

MIDDLE SCHOOL (Grades 5-8)

GENERAL INFORMATION

Philosophy

The mission of a Newport Middle School education is to successfully guide your student through life's challenges, both academic and social, during this exciting but sometimes difficult period of time – the early teen years. Through smaller class sizes, student centered learning, a tutorial atmosphere and individual attention, students are brought through the middle years utilizing a wide variety of curriculum which, in addition to the core subjects of English/Literature, science, math and social studies, encompasses the arts, computer studies, foreign languages, and physical education. We believe strongly in developing the whole student and nurture the artistic, physical and emotional side of the child in harmony. Through integrated Life Skills courses, students are brought to a greater understanding of who they are, what they are and should be about, and where they fit into the world. Newport celebrates its diversity by teaching each student the significance of becoming “global learners” in order to become “global citizens.” We accomplish this goal through the use of technology and special projects assigned throughout the year.

Schedule Example

A snapshot of a typical Newport Middle School student's day is provided in the following schedule sample:

Period	5 th Grade	6 th Grade	7 th Grade	8 th Grade
1	English	Science	Science	Social Studies
2	Math 1/2	Math 3	Pre-Algebra	Algebra
3	Arts Rotation	Social Studies	English	Science
4	Social Studies	English	Arts Rotation	Arts Rotation
LUNCH				
5	Language Block – Spanish, French, Italian			
6	Science	Arts Rotation	PE	PE
7	PE	PE	Social Studies	English

As the chart indicates, Newport follows a 7 period day, with classes lasting approximately 55 minutes each. The school day runs from 8:30 am to 3:30 pm.

Placement

Grades 5 through 8 students are tracked according to ability in Mathematics and English/Literature only. Each school year, placement is determined based on the previous year's performance, standardized test scores and diagnostic work/exams given during the first few weeks of school. Criteria for placement vary from year to year given the abilities of the current class. Placement is also not guaranteed from year to year as children will grow and develop at their own pace over the four years. Class groupings may not be finalized until the 3rd or 4th week of school each year and individual movement may continue, if we determine that the student's placement is not meeting his or her current needs. Students will be encouraged to move at a faster pace if they are able to do so, and may get high school credits in grade 8.

Academic Support

The Newport School accepts students who range in ability from grade-level to gifted and on occasion is able to accommodate students who have mild learning issues due to our small class sizes (no class will have more than 12-15 students to every teacher) and flexibility. Class instruction methods vary to accommodate a range of learning styles. Classroom accommodations

for students with documented learning issues may include: extended time on exams and assignments, use of a laptop (purchased through the Tiger Tech Program), tape recorded oral exams, copies of notes written by a teacher or another student, and/or exemption from foreign language classes and use of books on tape.

Tutors

There sometimes comes a need for a student to receive additional assistance with his or her studies. Students requiring the use of a tutor during school hours may meet with them at designated times cleared through the Division Head or before or after school. The Newport School will provide tutoring space for no cost to Newport students. Teachers employed by Newport may be contracted to tutor individual students, but we prefer they not be your child's daily teacher. All tutors must register with the school and undergo a background check prior to the first session. All tutors must enter into a private contract for payment with the individual student and his/her family. The Newport School has entered into an informal relationship with The Stixrud Group, an excellent resource for matching a tutor to your child's needs and whose tutors have all had background checks completed by Stixrud. Please see the Division Head for additional information on Stixrud services.

Tracker

All Middle School students are provided with a daily tracker, in which they record class assignments and tests over the course of the year. These trackers are an integral part of the student's education in that they teach the students to be responsible and organized. It is suggested, especially with the younger students, that parents take a proactive approach in checking their student's tracker and ensuring that the assigned work is accomplished.

Mid-Term Progress Reports

Newport provides Middle School students and their families with progress reports at the mid-point of each quarter. These reports allow both student and parent to gauge the student's academic standing and allows, if need be, time for a student to work harder to improve any poor grades before the end of the quarter.

Laptop (Tiger Tech) Program

In 2003, our laptop program began, with the 5th & 6th grades integrating technology in the classroom by using laptops as a tool for learning. Today, we are pleased to have all of the Middle School students leasing Newport laptops for daily use in most of their classes. It is anticipated that as these students continue up into the Prep School, our entire Upper School student body will be equipped with laptops over the next four years. (Currently, we are strongly suggesting that all Prep students also get laptops, but for now, they are not a requirement.) Newport has recognized that technology integration into curriculum is a requirement in this day and age, if we want to produce individuals who will become the technologically savvy global citizens of the world. Students in the Middle School learn not only how to appropriately utilize the laptop as an advanced learning tool, but also use their laptops as a window to the world. All students learn the basic Microsoft Office XP programs (Word, Power Point, Excel, Publisher, etc.) as well as how to properly take care of their laptop, and how to perform proper Internet research, searches, and effective file management techniques. All laptops run on a school server and will not be used as an entertainment device (i.e. no personal e-mailing, games, instant messaging, etc.). A separate technology policy and procedures manual is provided to all students and their families and additional copies can be attained from the Newport Technology Coordinator. Any questions regarding the Tiger Tech Program can also be forwarded to the Technology Coordinator.

Tests

The scheduling of tests are monitored on a daily basis and posted on a community calendar in the Upper School wing of the school. No student in grades 5 through 8 may sit for more than **two** full-period, scheduled tests per day. Project due dates also are counted as tests, due to the extensive preparation necessary.

Standardized tests are given at the beginning of each grade, usually in October or November for the main purpose of correct placement. Score reports are generally available before the end of the calendar year. Meetings are scheduled with the Division Head for returning parents to review their child's scores.

One high school credit may be given for Algebra I (or any high school mathematics course taken in the 8th grade), or Foreign Language I to a Newport student who meets department requirements by the end of the 8th grade. Mid-term and Final exams are only offered to 8th grade students in mathematics and Foreign Language.

Outdoor Education

One of the most popular activities for our Upper School students is the annual Outdoor Education excursion to Calleva, an outdoor educational specialist group that reveals the outdoors-person in all of our students. 7th & 8th grade students spend two days and one night on the Markoff Farm in Bladensburg, Maryland. For two days, the Newport students learn to work together through team-building activities, such as a ropes course, rock climbing, hiking, rafting and caving, and sleep in tents on the farm. 5th & 6th grade students spend the day (not overnight) at the same location. This excursion takes place early in the school year so students, both new and returnees, feel an affinity to their classmates that lasts throughout the school year. This educational experience is an additional minimal cost to families, but, as history has proven, is well worth the investment.

Class Trips

Students appreciate and understand course work to a greater extent when it is presented as a real life experience. As a result, we take a variety of trips and excursions which we feel help to integrate the curriculum into students' personal experiences and also help with each child's personal growth. All grade 5 through 8 students are encouraged to attend such excursions and overnight trips. Students have gone to Boston, Williamsburg, Charleston and historic Quebec City, Toronto, Niagara Falls, and Key West and the Everglades in Florida. This annual trip has two main purposes: experiential education and class bonding. We do not allow parents to attend or act as chaperones, as a final purpose of the trip is to allow the students to experience the thrill of travel and all that it encompasses, independent of their family ties. Newport teachers act as chaperones on all trips. Extra costs are incurred by parents if they wish their child to take part, which, as history proves, has been well worth the investment. The privilege of participating in this annual trip is tied to a student's grade point average/effort in class.

Enrichment Program

Each year the slate of Enrichment Program offerings will vary based on the particular talents and interests of our staff and older students. In the recent past we have offered student government, sports, karate, chess, cartooning, visual art, theater and music, to name a few. Some activities require a fee. A separate booklet will be provided to students outlining the current year's offerings.

Parent/Teacher Meetings/Conferences

The Division Head may hold meetings with parents in each class to inform them about upcoming events for the year, on pertinent issues. Parents may contact or meet with an individual teacher for a conference as the need arises. Meetings between parents and all of their child's teachers,

however, may be called at the request of the parent or the school and will be coordinated by the Division Head's Office. Contact by email is also an appropriate, and in many cases, the preferred manner in which communication takes place between family and teacher. We encourage our teachers to communicate with parents via e-mail for any reason (good or bad) as it seems to be the easiest and most preferred communication device by families. Please let your student's teachers know if you would prefer a different form of communication.

Prep School Orientation

In the 7th and 8th grade year, students and their parents are invited to a Prep School Orientation with the Upper School Division Head, the Head of the School, and the College Counselor. This meeting is intended to inform parents about the Prep School and its offerings and provide an opportunity for parents to ask questions about the Prep School and the upcoming task of preparing their child (and themselves) for the college admissions process.

MIDDLE SCHOOL ACADEMIC PROGRAM

SOCIAL STUDIES

U.S. History - Grade 5.

The fifth grade Social Studies course traces U .S. history from the time of the Pre-colonial Native American nations to Reconstruction. They are presented with a variety of study skills such as note-taking, outlining, summarizing, and interpreting maps, graphs, and charts. Laptops are used as an integral part of this curriculum and utilized for research purposes and hands-on activities.

Global History - Eastern Hemisphere - Grade 6 or 7 in alternate years

This Social Studies course introduces the development of various civilizations in the Eastern Hemisphere to help the student form a basis to understand the world today. Skills developed include map and graphing skills; organizing and summarizing information; and evaluating ideas to discuss or solve a problem. A year-long country research report assigned to each student is the highlight of the year. Students utilize both traditional research and internet research activities to develop a report that they present to the class at the end of the year.

Global History - Western Hemisphere - Grade 6 or 7 in alternate years

This Social Studies course introduces the development of various civilizations in the Western hemisphere with particular attention given to Latin America and Canada. Students continue to use their critical thinking skills to discuss issues or draw conclusions; organize thoughts and materials; and take organized notes. This class is also assigned a year-long country report that teaches research and reporting techniques.

U. S. History - Grade 8

The U.S. History course is designed to study the chronological history of the United States. Particular attention is paid to the transition from English colonies to a distinctly American outlook, and the development of our democratic institutions thereafter. Note taking, research skills, and test taking skills are taught.

ENGLISH

The English program at Newport fuses Composition and Literature into the daily English class. However, we have separated them here for the reader's better understanding of what is being covered in each grade level.

English Composition - Grade 5-8

The main focus of these daily classes is to help students share their ideas effectively in writing. This course begins by offering a study of the methods of paragraph organization and development as well as practice in writing descriptive, narrative, expository, and persuasive paragraphs. Later students will learn to construct more precise and interesting sentences and how to develop ideas into multi-paragraph compositions with introductions and conclusions. By eighth grade students will learn how to analyze a work, write a thesis, and develop that thesis into a five-paragraph essay. Another major focus in Grade 8 is a research paper dealing with a career. Beginning with the selection of a career, the students go step-by-step through the process of writing this paper, culminating in a presentation on Career Day. In addition, sentence structure, the parts of speech, punctuation, capitalization, and usage are formally taught. Vocabulary study is also an integral part of the program.

Grade Literature - Grade 5

The fifth grade program continues to develop and expand the skills taught in the primary grades through the reading of a variety of literary genres. The program focuses on the following comprehension and interpretative areas: main idea, cause and effect, fact versus opinion, sequencing, context clues, inferencing, reading for details, previewing, skimming, scanning, summarizing, and critical thinking. Novels supplement the literature anthology.

Literature - Grade 6

During the sixth grade, students are formally exposed to the elements of literature, including an introduction to poetry. Comprehension and interpretative skills are reviewed and expanded through reading various texts: selections from the literature anthology; articles from news magazines; books for book reports; and novels.

Literature - Grade 7

In this course students continue to expand their ability to understand literature and literary techniques. In addition to a variety of selections in the literature anthology, students read a variety of novels selected by theme. Furthermore, students read various poetry selections, which serve as catalysts for writing their own original poetry.

Literature and Speech - Grade 8

The aim of the literature portion of this class is to introduce the students to mature reading and sophisticated assignments. During the year, the students read a variety of literature dealing with mature themes, enabling them to increase their understanding of humanity. In a speech component, students receive guidance and experience in oral communication. Through a series of assignments, such as introductions and expository and persuasive speeches, students learn how to prepare an interesting speech and how to speak before an audience.

MATHEMATICS

The goals of the mathematics program in grades 5 through 8 are to continue and expand upon the goals of lower school mathematics, namely:

1. To teach students the basic skills to be mathematically literate in daily life and in occupational skills.
2. To provide experiences that connect the real world to mathematics, allowing students to apply knowledge and concepts to solve academic and technical problems.

3. To help students enjoy mathematics and develop the view that mathematics thinking is worthwhile.

In addition to the above, grade 5 through 8 mathematics challenges students further and acts as a link between lower school mathematics (rooted in the concrete) and upper school mathematics (which accentuates the abstract). Thus the program also serves:

4. To help students explore mathematics, encouraging students to take risks in problem solving and to think more abstractly.

The Newport School, recognizing student differences, accepts that students learn at different paces. The current goal of grade 5 through 8 school mathematics is for a student to be ready to study Algebra I by the end of the seventh or eighth grade.

Grade 5

Students learn how mathematics is used in the real world and in their other studies. They practice and reinforce basic operations with whole numbers, decimals, and fractions. While the course emphasizes basic skills, it also strives to enable students to think mathematically and improve their problem solving.

Advanced students study data analysis and probability to learn the connection of arithmetic with algebra and geometry.

Grade 6

Students learn new topics in statistics, geometry, and algebra. They apply basic mathematics skills to several areas such as business, personal budgets, and measurement. Concepts in geometry include calculating area, perimeter, and volume and in statistics include calculating and interpreting the mean.

Advanced students will develop their abilities to rationalize and compute with decimals, perform operations with fractions, solve problems with ratios and proportions, and write and solve equations. They will also solve problems in geometry.

Grade 7

Students expand their ability to solve problems and perform mathematics operations, practicing basic operations with all kinds of rational numbers, positive and negative, the entire year. Students solve problems with ratios, percents, and decimals. They represent relations and sets with graphs and Venn diagrams. Students will also continue to use basic algebra and geometric relations to solve problems.

Advanced students will develop their ability to manipulate variables in equations and expressions. They will also learn to perform basic operations with polynomials.

Grade 8

This course helps students in the transition from elementary mathematics to algebra. Students develop mastery of expressions, equations, ratios, formulas, and basic statistics and probability. They use calculators and limited computer applications to see concepts and become familiar with technology. Students review performing basic operations with the different types of numbers, writing expressions, and graphing data. This provides a basis for writing and solving basic equations to solve problems.

Advanced students will begin study of upper school mathematics (Algebra 1).

Algebra I

Students employ their mastery of rudimentary mathematical skills and concepts and extend it by using variables to represent unknown quantities and solving equations by applying rules of equality. Major topics include solving linear and quadratic equations, manipulating polynomials, graphing linear and quadratic equations as well as systems of the same, solving inequalities in one and two dimensions, and working with rational and irrational numbers. Applications of all of the above are integrated into their study. Graphing calculators are used to enhance understanding of graphs.

SCIENCE

Newport offers a "hands-on," inquiry-based, multidisciplinary approach to science at the grade 5 through 8 level. We are committed to engaging our grade 5 through 8 students through active participation in the learning process. The multidisciplinary approach divides the year into several sessions, each devoted to exploring one of the following disciplines: Life Science; Physical Science, and Earth Science. Our program introduces students to the concepts of biology, chemistry, and physics in a fun way and at an age-appropriate, non-mathematical level before they develop preconceptions about the complexity of these subjects. At all times connections will be made to the students' real world experiences. A mandatory year-long Science Project is undertaken by each student and presented by the student near the end of the school year at the Newport Science Fair.

5th Grade

Introduction to Life Science – Organisms & Taxonomy

This course is a "hands-on" program designed to introduce students to the world of life science. The curriculum examines different organisms with respect to form, function and habitat. Some areas of study include the characteristics of living things, cells, classifications of living things, and a closer scientific examination of animals and plants.

6th Grade

Life Science – The Environment

The sixth grade Life Science program focuses on populations, interactions of organisms, ecology and the environment. The curriculum stresses environmental awareness and the importance of preservation. Some specific areas of study include populations, ecosystems and biomes, living resources, land and soil resources, air and water resources, energy resources and current environmental issues. This course is expected to be offered in the 2007-08 school year. For the 2006-07 school year, grades 6 & 7 are following the grade 7 curriculum for physical science.

7th Grade

Physical Science

Physical science is an introduction to the basic concepts of chemistry and physics. The main focus is on theories and concepts, but there is also a small math component. Some areas of study include atoms, elements and the Periodic Table, the history of atomic theory, units of measurement, ionic compounds and molecules, states of matter and phase changes, mixtures and solutions, chemical reactions, motion, forces, energy, electricity and magnetism and waves.

8th Grade

Earth Science

Eighth grade science is the final year of Newport's multidisciplinary approach to science. Earth science is a study of the universe and the Earth, and the relationship of the Earth to the cosmos. The focus is on systems and cycles of the planets, atmosphere, oceans and land. Some specific areas of study include an introduction to Earth science, formation of the universe, Earth, Sun and Moon relationships, Earth's atmosphere, meteorology, forces, energy, electricity and magnetism, waves, oceanography, geology, earthquakes and volcanoes.

FINE ARTS

Grades 5 through 8

The Fine Arts classes encompass each of the fine arts: visual art, dance, drama, and music (depending on teacher availability). Students meet daily for fine arts. An across-the-curriculum theme is sometimes developed reflecting the grade level's interdisciplinary studies. Students are exposed to many cultures and cooperatively work to produce various performances and educational activities.

FOREIGN LANGUAGE

The 2006-07 school year is providing students the option to select from three different languages – Spanish, French and Italian. The following descriptions pertain to each of the languages offered.

Levels A and B

These are beginning level language courses. All four language components of listening, speaking, reading and writing are developed. Vocabulary and functions are presented in context. Grammatical structures are presented, practiced and reinforced. Students will also learn about the relevant countries and cultures. Many hands-on projects are built into the curriculum to allow students to develop their language skills in an active way, and to integrate cultural awareness into the course.

Levels 1A and 1B

These classes introduce students to the selected language in a communicative environment. Vocabulary and basic grammar are learned in meaningful conversational situations and reinforced in written form. The curriculum emphasizes real-life situations that students are most likely to encounter in the relevant countries or communities. In these levels, students learn to communicate their purpose and message. Students learn grammar and linguistic structure in conversational context much like they learn their native language. The four basic skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing are presented in videos, cassettes, and practiced in role-play and question/answer exercises. The target language's culture is presented with supplementary authentic materials and with exposure to native speech.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND HEALTH

Grades 5- 6

The emphasis of the Newport Physical Education Department is teaching lifetime leisure skills, building confidence and developing an appreciation and enjoyment for physical fitness. The primary purpose of grading is to evaluate the student's progress as well as to promote student participation by increasing the desire to be active. Physical Education is taught each day.

The emphasis of the curriculum is in teaching the students the importance of developing and maintaining a healthy "self" through engagement in healthy life-style practices and choices. The fact that health and wellness are related and integrated not just physically but mentally, emotionally, socially and spiritually as well, is the foundation from which the health curriculum is drawn. Through this positive insight young people can learn early the importance of practicing habits that will allow them to lead happy and healthy lives.

Grades 7- 8

The emphasis of the Newport Physical Education Department in the 7th and 8th grades is to teach lifetime leisure skills, build confidence, and develop an appreciation and enjoyment for physical fitness. However, there is an increased emphasis on sports. The sports programs offered for grades 7 & 8 are soccer, basketball, track, softball, and baseball. There are various activities included in the physical education program including, but not exclusive to, football, soccer, hockey and basketball. Physical Education for grade 7 and 8 is held each day.

The Newport School is approved by the Maryland State Department of Education, and is presently working on re-accreditation by the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools.

The Newport School is a member of the, the Association of Independent Schools of Greater Washington, and the National Association of Independent Schools.

The Newport School does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin, sex, sexual orientation, age, religion, marital status, or handicaps in the administration of its educational, admission, scholarship, loan, athletic, extracurricular, or employment practices. The Newport School is also in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act.