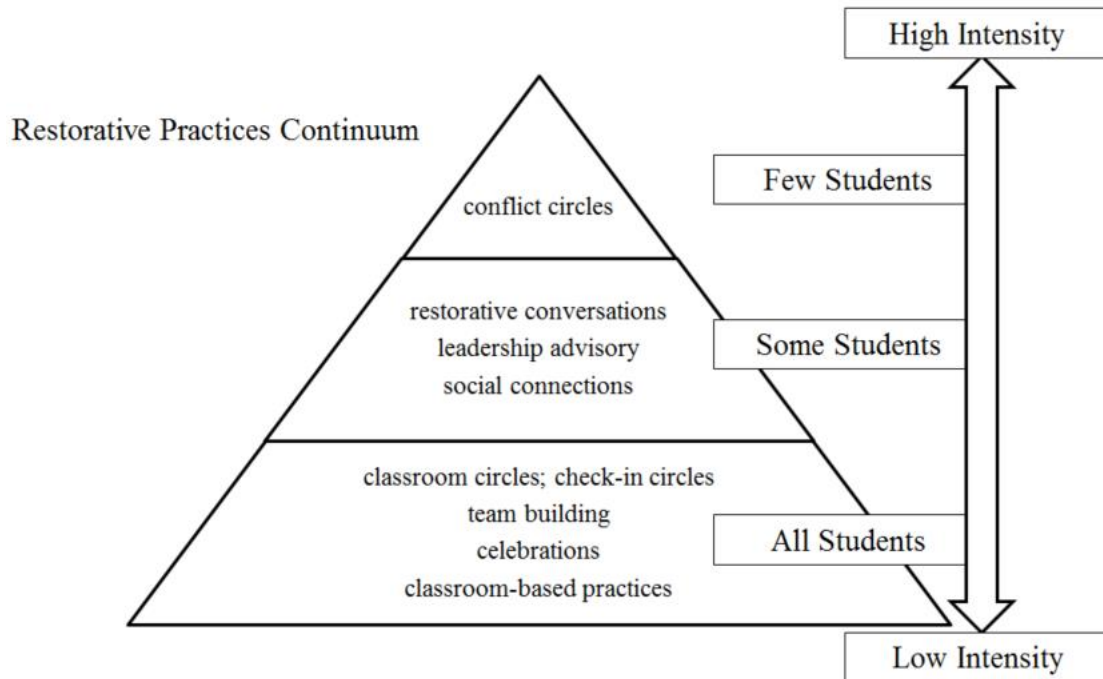
- Students learn best in a safe environment when education is individualized, engaging, and their basic needs are met.
- Students learn best when they are motivated and engaged in relevant learning.
- Young adolescents are impressionable, developing thinkers and citizens who want to feel valued, safe, and supported.
- Young adolescents need a wide range of experiences and role models who facilitate independence and challenge them to reach their full potential.
- UMS is dedicated to providing a collaborative, flexible, and challenging environment that meets the needs of the whole child.
- UMS is a welcoming environment that fosters productive, collaborative partnerships to positively influence student learning and thus students' lives.

[Table of Contents](#)

# Restorative Practices

## *What is Restorative Practices?*

Beginning in the 2015-2016 school year, UMS started implementing Restorative Practices (RP) as part of our social-emotional supports. The objective of RP is to improve school climate and break the cycle of repeating conflict and ongoing harm by dealing with issues underlying harmful behavior and addressing the needs and feelings of individuals who were affected. RP is a term used to describe a variety of processes that focus on building relationships, identifying harm and making amends or repairing relationships, instead of excluding students from the school community. Although in some cases RP may take the place of punitive discipline, even with RP in place, students may continue to receive traditional disciplinary consequences.



RP is a broad umbrella that includes general work with all students and staff on how to listen and respond effectively to others and includes direct, intensive interventions with specific students. Most students only experience RP through activities during Advisory. On a regular basis students participate in advisory classroom circles, classroom-based climate discussions, and community-building activities. The purpose of these conversation-based activities is to teach and practice social skills such as listening, empathy, and clear communication with peers.

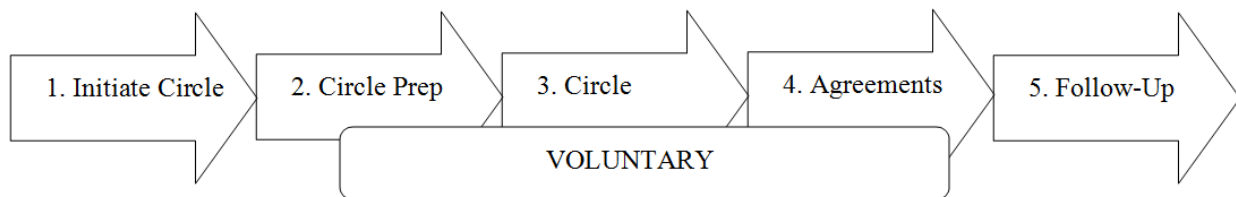
Other RP support practices in place at UMS include a full-time RP Facilitator, ongoing groups such as SPARCS (for students who have experienced major trauma), Social Connections (for students who persistently disrupt classroom settings), Leadership Advisory (for students interested in delving deeper into RP and leading RP activities among peers), and other social-emotional support groups as needed.

If there is a conflict involving a student, whether at school or outside of school, students and/or staff may participate voluntarily in a Restorative Conversation. A trained staff member facilitates these conversations, and these conversations are intended to help students and staff resolve minor conflicts.

## Restorative Practices (Cont.)

If there is a more serious conflict involving a student (e.g. physical violence, harassment, bullying, or a conflict unable to be resolved through a Restorative Conversation), whether at school or outside of school, students and staff may participate voluntarily in a Conflict Circle. A Conflict Circle is facilitated by one or two trained adult circle keepers and includes the parties that were perceived to have done harm, parties who perceive themselves as having been harmed, and those who feel impacted by what happened, which may include school staff and/or family members, as well as peers

The general process of a Conflict Circle is as follows:



1. Initiating the Conflict Circle. Anyone involved in the conflict, including students, staff, and/or family members, may request the conflict circle. A circle may be requested by speaking with a dean, counselor, social worker, school administrator, or the restorative practices facilitator. Alternatively, the person initiating the request may complete the “Restorative Practices Conflict Circle Request” form and turn it in to the main office.
2. Exploration Meeting / Circle Preparation. After receiving the request, at least one trained adult will meet with participants to explore their needs and the possibility of participating in a Conflict Circle. All participants voluntarily take part in these individual or small group exploratory meetings. The purpose of the exploration meeting is to identify the conflict and the individuals who need to be present, support those individuals in gaining clarity about their feelings and needs, explain the Circle process, and obtain informed consent to participate in the Conflict Circle, if participants want to proceed.
3. The Conflict Circle. After all participants have been prepared for the Conflict Circle, participants voluntarily take part in the Conflict Circle. During a Conflict Circle, a particular dialogue process is followed and all parties have the opportunity to be heard. At least one trained adult facilitates the Conflict Circle.
4. Agreements. During the last part of the Conflict Circle, participants are encouraged to make agreements in order to repair any harm done as a result of the conflict, make amends, and create conditions in which future harm is less likely. Agreements are written and agreed to by all parties.
5. Follow-up. After the Conflict Circle, a trained adult will check in with the participants to see if they are satisfied with how things have unfolded after the Circle. If there are concerns with the agreements or if participants are dissatisfied for other reasons, an additional Restorative Conversation or Conflict Circle may be initiated.

[Table of Contents](#)