



New Garden
FRIENDS SCHOOL

Middle School

(Grades 7 and 8)

Handbook

2023-24

Welcome to Middle School at NGFS! We look forward to getting to know you and your child as we begin our learning adventures this school year.

For the most up-to-date health information throughout the year, please consult the NGFS Student Health Handbook located on the [School Health page](#) of our website.

Beginning of the School Day

The official start time for school is 8:30 a.m. Students may arrive as early as 8:00 a.m., and they should report to the Middle School Commons. From 8:30-8:45, students will attend Morning Meeting where students will receive daily announcements from teachers and peers; students may also consult with teachers regarding class assignments, work in small study groups, or work/read independently. Students who arrive after 8:30 a.m. are considered late for school and must complete the sign-in form at the front office in building A before proceeding to class.

Traffic Procedures for Arrival

- Turn into the main entrance.
- Make a right turn to loop around in front of building A.
- Exit out the main entrance. Watch for cars from Upper School using the same exit.

Middle School (MS) Schedule

Monday/ Tuesday/ Thursday/ Friday	Class Period	Wednesday	Class Period
8:00-8:25	Arrival	8:00-8:25	Arrival
8:30-8:45	Morning Meeting	8:30-8:40	Morning Meeting
8:50-9:35	Period 1	8:45-9:25	Period 1
9:40-10:25	Period 2	9:30-10:10	Period 2
10:30-11:15	Period 3	10:15-10:55	Period 3
11:20-12:00	Mon/Fri- FLEX Tue/Thu- PE	11:00-11:40	Period 4
12:00-1:00	Lunch/Recess	11:45-12:15	Quaker Meeting
1:05-1:50	Period 4	12:20-1:15	Lunch/Recess
1:55-2:40	Period 5	1:20-3:00	Flex Period
2:45-3:30	Period 6		

End of the School Day

The school day ends at 3:30 p.m., except Wednesday of each week when students are dismissed at 3:00 p.m. Students should be picked up by 3:45 p.m. (3:15 p.m. on Wednesday) in

the carpool line unless they participate in after-school activities. Extended Care is not offered after school for MS students. Students participating in after-school activities should be picked up immediately when activities are over.

Students are not allowed to leave campus without an adult unless staff is given written permission from a parent or guardian. If a student has permission and leaves without an adult, they are no longer under our supervision and may not return to campus. Students who leave school for any reason during the academic day must complete the sign out form at the front office in building A before leaving campus.

- Turn into the main entrance.
- Make a right turn to loop around in front of building A.
- Form 2 car lanes upon entering so that no cars are stopped on Pleasant Ridge Rd.
- Take turns forming a single line when approaching the curb.
- Pull your vehicle as far forward as you can each time; please don't stop in front of the covered area if there is room to pull forward.
- Exit out the main entrance. Watch for upper school cars using the same exit.

Authorization to Pick Up

Students will only be released to adults listed in [ParentsWeb](#) (FACTS family portal) as authorized to pick up. Parents/guardians may update this information at any time on ParentsWeb. To ensure your child's safety, we will request picture identification if the student is being picked up by someone unfamiliar to us. We will not release your child to someone (even if we know them) if they are not authorized in ParentsWeb by the parent/guardian for that specific purpose. In an emergency, approval for pick up by someone not listed in ParentsWeb can be done by the Head of Middle and Upper School via a phone call with a parent/guardian.

Attendance

New Garden Friends School takes school attendance seriously. A student's academic success correlates directly with their daily school attendance, and developing a positive routine of regular attendance is crucial to professional and personal success later in life. Students must attend every class, Quaker Meeting, and service learning day. When a student misses a class, they are expected to fulfill all class obligations. In cases of illness, we will work with the student so that work can be made up in a reasonable timeframe. Attendance patterns will be closely monitored. **Students must attend at least 80% of any class to receive credit for that course.** The same applies to students taking a high school course while in middle school.

All absences, excused or unexcused, will be counted as part of a student's total absence record for the year. A student who misses 50% or more of a class period is considered absent from that class. Parents/guardians must let the advisor know in advance (preferably at least one week) if their student will be absent to attend religious holidays or family events, such as weddings, funerals, bar/bat mitzvahs, or graduations. Students are responsible for communicating with their teachers ahead of time and using Google Classroom to keep up with their work. We ask that medical appointments be scheduled outside of school hours whenever possible.

If a student is absent, the parent/guardian must call the office at 336-299-0964 by 8:45 a.m. to alert the school.

Please note that North Carolina has a Compulsory School Attendance Law (GS 115C-378) and NGFS is required to file a report with the county district attorney and the director of social services when a student accumulates 10 unexcused absences.

Absences are recorded and tracked by the course teacher. Students and parents/guardians may review attendance records in ParentsWeb (FACTS family portal).

Occasionally, a student may have a health concern that necessitates a prolonged absence. In cases where a student can continue some schoolwork, NGFS may employ online resources to enable the student to continue to make curricular progress.

Extended Absences/Planned Travel

We ask that NGFS families adhere to our school [calendar](#) when scheduling vacations. If participation in a particular activity requires a protracted absence from school, prior permission should be obtained from the Head of Middle and Upper School at least one week in advance. This allows for arrangements for students to do work in advance, take work with them, and plan for make-up work.

- When a family plans for a student to be absent, it is the family's responsibility to notify the school.
- It is the student's responsibility to ask for their assignments before the planned absence.
- When possible, families should make every effort to not plan extended trips or vacations at the end of an academic quarter. The last days of each quarter are as follows:

1st Quarter: Tuesday, October 24, 2023 - 42 days

2nd Quarter: Friday, January 19, 2024 - 42 days

3rd Quarter: Tuesday, April 2, 2024 - 43 days

4th Quarter: Friday, May 31, 2024 - 42 days

Advisors

Middle School students are in a period of significant developmental changes. They are seeking new connections and learning to navigate new school experiences, and they have increased autonomy (2017 Center for Responsive Schools).

The advisor is the first person a faculty member will consult when a student is having challenges. Likewise, parents/guardians should communicate with the advisor when they have questions about their child's life at school. To fully support their advisees' academic, social, and emotional experiences at school, advisors seek to maintain close contact with their advisees. Students are encouraged to turn to them whenever questions or difficulties arise.

The advisor's roles and responsibilities are as follows:

- To foster students' sense of significance, belonging, and community
- To effectively manage fun, physically active, and energizing activities while helping students demonstrate positive social skills

- To provide leadership, clarity, and support as students discuss important issues; to engage students in doing their part to create a vibrant, healthy community where they can thrive
- To serve as a guide, helping students increase independence and competence in their areas of interest
- To develop relationships with students and interact with them in ways that build trust; to get to know each student in order to effectively serve as a mentor and advocate
- To teach communication and social skills directly, provide time for practice, and have students set and monitor goals for demonstrating these skills

Social Curriculum, Behavioral Guidelines, and Consequences

Each class at NGFS sets its own community guidelines, a practice that is a vital part of our social curriculum. In Middle School, students work out these guidelines in the form of Quaker queries. The result of this work is a set of queries exploring behavioral expectations that the students have had a voice in developing.

The consequences for not following community or classroom guidelines are a series of removal from the group to centering time, with each becoming a little more severe.

- **First Centering:** Removal to the centering area in class so that the student may take a few minutes to adjust disrupting behaviors (student enters back into class after a minimum three-minute centering period).
- **Second Centering:** Removal to the centering area in class for the remainder of that class period. During this time, a reflection form will be completed so that students can consider what may have led to behaviors and how they might react differently in the future. Students may also consider what supports might be helpful. Students are responsible for all work that takes place during this period of time.
 - Teachers will communicate with the family on the day a second centering is received in any class or setting. The completed reflection form will be sent as an attachment with the email.

If the behavior continues after a second centering, the student will be removed from the physical location through administrative intervention. Students are responsible for all missed work.

NOTE: If a student is involved in a violent act (physical or verbal), the student may be sent home immediately with a follow-up strategy discussion with parents/guardians, the student, the Head of Middle and Upper School, and the Head of School.

Lunch

- When preparing lunch, please include a significant protein source and limit foods high in sugar.
- There is a hot lunch option available through My Hot Lunchbox, which partners with local restaurants to deliver nutritious meals to schools. Visit the [Back to School page](#) for more information. If you have questions, please contact My Hot Lunchbox at 888-894-8295 or info@myhotlunchbox.com.
- We strongly recommend that students bring a spill-proof water bottle to drink water throughout the day.

- Students may not bring any kind of caffeinated drinks.
- We do not have refrigerator space for lunches, so pack lunches accordingly.
- Students may use microwaves located in the MS Commons. Due to the high demand for microwave use, we ask that students do not bring meals that require more than 2-3 minutes of heating time.

Clothing/Dress Guidelines

In the spirit of the Quaker testimony of simplicity, we offer these guidelines for students and families when making choices about daily attire. Although the NGFS dress guidelines allow for great latitude in student dress, clothing better suited for the beach and bedtime should not be worn to school.

- Students should make clothing decisions that reflect individualism and personal choice and are consistent with our Quaker values and the mission of NGFS. Students should dress appropriately for the situation they find themselves in, understanding that what is appropriate in one context may not be appropriate in another. We ask that students, parents, and guardians respect our academic community and dress for school in appropriate clothing.
- Clothing with references to drug/alcohol use, illegal activity, violence, or that conveys offensive language will not be allowed. In addition, clothing should respect all the various constituencies of our community and not be disrespectful or discriminatory toward any groups or individuals.
- Participation in Physical Education class requires a change of clothing or preparing for the class by having an athletic t-shirt, athletic pants or shorts, and tennis shoes.

As a matter of policy, any concerns about student attire will be addressed with the student individually and with respect to confidentiality. Students will never be publicly admonished by any staff member for their clothing choices.

Lockers

Students are assigned lockers. It is important for your child to remember that the locker is school property. Empty lockers cannot become any student's extra storage space, nor is any student allowed to tamper with or vandalize a fellow student's locker. Lockers and their contents may be searched by school personnel at any time.

Curriculum

Teachers will have Curriculum Guides available on Google Classroom outlining the expectations for each class. In addition, Curriculum Guides for core classes provide more details about the curriculum covered in a given quarter and will be reviewed with students in class. Core classes include English, History/Social Sciences, Math, and Science. All curriculum guides will be posted within the first week of each quarter.

Homework and Grades

All Middle School students are required to use a planner or Google calendar to write/type homework in each class period. Direct instruction about using planners helps students learn to become personally accountable for both short and long-term deadlines.

- Teachers will post daily homework and long-term assignment deadlines on Google Classroom. Students are expected to show responsibility in keeping up with their assignments using planners or Google Calendar but will have access to Google Classroom if something arises where their planner is not available.
- Daily homework assignments will be considered “on time” if the student has turned in the completed assignment during class on its due date or by the appointed time in Google Classroom.
- Teachers will attempt to stagger the due dates of long-term projects, tests or assessments, and other assignments to avoid overload.
- Students are evaluated in each subject area using grades and narratives. We strive to keep in close contact with parents/guardians about their child's academic and social development. Parents/guardians can check Parent's Web to monitor academic successes and challenges. Middle School teachers are willing to set up times to discuss your concerns.
- There is a cumulative grade for each quarter. At the end of the year, a final grade is computed by averaging the four quarter grades together.

Office Hours and Late Work Policy

Each Middle School teacher will offer Office Hours on Wednesdays from 3:00-4:15 p.m. All students wanting a workspace, group meeting time, and/or more individual teacher assistance are welcomed and encouraged to attend Office Hours. **Any student with any late assignment will be required to stay for Office Hours.**

Academic Probation

Students must remain in good academic standing to continue their studies at New Garden Friends School. The Middle School defines good academic standing as making clear progress to meet all course expectations. At the discretion of the Head of Middle and Upper School, in consultation with the Head of School, students who are not making adequate progress may be placed on Academic Probation. The parents/guardians of the student will be notified, and a student support team will collaborate to create a detailed growth plan to assist the student. The plan will set specific expectations and academic benchmarks and define a probationary period during which the student will have opportunities to demonstrate progress. If the student does not meet the expectations, and student progress indicates there is no clear path to successfully meet academic standards, the student may be dismissed during the school year or not offered enrollment at NGFS for the following year.

Plagiarism

Within an educational community, it is of the utmost importance that we maintain the highest standards of academic integrity. It is through our actions and choices that we let our lives speak.

Each of the following constitutes an act of academic misconduct:

1. **Plagiarism:** To plagiarize, as defined by the Oxford English Dictionary, is “to take and use as one’s own (the thoughts, writings, inventions, etc., of another person); copy

(literary work, ideas etc.) improperly or without acknowledgment; pass off the thoughts, work, etc., (of another person) as one's own.”

2. **Cheating:** Cheating includes, but is not limited to, using unauthorized resources while taking a quiz or an exam, taking answers directly from another student's quiz or exam, knowingly allowing another student to take one's answers, and helping another student obtain or use unauthorized resources on an exam or homework assignment.

3. **Lying:** Not being honest to a teacher or the community as a whole regarding one's academic activities is considered lying. Also, students who assist with or have knowledge of the above behaviors of others may receive consequences at the discretion of the Head of Middle and Upper School.

4. **Dishonesty and/or Disrespect toward peers, faculty, staff, or other community members:** To regard or treat a member of our community dishonestly or with contempt, malice, or rudeness. This includes behaving dishonestly, recording, photographing, or sharing images or recordings of community members without that person's express consent, using derogatory language, hate speech, offensive gestures, or other inappropriate behavior.

Academic Misconduct Policy

If a student is found guilty of committing academic misconduct, the incident will be documented, and the student will not receive credit for the assignment. The student may be subject to further consequences, as deemed appropriate by the Head of Middle and Upper School in consultation with the Head of School, such as a parent/guardian meeting, in-school suspension, or out-of-school suspension. Repeated academic misconduct violations during a student's Middle School career will be considered grounds for dismissal from school.

Academic Discomfort Policy

New Garden Friends School is committed to fostering a culture of intellectual curiosity, open mindedness, and critical inquiry. In fostering that culture, students will sometimes find themselves confronted with ideas and opinions that are new or different from their own and may make them uncomfortable. Discomfort is part of intellectual growth. When students feel uncomfortable with an idea, we will encourage them to ask themselves why they feel that way. Learning to listen and respectfully consider ideas that make one uncomfortable is an important skill that will prepare students for their lives after NGFS.

Students and teachers have the right to share viewpoints and perspectives without fear of being harassed, intimidated, or mocked. Respectfully criticizing an idea with reason and support, however, is not the same as harassment, intimidation, or mockery. Students also have the right to avoid experiencing or re-experiencing personal trauma in the classroom because of the nature of the topic or discussion. If trauma is anticipated or experienced, we encourage students and families to notify the teacher/school so that reasonable accommodations can be made.

Students and teachers have the responsibility to engage in discussion respectfully, which means listening to learn, not to respond, and avoiding the harassment, intimidation, or mockery of others based on their differing views or ideas. Please remember that presenting or exploring alternative perspectives is not the same as advocating for those perspectives.

Medical Leave

When a student is unable to attend classes for an extended period of time in order to take care of physical, psychological, or emotional concerns, New Garden Friends school understands that a medical leave may be necessary. We support families taking the measures necessary to restore a student's health and encourage the student, family, and our staff to prioritize a student's health before focusing on academic advancement. While extensive medical leave may place the student's course credit in jeopardy and compromise matriculation to the next grade level, our highest priority is always the health and wellness of the student.

We endeavor to address each situation with kindness and compassion and have found that clearly presenting the guidelines for managing a medical leave is helpful in ensuring that students, families, and NGFS staff have a shared understanding of the requirements, expectations, and limits of this process.

Requirements:

1. It is necessary for the family to obtain a written request for medical leave from a licensed health or mental health professional. The request must indicate when the student is expected to be able to return to a full-time schedule. (We understand that this is not a guaranteed return date.) A copy of this request must be sent to the Head of School.
2. When the student is ready to return to school, the family must obtain a written statement to that effect from a licensed health or mental health professional. If the student requires accommodations upon return to school, these must be defined and requested in the return to school document.
3. When the school receives the return to school document, the school has one week to evaluate the request and respond to the family. (The return date may be affected by the academic calendar, see limitations below.)

Expectations:

1. Confidentiality - We will protect information about a student's medical leave and work with the family to agree on the content and amount of information that may be shared. Typically, in addition to the Head of School, the Head of Lower or the Head of Middle and Upper School, the Counselor, and those who work directly with the student (including learning specialists who may advise about specific student needs) will be aware that the student is on leave.
2. Communication - Managing medical leave and a return to learning plan will require sincere collaboration among the student's family, the school, and the professional treatment team. NGFS requests that families grant permission for our staff to speak with treatment team members so that we can establish and maintain communication about treatment progress. This is essential, particularly as we formulate a plan for supporting the student's return to learning.

3. Extracurricular Activities - Students on medical leave may not participate in extracurricular, athletic, or social school activities without permission.

Limitations:

1. Under North Carolina's compulsory attendance law, an extended absence will not be considered "excused" unless the student has been granted medical leave.
2. We will do our utmost to meet the unique needs of each student while also working within the structure of an accredited academic program.
3. The academic program at New Garden Friends School is designed for in-person collaborative learning; we do not have the facility for students to attend remotely.
4. The timing of the academic calendar may affect when a student is permitted to return from a medical leave.
5. Extensive medical leave may place the student's course credit in jeopardy and compromise matriculation to the next grade.
6. As per the terms of the enrollment contract, the obligation to pay the full tuition due is unconditional and is not affected by medical leave or extended absence.
7. If an Upper School student is participating in our dual enrollment program at the time they are pursuing a medical leave from NGFS classes and the family also wishes to pursue a medical leave from the student's college courses, the family will need to apply for medical leave in accordance with that college/university's policies. NGFS cannot grant medical leaves on behalf of its partner institutions.

Note: If a student is unable to return to school or in the case of an Upper School student, a specific class, withdrawal may be necessary. In such cases, we will work with the family so that there is a clear understanding of the student's academic record. In the case of an Upper School student, the student's transcript/records will indicate a medical withdrawal and the effective date, but it will not include the circumstances of the withdrawal.

Personal Possessions at School

Please assist your child in remembering that personal possessions brought to school are their responsibility. Teachers are not responsible for safeguarding personal possessions, including electronic devices. In addition, students who use electronic devices for inappropriate reasons (gaming, sending harassing messages, causing a disruption in class) or at inappropriate times may lose the privilege to bring their personal devices to school for the remainder of the year. The use of personal devices, including cell phones, is not allowed during school or office hours. If a cell phone is brought to school for off-campus or after-school use, it must be turned off and turned in to the assigned location upon arrival to the student's advisor's classroom.

Technology

Technology is an integral part of the school experience at NGFS. Students have a technology orientation at the beginning of each year with the Technology Team.

Students will have several school related accounts, including:

- Google Workspace for Education - Students access email and Google Drive to connect and collaborate with teachers and other NGFS students.

- [ParentsWeb](#) (FACTS family portal) - Students and parents/guardians view attendance records, daily schedules, and school events by accessing this secure family portal.
- Google Classroom (Learning Management System) - Students view class resources and assignments.
- Students may be issued other accounts, such as ALEKS, Moby Max, or Khan Academy for use in the classroom.

Students are required to use only the NGFS Google account for communications with teachers. Students are expected to check both email and Google Classroom daily.

Standard texting is prohibited as a method of communication between staff and students

Technology Devices

Students will be issued a Chromebook to be used as a tool to enhance student learning; students new to Middle School will receive training at the start of the school year. Students are expected to bring their charged Chromebooks to school daily and should leave personal laptops or other devices at home. Students may use personal devices at school only with prior approval of the Learning Specialist.

Students cannot have cell phones or other handheld devices during school hours. If such devices are brought to school to be used off-campus or after school hours, they must be turned off and turned in upon arrival to the assigned location upon arrival to the student's advisor's classroom.

Online Communication

Social media and other online communication can be powerful tools for connecting people. Sometimes students may use these tools to exclude or bully or to spread gossip and ill will. Students are expected to maintain a high standard of behavior and respect and honor their teachers, classmates, and school. Students should consider all possible outcomes of their online expression and should guard against causing any potential harm to others.

Privacy

The taking, posting, or sharing of photos, videos, or audio recordings of any NGFS community member without express permission from the student's parent/guardian or the community member is prohibited. This includes not posting names on social media sites or anywhere else, without express consent from the student or community member. Photos or videos taken as a part of a class or for specific school promotional purposes will respect the family's privacy preferences that they have specified.

Extracurricular Eligibility Policy

New Garden Friends School seeks to provide its students with a range of opportunities to excel inside and outside of the classroom. Though we wish for every student to be able to fully participate in extracurricular athletics, it is important that we maintain standards of achievement within our classes and within our community. As a Quaker school, we seek to honor the

individual gifts of each member of our community. We are cognizant that a single eligibility policy does not allow us to address the needs of all students.

Students will remain eligible for participation in extracurricular athletics unless it is determined to be in their best interest to take a break from these activities. This determination will be made as necessary and on a case-by-case basis by the Head of Middle and Upper School in conversation with the student; the student's parents/guardians; and appropriate staff members, such as the student's advisor, the athletic director or coach, or theater director.

Procedures to Support All Students at NGFS:

1. A report of students with a cumulative GPA below 2.0 is generated and shared with the staff biweekly.
2. Staff communicate with advisors and the Head of Middle and Upper School regarding any behavioral or academic concerns that they have.
3. During their weekly division meetings, staff discuss any students about whom they have academic, behavioral, or social concerns.
4. Staff and the Head of Middle and Upper School meet with students who are deemed to be in need of further support and discussion to develop a plan of action. These meetings include parents/guardians when appropriate.
5. Suspension of athletic eligibility is a measure available to the Director of Athletics in collaboration with the Head of the Middle and Upper School. Typically, this is reserved for serious academic situations or severe behavioral infractions.