

WELCOME!

We are very excited to welcome you to the Tiftarea Academy middle school family, and we are looking forward to an exciting new year as you make the transition from elementary to middle school! The role that families play in the life of our school community is greatly appreciated, and we encourage you to take advantage of the opportunities we offer to get and stay connected.

Important Contact Information

Main Office (229) 382-0436 dhardy@tiftarea.org	Stacey Bell Headmaster sbell@tiftarea.org	Chance Benson Upper School Principal cbenson@tiftarea.org
Larry Creamer Counselor lcreamer@tiftarea.org	Lou Davis Cafeteria Manager ldavis@tiftarea.org	Kip Stevens Athletic Director kstevens@tiftarea.org

I have a problem...Who should I contact?

If the question/concern pertains to GRADES and/or INSTRUCTION, please first contact the teacher directly involved. If you are unable to have your question/concern addressed, please contact Chance Benson, Upper School Principal. Should further assistance be needed, Mr. Stacey Bell, Headmaster, may become involved.

If the question/concern pertains to DISCIPLINE, please first contact the teacher or faculty member who was directly involved in the situation. If you are unable to have your question/concern addressed, please contact Chance Benson, Upper School Principal. Should further assistance be needed, Mr. Stacey Bell, Headmaster, may become involved.

If the question/concern pertains to your student's SCHEDULE or COURSE OFFERINGS, please first contact Dr. Larry Creamer, Counselor.

If the question/concern pertains to ATHLETICS, please first contact Dr. Kip Stevens, Athletic Director.

Curriculum and Courses

Sixth and seventh grade students will have the same teacher per subject for both years in the middle school. Students begin the day with their homeroom teacher, and then rotate to a different classroom/subject each period. There are seven periods in the day. Academic and Bible classes are housed within the middle school building. Students leave the building for PE/Band and Computer. Lockers are provided in the middle school building. Our middle school curriculum is aligned with college preparatory standards and requirements, and it is based on the Georgia Standards of Excellence (<https://www.georgiastandards.org>).

6th Grade	7th Grade
<p>Language Arts *Focus is on sentences, parts of speech, complements, phrases, sentence structure, agreement, using verbs correctly, using modifiers correctly, punctuation, writing effective sentences, paragraph development, composition, spelling, common error usage.</p>	<p>Language Arts *Focus is on sentences, parts of speech, complements, phrases, sentence structure, agreement, using verbs correctly, using modifiers correctly, punctuation, writing effective sentences, paragraph development, composition, spelling, common error usage.</p>
<p>Literature *Focus is developing an appreciation for various types of literature and examining various literary devices, such as figurative language, irony, and metaphors. Students will continue to improve their comprehension skills and will learn to distinguish main ideas and supporting details. Students will self-select reading materials and will be exposed to classic pieces of literature.</p>	<p>Literature *Focus is on strengthening reading skills and comprehension. Students will explore the following genres of literature: short stories, plays, poetry, informational texts, and novels through the use of characterization, story elements, figurative language, and vocabulary development. Students will self-select reading materials and will be exposed to classic pieces of literature.</p>
<p>Math *Topics include operations with integers, rational numbers, rates and proportionality, proportions and percent, expressions and equations, inequalities, modeling geometric figures, circumference, area, and volume, random samples and populations, analyzing and comparing data, experimental probability, theoretical probability and simulations.</p>	<p>Pre-Algebra *Focus is on preparing students for Algebra I. Topics include operations with integers and rational numbers, expressions and equations, multi-step equations and inequalities, ration, proportion, and similar figures, percent, powers, and polynomials.</p>
<p>Social Studies *Focus is on Latin America, the Caribbean, Canada, Europe, and Australia. Both physical and human geography is studied in order for students to begin to grasp the importance geography plays in their everyday lives.</p>	<p>Social Studies *Focus is on Africa, Southwest Asia (Middle East), Southern and Eastern Asia. Both physical and human geography is studied in order for students to begin to grasp the importance geography plays in their everyday lives.</p>
<p>Earth Science *Focus is on providing an overview of common topics in earth science including, but not limited to, meteorology, geology,</p>	<p>Life Science *Focus is on providing students with skills necessary for a smooth transition from elementary life science standards to high</p>

astronomy, oceanography, resources, and human impact on the earth.	school biology standards. An overview of common topics in life science is provided, including, but not limited to, diversity of living organisms, structure and function of cells, heredity, ecosystems, and biological evolution.
<p>Computer and Bible (one semester each)</p> <p>*Computer: Focus is on correct keyboarding techniques, composing at the keyboard, simple formatting techniques, an understanding of copy arrangement, word processing applications and production projects, locating and correcting errors, proper care of equipment, incorporation of images, charts, tables, hyperlinks, etc. into word processing documents, and successfully using the Internet for research purposes.</p> <p>*Bible: Focus is on the Old Testament book of Exodus. Objectives include: an emphasis on people, events, and geographical locations as pertaining to Biblical timelines, development of major characters in respective Biblical narratives with positive application as to the role models for the students, appreciation for the teaching and practical application for the Word of God, demonstrated ability to locate required Biblical narratives within the context of the Bible.</p>	<p>Bible and Computer (one semester each)</p> <p>*Computer: Focus is on correct keyboarding techniques, composing at the keyboard, simple formatting techniques, an understanding of copy arrangement, word processing applications and production projects, locating and correcting errors, proper care of equipment, incorporation of images, charts, tables, hyperlinks, etc. into word processing documents, and successfully using the Internet for research purposes.</p> <p>*Bible: Focus is on a New Testament survey of the life of Christ. Objectives include: an emphasis on people, events, and geographical locations as pertaining to Biblical timelines, development of major characters in respective Biblical narratives with positive application as to the role models for the students, appreciation for the teaching and practical application for the Word of God, demonstrated ability to locate required Biblical narratives within the context of the Bible.</p>
Physical Education or Band	Physical Education or Band

Grading Scale and the Semester System

90 – 100 = A

80 – 89 = B

70 – 79 = C

Below 70 is failing

Semester averages (first and second) are calculated as follows, per course:

First Semester: 1st & 2nd 9-weeks averages and the midterm exam average (20%).

Second Semester: 3rd & 4th 9-weeks averages and the final exam average (20%).

First semester and second semester averages are averaged together to determine a final average for each course. If a student has a failing final average, he/she must repeat each failed semester in summer school.

Once students enter the 8th grade, each semester counts as one half credit, meaning a failing semester average will result in the student having to retake the failed semester of that course in summer school or during the next school year, if schedule allows.

Schedule

Sixth and seventh grade students have the privilege of a fifteen minute break every morning. Students walk to the cafeteria and are permitted to use the vending machines and/or purchase breakfast items from the hot bar. Neither sixth nor seventh graders are allowed to use electronic devices during break or lunch.

8:05	Beginning Bell
8:10	Tardy Bell
8:10-8:20	Homeroom
8:20-9:10	First Period
9:15-9:30	Middle School Break
9:35-10:25	Second Period
10:25-11:15	Third Period
11:20-12:10	Fourth Period
12:10-12:40	Middle School Lunch
12:45-1:35	Fifth Period
1:40-2:30	Sixth Period
2:35-3:25	Seventh Period
3:15	Load Buses
3:20	Dismiss Car Drivers
3:25	Dismiss Car Riders

Standardized Testing

Sixth and seventh grade students participate in the IOWA standardized assessment each spring. This test determines a measure of students' knowledge in subject areas that they have learned in school - reading, language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies.

Duke Talent Search (7th graders) and College/Career Planning

Students may qualify for the 7th grade Talent Search by scoring at or above the 95th percentile on a grade-level standardized test. Enrollment provides benefits that last through the end of high school, including the opportunity to take the ACT or SAT, specialized publications, college prep advice, and access to educational programs. Learn more by visiting <https://tip.duke.edu/programs/7th-grade-talent-search>.

Sports

Junior Pro Football (6th grade)
JV Football (7th grade)
JV Baseball
Junior Pro Basketball (boys and girls; 6th grade)
JV Basketball (boys and girls; 7th grade)
JV Softball
Junior Pro Cheerleading (6th grade)
JV Cheerleading (7th grade)
JV Golf
JV Soccer (girls)
JV Tennis
JV Swim
JV Track
JV Wrestling
JV Cross Country

Clubs/Extracurriculars

Builder's Club (precursor to Key Club)
Academic Bowl
BETA Club
Fellowship of Christian Athletes

Band

6th grade students have the opportunity to participate in a Beginners Band course in lieu of Physical Education.
7th grade students have the opportunity to participate in Advanced Band in lieu of Physical Education. Again, these classes may be taken *in place of* PE (daily).

Dress Code

Boys

Allowed:

- Dress pants, khakis, and jeans. Pants must be worn at the waist level.
- Shorts. Shorts must be hemmed, worn at the waist level, and have a zipper or button fly.
- Shoes must be worn at all times.
- Hair must be neat, clean, and out of the eyes. Hair must not cover the entire ear, eyebrows, or on the collar. Boys must be clean-shaven at all times, and sideburns must not extend below the ear lobe.

Not Allowed:

- Frayed or tattered pants, or pants with holes in them. Sagging, baggy, or calf-length pants or shorts are not allowed. Pants or shorts without a zipper are not allowed.
- Tank tops, sleeveless shirts, shirts containing inappropriate imagery or messages.
- Sweat pants, wind suit pants, and athletic pants or shorts.
- Any type of shower flip-flops.
- Hair must not be tied up in any fashion. No facial hair. No extreme hair styles or colors.
- No earrings, body piercings, visible tattoos, or exposed undergarments.
- No hats, visors, sweat bands, or sunglasses in the building or classroom.
- No “Chubbies” style shorts.

Girls

Allowed:

- Blouses, polo shirts, casual shirts, sweaters, t-shirts that have a sleeve. Sleeveless blouses, dresses, and tops are acceptable as long as the strap is a minimum of one inch (1”) wide OR the width of two fingers across the shoulder.
- Slacks and jeans must be worn at the appropriate level.
- Shorts, skirts, and dresses (with sleeves or sleeveless) must not be shorter than five inches from the bend of the back of the knee.
- Shoes must be worn at all times.
- Jewelry may be worn in moderation.
- Jeggings or leggings must be worn with a top that is no shorter than five inches from the bend of the back of the knee.
- Loosely woven, mesh, or sheer shirts may be worn with a tank underneath meeting the strap width requirement of at least one inch.

Not Allowed:

- Any type of sleeveless top with straps less than one inch.
- Racerback tops/dresses, tops with a deep v-neck, low cut round neck tops, backless shirts, cropped or bare midriff shirts.
- Frayed or ragged pants, pants with holes in them, or pants that are sagging.
- Sweat pants, wind suit pants, athletic pants or shorts, yoga pants, and spandex pants or shorts.
- No extreme hair color or styles.
- No body piercings, visible tattoos, or exposed undergarments.
- No hats, visors, sweat bands, or sunglasses in the building or classrooms.
- Dresses or skirts with a sheer overlay must have a layer underneath that meets length requirements.

A Few Notes Regarding Academic and Behavioral Expectations

- Middle School students are working toward becoming more independent and responsible. Routines and procedures are in place to promote independence and responsibility, while still ensuring an orderly and safe learning environment.
- 4 AR (Accelerated Reader) points have a significant impact on Literature averages. Students must earn at least 10 AR points per 9-weeks grading period; doing so results in two 100% test grades for the grading period. Failure to do so results in two test grades below 100% (ex. 5 points would equal two test grades of 50%).
- With this being the first opportunity for students to participate in school sports, it is crucial to strike a balance between academics and athletics.
- Absences should be limited to true needs (illness, etc.), as it is very easy to get behind when a student misses class time and it can be difficult to catch up. There is no substitute for being present in class and hearing information first hand from the teacher.
- Midterm and Final exams count 20% of a students' overall semester average. These exams are comprehensive.
- Dress code expectations are different in Middle School than in Elementary. Please be sure to familiarize yourself with the Upper School Dress Code Requirements as listed in the handbook. Repeat dress code violations will result in disciplinary action. Most notably: no athletic clothing is allowed (athletic shorts or pants), leggings must be worn with a top that falls no higher than five inches from the bend of the back of the knee, pants or jeans may not have holes or rips (even with fabric behind so no skin shows), no facial hair is allowed.
- Study habits really begin to form during the middle school years. Establishing proper and effective study habits now will greatly help students in high school and beyond.
- Organized classroom theme parties end once in middle school.
- Students in the middle school travel to their classes with their homeroom groups (other than Band/PE), but unlike elementary school, middle school students have six different teachers as opposed to three.
- Computer and Bible courses are each ½ year courses, students will take Computer during the first semester and Bible during the second semester, or vice versa.