



EPISCOPAL COLLEGIATE SCHOOL

Dear Middle School Parents,

I have enjoyed seeing some of our students here in the mornings for summer workouts or camps and I love seeing some of our recent grads/young alums back on campus either working out or just to say hello! Episcopal does become like a second home away from home for many of our students. . . not to mention faculty! Below I will endeavor to provide a host of typical mid-summer reminders about the start of school. Please read the below and prepare for other communications from the School, your child's advisor, and the *Wildcat Weekly* in the weeks ahead.

I hope that this information is helpful and that everyone continues to enjoy a happy and safe summer!

Sincerely,

H. Charles "Chuck" McCormick, EdD

Back-to-School Information

While I will highlight new family orientations below, please check the Episcopal Collegiate School website, [School Resources Page](#), for comprehensive back-to-school information, including the very useful 2023-2024 planning calendar, [middle school carpool procedures](#), notes on classroom supplies, uniforms, and book ordering instructions. Other helpful resources include a [New Family Brochure](#) and the [Upper & Middle School Community Handbook](#).

Parents should be able to log onto Veracross to see their child's schedule. **Please note that advisor assignments will not be published until Monday, August 7.** Additionally, your child's locker assignment and combination may be found in the top left-hand corner of the schedule.

- To find your child's schedule, go to your parent portal, and the link displays to the right of pictures/report card links and is called current class schedules.

- **Parents of students new to Episcopal should have received email information about logging into Veracross in early July. This email expires after 24 hours.** Should you have missed this window, please contact Mr. Don Stalls, Director of Technology and Innovation, dstalls@Episcopalcollegiate.org.
- We are pleased to continue our partnership with local bookstore, [Wordsworth Books](#), for our textbooks for the coming year. The Wordsworth website has "gone live" for families to order textbooks. Please visit the [school resources](#) page on our website for an updated textbook list and for updated information as the summer progresses. If you decide to order books online, please verify that you are ordering the correct edition by matching the isbn number from the class/grade-level book list with what you find online.
- Please address scheduling questions to Mrs. Fitz, jfitz@episcopalcollegiate.org, or 501.372.1194, ext. 2461. The School does not make class/schedule/advisor changes based on requests for a particular teacher.

New Student & New Parent Orientations

Please note that the below orientation programs are only for **families new to Episcopal Collegiate Middle School**. Returning seventh and eighth grade students/families have no orientation responsibilities, though returning students are encouraged to join their classmates for [grade-specific social events](#) on August 14.

New Seventh and Eighth Grade Students and their Parents

Monday, August 14

11:00 am-12:45 pm

New seventh and eighth grade students and their parents should plan to attend an in-person welcome program in the Middle School's Erwin Library on Monday, August 14. The formal parent program will conclude at 12:45. The student program will run until 1:00pm, which includes a social event with other members of their grade outdoors in the quad between 12:30 and 1:15.

Sixth Grade Student Orientation (No parents, please.)

Tuesday, August 15

8:30 am-12:00 pm

Sixth graders should arrive at the middle school via the middle school carpool line entrance between 8:00 and 8:30. Students should bring a snack and a water bottle. Dress for this event is casual

appropriate - t-shirts with school appropriate logos, shorts that do not rise more than three inches above the knee, and tennis shoes are fine. The student orientation program will run until 12:00pm, and then our parents' auxiliary will host a grade-level social from 12 until 12:45pm. Lunch will **not** be provided.

Sixth Grade Parent Orientation

Tuesday, August 15

11:15 am-12:00 pm (w/ optional Canvas training from 12:00 pm-12:45 pm)

Parents of sixth grade students are invited to come hear from different members of the middle school administrative and teaching teams and meet their child's advisor. They are also welcome to attend an optional informational session on the Canvas Learning Management System from 12-12:45pm.

Canvas Training Sessions for Parents

Two years ago, Episcopal Collegiate moved to a new learning management system (LMS). Consequently, we want to make sure that parents know how to navigate this system to be able to see their child's progress and grades. Here are three, in-person training options that we are offering:

- Monday, August 14, 12:00 pm-12:45 pm in the Middle School's Erwin Library
- Tuesday, August 15, 12:00 pm-12:45 pm in Upper School Room 215
- Thursday, August 17, 5:45 pm -6:30 pm in the Middle School's Erwin Library

Planners: 6th Grade Families Only

Sixth grade students will be provided planners by their teachers on the first day of school, and your FACTS account will be billed, so there is no need to purchase a planner ahead of time.

MS/US Class Rotation Calendar

[This link](#) will take you to the class rotation calendar, which depicts the Middle/Upper School class schedule for each day of our school calendar.

Student Medical Information Update

Students who have turned 11 or will turn 11 before school begins are required to have the Tdap vaccine on or after their birthday and evidence of this needs to be on file with the school by Wednesday, August 16. Students entering the seventh grade are required to have the meningococcal vaccine, and evidence of this should also be on file in the MS office by August 16. (The meningococcal vaccine might have been given with their 11 year old vaccines). Also, if you started the HPV vaccination series remember to follow up with the sequential dose(s).

Any student requiring an asthma or allergy action plan should compile this between now and the start of school and should submit this and their medication to Nurse Lenna Hopkins on or before the first day of school. Some MS students will carry their emergency medication with them. In this case, we still need an action plan, knowledge of this, and location of their medication.

Students are not allowed to carry medication with them while at school or at school functions with the exception of emergency medications like albuterol, insulin, glucagon, and epinephrine auto injectors. For more information, please see the Episcopal Upper & Middle School Community Handbook. Most medication forms are on the school website.

Our annual flu vaccine clinic is scheduled for October 11, 2023. More information will be available in Wildcat Weekly as the event nears.

Locker Set-Up

The first date that students may come to school to set up/organize their lockers is **Tuesday, August 1**. This may occur anytime between 8:30 am-3:00 pm, Monday-Thursday, and 8:30 am-Noon on Fridays. We ask that students/parents check in at the middle school office prior to going to their child's locker.

PE Uniforms

Middle School students are **required** to wear PE uniforms for the school year 2023-2024. We recommend buying two sets of PE uniforms and putting students' names clearly on both shorts and shirts. Students/parents are encouraged to consider buying used uniforms at the used uniform sale on August third and fourth - students can set up their lockers at the same time. If you wish to order a new PE uniform from the Wildcat Warehouse, here is a link to the [PE Uniform](#) page on the website. Your order will be filled and left for pick-up in the middle school office.

Need Episcopal Gear? Visit the Wildcat Warehouse!

Need Episcopal Gear? Shop the Wildcat Warehouse [online here](#). Orders placed through the portal will be ready for pick up after August 3. Orders will be delivered to division offices for Middle and Upper School, and to homerooms for Lower School. Please [email Aaron Nixon](#) with any questions about Wildcat Warehouse or to schedule a shopping appointment. Orders will be charged to your FACTS account.

If you would like to shop in person, Wildcat Warehouse will be open the following times:

- Tuesday, July 25, in conjunction with the Toggery Pop-Up Shop, 12:00 pm-4:00 pm
- Monday, August 14th: 8:00 am-2:00 pm
- Tuesday, August 15th: 10:00 am-2:00 pm
- Beginning Wednesday, August 16, we are open during lunch Wednesdays and Fridays (12:00 pm-1:30 pm) for student/parent shopping. Ms. Nixon will ask your student if they have permission to charge your FACTS account. Additional hours will be posted once school starts.

Used Uniform Sale - August 3 & 4

The Used Uniform Sale will be held on Thursday, August 3, 8:30 am-6:00 pm and Friday, August 4, 8:30 am-3:30 pm, in the Middle/Upper School Dining Hall.

Toggerly Pop-Up Shop - July 25

The Toggerly will be selling new school uniforms at their on-campus Pop-Up Shop on Tuesday, July 25, 12:00 pm-4:00 pm, in the Lower School Dining Hall.

Important Fall Dates - Mark Your Calendar

Founders' Day - Thursday, August 17th (second day of school)

In honor of our School's 25th anniversary, we will celebrate our Founders on Thursday, August 17th. **Students will be required to wear Dress Uniform, so please plan accordingly.**

Middle School Back-to-School Night - Thursday, August 17

This year's event will also take place on Thursday, August 17, from approximately 6:40 pm-8:45 pm. Please plan to meet your child's advisor at their advisory meeting location promptly at 6:40 pm. Your child's advisor will inform you of where this is. If you arrive after 6:40 pm, please come directly to the Middle/Upper School Dining Hall, and our formal program will begin at 7:00 pm.

Grandparents & Special Friends Day - Friday, September 29th (*Half-Day)

We look forward to welcoming Lower, Middle, and Upper School grandparents and special friends to campus on Friday, September 29th. We will run a half-day schedule that Friday, and all Middle School students will be dismissed at noon. Stay tuned to Wildcat Weekly for more information about Grandparents and Special Friends Day.

Fall Break - Thursday, October 12th - Sunday, October 15th

Please note the small change to this year's Fall Break dates. Fall Break will start on Thursday, October 12th, and extend through Sunday, October 15th.

Fall Advisor-Student-Parent Conference Day - Friday, October 20th

On Friday, October 20th, every Middle School student--along with at least one parent or guardian--will be required to participate in a 30-minute, on-campus conference with their faculty advisor. Regular classes will not be held that day. Conference slots will start at 8:00 am and run until 4:00 pm, and your child's advisor will contact you in September to set up a conference time. Conference Day provides you and your child the opportunity to reflect on and discuss your child's overall school experience, including academic standing, extracurricular engagement, and social fit.

New Additions to the Middle School Faculty Team

Blake Carter - Mr. Blake Carter comes to us after a brief stint teaching high school world history, sociology, psychology, civics, and economics at West Fork High School. Prior to that, he was in the Master's of Arts in Teaching (MAT) program at the University of Arkansas, where in 2018 he earned the MAT student of the year award and was also the recipient of the Jesse Taylor Jr. Endowed Scholarship in History. We were really impressed by the way Blake creatively worked with our students during his sample lesson, and his two-fold mission of using technology to better engage students, as well as fostering a culture of kindness and empathy made him a very compelling candidate and one that we wanted on our sixth grade team

Leah Cook - After earning her bachelor's degree in mathematics from Southern Arkansas University, Mrs. Leah Cook took a job teaching a variety of math courses - 8th grade, Algebra I and II, and AP Statistics - at Carlisle High School. Here at Episcopal, Leah will oversee our seventh grade pre algebra program. During her visit to campus, she impressed us with her interest in employing technology to support instruction and with her previous experience collaborating with members of the science department at her former school. Leah is a willing learner and has a personality that will readily connect with our students and families.

Sara Patton - Ms. Sara Patton's sample earth science lesson blew us away with its organization and seamless integration of different learning activities. Moreover, the fact that she loves mining and the Arkansas outdoors only reinforced the strength of her candidacy. She holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Geology from James Madison University and just completed her Master's in Curriculum and Instruction at Virginia Tech. At Virginia Tech, she was a graduate assistant in their introduction to earth science class, and she will teach seventh grade earth science this year at Episcopal.

Hayden Dunn - Dr. Hayden Dunn earned his bachelor's degree with honors in chemistry and biochemistry from the University of Arkansas in 2014 and his MD from the University of Arkansas' College of Medicine in 2021. Along the way, he realized a passion for teaching and has spent the past two years tutoring students of all ages, including medical school, in biology, anatomy and physiology, chemistry, earth science, as well as algebra one and two and calculus. We at Episcopal were struck by his already developed educator's intuition, both in discussing teaching and learning and during his well-conceived sample physical science lesson. This year, Dr. Dunn will teach eighth grade physical science and an upper school science elective course.

Negeen Ghasedi - Mrs. Negeen Ghasedi joins our English Department as an eighth grade teacher following a very successful nine years as English teacher and Assistant Principal at Huda Academy. There, she helped lead Huda Academy's successful accreditation and re-accreditation processes in 2015 and 2020 respectively, oversaw faculty hiring and professional development, and observed and coached faculty on instructional practice, just to list a small part of her job. Negeen earned her BA and MLA degrees in English and political science from Henderson State University, where she also served as an English instructor from 2010-2014.