New Families Quick Links (October 2017)
Questions? Contact our VP of Outreach at mailto:outreach@mihsptsa.org

Staying Informed:
Both the PTSA Newsletter and MIHS Daily Bulletin were mentioned as great resources to stay informed. To join the PTSA and be automatically subscribed to the newsletter, please visit https://mihsptsa.org/. Alternatively, email mihsnewsletter@hotmail.com to subscribe. The Daily Bulletin can be located here: https://www.mercerislandschools.org/site/Default.aspx?PageID=9216. Families will also want to download the FlashAlert app to stay current on any school closings or delays.

Student Involvement:
The best way for your new students to start feeling connected is to get involved at MIHS. This can take many forms. A list of active clubs can be located at: https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B6clvK4Xox7xS0cxVnMtaUhwTzhQc1dkd3VvZENRLURMaF80/view. Club meetings are announced in the Daily Bulletin, on morning announcements and via signs in the school hallways. Students are also encouraged to reach out to the Teacher Advisor noted on the club list should they have any questions. Many students partake in the various sports offered at MIHS. Please note that winter sports registration will open October 3rd and close October 23rd. There are “no cut” sports options! Visit https://www.mercerislandschools.org/Domain/92 to learn more. For the more artistically inclined, MIHS has a hugely popular band program, as well as drama, choir and orchestra. Follow link https://www.mercerislandschools.org/Domain/1792 for more information. Perhaps your student is creative in other ways and is interested in journalism, yearbook or radio broadcasting. These are available at MIHS as well! See https://www.mercerislandschools.org/domain/1963 and connect via the respective links to learn more.

Keeping up with Academics, College Planning:
Several platforms were discussed, including Skyward, Schoology, and Naviance. Skyward is MISD’s online system for posting course/assignment grades, attendance, lunch account balances, students’ schedules, test scores, students’ progress toward graduation requirements and report cards. Separate log-ins are provided to students and families. Skyward can be accessed here: https://www2.nwrdc.wa-k12.net/scripts/wsisa.dll/WService=wmercers71/fwemnu01.w. Schoology can be found here https://app.schoology.com/login?school=4618001 and is used to post assignments / due dates and class resources. If you have more than one student enrolled in an MISD school, you will need to select that student at the top right to individualize the program. Again, students and families should have been provided their own log-ins. Naviance is used by MIHS to aid in the college and career process. While most useful for juniors and seniors, underclassmen will take various interest and career assessments. Junior and senior students may access the list of colleges coming to campus via Naviance and are encouraged to RSVP to meet with representatives during the school day. As with the other online platforms, students will be given individual log-ins. Family log-ins can be requested from your academic counselor. Please link to Naviance here: https://www.mercerislandschools.org/Domain/93 and scroll to Naviance Family Connection Log-in on left menu.
Additional Help (on almost everything!):
The PTSA website (https://mihsptsa.org/) is also a helpful resource. Seniors will find graduation information and juniors will find Mock SAT/ACT information under their respective tabs. PTA Reflections cultural arts competition information (submission deadline November 2017) can be found under the Fine Arts tab. Community Service Awards information is available, as well as information on the PTSA-hosted College Night Series (College Prep tab), discussing such topics as financing your student’s college education, highly selective colleges and colleges for learning differences. As noted in a previous email, new families may be particularly interested in reading the MIHS New Family Guide and MIHS 101 found here: https://mihsptsa.org/news-and-updates/new-families-information/.

Schedules & Student Absences:
MIHS follows a Block Schedule for the most part but will deviate from this format on occasion due to holidays, testing, assemblies, etc. All scheduling information can be accessed here: https://www.mercerislandschools.org/site/Default.aspx?PageID=5700. Note that there will be a change in schedule the week of October 9-13. Confusing? Have your student snap a picture of the schedule to access on their phone. What if my student is absent? Please note that MIHS requires students submit a hand-written note or Attendance Slip within 2 days of that student’s return to school. A doctor’s or hand-written note is required should a student arrive late or need to leave school early. If you know in advance that your student will be absent, such as due to an extracurricular activity, field trip, or college visit, a student should get pre-authorization from teachers using a “Whammo,” or Prearranged Absence Form. Forms are located here: https://www.mercerislandschools.org/domain/1209. All notes/forms should be submitted to the MIHS Attendance Office located just inside the main entrance.

Questions & Concerns:
Should students have emotional concerns, please encourage them to visit our Mercer Island Youth and Family Service counselors in the Resource & Referral (R&R) Place at MIHS. Cathy Gentino and Chris Harnish would be happy to offer support and guidance. Please link here https://www.mercerislandschools.org/Domain/2095 for more information. If your student needs academic help, MIHS will soon offer before and after school tutoring services in English, Math (through Algebra II), Science, Social Studies and Foreign Language. Watch for a schedule in the Daily Bulletin. Remember that your academic counselors are available to answer many of your questions. Not sure who your student’s counselor is? Find out here: https://www.mercerislandschools.org/Page/5466.

New Student Mentor Club:
MIHS ASB is piloting a new club this year that hopes to pair new students with current students to help ease their transitions. Club leaders hope to send a questionnaire via email to your students soon to aid in the pairing process. Please encourage your student to complete this so that they may participate!