

Independence Building

Preschool

- Our play-based philosophy implicitly encourages independence in that children are invited to explore the classroom following their own intrinsic motivations.
- We assist caregivers and children with the process of separation—an important emotional leap for young children.
- We assist families and children in toilet training.
- We encourage children to find solutions in conflict resolution. We narrate what we see and ask them what can be done now to fix it. When they come to us to complain about something another child did, we encourage them to verbalize their feelings and to express themselves.
- We encourage children to take care of themselves when buttoning clothes, jackets, pants and washing hands clean
- We encourage children to pump on the swings.
- We use Vygotsky's zone of proximal development when children are struggling or frustrated—asking careful questions that lead the children to their own discoveries and solutions, i.e., “what do you need to do first?”
- When children are attempting to literacy/writing/observational drawings “I can't” we offer encouragement and break things down into steps.
- Clean up- We encourage children to clean up the classroom before transitions and to clean up their plates and cups after snack.
- We offer limited choices at small group time for example, who to pair up with and which puzzle to do.
- Our consistent daily routine fosters independence in that children know what happens next and are able to prepare themselves emotionally and otherwise.

TK-5th

Academic Independence

Teaching students to ask questions and advocate for themselves

Students are responsible for bringing what they need for school

Students clean up after themselves, keeping their work area organized

Class jobs

Students need to know user name and password

Returning homework and completing assignments

Taking care of Chromebook (2-5th)

Social and Emotional Independence

Teaching students to use an “I” message

Social skills-how to resolve conflict, how to ask for help, how to work together

Turn and talk, learning to share and compromise, learning to take turns

Learn to cool off

Practice self-affirmation

Give compliments to others

Sportsmanship

Being honest

Being inclusive

Keeping track of own belongings

Understanding the size of the problem

Building Student Independence in Middle School

Academic Independence

- Digitized homework/assignments, where students have autonomy to check and turn in homework
- Email etiquette and overall communication skills (e.g., students who are applying to private schools are highly encouraged to reach out to teachers and administrators for letters of recommendation)
- Emphasized self-advocacy with no late-homework policy
- Students are given multiple models of methods for note-taking and writing, and are able to use what is most effective to them
- Grammar notes are optional- students get to use them for open-note tests, so the responsibility is on the student to take good notes
- Students must manage and log their independent reading books
- Taking responsibility for instrument (before and after school, bringing it on the correct days)
- Independent performance tests so that students improve and contribute in a positive way to the group
- Participating in performance (accountability to group)
- Logging practice and turning in chart
- Students are responsible for keeping track of assigned homework: checking class homework board and cross checking with Google Classroom
- Students are responsible for printing assignments before submission
- Students are responsible for emailing teachers. Re: absences, shadowing, etc.
- Before asking for help, use their notebooks and handouts for answers and directions.
- Self advocacy by teaching students to review mistakes and create a viable argument for partial credit
- Encourage student independence and time management skills by having students monitor the time they spend on homework
- Encouraging students to email when they have questions on the homework
- Students are highly encouraged to attend office hours to catch up on missing work, complete tests, ask clarifying questions, etc.
- Art Elective is an independent study class, students work on their own goals
- Students hang and curate middle school art projects
- Students help with After School Art for Community Service, Peer Leaders, etc.
- Students responsible for charging their chromebooks at night
- Students responsible for studying for their tests
- Students are given firm 4 week countdown to hand in late/missing work and take/retake tests
- Students responsible for keeping their ELA classroom notebooks organized and labeled
- Students responsible for keeping their Social Studies binders organized and labeled
- Responsible for organizing and grading in-class materials
- Creating study materials for formal assessments
- Taking advantage of test corrections to improve grades; have students make test corrections on missed questions before giving them then answers.

- Encourage students to email teacher with questions
- Ask students to create their own study guides to prepare for tests
- Students are responsible for checking recess equipment in and out using a check out sheet during lunch/recess
- Appropriate note-taking during lectures/class
- “Open” environment in classes allows for the focus to be on the students; less lecture time and more peer interaction encourages independent thinking and discourages passive learning
- “Scrutinize” independent/differentiated work so that all learners, no matter the level, feel empowered (e.g., writer’s workshop)
- Assign research projects allows for naturally differentiated instruction across most of the subjects (e.g., social studies projects, STEM Fair, Design, science, etc.)
- Student presentations allow students to practice independence through developing their oral communication skills

Social-Emotional Learning Independence

- Conflict Resolution framework is given to students to utilize for social and academic issues arise (e.g., think sheet, What happened sheet, restorative sheet, etc.)
- When parents reach out, they are encouraged to allow their child to advocate for themselves by scheduling a meeting with during office hours
- Emphasizing importance of setting up meetings and actually attending them
- Conversations around timely communication with teachers (e.g., emailing the night before is not as effective as advanced notice)
- Holding students accountable to deadlines
- Emphasizing the use of SEL/Conflict resolution strategies taught to them when needing to communicate with peers
- All Middle School students participate in the Mentor Program where every student in every cohort is involved with the creation of group norms and expectations, with the end goal being:
 - To develop self-awareness and self-management skills to achieve school and life success
 - To use social awareness and interpersonal (i.e., relationship) skills to establish and maintain positive relationships
 - To demonstrate decision-making skills and responsible behaviors in personal, school, and community contexts
- Google Classroom and PowerSchool used across the Middle School provides students with consistent organizational tools that help to build independence through engaging students in their individual work and responsibilities, improving executive functioning skills, communication with adults and peers, and self-advocacy
- The Mentor Program, Advisory class, and other academic classes help to provide students the opportunity to set individual learning goals, thus giving students the opportunities to self-assess

Fostering Independence – Student Services Team

Academic

- Regulating physical proximity
- Give student time / enough wait time (tendency to repair)
- Use silence, let them feel awkward in order to be motivated
- Students processing time is slower, wait before rephrasing
- Scaffolding skills (e.g. writing)
- Homework folder once a week, so she can manage her time.
- Keep note (use app) to monitor assignments
- Ipdas – cutting adult support
- Visual supports / checklists
- Exit support for all students that have a para support
- Google classroom
- Making them apply the concepts vs. memorizing.... (high order thinking skills)

Social-emotional

- Natural consequences (email your teacher, talk to your teacher). Office hours.
- Counseling: coming up with their own solutions, advocating
- SEL tools
- Talking to kids about their learning style and helping them be aware of their regulation tools. Some students propose their own.