



# Transitioning to Middle School





## What makes Middle School students unique?

- It marks the time of greatest change in emotional, social, intellectual, spiritual/moral, psychological and physical development in a child's life apart from the time of birth to two years old.



## Some examples:

- Experience rapid, irregular physical growth
- Increasingly able to think abstractly, not just concretely and are intensely curious
- Grapple with internal questions: Who am I? Where do I belong? What do I believe?
- Struggle for independence and long for peer acceptance
- Begin to ask, “Where and how can I make a difference?”
- Prefer interactions with peers during learning activities
- Need daily physical activity due to increased energy
- Ready to explore what faith means on a personal level



## What do Middle School students need?

- Educators who value young adolescents and are prepared to teach them
- Leaders who are committed to and knowledgeable about this age group, educational research and best practices
- Adult advocates/mentors to guide each student's academic, spiritual and personal development



## How do we prepare/support parents of Middle School students?

In the fall, we will extend an invitation to the parents of Middle School students to a Middle School Orientation Evening to cover topics such as:

- Changes to expect (physical, emotional, psychological, spiritual)
- Chromebook 1:1 program
- Supporting your MS child to keep organized
- Online media and your child
- Google Classroom



# What are some of the ways we hope to deliver a Middle School program that is in tune with what we believe about Middle School students?

## We are Planning:

- Flex Block
- Band/Art/Drama Selections
- Grade Specific Distinctives
- Theme Week
- Weekly MS Chapel
- Lunchtime/After School Clubs
- Grade Specific Field Trips
- Graduated Off Campus Privileges
- One to One Chromebooks
- Google Classroom

## We are Exploring:

- Morning Anchor Time
- Intramural 6-8 House Teams
- Math Class Groupings
- Move Up Day
- Student Council
- Gr. 6/7 Year End Celebration of Learning
- Gr. 8 MS Gallery of Learning Celebration



## **Flex Block:**

**Over the course of three years, Middle School students will have a Flex Block once per week to engage in a three term rotation of:**

- **Presentation Skills**
- **Life Skills**
- **Digital Citizenship**
- **Creative Labs**
- **Gr. 8 Electives**



## **Flex Block:**

Considering we are triple tracking we are looking at the following format:

### **Gr. 6:**

A three term rotation of:

Digital Literacy, Creative Labs, Presentation Skills

### **Gr. 7:**

A three term rotation of:

Digital Literacy, Creative Labs, Life Skills

### **Gr. 8:**

A three term rotation of:

Digital Literacy, Creative Labs, Elective Choices



## Band/Art/Drama Selections:

Triple tracking gives us an opportunity to add Drama to our Fine Arts mix. An option we are considering:

### **Gr. 6:**

A rotation of:

Band - 5 months

Art/Drama - 5 months

### **Gr. 7:**

We could follow either the Gr. 6 or the Gr. 8 pattern.

### **Gr. 8:**

Students choose either Band, Art or Drama for the full year.



## Grade Specific Distinctives:

- **Gr. 6: Community Builders**
- **Gr. 7: Community Cultivators**
- **Gr. 8: Community Leaders**



## Theme Week:

One week prior to spring break our regular schedule would be suspended and our 6-8 students would be involved in cross-graded workshop groups related to a particular theme.

Possibilities might be:

- Year One: 1930s - 1950s
- Year Two: 1960s - 1970s
- Year Three: Y2K

Each of these times in our history there was a major shift in culture and belief systems.



## MS Chapel:

As Middle School students and staff, we would meet once per week for a time of worship and reflection on our school's theme for the year.



## Lunchtime and After School Clubs:

- Clubs provide an opportunity for students to get excited about and explore their passions. (Example: Chess Club)
- It also helps them explore areas that may not be addressed in the regular school curriculum. (Example: Hip Hop Dance Club)
- They may have an opportunity to develop self-confidence in an extension area of the curriculum. (Example: Ecology Club)
- By offering lunchtime clubs as well as after school clubs, we provide an opportunity for students to participate who may otherwise be involved in after school sports activities.



## Grade Specific Field Trips:

These are the field trips which are tied to building community within each grade grouping.

- Gr. 6: Example: One Day Outdoor Ed Course
- Gr. 7: Example: Two Day Sailing Course
- Gr. 8: Example: Two Day Overnight Outdoor Adventure Course



## Graduated Off Campus Privileges:

In Middle School, we want to help students develop a sense of independence and responsibility. With this in mind, we allow the privilege of an off campus lunch for those students who demonstrate they are able to handle themselves responsibly off campus as VCS representatives:

- Gr. 6: once per term
- Gr. 7: once per month
- Gr. 8: once per week



## One to One Chromebook Program:

- All students in MS will be provided with a school issued Chromebook
- Teachers regularly use Google Classroom for student assignments
- Chromebooks are for school use only and are used only at school



## One to One Chromebook Program:

### Key Opportunities:

- **ready access** to learning resources
- **comprehension** of material
- **representations** of learning
- **collaboration** with peers
- **creative/critical** thinking



# Google Classroom:

## Benefits:

- Automatic organization of student work (Google Drive)
- All assignment resources and deadlines remain accessible
- Assignment submission and collection is clear
- Convenient teacher-student coaching and feedback
- Automated parent/guardian email summaries



## Morning Anchor Time:

Anchor time would happen first thing in the morning for 30 minutes 2 to 3 times per week.

**Purpose:** To engage in community building and engage with culture through the Christian worldview lens.

### Examples:

- Deeper theme related devotions with community building activities.
- Focusing on an aspect of media within a Christian worldview.



## Intramural Gr. 6-8 House Teams:

- Mixed grade group intramural sports at lunchtime according to a team house colour with Gr. 8 Team co-captains
- Possibly run 1 - 2 times per week at lunch depending on gym availability and clubs schedule



## Math Class Groupings:

For Gr. 8 all three classes might be grouped into the following:

1 x Math Challenge Class

2 x Math Core Class

1 x Math Small Group

This would only work if we are able to have all math classes for each grade in the same block each day.



## Move Up Day:

For half a day from 9:30 - 1:00 (through lunch) sometime in late May or early June:

- Gr. 5s come up from elementary to spend the morning with the Gr. 6 teachers
- Gr. 6s spend the morning with the Gr. 7 teachers
- Gr. 7s spend the morning with the Gr. 8 teachers



## Move Up Day:

- All the Gr. 5-7 students and teachers have a lunch together, probably in the gym, to end their morning and then head back to their regular classes and schedule for the day
- Move Up Day gives teachers and students a chance to meet each other and find out about the expectations for the coming year
- Gr. 6 teachers will do a mini orientation to what MS is all about
- Gr. 8s go to the HS to spend the morning with the Gr. 9 teachers and an introduction to the HS program



## Student Council:

- MS affords students the opportunity to be introduced to student council with teacher support and direction
- Students would “apply” for a council position articulating why they would like to be involved, what their commitment level would be, the skills they bring, etc.
- Council members would be selected through a process of student as well as staff input with staff making the final decisions
- One Gr. 8 “leader” from each Gr. 8 class as well as a student rep from each of the Gr. 6 and 7 classes



## Grade 6/7 Year End Celebration of Learning:

- This would be an afternoon event sometime in mid to late June
- Students and teachers would take time to explore and celebrate the learning that students have done throughout the school year
- Parents would be invited to attend the afternoon event as well



## Grade 8 MS Gallery Walk Celebration of Learning:

- This would be a more formal evening event as a Gallery Walk
- Students would display a portfolio of their learning using a combination of video, slide show and hard copy display of learning
- Gr. 8s would invite guests with whom they would like to share their MS learning journey
- A dessert reception would be hosted during the event by a contingent of Gr. 7 parents and students



# Questions?

*Thank you!*

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