



Middle School FAQs

Q: What are the hours of the school day and where is the drop-off and pick-up location?

A: Middle School classes begin promptly at 8:15 A.M. (15 minutes earlier than Lower School) and are dismissed at 3:15 P.M. Attendance is taken daily in each class. Arrival at school by 8:00 A.M. ensures that students have time to spend at their lockers, preparing for the day and connecting with peers, to then be able to arrive to class on time and not miss essential instructional time. Drop-off and pick-up for middle school students is on 700 South. Students may arrive as early as 7:30 A.M. where supervised Morning Care is provided in the Library at no charge, or students may attend teachers' Office Hours. Students remaining at school past 4:00 need to check in with the AfterSchool Program (fee based).

Q: Who do I contact with questions or concerns about my child?

A: If the question is specific to a subject area or teacher, it is best to first contact that teacher directly. More general questions or concerns can be directed to your child's advisor. At any time, you may contact Jocelyn Gukeisen (Middle School Director).

Q: When will my child know about his/her advisor, class schedule, and locker assignment and combination?

A: Students (and parents) are encouraged to attend the Middle School Open House on Monday, August 28, 9:00-10:00 A.M. in the Middle School Commons to pick up their class schedule, locker assignment and combination, advisory information, and planner. This is also a great time to connect with peers and teachers before the first day of school. Students who are unable to attend the Open House will receive their schedule, locker assignment and combination, advisory information, and planner on the first day of school, which is Tuesday, August 29.

Q: How are lockers used in Middle School?

A: In Middle School backpacks are expected to remain in lockers during the day and students should stop at their lockers throughout the day to switch out binders and to get necessary books and supplies. This reduces the load that students carry on their backs and eliminates the presence of backpacks in the classrooms, as well as requires students to practice better organizational skills. Each student locker is equipped with a combination lock that is provided by The School, giving students a secure place to store their backpacks, phones, and personal belongings. Having and using a combination lock also gives students practice with this skill before high school. If locks are misplaced, a replacement fee of \$10 will incur. It is expected that students use the school-provided combination lock on their lockers.

Q: What is the Explorations block?

A: Each Thursday, Middle Schools students participate in Explorations classes that provide opportunities to explore a variety of learning experiences that fall outside of the core classes. The goal is to have smaller classes, classes that may be multi-grade level, and more opportunity for student choice. One trimester each year will be dedicated to an Outdoor and Environmental Education (OEE) experience. The 6th grade OEE trimester is in the spring, winter for 7th grade, and 8th grade in the fall – all three trimesters include grade level OEE trips. During the OEE trimesters, students will spend half of the trimester in OEE and the other half in either SLAM (Service Learning @ McGillis) or Chorus. There are ten other Explorations classes that students are placed into based on student preference for the remaining two trimesters of the school year.

Q: On the Middle School schedule, I see 6M, 6A, and 6G —what do these mean?

A: Each grade level is split into three smaller groups. In 6th grade the three groups are named M, A, and G. Groupings allow flexibility both academically and socially. The composition of the groups may be reorganized at the beginning of each trimester. Time spent in science, history, and English classes is based on flexible scheduling and may change from week to week, which is why it is listed as Sci/Hist/Eng on the schedule. Students will participate in four hours a week of each subject area; however, this may be four 1-hour sessions, or two 2-hour sessions, or any other combination.

Q: Where can I find information about the Middle School class trips and do parents go on these trips?

A: The 6th grade class trip to the Teton Science Schools (TSS) in Jackson, WY is Monday, September 25 – Friday, September 29. The 7th grade class trip to Canyonlands Field Institute (CFI) in Moab, UT is Monday, October 16 – Friday, October 20. The 8th grade class trip to Washington, DC is Monday, April 23 – Friday, April 27. All class trip information will be sent home and posted on The McGillis School webpage in the fall. Sixth grade families, please plan to attend the sixth grade orientation on Thursday, August 31 at 8:15 A.M. for more information about the Middle School program and the Teton Science School trip. While attendance of parents on some of the Lower School OEE trips is essential, parents' attendance on the Middle School class trips, at a time when we are partnering with parents to help students develop independence, can change the overall dynamic and intended goals of the trip, and as such parents do not go on the Middle School trips. Grade level advisors chaperone and remain with students throughout the trip.

Q: How can I stay informed about what is happening in each of my child's classes?

A: The best way to stay informed is to ask your child what is happening in each of their classes. Students will be required to use their planner (provided by The School) as an organizational tool, and their binders are a great place for them to refer to what was studied each day. In addition, each teacher has a Canvas Page that is updated regularly. Canvas Pages include information about what students are currently studying, upcoming due dates, class work and homework assignments, dates of upcoming exams, as well as grades.

Q: Are electronics allowed at school?

A: We recognize the desire for increased independence and communication in middle school and at the same time understand the need for students to focus on academics and to encourage face-to-face interactions with peers and adults. To this end, the use of cell phones and electronic devices is not allowed while students are at school, unless specifically directed by a teacher. Any devices brought to school should be stored in the locker and turned off, or stored in the Front Office with Ms. Brooke and/or Ms. Laura. Students using laptops for school-related purposes must first talk with Ms. Gukeisen. Electronic devices are not allowed during Morning Care so that students can use that time to prepare for the academic day. After school, we recognize the need for students to be in communication with home. Cell phones may be used after school for communication with parents/care-givers, but not for entertainment purposes (gaming, videos, texting friends, etc.).

Q: Do Middle School students have a school-issued email address?

A: Each Middle School student has a magpiation email address. New students will receive their address and password information from their advisor during the first week of school. The magpiation email address is to be used for school related work only. A large majority of student work will be done through Google Docs and Google Drive, which is supported through their magpiation account.

Q: What are the dress expectations for Middle School?

A: The purpose of dress standards is to help children learn the importance of dressing appropriately for different occasions. Teachers and parents provide guidelines in this regard. On regular school days, students are expected to dress reasonably and appropriately. Flip-flops, hats, and raised hoods on hoodies are not allowed. Please see the Student & Family Handbook for more detail.

Q: Should my child plan on packing a snack for morning break?

A: Students need to eat a good breakfast each morning and pack a snack that can be eaten during morning break. If a student is staying after school for athletics, they should bring a snack from home for that time.

Q: What if my child is involved in after school Athletic practices and games and/or drama rehearsals?

A: If students have a game, practice, or rehearsal scheduled for 4:00 P.M. or earlier, they may stay at school until the event begins, during this time, they should change into their uniforms (if necessary), eat a snack, and meet their coach/teacher. If the game, practice, or rehearsal is scheduled for later than 4:00 P.M., students must be picked up by 4:00 P.M. or signed into the AfterSchool program (fee based) until the specified time by which to meet their coach/teacher.

Q: What does my child do with the PE uniform that was issued last year?

A: Incoming 6th grade and new students will be issued a PE uniform during the first week of school to be used throughout the three years of middle school. Returning 7th and 8th grade students need to bring and continue to use the uniform that was issued last year. Students who have lost that uniform will be issued a new one with a replacement fee of \$10 per piece. If students have the original uniform piece and have out grown it, a new piece will be replaced for no fee. Students who have two homes are issued two uniforms at no extra cost.