



# PROVIDENCE ACADEMY

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**AIM – A**

**Achieving Success in Middle School – For Adults**

A course prepared and delivered by  
PAPA – Providence Academy Parent Association  
For the 2023-2024 school year

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## Who's Who of Providence Academy

- Dr. Todd Flanders – Head Master
- Mrs. Teresa Claypool – Director of Middle School (office located in Cloister area near Boardroom)
- Mrs. Bridget Taylor, MS Director’s Assistant (great first point of contact for MS questions)
- Mr. Conner Goetz - MS Dean of Students
- Mr. Kurt Jaeger– Director of Upper School
- Mrs. Nancy Galgano- Director of Lower School
- Mr. Michael Tiffany, Director of Academics
- Mrs. Emily Semsch – Middle and Lower School Counselor
- Mrs. Annette Crider – Learning Specialist
- Mr. Larry Carlson – Transportation Coordinator
- Mr. Daren Messmore - Athletic Director
- PAPA Reps: Mrs. Ginger Anzalone is PAPA President; Middle School Rep is Dr. Elizabeth Schnobrich

## Core Virtues

Our Middle school philosophy is based on our five guiding Core Virtues: Piety, Loyalty, Respect, Wonder, and Prudence. Utilizing virtue in growth spiritually, academically, socially and emotionally offers a comprehensive and well-rounded approach to teaching youth adolescents.

Parents and students may notice signs in the hallways explaining ways that Middle School Students may act out these virtues during the school day. In addition, each month a Medal of Honor is award to a MS student from each grade who exemplifies the core virtue of the month.

### **PARENT TIPS:**

What should I encourage in my student?

Encourage demonstrating the core virtues each day. MS students earn tickets when school staff observe the student exemplifying the core virtues. The tickets are valuable to students, as they recognize positive behavior plus they can be turned into school administration for special benefits.

How is behavior modified?

School administration uses positive reinforcement and specific guidance when possible, but sometimes a consequence is required. In situations where multiple warnings have been ineffective, more serious consequences may be utilized.


Teachers and staff do make an effort to work directly with the students, and may utilize something as simple as lunch detention, or have the student meet with the Dean of Students to discuss their behavior. All conversations regarding behavior and any resulting consequences are held strictly confidential between the school, the student and their parent(s).

## Class Schedules


The Middle-School schedule, shown below, consists of a 7-period day, five days per week, for the entire school year, with lunch always taking place from 11:10 – 11:35 am. Except for lunch, each period is 50 minutes long with five-minutes of passing time in between. There are 8 main color periods, plus a white period.

Instead of referring to periods of the day in terms of “first,” “second,” “third,” and so on, we say “red,” “orange,” “yellow”, etc. This is because each color represents one academic subject in a student’s schedule. For example, “red” period for one student may be religion. If so, then that student has religion Monday-Thursday with Friday off. If this student’s “orange period” class is mathematics, then math happens Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday, with Thursday off. And so on. Each subject, therefore, meets just four days per week. The eight total colors meet our offering of eight subjects: Religion, History, English, Math, Language, Science, plus required rotation courses--such as PE, art, health, study skills, etc.--and one elective.

Mass for the Middle School happens each Wednesday during white period (2:25-3:15 pm). White period on Tuesdays and Thursdays has become dedicated to study hall and additional non-graded electives such as athletics, film studies, and woodshop.



### Bell Schedule | Grades 6-8

		Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
1	8:30-9:20	Red	Red	Red	Red	Orange
2	9:25-10:15	Orange	Orange	Orange	Yellow	Yellow
3	10:20-11:10	Yellow	Yellow	Green	Green	Green
 Lunch 11:10-11:35						
4B	11:40-12:30	Green	Light Blue	Light Blue	Light Blue	Light Blue
5B	12:35-1:25	Blue	Blue	Purple	Blue	Blue
6	1:30-2:20	Purple	Purple	Pink	Pink	Pink
7	2:25-3:15	Pink	Activity	Mass	Activity	Purple

### PARENT TIPS:

Print a blank schedule off and write on it at the beginning of the semester, so that you understand where your student is going each day AND can make good decisions if you have to pull them out of school for an appointment, etc. You can take a picture of the schedule and save it to your phone.

White period on Tuesday and Thursdays is a great option for those situations when it is necessary to make an appointment outside of school such as orthodontist, etc. We discourage missing Masses on Wednesday afternoons for appointments, as it is the most important time of the school week. Parents are welcome to come to weekly Masses, held each Wednesday at 2:25 PM in the Chapel.

## ULTIMA

Middle School students are divided into Ultima groups of 12 to 15 students by grade and assigned to an advisor/faculty member for the school year. This advisory is designed to provide time periodically to accomplish necessary school business, including announcements, distributing information for home, and reviewing expectations. Student lockers are assigned according to Ultima, and therefore a student's locker will most likely be outside of that teacher's classroom.

### **PARENT TIPS:**

Think of this as a homeroom, but they don't go every day. Do not worry if your student is not with friends. Time spent in Ultima is minimal but serves a good purpose in overall communication.

## Grading

Providence Academy believes that students should achieve at 70% and above in proficiency in all classes. There are several resources available to assist students at risk of not meeting proficiency that will be outlined below.

During the course of a semester, if a student does not achieve 70% on a given assessment (quiz or test) or is missing an assignment, a retake is required and needs to be scheduled with the teacher. ● The teacher will record either the actual grade (below 70%) or an "M" (missing work) in the grade book, as well as a comment about the work including any deadlines. An "M" counts as a 0 (zero) until a subsequent grade is entered.

- The highest score a student can receive, in the event of a retake, is 70%.

### **PARENT TIPS:**

Do not lose sleep over a grade below 70%! This is simply a notification of a potential issue you need to be aware of. Not all low grades or missing assignments carry the same weight. An Assignment with a lower grade carries less impact than a low test grade. If you receive a notification of a low score, check Infinite Campus to see what the grade was before contacting your child or your child's teacher. Infinite Campus is discussed later in this document.

Your student needs to work with the teacher to manage low grades. As a parent, be supportive but encourage the student to handle the situation. This is a great opportunity for students to practice sending an email or setting up an appointment to meet with a teacher. It can be helpful for your student to CC you on emails to teachers.

How are grades reported?

Providence Academy has two types of grading schedules in MS: the quarter and the semester: ● Quarters one and two fall within semester one. Quarters three and four fall within semester two. ● Grades for quarter-long courses, such as Art, Health, Launch, and the others, are recorded on each of the report cards for first and second semester.

### **PARENT TIPS:**

Parents and students can monitor grades online in Infinite Campus, which is discussed later in this document. Make it a habit to look grades together – part of your 'checking in' with your student. This helps them to understand how important it is to be aware of their performance throughout the school year – not just at the end of a semester. We recommend checking in with your child about their grades once per week.

## Homework

The time requirement for homework will vary, depending on grade level, the student's course load and levels of ability, preparation, and motivation.

### **PARENT TIPS:**

Spending 1-2 hours per night on homework is common. If your student consistently spends greater than 2 hours per night on homework, please contact the Middle School Counselor or the Middle School Director. It is important to note that in MS, homework changes from 'tasks' to more 'study'. Time management is key! Help your student with time management – study for tests early and plan out your week!

## Supporting your student

PA wants your child to succeed! There are many resources available to assist students with schoolwork. Here is an explanation of each:

**TEACHER ACCESSIBILITY:** Teachers are available for help before and after school from 8:00-8:25 a.m. and 3:15-4:00 p.m. (with the exception of meeting times). Teachers are also available by appointment when schedules conflict. Teachers may also be contacted by email or phone.

Students/parents should expect a return call within 24 hours. This should be the first point of contact for classroom related questions and concerns for both students and parents.

**STUDENT SUPPORT TEAM:** This team is made up of the MS School Director, School Counselor, Learning Specialists, MS Dean of Students, School Nurse, and Academic Director. This team meets weekly to discuss any situation where they may need to intervene and provide additional assistance to a specific student.

**STUDY HALL:** Study hall is offered as an elective two days per week during White Period.

**NHS TUTORS:** Upper School students in the National Honor Society offer their services to tutor fellow students in the Upper and Middle Schools. Tutors are pooled by subject area. Middle School candidates will be identified through the MS Student Support team or by parental request. Criteria used to determine eligibility are based largely on teacher recommendation and grades. Low grades combined with difficulty mastering content are essential to be considered for a peer tutor.

**BOOST PROGRAMS:** Boost programs provide targeted help for students struggling to master key concepts in a class. Students are identified through teachers and participation is coordinated through the Student Support Team. The service is designed to aid students who struggle to pass coursework. It is not intended for students performing above a C. The service is provided every Tuesday and Thursday during White Period. The following programs are offered:

**MATH BOOST**

**SCIENCE BOOST**

**LATIN BOOST**

**STUDY SKILLS SUPPORT:** This temporary service is utilized when students fall in their classes and is managed as needed. Students may be referred by individual teachers, identified through student support meetings or at the request of parents. Prioritizing work, grade book management, planner use, and target time to work on outstanding homework are all part of the program.

**LAUNCH:** Required for all 6th graders, this quarter-long course is intended to help students enhance their organizational, time-management, and test-taking skills. The course also provides methods and strategies for setting goals, taking notes, and improving reading comprehension skills. This course is designed to provide students with tools to be responsible and resourceful individuals who may become self-advocates.

**STUDENTS WITH SPECIFIC NEEDS:** Learning accommodation plans are made for certain diagnoses. Talk to the Middle School counselor or learning specialist to start this process if your student has a doctor certified learning diagnosis.

**PACE LESSONS:** Providence Academy Character Education is a monthly class taught by the MS Counselor. Each class has a different theme and purpose relative to life as a middle school student. The MS Counselor works with teachers to schedule these classes within the existing academic schedule.

**PARENT TIPS:**

Stay involved and ask questions about coursework and assignments. Validate on Infinite Campus. Students who participate in a lot of extracurricular activities may benefit from having a study hall rather than selecting an alternative elective

If you are concerned about your students' performance and believe that they need additional assistance, do not wait for an invitation to BOOST or Study Skill Support, reach out if you have concerns. In order to attend BOOST, arrangements must be made through the Student Support Team.

Encourage your student to discuss concerns with the teacher, or you need to engage with the teacher. And, when needed, contact the MS Director. Many resources are available – reach out if you are concerned. If you have personal or emotional concerns regarding your student, contact the MS Counselor.

## Technology: Moodle – Infinite Campus – PA email accounts

Phones are not permitted during school hours. Students will have access to technology during the school day on a need-based case at the teacher's discretion for educational purposes. Students will need access to technology at home to complete assignments and maintain communication with teachers and administrators.

Recommended technology includes: Access to a computer, internet, and a printer. The computer may be very simple, and a basic Chromebook with internet access will allow your students all the access to materials that they need. Middle School students are not allowed to wear smart watches during the school day.

During the first week of school your student will be introduced and given access to the applications listed below. Teachers will work directly with students to gain access and navigate the systems during the first weeks of school. Additional help will be given to students needing extra support. Most of these applications may be accessed from the [www.providenceacademy.org](http://www.providenceacademy.org) homepage. At the top of the page, click on "Login" to see a listing of commonly used applications.

- **PA Email account** – This is the student email account and is established via gmail. The expectation is for student to check the email account after school daily. Students will receive information via this email and will be expected to communicate with teachers, turn in assignments, etc.
- **Moodle** – is an online application that is used in Middle and Upper School by faculty and students. Each student will receive their own Moodle login (parents do not receive a log in as the tool is intended for student use). Once logged into Moodle, each class/teacher will have a different "page" where they will post the course syllabus and other information about class. Students should check Moodle often for changes and to help them plan ahead. Fun fact: Moodle is an acronym for modular object-oriented dynamic learning environment.
- **Infinite Campus** - is an online portal for students and parents to access important school information such as upcoming homework assignments, grades, attendance, schedule, report cards, etc. Grades for all student coursework are posted to Infinite Campus, so parents and students will be able to view grades throughout the semester. If you receive a notification regarding missing work or a low score on a quiz or test, additional information will be provided in Infinite Campus. Both parents and students receive separate Infinite Campus logins. More detailed information regarding Infinite Campus will be provided to parents and students at the start of the school year.

### **PARENT TIPS:**

Familiarize yourself with these tools right away! Do not wait until you need them to log on for the first time. Create a habit / routine to check in on these valuable tools early and often. For easy access and to receive notifications, download the Infinite Campus app on your phone.

Students will receive guidance during the year on how to draft a proper email; however, assistance from parents may also be helpful to remind students of common etiquette. It may be helpful for parents to review Infinite Campus with students on a weekly basis until students are comfortable with their time management skills.

A note about devices and entertainment screen time: As parents, we all struggle with the use of devices and technology. Some families adhere to strict rules about screen time and some families use apps to control and monitor screen time. A parent tip is to research various monitoring apps and implement something that works for your family.



## Before and After School

Before School: Students may arrive via carpool, bus, or other established transportation methods, and should arrive around 8:15am to prepare for their day. The school day officially begins at 8:30am, with a warning bell at 8:25am. Middle School students who are on premises prior to 8:00am are expected to report to Great Room, where breakfast is available. After 8:00 am students may be in the great room, cloister, or hallways. Upon arriving, students must enter the building and are not to remain in the parking lot, playground, or anywhere else on school grounds.

After School: The school day officially ends at 3:15pm. Students may be picked up via carpool, bus, or other established transportation options. If Middle School students remain on campus beyond 3:30 p.m., they must be working with a teacher or in a supervised school-sponsored activity. There are a variety of options for after-school activities available including various sports, academic activities, or the MS Extended Day Program. The program is supervised by a faculty or staff member, and offered each day from 3:30 to 6:00 pm. All students must be picked up by 6:00 pm. The Extended Day program may be used daily, or on an as needed basis. For students who use the MS Extended Day Program for 30 minutes or less, there is no fee. This option is intended to provide structure and supervision for students waiting for the start of other afterschool programs. Students participating in the MS Extended Day Program for 31 to 60 minutes will be charged \$3 daily. Use of the MS Extended Day Program for more than 1 hour will incur a daily fee of \$6. Fees will be billed monthly to student accounts. Registration is required for participation in the MS Extended Day Program in advance at the beginning of the year. Watch for the eBulletin for a link to the required forms.

### Drop Off and Pick Up Procedures:

All vehicles should enter through the main driveway. MS/US traffic should go straight and then turn left towards the West entrance. Students may be dropped off and picked up along the curb in this area. Vehicles should follow the outer edge the parking lot and exit thru the main driveway.

- When alongside any curb, please remain in your vehicles and be vigilant for possible pedestrians near your car.
- If parents/drivers plan on speaking with someone inside the school or meet their students on the walkway, please park in the lot. Do not leave unattended vehicles at the curb, or in non designated parking spots.
- Please park only in a designated parking spot.

### **PARENT TIPS:**

Follow the detailed drop-off and pick-up procedures! They work well if we all follow them, but it is very frustrating for all when a few parents do not follow the rules. As an overview:

- When dropping off students can be dropped off right at the front curb. Students should come immediately into school and to MS designated areas.
- When picking up, please follow the traffic and park along the front curb and to the east. Parents should not park in the crosswalk and should utilize extreme caution while driving in the parking lot.
- If your student is tardy, they need to go to the MS Office and get a tardy slip in order to report to class.

## Missing school

If you have a planned absence, you need to fill out a Planned Absence Form and will need to keep track of assignments on Moodle. The Planned Absence Form is located at the MS office.

If you have an unplanned absence, email Ms. Bridget Taylor or call the attendance line at 763-258-5520 to report your absence. Students can then email teachers / work with teachers when they return to make up the homework. Homework is due in a 'x+1 format' for each day they are absent. For example, if they miss 2 days, homework is due 3 days after they return to school.

Parents can use Moodle and Infinite Campus to view homework expectations and progress in making up missed work.

## Eating at school

Breakfast is offered each day from 7:40am to 8:10am for grades Pre-K-12. Food is to remain in the Great Room and students need their lunch cards to purchase breakfast. The breakfast menu is on the PA website and includes ala-carte options and a rotating daily menu.

Middle School Lunch is from 11:10-11:35.

Menus come out monthly in the e-bulletin and are available on the PA website. MS Students may eat from the main line, grill line, sandwich bar, pasta bar or select from ala-carte options. Students may also bring their own lunch from home. Alternatively, a Salad/Fruit Bar option is available to all students and several ala-carte options are priced separately.

### **PARENT TIPS:**

- Water bottles are permitted where teachers allow but are not permitted in any science classrooms or performance rooms.
- It is okay for students to keep a small snack in their locker to quickly eat if needed, in between classes. But this cannot be abused.
- Create guidelines with your student regarding food selections for treats and grill line.
- MS students cannot have coffee!
- Closed lunch – students are not allowed to leave campus
- No cash – all food/drink purchases are charged to your account using your students' lunch card.
- Students are not allowed to chew gum on campus.

## Communication with School / Parent / Student

The following are vehicles used to communicate school information to parents and/or students: ○ Providence Academy's webpage: [www.providenceacademy.org](http://www.providenceacademy.org). The top, right-hand corner of the website has a "parent" link that contains many useful resources, including the parent/student handbook which has a middle school section, a volunteer page that connects to PAPA's SignUp genius page, forms, and much more.

○ E-bulletins are an electronic newsletter that are sent on Monday evenings to parents via email. Please read the newsletter as it often contains important information about upcoming events. ○ School directories will be distributed to families after school starts, and will contain contact information for faculty, staff and PA families.

○ Back to School Night takes place each year in the third week of school. This is a parent only event, and great opportunity to meet your student's teachers.

○ Parent/Teacher conferences take place each November and March. Information for conference registration will be sent to parents prior to the date(s). Parents must register and schedule conference times in advance. Conferences are offered both virtually and in person.

○ Phone and e-mail: Parents may contact teachers directly by telephone or e-mail (each teacher has his or her own classroom phone and e-mail address). Likewise, faculty, staff and Administration may also contact students and parents via similar methods.

○ US Mail. The following reports are printed and sent home: Semester grade reports and final report cards.

○ Students receive announcements from teachers and school administration every day via email. Students should check these email announcements for upcoming events and notifications. ○ Each month the Business Office will send out an electronic invoice that covers your child's expenses from the prior months. Examples of items on this list include school lunches and supply fees. If students provide their own lunch parents may not receive monthly statement due to lack of activity. Payments are made via ACH or can be made directly to the Business Office.

### **PARENT TIPS:**

Stay involved – check grades/scores early and often.

Attend conferences – conferences are a great 'quick check-in' with your student's teachers. We are all busy, but we encourage you to come to school and participate. It feels good and it is nice to experience what your student does every day!

Here is the bottom line with Middle School...parent to parent:

- We all mess up or fail at some point. Most of us have missed a deadline, didn't do as well as we hoped on a test, had a meeting that didn't go as planned or had a difficult time communicating with friends or co-workers. This is normal and a part of how we grow. It's a part of middle school and it's to be expected.
- School administrators and teachers expect it and have a system in place to assist. Middle School is a time to experience small failures and learn to figure things out to get back up and on track. Middle School is the dry run for Upper School where grades really count toward college acceptance.
- Middle School is where we all help students to learn about managing time and expectations. Students need to learn how to manage their busy lives. Three tests next week plus a hockey tournament this weekend...they better start preparing now while they have the time.
- Be aware and supportive but let your student lead in resolving any issues. They need to learn how to do this on their own unless you plan on calling college professors or first bosses!

## Uniform Dress Code

The Uniform Dress Code encourages a community spirit at Providence Academy and enhances school pride. Uniforms are worn in PreK through 12<sup>th</sup> grade.

- Lower, Middle and Upper Schools each have different uniform styles.
- Uniforms can be purchased locally from Donald's in St. Paul and Eden Prairie or Educational Outfitters in St. Louis Park. The Lands' End School Uniform catalog also carries many pieces of the uniform. • A uniform sale is held at Providence Academy before the start of school for convenient shopping. Used uniforms are usually available at this sale as well.
- Reference the 2023-2024 Uniform Guidelines for detailed dress code and uniform information prior to purchasing items.



### GYM UNIFORMS:

Physical education uniforms are required for all students in 4<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> grade physical education classes. PE uniforms are available for purchase during the Uniform Sale in August and by order forms available on the school website or in each of the Administrative offices.

### OUT-OF-UNIFORM OR MODIFIED UNIFORM DAYS/EVENTS:

Several school-related events during the year are “out-of-uniform” or “modified uniform” (e.g. retreats, certain field trips, school-sponsored dances/parties, etc.). In some instances, students will receive instruction on whether specific attire is required (e.g. band and choir concerts, etc.). For all out-of-uniform events students are reminded that attire must be appropriate. Clothing must be neat, clean, modest and free of offensive or suggestive advertisements or slogans. Skirts, shorts or dresses should generally be to fingertip length minimum with no less than a 5” inseam for shorts. No crop-tops or leggings worn as pants. Shirts or dresses with spaghetti-style straps should be covered with a sweater. Generally speaking, straps should be two fingers wide. Students sitting on an elevated stage should be particularly mindful of hem length and posture. Belts should be worn as necessary. Distressed jeans may be appropriate depending on the event but torn/excessively worn jeans should be avoided.

**PARENT TIPS:**

- Try on uniforms before purchasing a lot! Sizes differ between brands. Suggestion is to start with a few of each item to make sure student wears them, before buying 5 of everything only to find out that your daughter won't wear the button up shirt!
- Girls: typically wear shorts under skirts - no pants on Mass day – no leggings on non-uniform days.
- Boys: belts are mandatory.
- Yes – uniforms on picture day!
- Shoes – many students wear Sperrys that are black or navy blue.

**For gym:**

- Have a small gym bag (many use the small string backpack type) with shoes, uniform, and DEODORANT!!
- Remind your student to bring bag home often so that you can wash their uniforms. • MS Students can keep their gym clothes in their assigned gym lockers.

### **Providence Academy Athletics in Middle School**

Providence Academy offers many sports options to Middle School Students. Please refer to the MS Sports Manual for more information.

