



Dear 6th grade parents,

I have decided to address my May Newsletter to you; the parents and guardians of our 6th grade families. In the recent past leading up to now, several 6th grade parents have been sharing their concerns with me when we happen to be discussing their child. For example, *“My sixth grader is usually very well-behaved. But lately, he has been acting out at home and at school. He’s heading to middle school next year and I know he’s anxious about that. Could this be why he’s causing so much trouble? I’m at a loss about what to do.”*

My response has been consistent to these parents. Therefore, I believe it’s important that I share my thoughts with as many parents and guardians of 6th grade students as possible.

When kids are anxious, they tend to act out with the people they feel the closest to—usually parents and teachers. Transitions are hard on all kids, and even harder on some. The move to middle school can be a scary time. Your 6th grade child has a lot of worries: Will he still see his friends? Will he be able to do the work? Will he be able to open his locker? Will he be able to manage the workload of classes? Will he be traveling hallways with high school students? These fears may be causing his misbehavior. Letting him get them out in the open will be a first step in dealing with them. Here’s how to help: • **Talk with your son.** See if you can get him to start expressing his fears out loud. A low-key approach usually works best, especially with boys. To open up a conversation, you might say, “I bet you’re wondering about who will be in your classes next year.” • **Address his concerns.** Once he begins to talk about his worries, you and his teacher can start to address them. Perhaps the teacher can lead a few class discussions about Life in Middle School. Or, if your son knows someone who is already at the school, he can ask him about what it’s really like. • **Remind your child that he still needs to follow the rules at home and at school.**