

Dear Middle School Parents,

When you hear "science class," your first reaction might be to remember back to your days in high school - dissecting frogs, mapping vectors, or lighting Bunsen burners. Oakwood's science experience doesn't just begin in "high school." Starting in Lower School, students have a designated class for science exploration each week. Once students arrive in the Middle School, they immerse themselves in a daily hands-on science.

Walk into the Lower Middle School science lab and you will rarely see the students just sitting in class. Both 4th and 5th graders utilize a flipped classroom model, where homework involves watching videos made by the teacher to learn content, while classwork involves hands-on lab experiments and engaging activities to practice science skills and critical thinking. It allows the students freedom to predict results, explore concepts, and make connections to the real world while being guided by their teacher. For 4th graders, science class is particularly new and exciting because this is their first year with a daily class period dedicated solely to science. From lab safety to physical science, chemistry, biology, and environmental science, Lower Middle School science is always an adventure!

The experience continues into Upper Middle School where students engage in a variety of lab formats including open-inquiry labs. Instead of simply following directions like a recipe, both 6th and 7th graders are often tasked with designing the experiment themselves. Given a question and a list of materials, students write a hypothesis, design a procedure, and identify independent and dependent variables, constants, and controls. Once they have teacher approval, students conduct their experiment and analyze the data. Once complete, students use a variety of presentation formats including posters, PowerPoint, video, or other electronic means to organize and communicate their findings.

Probably the best part about science in the Middle School is that it doesn't end in the classroom - our science program has extracurricular opportunities, too! Once a week, students can volunteer their recess to help collect chicken eggs, complete chicken coop chores, and socialize with OASES residents outdoors. Students with an eye for a challenge have the opportunity to participate on our Envirothon or Science Olympiad teams. Our science program also extends to the Greenville community. This year on March 11, the 7th grade students will run a water quality exhibit at the Science Expo, sponsored by A Time For Science. This free, hands-on science event will be held at the former Go Science building on Dickenson Avenue in downtown Greenville. At the booth, Oakwood students will show patrons how to perform water quality tests and purify dirty water.

We invite you to come and see what our science students are up to during the school year. You might just learn something new and exciting!

Sincerely,

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