



# Phoenix Country Day School

3901 E. Stanford Dr. • Paradise Valley, AZ 85253 • www.pcds.org • P: 602.381.4523

## Ninth-Grade Transition Information

Welcome to the Phoenix Country Day School Upper School. You will find that the Upper School experience at PCDS is enjoyable, challenging, and rewarding on a number of levels. Our students possess a wide array of interests and passions, strengths and points of challenge, and our goal as an institution is to help them become the best versions of themselves that they can be.

It is important to note that life for students in the PCDS Upper School is very different from a typical middle school experience. There is an assumption of more responsibility, student initiative, and connectedness within this very tightly knit community. While many of these differences may be subtle, the following information is provided to help in the transition to life as a PCDS Upper School student.

### Daily Schedules

The PCDS Upper School runs on a daily schedule with a seven-day rotation. Students have four class periods per day, separated by a 50-minute Community Time/Break period in the morning, an hour-long lunch midday, and a 20-minute break in the afternoon. (Exception: On Fridays, the Community Time period is replaced by two 15-minute breaks following a student's first and second classes, and lunch is 40-minutes following the students' third class.)

#### Monday-Thursday

Block 1	7:50-9:05
Community Time	9:05-9:35
Break	9:35-9:55
Block 2	9:55-11:10
Lunch	11:10-12:10
Block 3	12:10-1:25
Break	1:25-1:45
Block 4	1:45-3:00

#### Friday

Block 1	7:50-9:05
Break	9:05-9:25
Block 2	9:25-10:40
Break	10:40-10:55
Block 3	10:55-12:10
Lunch	12:10-12:50
Block 4	12:50-2:05

### Community Times

Community Times serve a multitude of functions in the PCDS Upper School. In a typical week, community times may look like this:

<u>Day</u>	<u>Community Time</u>	<u>Function</u>
Monday	Advisory	Students meet weekly with their advisor as a group.
Tuesday	Class Meeting	Grade-level meetings to discuss grade-specific items & opportunities led by student senators and grade-level coordinator.
Wednesday	Morning Meeting	Entire US Faculty & Students assemble for announcements & presentations
Thursday	Senior Speeches	Each senior gives a 7-9 minute speech to the US community as a graduation requirement.

Additionally, some Community Times are designated for special guest speakers, assemblies, community building events, or opportunities to see faculty for "office hours" or additional help.

All freshmen are assigned to mandatory study halls that occur within their academic schedule. These study halls offer an opportunity for freshmen to study, complete homework, or meet with a faculty member for extra help during the course of a regular school day. These study halls are proctored by faculty, and are used as productive periods of time to ensure academic success at PCDS.

<b>Lunch</b>	PCDS is a nut-free campus. Students have multiple options for lunch in the Upper School. They may purchase lunch in the PCDS Dining Hall during the lunch break, buy items à la carte from the Upper School Student Center Café, or bring their own lunches to school. Both the Dining Hall and Student Center Café charge purchases to the student's PCDS pre-paid account. Students who bring their lunches to school may store them in the refrigerator in the Student Center or in their lockers/backpacks. No food delivery of any kind is allowed during the school day.
<b>Lockers</b>	Freshmen are assigned lockers in the Upper School Quad, and students supply their own locks. Books, papers, and school materials must be kept in one's locker or backpack during the school day.
<b>Freshman Year Initiative &amp; Freshman Class Retreat</b>	<p>The freshman class is supported throughout its first year by its faculty, as well as by a select group of PCDS students, the Freshman Year Initiative (FYI) team. This group of seniors, under the guidance of faculty moderators, designs the Freshman Class Retreat, as well as multiple freshman class social events held during the school day and on the weekends throughout the year. The FYI team serves as ambassadors for the freshman class and supports the transition to the PCDS Upper School.</p> <p>The traditional Freshman Class Retreat is a bonding experience that takes place over the course of three days, shortly after the beginning of the school year. It allows the freshman class to get to know themselves and one another better, and to positively set the tone for student life in the Upper School. Information regarding the Freshman Class Retreat is sent to parents prior to the beginning of the school year.</p>
<b>Email Communications</b>	The Upper School utilizes email as the primary mode to communicate with students and families. Each Upper School student is given a PCDS email address and password. Students use these to communicate with faculty and peers, as well as receive frequent communications and announcements about the School, classes and assignments, club meetings, extracurricular activities and more. A weekly PCDS email, <i>The Weekly Eagle</i> , is sent out to all constituencies, including parents, outlining news, upcoming events, and opportunities to engage in the community at the all-school and Upper School levels.
<b>Academic Life</b>	<p>The Upper School academic experience seeks to be both enlightening and challenging for all students. The freshman year curriculum offers a shared experience for its students, as the majority of students take the following courses: English, history, math, biology, a world or classical language, and a fine arts course. Incoming students to the Upper School are evaluated and placed in the appropriate levels of their math and language courses in order to ensure adequate challenge and ultimate success. All freshmen take a required course, <i>The Real World</i>, taught by the Upper School counselor, which focuses on challenging issues that students are likely to encounter and how to handle these obstacles in healthy and effective ways.</p> <p>The Upper School uses a semester grading system. At the mid-semester, students receive an interim grade report and teacher comments. Freshmen receive progress reports throughout the year. Semester grades cover the work of the entire semester and are recorded on the student's transcript. Additionally, students and parents may receive a Teacher Report Form (TRF) if the teacher wishes to communicate concerns about the student's engagement and performance in a course.</p>
<b>Canvas</b>	Each student is given a Canvas account. This online learning management system is used by all teachers to post announcements, resources, and assignments for courses. Students should check their Canvas dashboard frequently to stay up-to-date on their courses.
<b>Advisory</b>	Each student in the Upper School is assigned to an advisory led by a faculty member. The advisor is the adult on campus who takes primary responsibility overseeing the progress of a student. The advisor maintains close lines of communication with individual teachers to monitor the student's academic progress and transition to the PCDS Upper School. The advisor is intended to be the first point of contact for parents regarding concerns or updates on their student.

Advisory groups of eight to ten students meet each week to check in and discuss current campus or grade-level concerns, events, or updates. Advisories may also work together on social activities during the school year; This small group provides an important connection for each student on campus to his/her peers and faculty. Advisors also meet individually with advisees periodically and work with students in April to select courses for the following year.

Parents are encouraged to contact advisors with any student concerns (both academic and social). Similarly, advisors seek to maintain an open line of communication with students and parents, and may reach out to families periodically during the year with updates, praise, or concern for advisees.

## **Upper School Clubs & Student Activities**

Upper School students are encouraged to engage in the school community and connect with peers beyond academics in order to support a healthy and fulfilling high school experience.

Upper School clubs and student activities are completely student-driven and student-centered. Clubs and activities are showcased during the annual Clubs Fair, held during a Community Time each September. This time is an opportunity for all students to browse PCDS clubs and activities, sign up for memberships, or request additional information. All students, including freshmen, have the opportunity to create new clubs in the PCDS Upper School, provided they are appropriate for school and students are able to secure a faculty moderator. These clubs and activities then have the opportunity to meet throughout the school year during lunches, breaks within the school day, before or after school, or for select club activities during the weekends. Students are free to join multiple clubs and activities, as well as dictate their own levels of involvement and time commitment to each experience.

Freshmen are encouraged to engage in these activities while maintaining a healthy balance between academics, activities, and personal interests.

## **Social Events**

Throughout the school year, PCDS hosts social events for Upper School students. Each of these events is open to all Upper School students. If a student would like to bring a non-PCDS student to an event, a guest pass must be completed and submitted in advance. Students often engage in the community by attending sporting events, concerts, theatrical performances, service opportunities or other social events organized by students and the School.


## **Community Service**

As a graduation requirement, all Upper School students are expected to complete and document at least ten hours of community service each year, at least half from service to organizations outside of PCDS. The school offers many opportunities for students to meet this requirement, as well as allows students to seek out their own service activities that may be of interest. Community service hours must be documented and submitted to the Upper School office in May.

## **Athletics & Physical Education**

Freshmen are required to complete a Physical Education activity for two of the three seasons, which can include participation on a PCDS sports team or outside athletic or physical activities (e.g., club sports, personal fitness regimen, etc.). The PCDS Athletic Department will distribute information regarding sports prior to the beginning of the school year. Fall pre-season practices will begin in August (Individual team start dates are listed at the end of this document; see the PCDS athletics webpage for practice times). Additional information on athletics offerings, teams, and practice and game schedules will be available on the PCDS Athletics webpage.

School Year Calendar

 <b>2021-2022 School Calendar</b>						
<b>August 2021</b>						
LS/MS Parent Connection Days.....August 19-20						
US/MS New Student Orientation, LS Meet the Teacher....August 23						
First Day of Classes.....August 24						
<b>July 2021</b>						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31
<b>September 2021</b>						
Labor Day Holiday.....September 6						
<b>October 2021</b>						
Noon Release.....October 8						
Fall Break.....October 9-17						
School Reconvenes.....October 18						
<b>August 2021</b>						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				
<b>November 2021</b>						
Veterans' Day Holiday.....November 11						
Noon Release.....November 23						
Thanksgiving Break.....November 24-28						
<b>September 2021</b>						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		
<b>December 2021</b>						
LS/MS Conferences.....December 2						
Noon Release.....December 17						
Winter Break.....Dec 18 - Jan 3						
<b>January 2022</b>						
Faculty In-service Day.....January 3						
School Reconvenes.....January 4						
Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday.....January 17						
<b>October 2021</b>						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
				1	2	
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						
<b>February 2022</b>						
Presidents' Day Holiday.....February 21						
<b>March 2022</b>						
LS Conferences.....March 10						
MS Conferences.....March 17						
Noon Release.....March 18						
Spring Break.....Mar 19 - Apr 3						
<b>November 2021</b>						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			
<b>April 2022</b>						
School Reconvenes.....April 4						
<b>December 2021</b>						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	
<b>May 2022</b>						
Memorial Day Holiday.....May 30						
<b>June 2022</b>						
Last Day of Class - NOON RELEASE (All School).....June 3						
Lower School Closing Ceremony.....June 3						
Middle School Commencement.....June 8						
Upper School Graduation.....June 9						
<b>January 2022</b>						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					
<b>February 2022</b>						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28				
<b>March 2022</b>						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	
<b>April 2022</b>						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
<b>May 2022</b>						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				
<b>June 2022</b>						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	

Other Important Dates

Girls' Volleyball Practice Begins  
 Swim & Dive Practice Begins  
 Freshman & New Student Orientation  
 Freshman Class Retreat  
 Blue & Gold Spirit Week  
 Fall Semester Assessments  
 Spring Semester Assessments

August 16, 2021  
 August 16, 2021  
 August 23, 2021  
 September  
 October  
 December 13-17  
 May 31-June 3