

# WHITEFORD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Whiteford Agricultural School District  
6655 Consear Rd, Ottawa, Lake, MI 49267



Dear Whiteford Families,

As we prepare for the upcoming school year, we want to provide clarity and reassurance about the relocation of our 5th grade classrooms to the middle school building. While the location is changing, 5th grade remains an important part of Whiteford Elementary. Below is a list of frequently asked questions to help address common concerns and provide more information about what this change will look like for the coming school year.

## **Are 5th grade students still part of the elementary school this year?**

Yes, 5th grade students will remain part of **Whiteford Elementary School for the 25-26 school year**. They will continue to participate in all elementary activities, events, and programs. Their teachers, support staff, and principal will remain elementary-based.

## **When will we know what class our child is in and see the classrooms?**

Fifth grade students will learn their classroom placement at the **WPA Welcome Back Picnic (8/20)** just like in past years. We are planning on a 5th grade Orientation on the same night. Orientation will begin at 6pm in the elementary cafeteria followed by a guided tour of the middle school wing. A 5th grade Q&A will also be available for families as well. Our 5th grade teachers for the upcoming year are Mrs. Biddle, Mrs. Shepherd and Mrs. Young, and they will be available for the orientation night. Additionally, you will be able to see the 5th grade space the following week at **1st-12th Grade Open House (8/27)**.

## **Who will oversee the 5th grade students?**

Fifth grade students will still be under the care of the **Elementary Principal (Mr. Marsh), Behavior Interventionist (Mrs. Hillard), and Elementary Counselor (Mrs. Brossia)**. This will be in partnership with the Middle School/High School Principal (Mr. Fielder), Dean of Students (Mr. Groch) and Secondary Counselor (Ms. Head) to build relationships and ensure a positive transition.

## **Will the 5th graders interact with middle school/high school students?**

Fifth grade students will be housed in the middle school hallway that allows them to remain physically and developmentally separated from older students throughout the day. This area will include classrooms and designated **middle school only bathrooms** to maintain clear separation from older student spaces.

## **When will students be dropped off or picked up?**

**Start/End Times** – The 5th grade schedule will align with the middle/high school.

- **Doors open at 7:30am.**
- **Breakfast served from 7:30-7:50am in the middle/high school cafeteria.**
- **First Bell dismisses students to their lockers at 7:50am.**
- **Tardy Bell is at 8:00am**
- **Dismissal Bell is at 3:00pm.**

## Where will students be dropped off or picked up?

**Bussers:** Transportation will remain the same for 5th graders, but will be let out at the middle school building and dismissed to a designated area.

**Car Riders:** [Click here for drop-off process](#). We are utilizing a newly created **5th–8th grade office space**, which currently houses high school athletic offices, for student and family use (e.g., signing students in and out for appointments). This location is **closer in proximity** to the middle school wing and offers access to **student support services**.

**Breakfast eaters** will be supervised in the MS/HS cafeteria.

## Will 5th graders have their own lunch and recess?

Yes, we have ensured that 5th graders will continue to have **lunch and recess with the 4th grade** at the elementary school.

## What about specials (art, music, PE, etc.)?

Fifth grade students **will continue to attend specials** as they normally have in the past.

## What's Staying the Same for 5th Grade?

Despite the classroom location change, many important traditions and routines will continue unchanged:

- **Lunch** – Teachers will walk 5th graders to the elementary school, and they will eat a 25-minute lunch with 4th graders.
- **Recess** – 5th grade will enjoy a 20-minute **lunch recess on the elementary playground** with 4th graders.
- **Camp Michindoh** – Our annual fall trip will remain a tradition for 5th graders, which is September 9-12th.
- **Little Buddies** – 5th grade will continue to meet with kindergarten students to mentor and build relationships.
- **Reading Month** – Students will fully participate in reading month activities and celebrations.
- **Field Day/Ag Day** – 5th graders will be part of elementary field day and Ag Day activities.
- **Holiday Celebrations** – Events such as the **Halloween Parade/Christmas Concert** will continue for 5th grade.
- **D.A.R.E.** – Students will participate in D.A.R.E. lessons with a Monroe County Sheriff's Officer.
- **Mini Society, Survivor Day, Etc.** – Traditional 5th grade activities will continue based on teacher discretion.
- **Whiteford Parent Association (WPA)** events will still include our 5th graders.

## What are the New Opportunities for 5th Grade?

The move also creates new options for enrichment and flexibility:

- **Smooth Transition to Middle School:**
  - Being in the same building provides a **low-stress preview of the middle school environment**, which can help students feel more confident and prepared for 6th grade.
  - Our 6th graders will have the opportunity to mentor 5th graders as they have experienced a year of middle school.
  - Academic alignment between grades will be available due to proximity in the building.
- **Expanded Independence:**
  - With thoughtful guidance, students will have chances to **build independence and responsibility**, such as:
    - Navigating a slightly larger school setting
    - Managing transitions and time more independently
    - Practicing communication skills with multiple staff members
    - Using and maintaining a locker with another 5th grader

## What can you expect as a parent or student as the school year begins?

During the first week of school we will hold a **welcome assembly** for the students to be introduced to the Middle School/High School Principal (Mr. Fielder), Dean of Students (Mr. Groch) and Secondary Counselor (Ms. Head). The elementary support staff will be assigned to 5th grade areas to make sure that students are more comfortable during the transitions and conduct check-ins with the classes. Throughout the year the district will send out feedback surveys for students and parents to gauge the effectiveness of the transition and see what improvements we can make.

We appreciate your continued support and partnership as we make adjustments that will benefit all of our students. If you have further questions, feel free to reach out to the elementary office directly.

Sincerely,



Samuel Marsh  
Whiteford Elementary Principal