

# Upper School

UPPER SCHOOL SAMPLE DAY SCHEDULE

TIME	FOCUS
8:30-8:45 a.m.	Mind & Body
8:45-9:55 a.m.	Interdisciplinary Block: Humanities
10:00-11:10 a.m.	Interdisciplinary Block: STEM
11:15-12:05 noon	Mastery Band: Languages
12:10-12:45 p.m.	Lunch
12:45-1:20 p.m.	Advisory
1:20-2:10 p.m.	Acceleration
2:15-3:05 p.m.	Mastery Band: Math
3:10-4:20 p.m.	Interdisciplinary Block: Studio Art
4:30-6:30 p.m.	Studios (Optional)

The Upper School is a time when students will develop not just their independence, but also their interdependence as they learn, live (via the 5- and 7-day boarding program) and fellowship with peers from all over the world. Just like the other divisions at Whittle, the Upper School is inspired by the Reggio Emilia approach which puts the students’ intellectual, social, and emotional growth are at the center. In short, it is a program that prepares them not only for college, but for life beyond as well.

The Upper School daily schedule includes team-taught periods that are either 70-minutes interdisciplinary “blocks” or 50-minutes mastery “bands”. Aligned with the school’s mission to provide student-

driven, interdisciplinary, project-based and experiential opportunities for students, courses are not taught to the requirements of any external assessment (e.g. SAT, ACT, AP). Even then, the curriculum will position students for success with these external measures as well as help them develop a robust portfolio.

For each grade, course content will be guided by a central developmental theme. Ninth grade is a “pivot” year, smoothing the transition from middle school by moving students toward addressing questions of increasing complexity, demanding more ambitious critical thinking and greater degrees of student choice and agency within the teacher-designed curriculum. Tenth grade is about “foundations” that establishes the knowledge and skills necessary for students to be well-rounded scholars and empathetic global citizens, and to make more independent choices in 11th and 12th grade. By 11th grade (“depth”) students will be able to choose elective courses, begin a special study in the C.O.E., or step out of the regular program for a semester or more in City Experience, either at home or abroad. In 12th grade (“autonomy”), students can continue with advanced study in all three interdisciplinary course areas, choose to focus on one of them, or choose to pursue an independent study (with approval).

**INTERDISCIPLINARY BLOCKS****• HUMANITIES**

A two-year core program integrates English language and literature, history, politics, economics and religion. Ninth-graders will engage in thematically oriented, project-based study of modern world history and literature, culminating in a capstone project. Tenth-graders will study modern United States history and literature, using Washington, D.C. as a lens to examine the national history. Students will also have the opportunity to choose from a diverse menu of elective seminars on topics ranging from creative writing to model diplomacy.

**• STEM**

A two- or three-level core sequence (completion of the third level is required for study of advanced topics) integrates traditional science disciplines (life sciences, physical sciences, earth and environmental sciences) with technology, engineering and applied math. After completing the first two levels of the STEM sequence, students will be able to enroll in STEM electives and/or pursue independent study in STEM topics. Enrollment in advanced electives and study of advanced physics, chemistry or biology requires completion of the third level of the core STEM sequence.

**• CREATIVE ARTS & DESIGN**

We are collaborating with some of the best arts and design professional institutes in D.C. to create a four-year sequence that builds from artistic exploration to application, acquisition and integration across visual and performance arts disciplines as well as study of media arts and design.

**MASTERY BANDS****• MATH**

A two- or three-level mastery-based

sequence (completion of the third level is required for study of advanced topics) integrates algebra, geometry, precalculus and statistics topics, leading to advanced study in calculus or statistics, independent study and/or electives (basic and advanced). Math study in the Upper School will be problem-based and will also integrate focused work on computational thinking and financial literacy alongside the acquisition of more traditional math skills and knowledge.

**• LANGUAGE AND CULTURE**

Students choose between an immersive study of either Spanish or Chinese, leveraging our global network for authentic experiences and cross-cultural connections. Opportunities for full cultural immersion exist through our Global Rotation Program. Course offerings provide a range of experience and exposure to languages, from novices to heritage speakers.

**• ACCELERATION**

This is dedicated time for students to work one-on-one with teachers, either to address gaps in foundational knowledge and practice core skills or to enrich learning and pursue individualized study of topics in greater depth.

**ADVISORY**

Four times per week, students meet with an advisor, with whom they will work closely to guide their academic, travel and extra-curricular activities and to plan for college and their careers. For example, ninth graders might choose to use an advisory period to develop goals for each class, including how they will use their acceleration periods that week.

**COLLEGE ADVISORY**

Using a combination of both local and

global resources, college counselors will use a holistic approach to support students, starting in ninth grade, through the college process which will lead to admission to a college that is the best fit for each student.

### ATHLETICS

Although participating in athletics is not a requirement, there will be an emphasis on physical literacy within the school. As a result, an exciting and diverse range of athletic offerings will be available to students, including soccer, fencing, rock climbing, badminton, cross country, squash, table tennis, tennis, volleyball, basketball and track and field.

### RESIDENTIAL LIFE

Our five- and seven-day boarding options give students the opportunity to immerse themselves fully within the culture of the school. They will have opportunities to develop deep relationships with their peers and the residential faculty through educational and social activities during evenings and weekends.

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