

MIDDLE SCHOOL

WE GO FURTHER

Conducting hands-on & discussion-based classes

Challenging students to inquire and problem solve

Developing curriculum and learning opportunities that are authentic and rigorous

Celebrating discovery and risk-taking

Recognizing that diverse perspectives spark greater intellectual growth

Fostering passionate and expert teachers

Offering small classes, individual attention, and abundant leadership opportunities

Integrating equity, justice, and belonging into everyone's sense of a strong community



Middle School

FRIENDS' CENTRAL SCHOOL
1845



Friends' Central's Middle School is a dynamic, challenging, and nurturing place for eager young learners to grow into critical and creative thinkers. We encourage new ideas and the intellectual risks inherent in reaching higher levels of social and academic excellence. We are ever mindful of students' growing understanding of themselves in a larger world. We work to build self-awareness, empathy, and kindness – all of which reinforce confidence, motivation, and courage.

The success of our Middle School is rooted in relationships. Friends' Central teachers understand and delight in the opportunities and challenges that come with shepherding children into adolescence. The strength of these foundational relationships allow our students to thrive and achieve.

The individual attention our teachers devote to each student's intellectual, spiritual, and ethical selves sets our Middle School apart.

We dig deeper

Opportunities help Middle School students grow into themselves and into the world. Our Middle School program includes a curriculum rich with opportunities to develop as individuals, as team members, and as leaders. Clubs, affinity groups, service learning, advisory groups, and Meeting for Worship complement academic, artistic, and athletic choices to provide our students with an abundance of skill-building and character-building opportunities in and out of the classroom.

By design, there is a balance of self-confidence and intellectual bravery. Middle School students become bold thinkers when they are encouraged to consider new ideas and take intellectual risks. At Friends' Central, we champion trial and error, discovery, and intellectual courage in all areas of the curriculum. This approach gives students the self-confidence and academic skills they need to succeed in Upper School and beyond.

It's extraordinary because teachers and students are in it together. Our advisory system is central to student success and well-being. Each student has an advisor who oversees their overall academic progress and social-emotional growth. Advisory time is intentionally built into each day so that students and their advisors have plenty of opportunity to establish this key relationship. Along with time for a check-in or to ask questions, there is also co-curricular programming to enhance cultural competency.





Program Highlights

Trips

Middle School teachers use the surrounding area as an extension of the classroom, including visits to our local watershed and to the rich historical and cultural offerings of Center City. Grade 7 students travel each year to Echo Hill Outdoor School on the Eastern Shore of Maryland, and students in grade 8 take an overnight trip to Washington, D.C.

Mini-Course

In this signature once-a-year program, teachers design three-day classes. The courses are interdisciplinary, cross-grade, and involve a special field trip related to the subject.

Affinity Groups

Middle School students participate in affinity groups based on particular aspects of their identity, such as race, gender, or religion. Affinity groups meet regularly to discuss common experiences, develop skills related to identity-formation, and engage in courageous conversations.

Assembly Programming

The entire Middle School gathers weekly for an engaging and spirited assembly. The programming is often crafted by our very own students, as clubs and organizations give presentations on everything from Black History Month to Climate Change.

Student Leadership

Whether they participate in the Assembly Committee, athletics, or the arts, students are encouraged to take on greater responsibility and lead their peers both inside and outside the classroom.

DEI Conference

Middle School students host an bi-annual Diversity Conference inviting students from local schools to join our student body. The day typically features workshops led by FCS teachers, with discussions surrounding DEI issues facilitated by FCS students.

Grade 8 Showcase

Each spring, grade 8 students complete a capstone project which showcases a special interest or skill, particularly one that is not displayed in the classroom.

Guest Speakers/Community Engagement

FCS is incredibly fortunate to be a part of an extended community of scholars, artists, activists, and professionals. Over the course of the year, our students are introduced to a wide variety of topics from outside speakers.

Middle School Clubs

Clubs give students the opportunity to explore their interests, to discover new passions, to connect with students in various grades, and to pursue topics that may fall outside of traditional disciplines. Club offerings include Student Council, Literary Magazine, Music Appreciation, Open Art Studio, Improv Club, Debate Club, Kickball, Yoga, Spanish Club, Board Games, and more.



“Friends’ Central Middle School provides students with space to grow and thrive. We have created an intentional program designed for young learners to foster critical thinking, creativity, and collaboration. We also have a lot of fun in the process.”

ANDY WHITE '03
MIDDLE SCHOOL PRINCIPAL



Curriculum Overview

The **English curriculum** inspires students to love literature and to appreciate the power of words in helping us understand ourselves and the world. Texts are selected to include a variety of voices and perspectives and to help students confront moral and ethical questions. Assignments are designed to foster analytical thinking and creativity, with students writing essays, personal narratives, speeches, fiction, poetry, and more.

The **math curriculum** provides a strong foundation in mathematics with challenging classes that highlight fundamental operations and an understanding of how math works in the real world. Emphasis is placed on problem-solving, clearly communicating mathematical concepts, and collaborating during class to determine strategies and solutions.

The **history curriculum** helps students to understand the past and its relationship today, while preparing them to live in a complex, interconnected world. Through writing, reflecting, and role play, students are able to connect historical events to issues of social justice that we see in current events and that impact our daily lives. Students learn to research effectively, decode primary sources, and write about history.

In the **science curriculum**, students hone their observation, prediction, and interpretational skills as they proceed through their emergent studies of life, physical, and earth sciences. Our teachers cultivate student curiosity about the world around them through a hands-on approach to science – from conducting experiments to using our campus and nearby parks as outdoor labs.

The **World Language curriculum** aims to prepare students to be global citizens and to understand how language and culture are intertwined. Students gain confidence in their ability to express themselves and to speak, read, write, and comprehend their chosen language. Students can choose from Spanish, French, or Latin.

Throughout their Middle School years, students are introduced to and participate in many forms of **artistic expression**. Through their exposure to the performing and visual arts, students are encouraged to tap into their creativity, learning to express themselves through the disciplines of art, drama, and music. The Middle School puts on two plays every year. Students have the opportunity to sing in chorus or play an instrument in our jazz ensemble.

Learning through service and instilling a commitment to serving the community are as essential to daily life at Friends' Central School as they are to our broader mission and values. All Middle School students participate in weekly service projects. Through a broad range of projects on and off campus, our students learn to be comfortable in new situations, to find commonalities with people different from themselves, and, most importantly, to learn that they can make a difference in the School community and beyond.

STEAM at FCS Middle School

Middle School students are provided with experiences in the field of Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics, both in and outside of the classroom. Students in grades 6 through 8 have the opportunity to take computer science and programming courses as well as join our Middle School robotics team.

The Middle School building is equipped with a dedicated maker “nook” for small-scale projects. In addition, Middle School students have regular access to our City Avenue makerspace, which includes circuitry and Arduino technology, wood-working tools, sewing machines, 3-D printers and everything in between. As part of the curriculum, students use our new Center for Innovation and Design for various class projects and assignments, learning not only to use the many tools available but also to utilize design thinking and iteration to explore and create.

Grade 6 Overview

For all students entering grade 6, Middle School is a new realm. For most, the transition includes a change from self-contained classrooms with a single teacher to navigating the demands of a changing schedule and increasing academic expectations. Guiding students through this process is an important aspect of every grade 6 teacher's role.

Grade 6 is a year of tremendous academic growth. Students build upon strong elementary school foundations and begin to acquire new, more sophisticated skills essential to their success in Middle School and beyond. Some examples include reading for more than plot, inferring authors' messages, and noticing literary techniques; drawing on prior knowledge and making predictions; learning the difference between working in a group and active collaboration; and developing plans to manage long-term assignments.

Grade 7 Overview

Students entering grade 7 are mastering the transition to Middle School and are working to manage the responsibility that comes with increasing independence. They are beginning to ask more of themselves, taking on some leadership roles in Middle School, preparing to step into the many demands of grade 8.

Grade 7 is an important year in our students' academic development. They move from the important lessons of grade 6 to increasingly abstract and independent thinking, viewing their world and the greater world through an evolving analytical lens. Some examples of this include working effectively within a group by helping the group to problem solve, supporting a point of view with textual evidence, using prior knowledge to ask pertinent questions, and challenging assumptions thoughtfully and carefully. Grade 7 students are learning to

Grade 8 Overview

Grade 8 is a critical year in our students' preparation for Upper School and beyond. With the help of expert teachers, grade 8 students have come to know themselves as learners. They understand how to approach different aspects of their education – how to study for tests, how to manage longer-term projects, how to work effectively in groups – to ensure future success. They know how to use the resources around them effectively – advisors, teachers, support staff, family, and friends. They understand how to safely and appropriately take risks – whether intellectual or otherwise. They learn to create and support an original argument, making increasingly sophisticated connections between and among different disciplines. They become self-directed learners, planning their own approaches to projects and mapping out their academic goals.



Founded in 1845, Friends' Central School is a Quaker, co-educational, college preparatory school for students in Nursery to grade 12. Our easily accessible Middle and Upper School campus is set on 28 beautiful acres on City Avenue in Wynnewood. Students in Nursery through grade 5 are on our idyllic 18-acre Lower School campus on Old Gulph Road in Wynnewood.

MIDDLE SCHOOL BY THE NUMBERS

16	Affinity groups available to students
32	Middle School sports teams
3,240	Service learning minutes per student each year
7,400	Advisory program minutes per student each year
30	Community service organizations & clubs
15	Average Class size



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