



Welcome to  
our classroom.

# Middle School

## Sixth - Eighth Grade

### Academic Rigor

AGES 12 TO 14

In Giffthill School's middle school classrooms, academic rigor means developing the skills and habits of a collaborative learner, while maintaining a growth mindset as students face the increasingly challenging demands of content reading and abstract mathematical applications.

The academic expectations for middle school students emphasize application and generalization of knowledge and skills across and between disciplines through a heavily experiential learning approach. Additionally, students focus on gaining the habits and study skills necessary to be independent, self-directed learners. Teachers explicitly focus on executive functioning skills such as: organization, time management, prioritization, task-analysis, goal setting, and self assessment.



By the end of middle school, students are expected to take responsibility for: monitoring their own content comprehension, seeking assistance when they need it, and utilizing note-taking and test preparation strategies to enhance their ability to demonstrate content mastery.

A one-to-one technology model is introduced at the middle school level and students are given support as they learn to use technology and applications like the google education suite as critical tools for learning and collaboration with peers and teachers.





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### In our classrooms rigor looks like:

By the end of middle school students are able to write 3-5 page papers with confidence and clarity. They actively engage in class novel studies, and differentiated small group literature circles to explore a variety of literary genres ranging from classic to contemporary. In depth, purpose driven writers workshops focus on the traits of narrative, expository, and persuasive writing.

Students use manipulatives and real world examples to explore math concepts and processes related to introductory Algebra and Geometry. Eighth graders who demonstrate an aptitude for math (as measured by classroom work samples and standardized test data) and an excitement about taking on an additional level of challenge may enroll in Algebra I.

Eighth graders participate in a week-long learning expedition aboard STV/ Roseway. While sailing to and from St. Croix, Vieques, and Culebra, students conduct marine science labs, retrace historic trade routes, read classic maritime literature, and build personal leadership and teamwork skills.

All middle school students participate in an exploratory wheel featuring three of Giffthill School's signature programs: culinary arts, EARTH, and STEAM. In addition, students participate in health, PE, student toolkit, mindfulness, and art classes twice a week to enrich core content and allow for creative cross-curricular applications.

Week-long "minimester" and "STEAM Week" experiences give students the opportunity to select from a variety of immersive learning opportunities facilitated by a combination of GHS faculty and guest teachers from around the nation.

The Middle School Advisory Program matches each student and his/her parents with a faculty member who will serve as the student's academic coach, advocate, and mentor for all three years of middle school.

Every student is provided with a Giffthill School email account and access to the Google Suite of learning tools. Teachers provide direct instruction in how to use technology tools to organize and archive materials, to manage short and long term due dates, and to collaborate with peers and teachers on assignments.