



Welcome to the Phoenix Country Day School Upper School. The Upper School experience will be a time of great change in which students experience joys, rewards, challenges and success. Our goal as an institution is to help them discover their passions, engage in intellectual curiosity, and strive to create communities of belonging.

Life for students in the PCDS Upper School is very different from a typical middle school experience. Students begin to take on more responsibility, take initiative, and make connections within this 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.

The PCDS Upper School schedule operates on a seven-day rotation. Students have four class periods per day, with each class meeting four times per rotation.

Monday-Thursday		Friday	
Block 1	7:50-9:05	Block 1	7:50-9:05
Break	9:05-9:15	Break	9:05-9:25
<i>Community Time</i>	9:15-9:45		
Break	9:45-9:55		
Block 2	9:55-11:10	Block 2	9:25-10:40
Lunch	11:10-12:10	Break	10:40-10:55
Block 3	12:10-1:25	Block 3	10:55-12:10
Break	1:25-1:45	Lunch	12:10-12:50
Block 4	1:45-3:00	Block 4	12:50-2:05

Community Time serves a multitude of functions in the PCDS Upper School. In a typical week, Community Time 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 led by student senators and grade level faculty coordinator
Wednesday	Morning Meeting	Entire Upper School faculty & students assemble for announcements and presentations
Thursday	Senior Speeches	Each senior gives a 7-9 minute speech to the Upper School 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 scheduled in study halls which provide a structured environment to study, complete homework, or meet with a faculty member for extra help during the course of a regular school day.

Academic Life

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, world or classical language, and fine arts. 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, *Real World*, taught by the Upper School counselors, which focuses on healthy and effective ways to meet challenges that young teens are likely to encounter.

The Upper School uses a semester grading system. At the mid-semester, students receive an interim grade report and teacher comments. Freshmen receive informal 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 or convey kudos about the student's engagement and performance in a course.

Canvas

Each student is given a Canvas account. This online learning management system is used by all teachers to post syllabi, announcements, resources, and assignments for courses. Students should check their Canvas dashboard and calendar frequently to stay up-to-date on their courses.

Email Communication

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 classes and assignments, club meetings, extracurricular activities and more. A weekly PCDS email, *The Weekly Eagle*, 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. Additionally, the Head of Upper School writes a monthly memo to families that highlights Upper School news and events.

Advisory

Each student in the Upper School is paired with a faculty member who serves as their Advisor. The Advisor's primary role is to help their advisees navigate Upper School academic and social life. The Advisor is 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. This small group provides an important connection for each student on campus to their peers and faculty. Advisors also meet individually with advisees periodically and work with students in April to select courses for the following year.

FYI

The freshman class is supported throughout its first year by a select group of PCDS seniors, the Freshman Year Initiative (FYI) team. This group organizes and facilitates the Freshman Class Retreat, one of PCDS's most cherished traditions.

The 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 at the beginning of the school year.

Athletics/Extracurriculars

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.

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. Additional information on athletics offerings, teams, and practice and game schedules will be available on the PCDS Athletics webpage.

Additional school-sponsored extracurricular offerings include eSports, Robotics, Speech & Debate, and Theatre.

Student Clubs

Upper School Student 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 that contribute to the PCDS community. Students are free to join multiple clubs, as well as dictate their own levels of involvement and time commitment to each experience.

Social Events

Students often engage in the community by attending sporting events, concerts, theatrical performances, service opportunities, dances or other social events organized by students and the School.

Physical Education Requirement

Freshmen must complete the Upper School Physical Education requirement. Freshmen may satisfy the PE requirement by (1) participating in a PCDS sport in two of the three sports seasons (2) engaging in off-campus physical activity or (3) completing two semester-long PCDS courses that satisfies the PE requirement. Students may also satisfy the PE requirement via a combination of the above options.

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. The school offers opportunities for students to meet this requirement, as well as allows students to seek out their own service activities that may be of interest.

Lunch

PCDS is a nut-free campus. Students may purchase lunch in the PCDS Dining Hall, buy items from the Upper School Café, or bring their own lunches. Both the Dining Hall and Café charge purchases to the student's PCDS pre-paid account. No food delivery of any kind is allowed during the school day.

Lockers/Books/School Supplies

Freshmen are assigned lockers in the Upper School Quad, and students may supply their own locks. Families receive an email in early July to access the online-bookstore and purchase textbooks for the upcoming year. The Upper School does not provide a mandatory school supplies list, however, certain classes may have specific supply requirements that will be communicated at the beginning of the course.



2023-2024 School Calendar

July 2023 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							August 2023 LS/MS Parent Connection Days.....August 17-18 US/MS New Student Orientation, LS Meet the Teacher....August 21 First Day of Classes.....August 22 September 2023 Labor Day Holiday.....September 4 October 2023 Noon Release.....October 6 Fall Break.....October 7-15 School Reconvenes.....October 16 November 2023 Veterans' Day Holiday.....November 10 Noon Release.....November 21 Thanksgiving Break.....November 22-26 December 2023 Noon Release.....December 15 Winter Break.....Dec 16 - Jan 2 January 2024 Faculty In-service Day.....January 2 School Reconvenes.....January 3 Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday.....January 15 February 2024 Presidents' Day Holiday.....February 19 March 2024 Noon Release.....March 15 Spring Break..... March 16-31 April 2024 School Reconvenes.....April 1 May 2024 LS/MS Noon Release.....May 22 - 24 Last Day of Class - NOON RELEASE (All School).....May 24 Lower School Closing Ceremony.....May 24 Memorial DayMay 27 Middle School Commencement.....May 29 Upper School Graduation.....May 30						
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Fall Sports Practices Begin
Freshman & New Student Orientation
Freshman Class Retreat
Blue & Gold Spirit Week
Fall Semester Assessments
Spring Semester Assessments

August 14, 2023
August 21, 2023
September 6-8, 2023
October 16-20, 2023
December 11-14, 2023
May 20-24, 2024