



**Middle School
Student-Parent Handbook
2025–2026**

**Trinity School of Durham
and Chapel Hill**

Please note: The information in this handbook is subject to change at any time, as Trinity's policies and procedures are updated to best serve our students and their educational goals.

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General Middle School Information

INTRODUCTION

A middle school should be about more than academics. It also needs to be a place that cares about students' moral, spiritual, and social development and that helps students discover their God-given gifts and interests and deepen friendships.

To provide such a learning experience, we place a high priority on shepherding students in a healthy and welcoming environment, to help them to be humble, thoughtful, and respectful young people who delight in and trust the Lord.

Trinity offers many cocurricular and special program opportunities for Middle School students: superb athletics; off-campus trips; arts and other resource classes that often include options like Coding, Band, Drama, and Engineering; and social events. The Middle School Coordinator of Student Life advises the Middle School Student Council, which organizes many of the division's social events, such as dances and movie nights.

The following sections explain the variety of opportunities for a rich, enjoyable experience in Trinity's Middle School.

MIDDLE SCHOOL LEADERSHIP

Homeroom Teachers

Students begin at least three days of the school week with their homeroom teacher or teachers, who help to shepherd them by discussing upcoming events and taking attendance. Homeroom teachers lead homeroom activities, including prayer and devotions. Homeroom teachers seek to know their students well and develop relationships that will allow them to support their students' intellectual, spiritual, social, and emotional growth. Trinity's homeroom teachers are committed to guiding students within a framework of Christian faith and conviction, trusting that this helps shape students' character and influences their lives for the better.

The homeroom teachers' role also includes serving as a liaison between home and school. They serve as a general resource for parents. When parents have questions about a specific class, they should communicate directly with that class's teacher. Likewise, teachers are asked to communicate concerns or accolades directly to the student's parents.

Coordinator of Spiritual Life

The Coordinator of Spiritual Life shepherds the spiritual life of the Middle School through Sanctuary (the Middle School's weekly worship time) and through special assemblies, gatherings, and events. With others, the coordinator works collaboratively and proactively to cultivate and sustain a healthy, safe, and welcoming environment for study, deepening relationships, and spiritual growth.

Middle School Learning Specialist

The Middle School Learning Specialist works with students, parents, and teachers to support students with learning differences. She maintains the learning evaluation records and accommodation information for Middle School students with learning differences and collaborates with other staff to help ensure the success and well-being of the students.

School Counselor

Trinity's School Counselor offers programs that support students' spiritual, emotional, and social development. She provides emotional and psychological counsel for students, working closely with families and making referrals to outside therapists or other experts as appropriate.

Middle School Administrative Assistant

The Middle School Administrative Assistant supports the Head of Middle School and other Middle School staff. She also serves as the receptionist at the main desk in the South Building.

Head of Middle School

The Head of Middle School is available to meet with students and parents regarding academic or personal matters and may be involved when teacher-parent conferences are scheduled.

MIDDLE SCHOOL ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL PROCEDURES

Arrival Procedures

Students are expected to arrive promptly for school and all classes. The Middle School day begins at 8:00 a.m. Students may enter the school building as early as 7:40 a.m. Excessive tardiness to school will result in disciplinary action. Middle School students with three or more unexcused tardies in a quarter will be required to attend detention.

Students arriving by car may be dropped off along the driveway in front of the South building.

- Students should disembark from the car so that they are not stepping into the flow of traffic, and the driver should stay in the car.
- Once in the carpool line, cars must stay in line until they exit the campus.
- Do not use your cell phone or other mobile device while driving on campus or when you are waiting in the carpool line.
- Students should enter the building promptly upon arrival and report directly to homeroom on Monday, Wednesday, and Thursday or the HUB on Tuesday and Friday.

Late Arrival

Students who are not in their classrooms and ready promptly at the beginning of homeroom are considered late.

Middle School students who are more than 15 minutes late for the start of the instructional day must bring a note or be signed in by a parent.

Late arrivals fall into one of two categories: unexcused or excused.

Excused. If a student will arrive late due to an appointment or other excused reason, the parent must notify the school no later than 8:15 a.m. that morning, or the student must bring a note from their parent or from the appointment indicating the reason for late arrival. Parents may notify the school by contacting the homeroom teacher or the Middle School Administrative Assistant by phone or email.

Unexcused. Late arrivals with no previous notice of an appointment and no other parental note are considered unexcused. The Head of Middle School will make the final decision as to whether a late arrival is considered excused or unexcused.

Students arriving late, whether excused or unexcused, must check in with the Middle School Administrative Assistant at the front desk of the South Building. Carpooling students with unexcused late arrivals may be penalized equally, as determined by the administration. The Head of Middle School may contact the parents in cases of habitual tardiness.

Students arriving late to a class because of a conference with a teacher or administrator must bring a note to that class signed by the adult with whom the student was meeting.

Students with three or more unexcused tardies in a quarter will be required to attend detention.

All tardies, both excused and unexcused, will be recorded as tardies on the report card.

Middle School Carpool and Dismissal Procedures

Middle School students are dismissed at 3:00 p.m. Drivers must proceed through the carpool lane to pick up their students. Please do not park.

Early Release

Parents should not take students out of class early, except for occasional, unavoidable appointments or emergencies. Please schedule students' appointments outside of school hours whenever possible.

If a student must be released from school early, parents must contact the Middle School Administrative Assistant or the student's homeroom teacher in advance by email or send a signed, dated note to the school indicating the reason for and time of release. The student should present this note to the front desk upon arrival at school. This helps ensure that class interruptions are kept to a minimum. Explicit parental permission for early release must be communicated to the school.

ABSENCES

Regular, punctual attendance is essential for students to be fully engaged in the Middle School community. Being at school on time each day will allow them to maximize their academic development and fully benefit from collaborative learning opportunities. Irregular attendance can lead to academic difficulty and creates an extra burden on faculty.

Middle School students who have incurred a significant number of absences risk not being promoted to the next grade. The Head of Middle School, in consultation with the faculty and staff, shall determine if the number of absences is becoming excessive and will contact the parents to discuss the situation.

Parents should report their students' absences to the homeroom teacher or Middle School Administrative Assistant by phone, note, or email no later than 8:15 a.m. If the school has not been notified of a student's absence or late arrival, the Middle School Administrative Assistant will contact the parents. All absences, both unplanned and planned, will be recorded as absences on the report card.

Unplanned Absences

Students who miss school due to illness or an unplanned event are expected to keep up with their class assignments as much as reasonably possible, using class assignment agendas or email or phone conversations with faculty to stay informed regarding homework. Upon their return from an unplanned absence, students needing flexibility or extensions regarding make-up work should communicate directly with their teachers. Depending on the circumstances, excessive absences may jeopardize a student's academic standing and the privilege of making up work.

Planned Absences

Students intending to miss school days for non-health-related reasons must complete and submit a Planned Absence Form in advance of the absence. These forms are available on the Trinity website and from the Middle School office. It is the responsibility of the students to meet with their teachers before their absence to inquire about work that they will miss that might be completed while they are gone. All students should meet with their teachers upon their return to school to submit completed work and to determine what work remains to be completed.

AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAM

The Middle School day ends at 3:00 p.m., and students should be picked up no later than 3:15 p.m. Students who will consistently require supervision after 3:15 p.m. should be enrolled in Trinity Lions on Campus (TLC), Trinity's after-school program for grades 7–8. All TLC students must be picked up by 5:00 p.m. Parents and guardians can enroll their student in the TLC program via the Veracross Parent Portal.

Middle School students may not remain unsupervised on campus under any circumstances, even if they are waiting for an athletic event or practice. At 3:15 p.m., all Middle School students who have not been picked up will be sent to TLC, and parents/guardians will be charged a drop-in fee, if appropriate.

Middle School students with Upper School siblings may wait on the front porch until Upper School dismissal. If they remain after 3:30 p.m., the students will be sent to TLC, where the family may incur a charge.

FIELD TRIPS

Middle School students will likely take several local field trips throughout the course of the school year. These excursions will take place during the school day. The locations to be visited may change from year to year. The primary purpose of these trips will be to explore places that are relevant to the Middle School curriculum and offer opportunities to enhance student learning. One example of a past field trip is a visit by the eighth grade students to the International Civil Rights Museum in Greensboro.

COMMUNICATING AND PARTNERING WITH THE MIDDLE SCHOOL STAFF

Emails from Trinity Faculty and Staff

Email is a primary way for Trinity faculty and staff to communicate with parents. Communications range from a teacher's quick update about a struggling student's most recent test to periodic messages from the Head of Middle School and other administrators about special programs or upcoming events. Middle School parents are strongly encouraged to maintain email accounts, to keep Trinity apprised of their current email addresses, and to ensure that school messages arrive and are read.

Finding Answers to Your Questions and Concerns

If you have questions regarding...

- Forms, messages to students, late arrivals
- Appointments with the Head of Middle School
...contact the Middle School Administrative Assistant.
- A specific class
...contact the teacher of that class.

- A student's social or emotional well-being
...contact the Head of Middle School or the School Counselor.
- Learning differences and accommodations
...contact the Middle School Learning Specialist or the Head of Middle School.
- Most disciplinary matters
...contact the student's teacher.
- More serious disciplinary infractions
...contact the Head of Middle School.

For immediate assistance, please contact the Middle School Administrative Assistant.

Self-Advocacy

The Middle School encourages students to become their own respectful advocates with faculty and peers and to take responsibility for themselves academically and personally regarding matters such as understanding how a test was graded, arranging for extra help, seeking advice about how to study, and navigating challenging relationships.

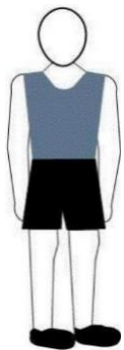
Not all students develop these skills and abilities at the same rate. When students feel uncomfortable self-advocating, we coach them and, depending on the situation, may work behind the scenes to help facilitate a positive outcome. In some situations, more direct adult involvement may be needed, and we encourage parents, sharing our self-advocacy goals, to communicate hopes, concerns, or requests as appropriate with teachers, the School Counselor, or the Head of Middle School. When a student needs closer communication and collaboration between school and home, we invite parents and the student to partner with these staff members in this endeavor.

Interactions with Others

Trinity strives to be a place where community members feel safe at all times, and its members should be mindful of the ways in which words and actions can influence the physical and mental health of others. Language should be carefully chosen to avoid demeaning the dignity of others, whether in person, in writing, or online. No one's body should ever be subject to harm or to unwanted touch. All students should feel safe and confident in reaching out to faculty and staff in the case of any bullying or abuse.

DRESS CODE

Appropriateness, cleanliness, moderation, modesty, neatness, and safety should serve as guidelines for choices regarding dress and appearance. The goal is to teach students how to make their own good decisions about clothes. The Head of Middle School has the final say on the appropriateness of attire. To simplify the task of monitoring and maintaining the dress code, we provide the following guidelines.



Head: Hats and caps may not be worn inside school buildings. Similarly, hoods on sweatshirts and coats are not allowed to be worn on the head. Earrings must be tasteful and not interfere with activities.

Torso: Clothing must cover stomachs, backs, and chests, as indicated by the shaded area in the figure on the left. Shirts and dresses may not have any cutouts or "open backs." Shirt and dress sleeves must have a minimum width of a credit card. Undergarments must be covered.

Legs: Shorts must have at least a three-inch inseam. Skirts and dresses must come to the lower thigh, within six inches of the knee. Skirts must meet this requirement regardless of shorts.

underneath. Leggings and other form-fitting pants should be opaque, with no mesh, holes, or tears, and must be worn with a shirt or top that is longer than mid-thigh. Undergarments must be covered.

Feet: Footwear that is safe and appropriate to the activity must be worn at all times. Middle School students may wear athletic shoes, casual dress shoes, boots, sandals, or flip-flops.

The shaded portion of the above figure represents both the front and back views. These parts of the body must be covered in all positions—sitting, standing, bending, reaching—while attending school.

The following are not permitted on school campus or at school-sanctioned events: tank tops; tops with spaghetti straps; shorts with tears, holes, or slashes; unhemmed jean shorts; sagging pants; exposed boxers. Clothing that promotes drugs, alcohol, tobacco, or violence, that is sexually suggestive, that displays inappropriate pictures or writing, or that in any way contradicts the mission and policies of the school is prohibited. Pajamas or clothing intended for sleeping are not allowed. Pants or jeans with holes, tears, or slashes are permitted only if all of the openings are at or below the knee.

For P.E. classes, Middle School students must wear athletic shoes and appropriate P.E. attire (see below).

Sunglasses may only be worn in school buildings if medically necessary and with a doctor's note or prescription.

The Middle School dress code may be updated or changed at any time. Exceptions to these dress code standards may be made for P.E. activities, field trips, or other school activities at the discretion of the Head of Middle School. For questions or further clarification, please confer with the Head of Middle School.

Dress Code Violations

The faculty have the primary responsibility of correcting students in violation of the dress code. This is one of their most challenging responsibilities in that it has the potential to create significant division in the relationship between teacher and student. That is why it is so important for everyone—students, parents, and faculty and staff—to be committed to observing the dress code as written and that the Middle School staff make enforcing the dress code a priority.

An initial dress code infraction will involve primarily a conversation so that the student understands the specifics of the issue. The Head of Middle School keeps records of dress code violations, and subsequent infractions may result in a detention. If it is necessary to address the infraction immediately, the Head of Middle School will contact the parents and require them to bring appropriate clothes to school before a student is permitted to return to class or, if the parents are not available, the student in violation of the dress code may be required to wear clothes borrowed from the school. Repeated dress code violations become issues not just about one's attire, but also about respect for the rules, for those who enforce them, and for the community itself. Under these circumstances, the Head of Middle School will require a conference with the student and their parent or guardian to develop a plan to address these issues, including the possibility of additional disciplinary action.

P.E. Attire

Trinity's Middle School students do not wear P.E. uniforms. Students will participate in the clothes they are wearing that day. We recommend that students wear clothing that will be comfortable for P.E. on the days that their P.E. class meets. Please remember that the dress code still applies on P.E. days.

Special Chapel Attire

All-school chapels are held five times a year (Opening Chapel, Thanksgiving Chapel, Christmas Lessons and Carols, Easter Chapel, and Closing Chapel). On these days, Middle School students are required to wear dressier clothes to show respect for parents, guests, faculty, and fellow classmates. The dress code for all-school chapel

days is as follows: dresses, nice slacks, or skirts for girls; dress shirts, nice slacks, and ties for boys; no flip-flop shoes, shorts, or jeans for either gender. On all-school chapel days, students should arrive in and remain in these clothes all day, except during P.E.

ELECTRONIC DEVICES AND ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION

Middle School students should put away their personal devices (e.g., cell phones and smart watches) when they enter the building in the morning and keep them stored until after the school day has ended. Without explicit permission of a Trinity faculty or staff member, students are not permitted to use cell phones, smart watches, or similar devices to call, text, email, or otherwise communicate with others before or during school hours, regardless of their location on campus.

Students are encouraged to bring to school only those electronic devices deemed necessary by the teacher for school work (calculators, iPads, etc.). Without explicit faculty or staff permission, no device may be used for accessing the internet, watching videos, listening to music, communicating with others, or playing games. Music-listening devices are not permitted for Middle School students during the school day, but these may be used on campus after school hours. The rules governing the use of Trinity iPads are described in the [Responsible Use of Technology Policy](#). Copies of this policy are available on the School Forms page of the website and from the Middle School office.

Electronic devices used in violation of these rules will be collected and held by the Head of Middle School through the end of the school day. After the second offense, they will be returned only to the student's parents.

After school hours, students may use electronic devices such as cell phones to communicate with their parents. However, while they remain on campus, Middle School students' electronic devices are still subject to Trinity guidelines. Thus, Middle School students can still be instructed by a member of the Trinity faculty or staff to put away or limit the use of their devices. After school, the streaming of music and videos remains prohibited unless permitted by a member of the Trinity faculty or staff.

Online Social Networking and Group Chats

Parents are advised that social networking sites like Facebook, Snapchat, Instagram, etc., prohibit students under age 13 from using their sites. While Trinity prefers not to involve itself in students' online behaviors, from time to time we must deal with discipline issues that arise from students' activities on such online sites. It is Trinity's position that social networking sites are inappropriate for Middle School students, who lack the maturity, judgment, and language skills to use them in a healthy manner, and that the use of such sites should be delayed until students are, at a minimum, in the Upper School. We invite parents to partner with us in our goal of being a middle school in which students do not participate in online social networking activities. If you still choose to allow your child to be active on social media networking sites, we strongly encourage you to regularly and closely monitor your child's online activities.

Similarly, middle school students are often very engaged in online communication with others through group chats. These conversations can sometimes be difficult for students in middle school, who are still actively developing their social skills. We encourage parents to actively monitor their student's participation in these activities. As with social networking, Trinity prefers not to involve itself in students' online behaviors; however, occasionally, we must deal with discipline issues that arise from students' activities.

HOMEROOMS AND CLASS PLACEMENT

Homerooms

Middle School students begin the first six minutes of the school day on Monday, Wednesday, and Thursday with their homeroom. This time is intended to be an opportunity for students to start the day on a strong note. Being on

time for homeroom each school day is essential. In homeroom, students pray for each other, hear and sometimes lead devotions, and discuss upcoming events. Certain school events during the year—for instance, the annual Turkey Bowl—call upon homerooms to compete as groups, which promotes a common, enjoyable, collaborative experience for students and teachers alike.

Class Placement

Trinity School seeks balance in each class section according to gender, academic ability, and social needs. Using information from the application—and student interviews, where applicable—the Head of Middle School assigns each new student to a class section. Returning students are carefully and thoughtfully placed into homeroom and academic sections with input from the teachers who have worked with the students the preceding year. Each student's academic, social, and emotional needs are taken into account, with their best interests in mind.

FOOD AND BEVERAGES

Students may bring their lunch from home or receive it through Trinity's fee-based Hot Lunch program when parents order food online. Students may not order food for delivery or leave campus for lunch. Trinity will have simple lunch options available to ensure that no student goes without lunch. All grades will eat lunch outdoors whenever the weather permits. Food and beverages of any kind are not permitted in the HUB's mezzanine and rooms.

Food, gum, and drinks may be allowed in classrooms with teacher permission. Students should always dispose of trash, leftovers, and gum properly.

LOCKERS

Trinity Middle School students are not assigned lockers. There are cubbies in the classrooms for students to store coats and lunch items.

MIDDLE SCHOOL GATHERING AND SANCTUARY

Middle School students will begin the first six minutes of the school day on Tuesdays and Fridays as a single large group in the HUB. This time is intended for the entire Middle School to participate in devotions and to hear from the whole community.

The Middle School will meet all together in the HUB this year on Thursdays from 11:14 a.m.–12:04 p.m. for our weekly Sanctuary program. Parents are always welcome to join us for Sanctuary.

FIELD TRIPS

Middle School students will likely take several local field trips throughout the course of the school year. These excursions will take place during the school day. The locations to be visited may change from year to year. The primary purpose of these trips will be to explore places that are relevant to the Middle School curriculum and offer opportunities to enhance student learning. One example of a past field trip is a visit by the eighth grade students to the International Civil Rights Museum in Greensboro.

STUDENT COUNCIL

The Middle School Student Council is elected by the students each year and meets regularly to enhance the Middle School community and to organize community-service initiatives. The Student Council, advised by the Middle School Coordinator of Student Life, plays an important role in the ongoing process of community-building among Trinity's Middle School students by organizing many of the Middle School social events throughout the year.

Middle School Academic Life

Middle School students are ready for and interested in deeper thinking. They ask ethical questions as they seek to understand themselves and their world. They become more aware of the rich relationship between creative and logical thought. They are capable of sophisticated connections, a necessary step on the climb toward high-level synthesis. Some won't get there until Upper School; some already have arrived.

Our Middle School program offers students high expectations and an engaging curriculum to help them understand their gifts, how they learn, and what to continue working on before grades become more of a focus in Upper School. These goals, along with continued refinement of the skills and concepts they will need to flourish in Upper School courses, frame the main academic purposes of our teaching.

Just as importantly, Trinity's Middle School faculty love and understand Middle School students. In a way, we see our academic program as a vehicle for shepherding them through years often regarded as the most difficult—but which can bear much fruit. In a place that loves, encourages, and guides them, while holding them to high personal and academic standards, our students can truly grow and develop their God-given abilities.

HOMEWORK AND TESTS

Homework

Middle School students can expect more homework than in previous years, especially in the core subjects of mathematics, science, history, language arts, Bible, and Latin. Other subjects, such as art and music, typically do not require as much homework.

While teachers aim to avoid excessively burdensome homework loads, the difficulty and amount of work that must be accomplished in these grades mean that students must plan on significant homework each school evening and on weekends. Homework should not be assigned over Thanksgiving, Christmas, Easter, or spring breaks.

Students should expect an average of about 1.5 to 2.5 hours of homework each night. This is a general expectation, and the specific amount of time it takes a student to complete an assignment is highly dependent upon the individual. Homework loads tend to be a little heavier near the end of a quarter and before major school breaks. Students or parents should consult with relevant teachers if homework completion time seems excessive.

Homework and Tests Missed Due to Absence

Generally, all missed or due quizzes, tests, labs, and assignments must be completed and turned in on the day the student returns to school, even if that student's class does not meet that day or if that student arrives at school after that class has met. At the teacher's discretion, the student may have one additional day to complete any due assignments or assessments. Assignments received beyond their due dates may be penalized according to individual teachers' policies. Under extenuating circumstances such as prolonged absences, students must complete and turn in assignments within five school days of returning to school. No work should be accepted for credit beyond that time unless approved by the Head of Middle School.

Summer Reading

MS students are required to read one book over the summer in preparation for their Language Arts classes in the fall; Required and suggested reading titles are included in the MS Summer Reading List. Students may also be required to read a Trinity Reads book, whose topic is announced each spring. All members of the Trinity community participate in this program, reading a book developmentally appropriate for their age.

ACADEMIC EVALUATION AND COMMUNICATION

Grading Scale

Middle School students are given letter grades based on the following percentage scale:

A 93–100	B- 80–82	D+ 67–69
A- 90–92	C+ 77–79	D 63–66
B+ 87–89	C 73–76	D- 60–62
B 83–86	C- 70–72	F ≤ 59

Academic Support and Probation

Students who have habitual absences, missed assignments, and/or a drop in the quality of their work may be referred to the Head of Middle School, and the Learning Services staff will come alongside students to assess issues and obstacles and potentially develop a personalized plan for improvement. Students, parents, teachers, and learning specialists may all be involved to help ensure that each student has a clear path to success.

Any student who earns two or more semester grades in the D range or one or more Fs may be placed on academic probation for the next semester. Each student on academic probation may have a meeting within two weeks of the release of grades with their parents, any relevant teachers, and the Head of Middle School to discuss specific actions to help the student improve his or her academic performance (unless a parent/teacher conference was previously held). These actions may include, but are not restricted to extra help, tutoring, and mandatory study hall attendance. A letter will be sent home informing the student and his or her parent(s) of the student's probationary status. The student's progress will be monitored closely by the Head of Middle School and the relevant teachers, and these will meet periodically with the student.

Students on academic probation who earn improved grades (with no more than one D) for the next semester will be removed from academic probation. Any student remaining on probation for the next semester may be required to repeat a course or grade level or possibly be subject to separation from the school.

Report Cards

Grade reports are an important part of Trinity's partnership with families as we work together to develop not just our students' academic gifts and proficiencies, but also the personal qualities God desires them to possess. We encourage parents to use these reports at home as an opportunity for reflective conversations about how their son or daughter's studies are going and what specific academic goals might be set for the following grading period.

All Middle School students receive grade reports quarterly. In addition, core academic faculty include comments on the grade reports in the first and third quarters. Middle School specials teachers write comments only if concerned about student progress. Report card comments focus on the student's strengths and areas for improvement. If a student is struggling academically (i.e., experiencing difficulty with comprehending and/or demonstrating proficiency skills) at any point during the marking period, the parents will be notified. All report cards will be distributed electronically.

Communication about Academics

Classroom teachers communicate with students and parents when students perform consistently and significantly below their academic potential; when a grade on any major assessment (e.g., a unit test) is a score of C- or lower; when a concerning pattern is identified (for instance, frequently forgotten or undone homework); or when students are at risk of earning a C- or lower for a quarter or semester average. Parents with concerns about their student's

academic performance are encouraged to contact the teacher to schedule a conference at any point during the year.

Parent-Teacher Conferences

Parents are encouraged to contact teachers by email at any time to ask questions or arrange a conference. Conferences are an important part of the communication between home and school, and both parents are encouraged to attend. During a conference there is an exchange of information about the student, including what the parents see as the student's needs and how school and home can work together to meet those needs to allow for the student to succeed and grow both personally and academically.

Additional conferences can be scheduled with the homeroom teacher, classroom teachers, School Counselor, Middle School Learning Specialist, or Head of Middle School at any other time during the school year if the teacher or parent considers it desirable. However, please note that teachers are not available to confer with parents during morning drop-off, during class time, or at dismissal.

MIDDLE SCHOOL CONDUCT AND DISCIPLINE

General Principles

As Christians we are called to love and honor one another (Romans 12:10). The Middle School faculty and staff seek to live out this call by modeling Christ's love to their students in all that they do. Similarly, Middle School students are expected to serve the Lord by treating their classmates and others with kindness, honor, and respect as fellow children of God (Galatians 3:26). The Middle School is striving to be a community that relies on God's grace (Ephesians 2:8) and forgives each other as we have been forgiven (Matthew 6:14).

Truthfulness is a virtue that is essential to the honor of God, the well-being of the self, and the life of the community. The command to tell the truth is included in the Decalogue (Exodus 20:1-17), and Jesus reiterated this precept in the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5:33-37), making it clear that God's concern was not merely with the letter of the law but with truthfulness at the heart of a person.

A school must establish and maintain trust among and between its different groups. Of particular importance is the trust that must abide among students and between students and faculty. We all have a responsibility to maintain our own honesty and also the honesty of the community, without which we cannot live as a morally healthy school.

Lying, cheating, and stealing are three specific behaviors that will not be tolerated at Trinity School. A community cannot successfully exist and flourish when its members practice these three behaviors, and we take seriously the importance of instilling in our students the habit of truthfulness. The following are examples of violations in these three areas:

Lying...

- Telling an untruth.
- Deliberately deceiving.
- Not telling the whole truth.
- Denying responsibility for acts for which one is responsible.
- Changing a grade on a paper, quiz, test, or report card.
- Forging a parent's signature and offering that forgery as a legitimate signature.

Cheating...

- Copying another person's work (tests, quizzes, homework, etc.) or allowing someone to copy one's own work.

- Asking for or giving questions or answers to tests or quizzes. (Students working together on homework or other assignments may do so according to the teacher's instructions or with permission.)
- Viewing or getting information from someone else's work in class or allowing someone to look at one's own work.
- Turning in another person's work as one's own; plagiarizing another person's work, ideas, or words.¹
- Utilizing artificial intelligence (AI) tools (e.g., Grammarly, ChatGTP, or Google Translate) to complete work without the permission of a faculty member.

Stealing...

- Taking or using another person's or the school's possession(s) without permission (e.g., library books, sports equipment, textbooks).
- Not turning in "found" items to the lost and found.

Disciplinary Actions

The Middle School faculty and staff consider each misbehavior individually and strive to use disciplinary consequences to help students learn from their mistakes, make amends for their errors, and restore relationships.

Factors that the Middle School faculty and Head of Middle School take into consideration include these: precedent; grade level; the seriousness of the offense; and previous violations. Most instances of misbehavior are handled by the faculty in their classrooms and do not require the attention of the Head of Middle School or the parents.

When infractions require the involvement of the Head of Middle School, the disciplinary consequences taken may include but are not limited to the following (from least to most severe):

- Warning
- Recess or lunch detention
- Letter of apology
- Detention before or after school
- In-school suspension
- Out-of-school suspension
- Final warning
- Expulsion

A student may be referred to the Head of Middle School for any behavior that is deemed to be serious. Trinity reserves the right to exercise discretion in assigning consequences in light of exceptional or extenuating circumstances. The spirit of the law, rather than the letter, guides Trinity's decisions.

Consequences for Serious Conduct Infractions

First Offense:

While a serious first offense could result in suspension or expulsion, Middle School discipline emphasizes responsibility, growth, restoration, and changed behavior patterns.

¹ Plagiarism, according to the *MLA Handbook*, is the use of another person's ideas, words, or work without proper acknowledgment of that person. It occurs, for instance, when a student passes off as his or her own—i.e., without proper credit to the actual author—someone else's words in written or spoken form. It also occurs when a student paraphrases such words or uses someone else's interpretations or creations without proper acknowledgement. It is each student's responsibility to fully understand the rules regarding plagiarism and proper citation. To avoid plagiarizing, students should always use proper citation with any form of Trinity schoolwork—not just essays, but also assignments such as group projects, poster board or slide presentations, speeches, and skits.

The first instance of a serious conduct infraction will typically result in a conference with the student and the Head of Middle School. A teacher may be included in this conversation if necessary. The parents will typically be notified and a follow-up conversation may be required with the teacher or Head of Middle School. No credit is given for any work involved in a serious conduct infraction (e.g., a case of plagiarism or the unauthorized use of AI tools).

Second Offense:

Second offenses result in a conference with the student, his or her parents, the Head of Middle School, and often the teacher. Consequences typically include a suspension from school and a warning that further violations may result in expulsion. If the consequence involves a suspension (in-school or out-of-school), a follow-up meeting with the student, his or her parents, and the Head of Middle School will likely be required before the student can return to school.

Third Offense:

A student's third conduct infraction results in a conference with the student, his or her parents, the Head of Middle School, and the Associate Head of School or Head of School, and, while mitigating factors may be considered, expulsion from school is likely.

RESPONSIBLE USE OF TECHNOLOGY

Trinity values electronic tools and resources for education, productivity, and communication and permits students to use them during school hours for these purposes. Recognizing that the world beyond Trinity is increasingly digitized, we seek to help our students learn to use digital tools with wisdom and discernment.

The use of Trinity's digital tools and resources is a privilege rather than a right. This privilege will be granted only after students have read a copy of the school's [Responsible Use of Technology Policy \(RUP\)](#). If at any time a student violates this policy, they are subject to the disciplinary policies outlined in this handbook, including potentially losing this privilege.

The full RUP can be found via a link on the School Forms and Downloads page of the Trinity website.

The use of artificial intelligence (AI) tools by students in the Middle School is prohibited unless a faculty member has authorized their use by providing specific instructions for the assignment. This prohibition includes the use of AI editing tools like Grammarly, as well as generative AI tools like ChatGPT. Middle School students are actively engaged in the process of developing important writing and critical thinking skills. Part of this process involves students learning from their errors by revising their work. The unguided use of AI tools at this stage of the students' skill development can compromise this essential learning process.

ADDITIONAL ACADEMIC INFORMATION

Learning Accommodations

The Middle School faculty will actively work to support students with formal learning evaluations who qualify for accommodations such as extended time, preferential seating, alternative note-taking approaches, and reading aids. Accommodations requiring more extensive teacher assistance will be considered; however, some accommodations may be deemed beyond the scope of what Trinity can provide. To learn more, please confer with the Middle School Learning Specialist or the Head of Middle School. The Middle School Learning Specialist maintains records of all Middle School students whose parents have informed Trinity of documented learning differences regarding their children. Parents of a student with documented learning accommodations may contact the Middle School Learning Specialist or the Head of Middle School to discuss convening a conference with some or all of the student's teachers and the Middle School Learning Specialist if they feel it would be helpful.

Return-to-Learn after Concussion Policy

Students who have experienced a concussion face many challenges upon returning to the classroom. Trinity's policy for working with these students and their parents is found in appendix II of the All-School Student-Parent Handbook.

Communicating Homework Assignments

Middle School HQ is the Middle School's primary digital learning portal. Middle School teachers post homework agendas and some assignments, as well as important class information, on their HQ pages. Parents can access these pages via My Portal Links on the Veracross Parent Portal page. The HQ pages may be especially helpful if a student misses a class for any reason.

Google Classroom is also utilized, at times, by the Middle School for the distribution and collection of assignments. While Middle School students have easy access to this platform using their Trinity iPads and Google accounts, we are currently unable to offer parents access to Google Classroom.

Word Processing

Trinity strongly encourages Middle School students to achieve a minimum typing speed of 20 words per minute. Students are encouraged to acquire this skill through the use of commercial keyboarding instruction programs.