ASHLEY HALL

Understanding the New Middle School Schedule:
A GUIDE FOR PARENTS

Beginning this school year, our Middle School schedule has been thoughtfully redesigned to create a school day that supports academic excellence, student well-being, and meaningful connections.

While many aspects of the day will feel familiar, you'll notice several new schedule components. Together, these changes create a more intentional rhythm that gives students the time they need to think deeply, collaborate, receive support, and recharge so they can do their best learning.

The new 8-day rotation provides more consistent learning time across subject areas, even when holidays, athletic commitments, or other events affect the school calendar, and unites the Middle School under a single structure. Please use the information below as a guide to help you understand how this will help support your daughter and her academic success. We look forward to partnering with you as we begin the school year and seeing our students thrive within this new rhythm of learning!

At a Glance

SCHOOL DAY

- Arrival: 7:30–7:50 a.m.
- Classes Begin: 8:00 a.m.
- Dismissal: 3:15 p.m.

INSTRUCTIONAL SCHEDULE

- Five academic classes each day
- Class periods of approximately 50–60 minutes
- Daily Advisory
- Daily WIN Time (see below for more information on WIN Time)
- Weekly Discovery Period (Thursdays)
- Weekly Design Studio (Fridays)

Why We Made These Changes

A BETTER RHYTHM AND MORE TIME FOR MEANINGFUL LEARNING

Longer class periods allow teachers to move beyond simply delivering content. Students have more opportunities to ask questions, engage in discussion, collaborate with classmates, participate in hands-on learning, and reflect on their understanding before moving to the next subject. Research on adolescent development shows that students learn more effectively when periods of focused work are balanced with opportunities to reset their attention. Our new schedule intentionally builds in moments for movement, reflection, and transition throughout the day so students can return to class ready to engage. Rather than adding "free time," these opportunities help students sustain focus, reduce cognitive fatigue, and approach learning with renewed energy.

SUPPORT FOR EVERY STUDENT

The schedule includes dedicated time for students to receive individualized support, meet with teachers, strengthen skills, pursue enrichment opportunities, and develop greater ownership of their learning—all within the school day.

STRONGER RELATIONSHIPS

Consistent time with advisors and peers helps foster the sense of belonging that is essential during the middle school years. Daily Advisory creates space for students to build community, develop organizational habits, and receive guidance from a trusted adult.

New Schedule Components

WIN TIME

Daily | 12:30–1:00 p.m.

WIN stands for **What I Need.**

WIN Time is a flexible learning block designed to meet students where they are. Depending on the day, students may:

- Meet with teachers for extra support
- Complete independent work
- Collaborate in small groups
- Catch up or get ahead on assignments
- Participate in enrichment opportunities

This dedicated time allows teachers to provide targeted instruction while helping students become increasingly independent learners. Advisors will help students in the process of planning their WIN each week.

ADVISORY

Daily | End of the School Day

Every student is part of an Advisory group led by a faculty advisor. Advisory serves as a consistent touchpoint each day where students can:

- Organize assignments and plan ahead
- Reflect on their day
- Build relationships with peers
- Receive guidance and support
- Strengthen executive functioning skills

Ending the day with Advisory helps students leave school feeling organized, connected, and prepared for the following day.

DISCOVERY PERIOD

Thursdays | 8:00–9:00 a.m.

Discovery Period gives students opportunities to explore interests, pursue enrichment, and engage in experiences beyond the traditional classroom.

For **7th and 8th grade students,** Discovery also includes an **optional late arrival**. Students choosing the late arrival option should not arrive on campus before **9:00 a.m**.

During Community Days in August, students will participate in a **Discovery Faire** to learn about available offerings and make selections.

DESIGN STUDIO

Fridays | 8:00–9:00 a.m.

Design Studio is rooted in the **IB Middle Years Programme (MYP) Design** framework, which encourages students to solve authentic problems through creativity, innovation, and iterative thinking. Please note that while students will not receive letter grades in this course, it is a mandatory class within their schedules. Students are required to be at school for an 8:00 a.m. start on Friday mornings.

Students will:

- Design and test solutions
- Build prototypes
- Collaborate with classmates
- Apply design thinking processes
- Make connections across disciplines

Each grade level explores a developmentally appropriate design challenge:

- **Grade 5:** Boat Building led by Marisol Castro-Calzada
- **Grade 6:** Design Thinking Through Spaces & Gardens led by Megan Hall
- **Grade 7:** Designing the Future led by Christina Trimarco
- **Grade 8:** IB MYP Community Project led by Sara Lyle