

Gibbs After-School Program



Who are we?

Gibbs After-School Program is a multidisciplinary after-school program that focuses on providing a student-centered experience for Gibbs students after the school day has ended. We achieve this by fostering independence through the strengthening of critical thinking skills, focusing on skill-building in both social-emotional learning as well as academics, and providing a safe space for students to make connections with peers and be their authentic selves. Through a wide variety of activities that we offer such as active games, art projects, board games and more, students have the opportunity to engage with peers across all Learning Communities, forging lasting connections and relationships that take them through Gibbs and beyond. Our staff is highly qualified and passionate about developing positive connections with students, being supportive role models, and encouraging students to treat one another with kindness, compassion and respect.

What's a day like at Gibbs After-School Program?

Here is the detailed schedule for each day at Gibbs After-School Program - please note that on monthly Wednesday half days, we are open from 1pm - 6pm and use the extra time to do things like take kids to Capitol Creamery for ice cream, as well as walk to Spy Pond and Thompson Field for fun off-site activities:

2:56 - 3:10pm: First Snack and Attendance

Students are dismissed from day school and meet in the Media Center for after-school. During this time, we take attendance and offer students a couple of healthy snack options (typically a piece of fruit and a dairy-based option like yogurt or cheese sticks - students are also always welcome to eat their own snacks from home during our snack times). During this time, we also allow students to relax, connect with friends, and use their devices if they choose; however, we ask that devices are only used during snack periods (with the exception of Chromebooks used for homework during our homework period).

3:10 - 4:00pm: Activity Time

Students have the opportunity to choose from a variety of activities offered by our staff at this time. Each day, we offer an active game such as a gym game (such as Capture the Flag, Doctor Dodgeball, etc) and we also utilize the basketball court outside to play basketball, four square, and other games when the weather allows.

We also offer a tabletop role-playing game (RPG) activity called Pathfinder, which is a variation on Dungeons & Dragons that allows for students to create and develop their own fantasy characters while playing an engaging and fun game.

We always have some variety of creative activity like art projects, music projects, and more available during our Activity Time that are led by a staff member.

Additionally, we also offer students the option to engage in their own self-directed activities that we have on our Activity Cart such as free draw, beading, flashcards,

reading, board games and more if they do not feel like participating in the staff-led activities on a given day.

Another facet of our Activity Time are Clubs that we offer, which are specifically tailored to and based on student interest. Clubs are activities that only happen during Activity Time on certain days of the week, and they are included in after-school enrollment; in other words, students cannot sign up for these Clubs without signing up for half-day or full-day enrollment at Gibbs After-School Program as they are a part of our Activity Time. For example, last year we had an overwhelming student interest in anime and manga. To accommodate student requests for activities that centered around anime, and in keeping with student-centered programming, we offered an Anime Club twice a week where students could come, watch Ghibli films and practice their anime drawing skills, discuss the films together, and eat snacks from Japan.

4:00 - 4:45pm: Homework Time

Students utilize the extensive Media Center space to complete homework assignments from their LC (Learning Community) teachers. Our staff, most of whom have extensive experience working for day school and are skilled in concepts and methods taught in the classes, use this time to check in with students and offer academic support across subjects. We also are in constant communication with classroom teachers at Gibbs and have a general sense of what is assigned or material focused on each week in different subject areas across LCs.

While we do walk around and check in with all students, we encourage them to self-advocate and ask for help if they are struggling with a certain assignment or concept. We help students by using guiding questions, helping teach students how to refer back to their classroom material for solutions to their questions, and encouraging critical thinking so that students can figure out homework problems themselves. Our staff is also happy to accommodate IEP needs to the best of our ability if families inform us of IEP plans and request extra and/or more specific routes of assistance for their child.

Our overarching homework policy is that our staff provide support for students, but we do not check for completion of assignments and we are not responsible for the completion of said assignments by students. We believe that supporting students in completing their work while also holding them accountable for completing their work fosters a deeper sense of independence and responsibility in students, which is a core value in our program. While we do check in frequently with students and encourage them to complete all of their assignments to the best of their ability at a high level of effort and quality, it is ultimately up to them to take on ownership of their work and follow through on this responsibility. Families and day school teachers hold the primary responsibility for communicating and checking that students have completed and submitted their assignments in a timely manner.

Students are allowed to use their Chromebooks for homework, provided that they are using the technology appropriately and not for playing online games, using social media, etc. We encourage students to work together with other students in their LCs that attend after-school as well, if they choose to. When students are finished with homework, we ask that they read ideally, or do another quiet activity like free draw as to keep the space peaceful and low volume for students who are still working on assignments. Students are also welcome to complete homework at any point in the after-school day, though we do only offer specific help from staff during our homework time.

4:45 - 5:00pm: Second Snack and Attendance, Half Day Dismissal

Students who are signed up for half day enrollment are dismissed at the beginning of this period, though they are free to grab a snack on their way out. At this time, we typically offer a carb-based, healthier packaged snack such as pretzels, fruit gummies, PopChips, etc. As is the case with the first snack time, students may eat their own snack from home if they choose and can use this time to socialize with friends, use devices, and relax.

5:00 - 6:00pm: Choice Time

Choice Time is an extension of Activity Time, but later in the day. We offer a similar variety of activities that students can choose between such as active games, board

games, art activities, and more until they are picked up or walk home, as detailed by families in the enrollment packet.

How can I sign up and learn more?

We accept rolling admission for full and half day enrollment. You can email Gia Greene at aaspgibbs@arlington.k12.ma.us for more information and with specific questions or concerns. We also have a program cell phone where we can be reached at 781-777-5397 via phone call or text; please note that this phone serves as our site office phone, and therefore is only answered during after-school hours.

To enroll your child in Gibbs After-School Program, please submit a completed 2022-2023 Enrollment Form and a \$50 registration fee, either via paper form (which can be submitted via mail or to the Gibbs directly) or via email. For payment, you can submit a check made payable to Arlington Public Schools or via the town payment portal, the link to which can be found in the email signature of aaspgibbs@arlington.k12.ma.us or via the town website.