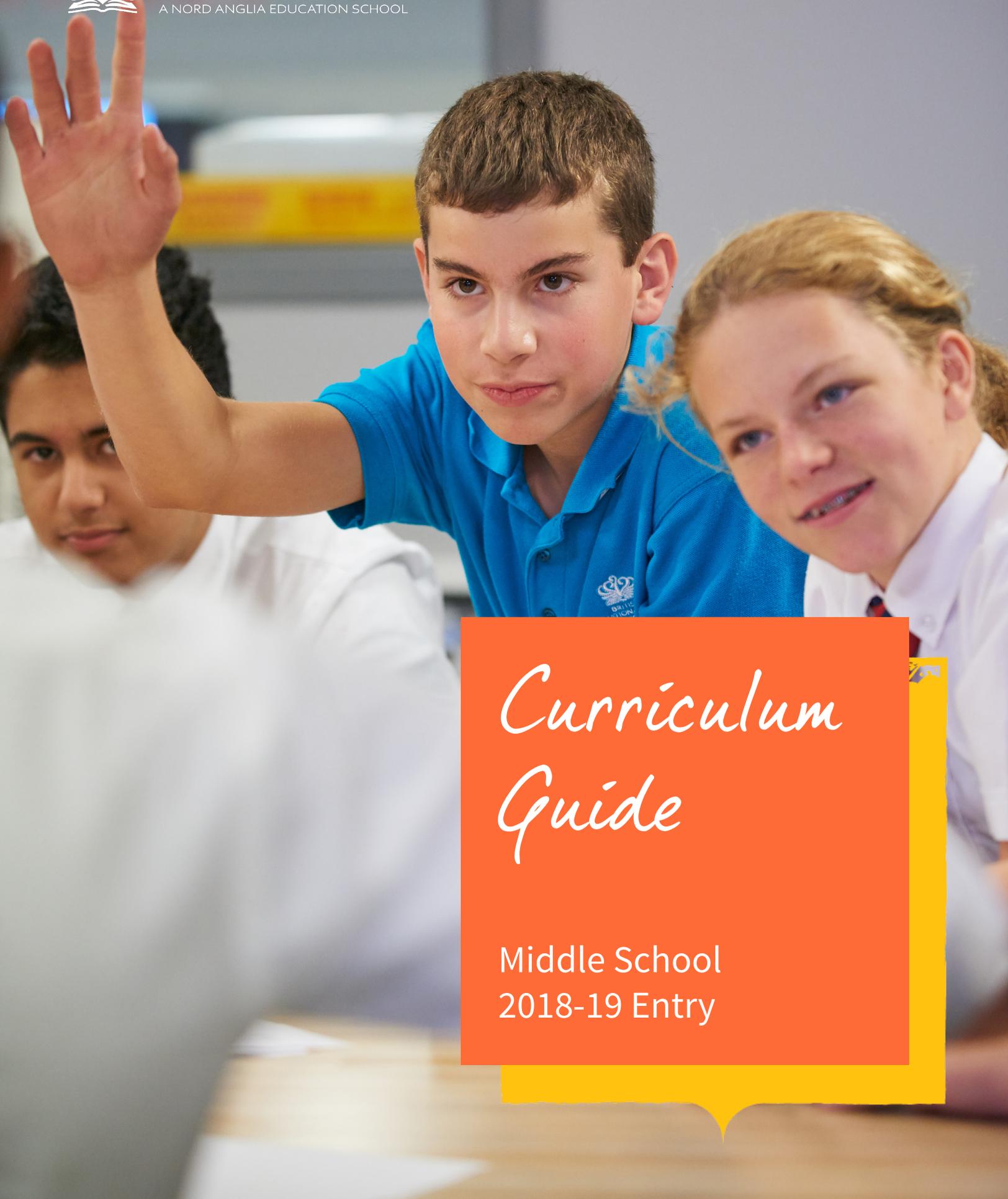


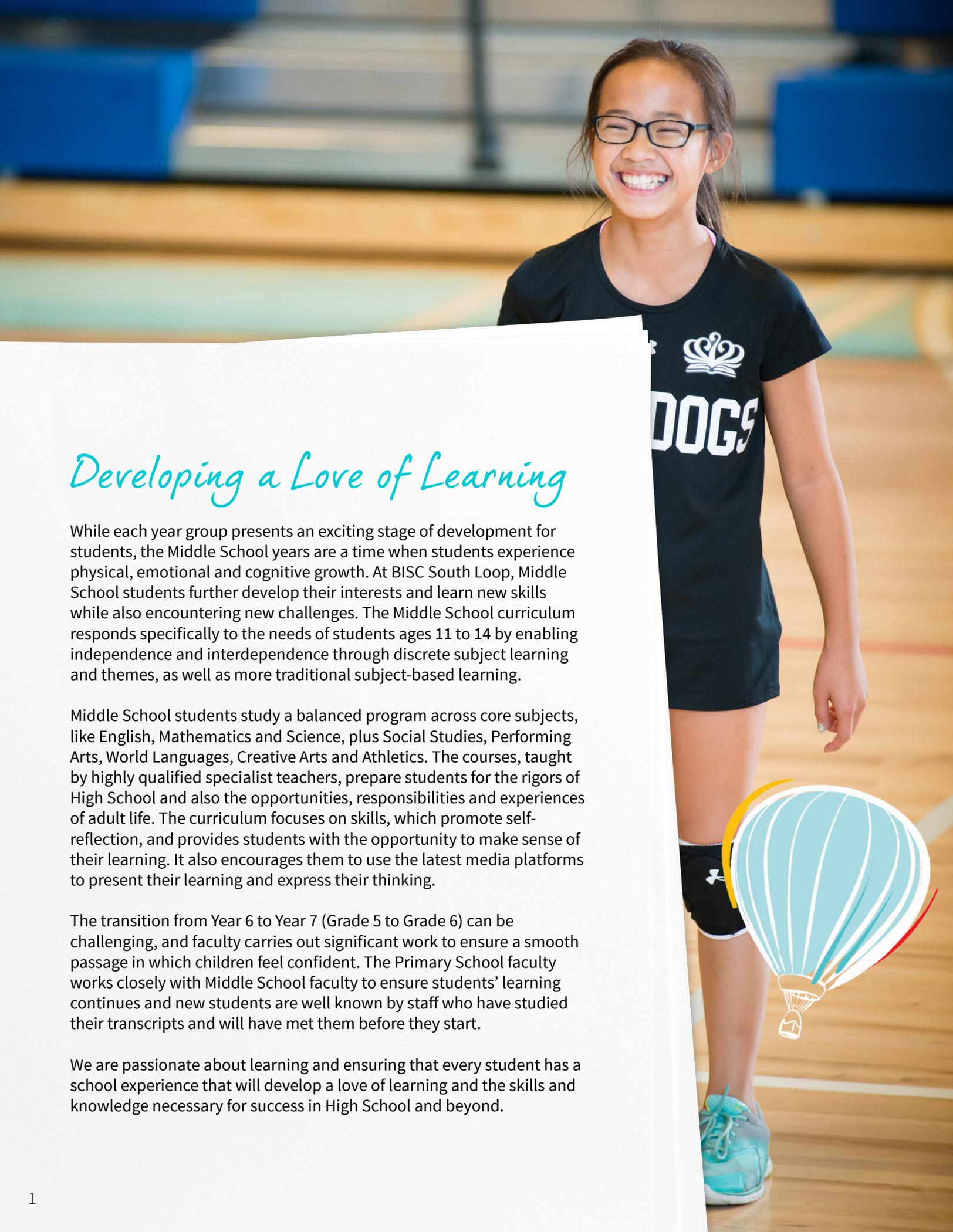


BRITISH INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL
OF CHICAGO, SOUTH LOOP
A NORD ANGLIA EDUCATION SCHOOL



Curriculum Guide

Middle School
2018-19 Entry



Developing a Love of Learning

While each year group presents an exciting stage of development for students, the Middle School years are a time when students experience physical, emotional and cognitive growth. At BISC South Loop, Middle School students further develop their interests and learn new skills while also encountering new challenges. The Middle School curriculum responds specifically to the needs of students ages 11 to 14 by enabling independence and interdependence through discrete subject learning and themes, as well as more traditional subject-based learning.

Middle School students study a balanced program across core subjects, like English, Mathematics and Science, plus Social Studies, Performing Arts, World Languages, Creative Arts and Athletics. The courses, taught by highly qualified specialist teachers, prepare students for the rigors of High School and also the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life. The curriculum focuses on skills, which promote self-reflection, and provides students with the opportunity to make sense of their learning. It also encourages them to use the latest media platforms to present their learning and express their thinking.

The transition from Year 6 to Year 7 (Grade 5 to Grade 6) can be challenging, and faculty carries out significant work to ensure a smooth passage in which children feel confident. The Primary School faculty works closely with Middle School faculty to ensure students' learning continues and new students are well known by staff who have studied their transcripts and will have met them before they start.

We are passionate about learning and ensuring that every student has a school experience that will develop a love of learning and the skills and knowledge necessary for success in High School and beyond.

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Mathematics

Mathematics is taught holistically, covering algebra, number, geometry and statistics. Focusing on these four topics throughout Middle School means students can consolidate and extend their learning. The course also incorporates investigation work and real-world applications. The curriculum is enriched by participation in both U.S. and UK math competitions, which take place in and out of school. From the start of Year 7 (Grade 6), students are allocated to ability groups that are continuously monitored and reviewed against progress and assessments.

Year 7

Algebra:

- Sequences
- Linear functions and graphs
- Mappings
- Solving equations
- Developing formulae
- Manipulating algebraic expressions
- Coordinates

Number:

- Decimals and decimal arithmetic
- Fraction arithmetic
- Percentage calculations
- Negative number arithmetic
- Rounding
- Ratio and proportion
- Prime factor form
- Indices and roots

Geometry:

- Perimeter, area and volume
- Angle rules
Constructing triangles
- Transformations
- Nets of cuboids
- 3D Drawings
- Area and perimeter of circles

Statistics:

- Averages
- Probability
- Drawing and interpreting charts and graphs
- Interpreting data

Year 8

Algebra:

- Sequences, including quadratic and fractional
- Functions and graphs, including non-linear graphs
- Solving equations
- Developing formulae
- Manipulating algebraic expressions
- Graphing and algebraic solution of simultaneous equations
- Logic and proof

Number:

- Decimals and decimal arithmetic; fraction arithmetic
- Rounding
- Percentages, including interest calculations
- Prime factor form
- Metric and imperial measures
- Ratio and proportion
- Indices and roots

Geometry:

- Perimeter, area and volume, and surface area
- Angle rules, including polygons
- Transformations
- Area and perimeter of circles

Statistics:

- Averages from tabled data
- Probability
- Charts and graphs, including stem and leaf, and scatter graphs
- Interpreting data

Year 9

In Year 9, students cover topics from the first year of the IGCSE (International General Certificate of Secondary Education) Curriculum. IGCSE Mathematics is a rigorous, two-year course pursued by students in high school.

Algebra:

- Functions and their graphs, including non-linear graphs
- Solving equations
- Developing formulae
- Manipulating algebraic expressions
- Graphing and algebraic solution of simultaneous equations
- Logic and proof
- Solving inequalities
- Using graphs to model real-life situations

Number:

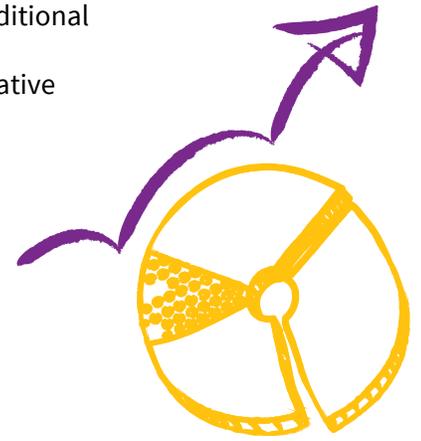
- Percentages, including compound interest and reverse calculation
- Standard form
- Direct and indirect proportions
- Negative and fractional indices
- Surds

Geometry:

- Perimeter, area and volume, and surface area
- Angle rules, including polygons
- Transformations
- Area and perimeter of circles, sectors and compound shapes
- Bearings
- Trigonometry with right and non-right angled triangles
- Compound measures, bounds

Statistics:

- Averages
- Probability, including conditional probability
- Charts and graphs: cumulative frequency and box plots
- Interpreting data



English

English skills empower students in all aspects of their schooling and adult lives. As well as communication, grammar, and analytical skills, English provides students with an opportunity to enhance their ability to think critically and make evaluations. Through their study of English, Middle School students develop their formal essay writing, problem solving, presentation delivery and persuasion. English is a challenging and rewarding subject that allows students to experience classical literature along with contemporary texts. In this sense, English is more than a set of rules to be followed, but a way of developing empathy by exploring culture, places and people. Methods of assessment include creative writing, formal analytical essays, discussion with peers, speeches, and presentations about writers' skills and techniques. The study of grammar is embedded in all areas of the curriculum, and our goal is to foster students who reflect on their targets and evaluate the effectiveness of their choices. From the start of Year 7 (Grade 6), students are allocated to ability groups that are continuously monitored and reviewed against progress and assessments.

Year 7

Autumn Term

The Novel - "Holes": Students read "Holes" by Louis Sachar and discuss, reflect and write on its themes, characters and settings. The author's use of parallel plotting and exploration of friendship, prejudice and the relationship between past and present are particular features of the novel, and students have opportunities to write analytically and creatively. Students learn a structured approach to essay writing that is built upon in successive units through the Middle School English curriculum. Assessment of learning in this unit is through a formal extended essay on character development in the novel, as well as through shorter reading and writing tasks.

The Art of the Horror Story: This unit has perennially enthused and inspired even the most reluctant writers to produce an original short story that creates suspense and terror. Students learn the features and conventions of the horror genre and apply these to the classic five-stage structure of a narrative. Much of this term sees students completing short writing tasks, focusing on how to create compelling action, description and

dialogue. They learn the importance of editing and revising their writing with its readership in mind. The unit culminates in students writing their own extended story, employing the techniques and skills they have developed over the term.

Spring Term

Shakespearean Drama - "Macbeth": Students read, analyze and perform key scenes in Shakespeare's tragedy, "Macbeth". They focus on plot and characters to understand the piece's social, cultural and historical background, thus better understanding its themes. Students finish the term with a greater understanding of how to interpret the often complex imagery used by Shakespeare, supported by frequent short writing activities based on the play. They also learn to appreciate and enjoy this classic drama for its powerful portrayal of ambition and justice. Learning is assessed through the completion of an extended analytical essay on the characters of Lady Macbeth and Macbeth.

Summer Term

Writing Short Fiction - Twisted Tales: Building on previously learned skills, students explore short stories with a twist. This has proven to be a popular unit and includes analysis of stories such as Roald Dahl's "Lamb to the Slaughter" and Ray Bradbury's "The Veldt". The aim is to encourage students to learn and then experiment with conventions of storytelling, expand their vocabulary, and use more ambitious syntactical structures in their writing. Students are assessed through an analytical essay on a short story, as well as through the production of their own original twisted tale. Throughout the unit, students complete grammar tasks for classwork and homework, learning to combine creativity with accuracy and control in expression.

Year 8

Autumn Term

A Global Perspective: Throughout this unit, students explore non-fiction writing from around the world, its conventions and language features. They review newspaper articles, biographical accounts and short stories. They also study media texts and documentaries as they develop a wider understanding of how to employ skills developed in English to the working world. The study of writers' grammar, syntax and vocabulary is explored and analyzed, leading students to develop better understanding of how to express themselves through writing. This unit broadens students' understanding of a wide range of cultures and people's histories. Students are assessed through an analytical response to a travel article, in addition to a written piece of their own, in which they are expected to exhibit the conventions and writing devices studied throughout the term.

Literary Heritage - Charles

Dickens: In this unit, students are formally assessed on an analysis of the character Ebenezer Scrooge (Charles Dickens's "A Christmas Carol"). Incorporated into the study of Dickens's language is the development of key terminology for literary analysis and how it is applied. Building towards the final assessments, students explore and analyze how characters are presented and developed. They also learn how to identify, analyze and evaluate linguistic devices within the iconic novella, and the effects achieved through these devices. The study of grammar, syntax and vocabulary is constant throughout the year and incorporated

into lessons and homework assignments. The development of students' writing skills is assessed through a task in which they write for purpose and imagine they are addressing one of the characters from "A Christmas Carol".

Spring Term

Exploring Poetry from Different Cultures: Students continue to develop greater understanding of narrative devices and different cultures through the study of international poets. The works of Grace Nichols, Simon Armitage, William Shakespeare, Imtiaz Dharker, Maya Angelou and Denise Levertov are explored as students learn about cultures and a plethora of poetic devices and forms. Students also learn about manipulated syntax and significant lexical choices made by writers, developing greater understanding of grammar and how to vary their own writing. Students are assessed through an analytical piece in which they explore the presentation of a culture through poetry.

Writing for Different Purposes:

The latter half of Spring Term is dedicated solely to students developing their writing skills. Students write in a multitude of forms and genres, for a range of purposes as they do so. The objective is to educate students on how to apply the knowledge developed in English lessons to real-world tasks such as persuasive letter writing, articles that inform readers, and speeches that persuade listeners. Students are assessed through a practical written task and a speaking and listening assessment.

Summer Term

Contemporary Fiction: This unit sees students assessed through a reading assignment: an analysis of a contemporary author's purpose and the techniques used to convey their point of view, and how they establish atmosphere. Further skills based work is covered, and students learn to be selective in their retrieval of textual evidence to build the strongest response to an exam-style questions. Reading skills are further developed through the study of how writers create character, setting, mood and atmosphere. This novel also provides a good opportunity for students to note the use of sophisticated punctuation and consider its significance.

English

Year 9

Coursework Tasks

Studies in Language:

- Poetry and Prose Texts: Study and analyze selections from a range of fictional poetry and prose texts.
- Imaginative Writing: Explore and develop imaginative writing skills.

Studies in Literature:

- Modern Drama (“A View From the Bridge”): Compose an analytical essay.
- Literary Heritage Texts (“The Scarlet Letter”): Compose an analytical essay.

Course Skills

Through preparation for and completion of the coursework tasks, students develop the following skills.

Writing:

- Use fluent, accurate expression and appropriate terminology.
- Demonstrate sophisticated control and understanding of grammar and language mechanics.
- Use a range of punctuation for effect.
- Use sophisticated structures of English expression.

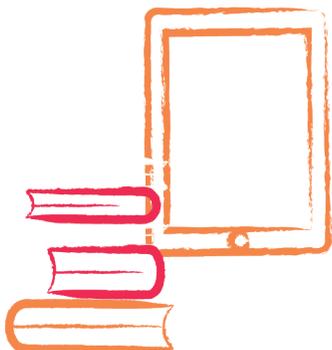
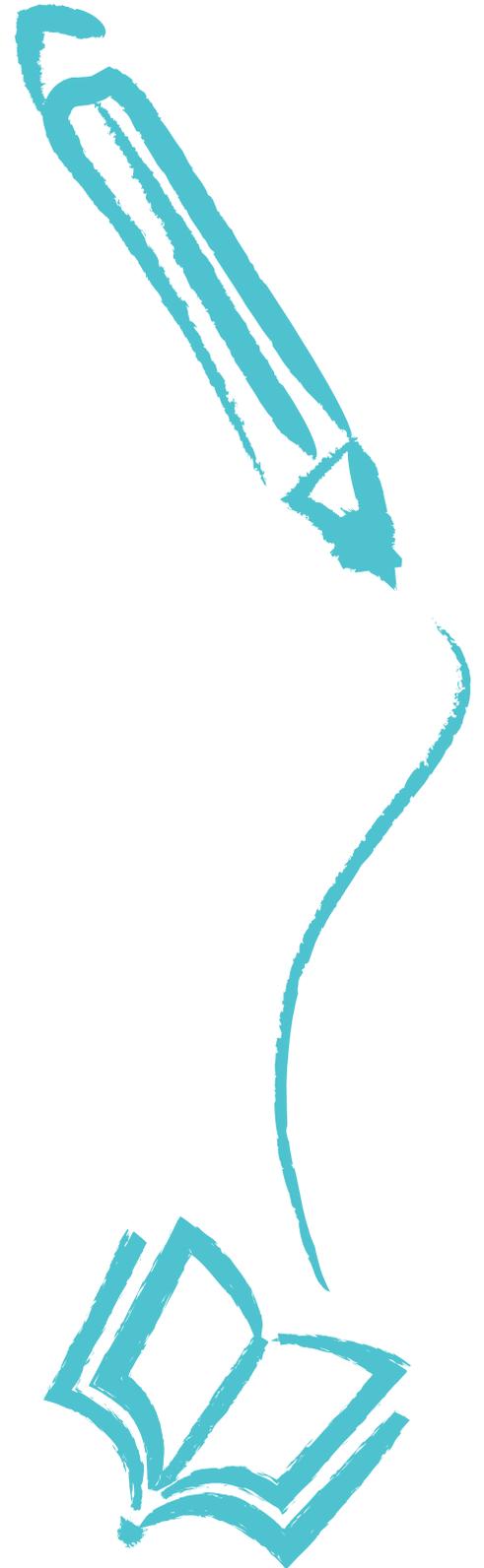
- Write with effect for a variety of audiences/purposes, including writing to inform, explain, describe and persuade.
- Demonstrate expertise and creativity in response to questions.
- Show sophisticated control and understanding of non-fiction and journalism techniques.

Analysis:

- Analyze a contemporary play as a representation of tragedy.
- Study Aristotle’s features of tragedy.
- Analyze non-fiction writing.
- Study poetry by seminal poets (Wilfred Owen, Maya Angelou, Robert Frost, and many more).
- Thematically link poetry from a range of historical contexts.
- Evaluate the significance of contextual factors and effects of production/reception of texts.
- Evaluate the effect of writers’ language choices.
- Evaluate the significance of how writers choose to structure their texts.
- Select evidence that is pertinent to the question and evaluate its significance.
- Make cross references to produce a balanced and sharply focused response to the question.

Presentations:

- Deliver presentations with striking effect, demonstrating sophisticated control of rhetorical techniques.
- Respond to questions, demonstrating sharp focus and a perceptive understanding.





Science

Science is an essential skill *and* an inspirational subject that sets students on paths to a broad spectrum of opportunities. The enthusiastic nature of our approach to Science is one of the school's most exciting features. Unlike the majority of schools in America, we do not select blocks of single Science courses. Instead, all students sit a rigorous and well-produced integrated course that builds from year to year. Beginning in Year 7 (Grade 6), students embark on a course that contains the foundations of Biology, Chemistry and Physics.

Year 7

Autumn Term: Chemistry

Labtastic: This intro to the lab environment focuses on key scientific practical methods, setting the stage for more advanced laboratory equipment. The unit stresses the importance of safety and provides an opportunity to develop the scientific method.

Particles and Behavior: Students learn the importance of modeling by exploring the states of matter and associated behaviors. Students forge ideas about why solids, liquids and gases undergo certain processes under changed temperatures. They also learn why substances dissolve and how it occurs.

Separating Solutions: In this topic, students use their lab skills to learn how solutions can be separated and investigated (filtering, distillation and chromatography). We move beyond classroom techniques to investigate the importance of water purification and also the use of separation in careers.

Acids and Alkalis: This exciting unit features labs about the chemistry of acids and alkalis, and identification using chemical tests. It draws upon higher level concepts, like the definitions of acids and alkalis, and students learn to calculate the pH of a chemical. They also investigate uses in nature and for humans.

Spring Term: Biology

Cells, Tissues and Organs:

Students discover cell biology, learning the functions of animal and plant cells. They learn to operate microscopes, how to create slides, and to identify cell organelles. Other topics include cell specialization in animals and plants, and cell organization in tissues and organs, focusing on how the body is designed for movement.

Reproduction: Students investigate key aspects of human and animal biology, delving into the science of fertilization, fetal development, pregnancy and the menstrual cycle. Students also learn about developments in fertility treatment.

Classification and Ecology:

Students unearth ideas behind the symbiotic relationship of life on Earth by considering habitats, adaptations, food relationships, predators and prey, and parasites. They thus gain deep understanding of the classification system of animals and plants, genetics and how nature produces variation.

Summer Term: Physics

Forces and Motion: Students develop understanding of balanced and unbalanced forces, and become familiar with Newtonian laws of motion. The mathematics behind motion are taught, including associated calculations and how scientists graph journeys.

Energy Transfers: In this introductory look at the concept of energy, students learn about energy transfers and how Sankey diagrams illustrate them. Students are exposed to issues of energy, with the aim of gaining an appreciation of "saving energy".

The Universe: How big is the solar system? What is precession? How big is the universe? How do we know so much about the universe? Students get to self-direct their learning to discover more about what fascinates them in the universe, while learning fundamental concepts of astrophysics.

Summer Term Project -

Sustainable Living: Students complete an interdisciplinary project that draws upon key concepts in Year 7. They investigate and attempt to resolve a real-world issue linked to energy conversation and the need for sustainable living.

Year 8

Autumn Term: Biology

Nutrition and Digestion: This unit delves into the science and importance of a healthy diet, as well as implications of malnutrition and eating disorders. Students learn to explain why some nutrients must break down before the body can use them, and to use models and analogies to describe how enzymes break down large molecules during digestion. It includes an exciting look into the anatomy of the digestion system.

Respiration and Gas Exchange:

Students discover how cells obtain energy through respiration, which often requires oxygen (aerobic respiration). They use this to explain why tissues need good blood supply, and identify similarities in animal and plant aerobic respiration.

Photosynthesis: Understanding the process of photosynthesis is fundamental to Biology, and this unit provides the opportunity to learn about ideal conditions, limiting factors and how plants are physically designed to enhance their ability to photosynthesize. Students also look at how humans have used this understanding to maximize food production, including the growing field of urban farming.

Spring Term: Physics

Electricity: Advancing students' ideas about electrical circuits through lab work and inquiry, this unit further engages their perceptions of modeling and how it is used to explain ideas. Key concepts of circuits, electrical calculations and resistance are covered under the spotlight of the real-world context of wiring a building (electrical engineering).

Magnetism: In this topic, students learn to identify magnetic materials and their properties. Students use the idea of a force field to explain the patterns of magnetic fields produced by permanent magnets and electromagnets, and they get a glimpse into concepts such as the motor effect and generators.

Heat Transfers: Students investigate thermal energy and how it is transferred in nature via conduction, convection and radiation. It builds upon previous knowledge of particle modeling and relates this to ideas such as sustainable living.

Summer Term: Chemistry

Periodic Table: Students learn that the atom is the basic building block of matter. They identify the relatively small number of different atoms and learn how they are organized on the Periodic Table. Students learn about the history of the Periodic Table and discover all the secrets it has to offer.

Elements and Compounds: It is in this topic that students discover that compounds consist of fixed combinations of different types of atoms that cannot be easily separated. They begin building up ideas that atoms and combinations of atoms can be represented by symbols and formulae. By building upon previous understanding, they use the more sophisticated particle model to explain how chemical reactions take place.

Metals and Reactivity: This practical, focused unit allows students to observe the behavior of numerous metals, learning about a series of metal reactions and consequently construct a reactivity series. The unit extends to look at the applications of the theory, through the need of different metal extraction techniques and how to prevent metal degradation.

Summer Term Project - Sports

Science: This interdisciplinary project draws upon key concepts, enabling students to distinguish between “fit” and “healthy” and to discuss various aspects of health. It looks at important issues with regard to nutrition and exercise.

Science

Year 9

Autumn Term: Physics

Pressure and Moments: This topic develops the core concept of forces, delivered in Year 7, to include pressure and moments. Students develop definitions for these words and investigate scenarios to develop understanding. This unit focuses on mathematical equations linked to representing pressure and moments, and applies them to a range of situations.

Waves: Students learn about transverse and longitudinal waves, focusing on the two examples of light and sound. They investigate how light traveling from a source transfers energy and use this idea to describe the nature and propagation of light. They learn to explain the behavior of light, including reflection, refraction and absorption through experimental work. They explore ideas of frequency and amplitude to explain how sound is produced, its transmission and how it is detected. The topic is extended to include a look at the electromagnetic spectrum and the uses of each section.

Radioactivity: Learning about nuclear radioactivity is a fascinating opportunity. Students discover the properties of alpha, beta and gamma radiation, gain appreciation for nuclear power, and gain knowledge that enables them to construct an opinion about the use and development of the nuclear industry.

Spring Term: Chemistry

Earth: Students gain confidence in identifying rocks and develop deeper understanding of the rock cycle. They learn about the dynamic nature of the planet, and look at fundamental geological processes in a scientific manner.

Atmosphere: This unit explores the dramatic evolution of the atmosphere over 4.6 million years. Students discover processes that resulted in our current atmospheric composition, analyze how humans affect the atmosphere, and look at models that predict the consequences of our actions.

Summer Term: Biology

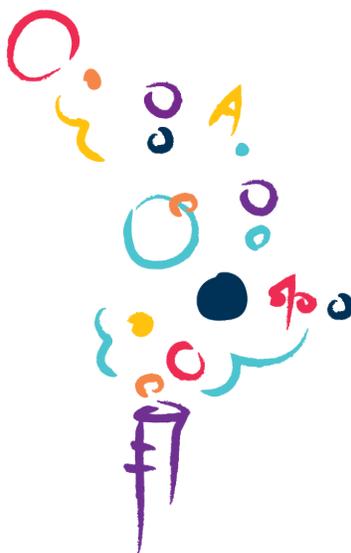
Microbes and Disease: This topic gets students thinking about the microbes and cleanliness. They classify bacteria and fungi as cellular microorganisms and viruses as microorganisms that are smaller than a cell, and learn about the positive and negative effects of microbes on their lives. This leads to a look at the immune system and how humans wage war with microbes in the body.

Genetics: Students look at how diversity is useful for life, how it comes about, and the role of genes versus the environment in determining physical characteristics. They are exposed to ethical issues associated with selective breeding, GMOs, cloning and genetic screening.

Evolution: Students look closely at why so many organisms we see in the fossil record are no longer living today. Students look at human-induced extinction, ancient examples, and of course, the end of the age of the dinosaurs. They learn about the idea of evolution by natural selection, and look at alternative theories relating to evolution.

Semester 3 Project - Space

Exploration: This interdisciplinary project draws upon key concepts, tasking students with considering the possibility of life on other planets and the future of space exploration, including the movement towards privatization of space travel and the desire to inhabit other planets.





*Social
Studies*

Geography

The Social Studies Department develops students into active, educated and mindful citizens of the world, and Geography provides students with the opportunity to investigate many major issues that face global citizens. The study of Geography has never been more relevant, and careers connected with Geography have never been more plentiful. Geographers become cartographers, climatologists, geographic information systems specialists, meteorologists, real estate developers, surveyors and urban planners. Geographers think critically and globally, a key skill that employers seek. Students have the chance to apply their knowledge and understanding of Geography through a series of fieldwork studies at a local and regional level. Previous fieldwork studies include beach profiles, urban transects and environmental surveys.

Year 7

Autumn Term

Geographical Skills: Students grasp basic skills that underpin the foundations of the course. During this topic, students practice grid references, compass directions, scale, reading and interpreting landscapes on a map. They then use these to discover human and physical features of the local area.

Coastal Environments: How does weathering and erosion affect coastlines? How does the sea shape the coast? Students learn what causes some parts of the coast to collapse and how to protect it against the sea. There is also an opportunity to go into the field to put theory into practice.

Spring Term

Population 7 Billion: In this unit, students learn how to describe growth in the global population, why the global population is increasing so rapidly, how to manage population growth, and the issues surrounding population growth.

Rivers and Flood Disaster:

Students understand how processes shape river landforms. They also learn to read and analyze a flood hydrograph and understand the causes of flooding. They develop

their ability to describe the effects of flooding in countries of varying socioeconomic levels and to compare the effects of flooding in an LIC and HIC. They also learn how to manage flooding.

Summer Term

The Local Area: Students gain a sense of place by locating Chicago neighborhoods and learning the socioeconomic aspects associated to some neighborhoods. Students also look at the regeneration taking place across the city, as well as the sustainable development of the city, with a focus on transport.

Exploring the USA: This topic sees students learn the main physical and human features of the United States. They gain understanding of various landscapes and learn how to conduct their own geographical inquiry piece, to present to their peers.

Year 8

Autumn Term

Geographical Skills: Students start the year by broadening their horizons to take on an international perspective. They go on a journey around the world, mapping the main human and physical features. They also learn how to read and interpret longitude and latitude coordinates, as well as understand why we have different time zones and how to calculate them.

Ecosystems: In this unit, students study the world's main ecosystems, focusing in particular on tropical rain forests whereby they analyze the socioeconomic development of the Amazon rain forest and conflicts that ensue as a result.

Spring Term

Weather and Climate: The unit begins with focus on reading and analyzing maps and satellite images, as well as using satellite images to predict weather patterns. Students learn the difference between weather and climate, how to accurately draw climate graphs, and understand the three main types of rainfall.



Year 9

Crime and Geography: Students describe and analyze crime maps, learn how environments can be shaped to prevent crime, and map crime in the local area.

Summer Term

Globalization: In this unit, students gain awareness of how people, places and environments are connected through industry. They learn about globalization, who takes part in the chain of production, and what happens if the chain is broken.

China: Students take an in-depth look into life in China, from the main human and physical features to its governance, its rapid development, and environmental consequences of such development.

Autumn Term

Tourism: Students learn about types of tourism and understand the importance of the tourism industry and how it is changing.

Glaciation: Students explore processes that have shaped and carved magnificent landforms into our planet.

Spring Term

Development and the UN Goals: Students gain in-depth knowledge of the UN Sustainable Development Goals launched in 2015, which allows them to partake in a unique and self-driven service learning opportunity as part of the Global Campus Challenge in partnership with UNICEF.

Geophysical Hazards: Students study where volcanoes and earthquakes occur to learn what happens during these episodes, understand how people can reduce the effects, know how economic aid can help victims, and learn why people want to live in active zones.

Summer Term

Climatic Hazards: Students learn about where tropical storms occur and how to protect, prepare and predict them. They also analyze the effects between a LIC and HIC and the management responses.

Urban Environments: In this unit, students study the nature and causes of urbanization, the difference between rural and urban, what life is like in a mega-city, the opportunities and issues arising from urbanization, and how to manage them.

History

History focuses on the core skills of interpretation, cause and consequence, change and continuity, and significance. The development of these transferable skills helps students gain meaningful understanding of the past and become independent, inquisitive historians. This course covers the prehistoric era to the 20th century, with a focus on international and American history. Students delve into fascinating periods with a broad chronological and international scope.

The course encourages students to understand the “bigger picture” of the past with each year of study targeting an overarching theme to bind the topics: Beliefs and Lifestyles in Year 7 (Grade 6), Revolutions in Year 8 (Grade 7) and Human Rights in Year 9 (Grade 8). Students are assessed on a modular basis with an assessment at the end of each topic; this is consolidated with an end-of-year assessment. There are regular factual knowledge quizzes and projects. However, the majority of assessments require students to structure and express their ideas through extended writing. Focus is placed on writing throughout the course with the intention of developing literacy skills, building confidence and preparing students for an external examination, should they choose to take History in High School.

Year 7

Passport to the Past: Why do the Pyramids exist? What were the first governments in Africa? Who were the first astrologists in the ancient world? These are just some of the questions that our first topic addresses. This unit is designed as an introduction to Middle School History, giving students a broad chronological understanding and introducing the key skills of a historian. Plus, students love learning the fascinating.

Medieval Times - Lifestyles and Culture: This unit examines the lifestyles, beliefs and values of Medieval Europeans. Students look at the importance of religion, warfare and the feudal system, and build their own castle.

Renaissance Europe - Roller Coaster of Religion: Students look at the most tumultuous years in English history and England’s most notorious royal family. The focus is change and continuity, with the students creating a roller coaster of religion that demonstrates the ups and down of religious policy. They also learn how religion led to executions, revolution and war.

Finally, the students consider how these changes affected ordinary people, which lends meaningful insight when students come to their next unit on colonization.

The Salem Witch Trials - An Investigation: This investigation into the Salem Witch Trials allows students to discover one of America’s most infamous miscarriages of justice. Students gain insight into the importance of religion and belief amongst early Puritan settlers.

History Mystery - The Last Colony This unit introduces students to the first settlers of America and requires them to consider what happened when Native America and Renaissance Europe met. We study early interaction between the two: exploration, colonial settlements and conflict. Students must demonstrate skills of empathy, considering the motives for each group’s actions and drawing their own conclusions about the events.

Year 8

The Empire Strikes Back! Imperialism and Colonies: Focusing on change and continuity, students consider how Britain became the most powerful nation by the mid-19th century. Students also consider the human cost of Imperialism and effects on those colonized.

American Revolution - Fighting for Freedom: Students learn about the battle for America’s freedom from British rule, and gain insight into colonial America. The focus on cause and consequence encourages students to consider the main reasons for the Revolution and the American victory.

Slave Trade in America - Fighting Injustice: Students look at the Slave Triangle, Middle Passage, life on plantations and slave rebellion. They study Booker T. Washington’s interpretation of slavery as “miserable, desolate and discouraging”. The unit then goes on to consider how and why the slave



Year 9

trade was abolished in America.

Westward Expansion - A Social Revolution: Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness: Why did Americans move west? This exciting unit considers what motivated individuals and groups to risk their lives to go west. Students learn about frontier towns and harsh justice, the Indian Wars and Battle of Little Bighorn.

Titanic - An Investigation: Students learn the truth about the world's most infamous ship. They make links to STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) by reviewing the engineering survival rates and environmental factors that led to the disaster. Students then consider responsibility and hold their own inquiry.

World War I - The First Total War:

Students consider how revolutions in technology and warfare resulted in the bloodiest conflict in human history to date. They learn about the causes, course and effects of the First World War, and consider what it would have been like to live in the trenches.

Nazi Germany - How Did Hitler

Come to Power?: This unit focuses on Fascism and considers challenging questions about the 20th century's most infamous government. How did Hitler rise to power? How did Hitler control the German people? Did life improve for some under the Nazis?

The Holocaust - 20th Century's Worst Human Rights Violation?:

This investigation into the Holocaust helps students understand one of history's most challenging and distressing topics. The unit encourages students to see those who suffered not as numbers, but as human beings whose stories deserve to be understood. Students investigate a real victim of the Holocaust and present to their classmates.

Vietnam War: This unit gives students the chance to investigate one of America's most controversial wars. They learn about the causes, course and effects. There is focus on factors that led to the American withdrawal from Vietnam, which offers invaluable insight into the rise of the media and its effect on government policy.



*World
Languages*

World Languages

Learning a foreign language is a gateway to different cultures and countries. It also helps students develop awareness of their own languages, cultures and customs, encouraging them to become sensitive to others and developing confident communication skills. Middle School students expand their skills in understanding and using written and spoken language, enabling them to manage a visit to a target language country. Students are expected to effectively use the target language beginning with everyday conversation and spanning to more intricate and developed subjects, deepening their knowledge of culture and grammar along the way. Aside from grammatical rules, which are explained in English to ensure full clarification, World Languages teachers primarily instruct in the target language using a communicative approach. Teachers also employ a variety of creative resources and activities that appeal to all learning styles, while encompassing the four key skill areas of listening, speaking, reading and writing.

Subject Breadth

Students study four hours of one foreign language per week: French, Spanish, German or Mandarin. Those with a particular talent and prior learning experience may study French and Spanish for two hours of each language per week. Students already fluent in one language should select another; we do not offer a program for bilingual language learning. The subject breadth means students gain a solid foundation for continuing study at a second-year High School level or higher.

Assessment

Homework is set weekly and assessments are set throughout the year, focusing on the key skill areas of listening, speaking, reading and writing, with follow-up target-and goal-setting on an individual basis. The Middle School program builds upon language delivery in Primary School; however, support is provided for students with limited prior knowledge, and the focus remains on each student's goals and progress.

Resources

Technology plays an important role in the World Languages Department, which integrates authentic and computer-based materials into curricula. All language classes make use of target language multimedia software, blogs, podcasts and other online material. In addition to maximizing technology uses, the program exposes students to age-appropriate popular music and films, and students take part in group, pair and individual tasks and activities during each lesson.

Supplemental Activities

Language skills improve through practice, so we aspire to find new and creative ways for students to try skills in real-life situations. In addition to role play and drama activities that encourage impulsive speech, students take part in local field trips conducted in the target language; these have included a cookery lesson at the Alliance Française, a walking tour of Pilsen and the Mexican Art Museum, and visits to Chinatown and Christkindlmarkt. Students are also encouraged to take part in residential field trips to further deepen their language skills and cultural awareness.





*Performing
Arts*

Dance

Dance is the comprehensive study of the performing art in physical, artistic, aesthetic and cultural context. In addition to helping students acquire subject knowledge, the curriculum promotes in collaboration with The Juilliard School a sense of creativity, fitness, teamwork, character, leadership and performance. Middle School students take part in units on performance/recall, research and choreography across six styles: Contemporary, Ballet, Hip Hop, Jazz, STOMP and African dance. There are also pop-up lessons for occasions like Winter Break, Black History Month and St. Patrick's Day.

Learning Process

1. Students learn the conventions of a dance style.
2. Then students put these conventions into action, learning a routine set by the teacher.
3. Students pursue a research project in which they discover the importance of historical and cultural context.
4. Synthesizing all this experience and knowledge, students choreograph a piece in the studied style.
5. After studying two styles, students are then asked: Can we fuse, accent and highlight similarities and differences?

Throughout the learning process, students focus on the mental and physical performance qualities of a dancer. Students can apply their learning through extracurricular teams and clubs.

Year 7

- Contemporary Dance
- Classical Dance
- Contemporary/Classical Dance Fusion
- Qualities of a Strong Performance and Performer

Year 8

- Jazz Dance
- Hip Hop Dance
- Jazz/Hip Hop Dance Fusion
- Qualities of a Strong Performance and Performer

Year 9

- STOMP
- African Dance
- STOMP/African Dance Fusion
- Qualities of a Strong Performance and Performer



Drama

From imagination and empathy to solid communication, Drama teaches skills that students can apply in all school subjects and their lives outside of school. The benefits of studying Drama are considerable, so Middle School students take part in one Drama lesson each week. Students cover a wide range of topics, learning technical elements and vocabulary across genres, styles and famous works. Students work in a variety of group sizes and regularly create performance work during their lessons. Many elements are also cross-curricular and support learning in more than one subject.

Topics of Study

Key Practitioners: Students are introduced to Stanislavski early on, developing skills to create believable characters.

Physical Theatre: The practice of current theatre companies is used in class to help devise work and develop characters.

Set Design: Students are taught the various forms of staging, e.g. proscenium arch, traverse. They are given tasks such as creating the set design for a text using naturalism to enhance the theme of the play.

Technical Theatre: Our Drama Studio is equipped with a professional lighting rig and board. Students are trained to program the lights in order to apply to their own work. Students use the PausePlayFade app to program sound for a piece of work. We also have Qlab for advanced users.

Stage Management: From Year 7, students take on various roles to run shows professionally, including Company Manager, Deputy Stage Manager and Assistant Stage Manager. Students create “the book”, which houses all cues for actors, lighting and sound. Students

are encouraged to try several roles in Middle School and utilize these skills by supporting shows of those in younger years.

Live Theatre: Students see live and filmed theatre, analyzing choices by the director and designers.

Productions: Students are challenged to create an entire performance that they take accountability for – directing, lighting, set, sound. Parents are invited to see these small-scale shows that are prepared in class.

Devising: Various strategies are used to create original work, including adaptation and utilizing genres including pantomime and commedia dell’arte. We also work from an array of stimuli such as music, poems and images.

Scripted Work: Students work on a variety of texts and on developing characters from clues in the scripts.

Public Speaking: A variety of exercises are done to increase students’ ability to speak confidently in different arenas, e.g. presenting a set design proposal to a producer and interview skills.



Music

Music plays an integral role in students' education, and we are proud to offer The Juilliard-Nord Anglia Performing Arts Program. As part of our Juilliard collaboration, students are drawn into a Juilliard-curated repertoire of 12 core works that encompass a wide range of musical genres and styles, opening doors to different cultures and historical periods. Research shows music skills are transferable to many other subjects, and the techniques and disciplines students learn in the Music course further our goal of creating innovative, ambitious learners. In Middle School, students develop the skills they already have and also learn exciting new skills. Students explore Music through a variety of creative practical lessons. Music lessons are weekly and consist of: instrumental music making, areas of study and music theory based on keyboard skills.

Extracurriculars

Classroom learning is supplemented by performance groups, private lessons and booster sessions. The aim of these activities is to help students develop and extend their performance skills, and create relevant and exciting opportunities for further learning.

After School Arts with Juilliard:

Students may supplement their instrumental and vocal skills with private lessons taught by Juilliard alumni before and after school.

Orchestra: Students who have been playing an instrument for a number of years and are at approximately ABRSM Grade 3 or above are encouraged to join. Musicians cover a wide range of pieces and perform at school concerts.

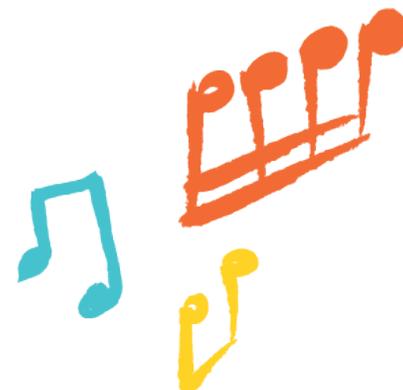
Choir: Choir meets regularly to work on a range of pieces that contribute to school and public performances. All levels of singers are invited.

Small Groups: The Music Department establishes the small group program at the start of the school year to meet the varying

needs of Middle School performers. Past small groups include Jazz Band and Wind Quartet. Groups perform at a range of events through the school year.

Booster Sessions: During the week, teachers are available for informal drop-in booster sessions before school. Organized by instrumental groups, these sessions give students a chance to obtain extra support.

Associated Boards of the Royal Schools of Music (ABRSM): ABRSM is the UK's largest music education body and the world's leading provider of music exams. ABRSM's mission is to inspire achievement in music. In partnership with the Royal Schools of Music, ABRSM supports high-quality music-making and learning around the world. Students in Year 5-13 may sit their ABRSM grade during school time. With full support from teachers and booster sessions, students may pursue the ABRSM to measure their musical progress and earn college credit at UK universities.





*Creative
Arts*

Visual Arts

Art is an important element of the curriculum, as we aim to nurture students' creativity and ability to express and communicate their ideas. The goal of the curriculum is to develop independent, inquisitive and resilient learners, active researchers and team players. While creating their artwork, students learn about a range of cultures and traditions and also develop transferable skills:

- **Making Observations:** The process of recording observations is at the heart of Art lessons. Working from primary sources (i.e. real objects), students develop their skills and confidence by working with a variety of media and exploring various techniques. Technical knowledge such as color theory and composition are central themes.
- **Experimentation:** Students explore a range of media and processes, enabling them to become competent, confident artists. They adopt skills in drawing, painting, printing, sculpture, textiles, illustration, and new media, which will help them express their ideas creatively for years to come.
- **Critical and Contextual Studies:** The curriculum is designed to boost students' ability to understand and question our visual world. We encourage students to develop meaning and explore theories within their work.

Year 7

Natural Forms: This project is aimed at developing skills in color theory and drawing for purpose. Students build on knowledge they gained in Primary while researching artists and experimenting with materials and techniques.

Jungle Frieze: Inspired by natural forms and an extract from Arthur Conan Doyle's "The Lost World", students learn about composition and atmospheric perspective. They build on work created in the previous Natural Forms project, and work independently and in teams to produce a whole-class collage.

Marine: Students develop knowledge and skills in composition as they study marine life. They build on skills and techniques from the Jungle Frieze in addition to learning the art of silk painting.

Year 8

Animals: Students create firsthand observations of animals, investigating elements of color and texture. Then, they work in groups to create a sculptural costume. Students also work with lighting in the Drama Studio to bring their sculptural costumes to life.

Mechanical Objects/Repeat Pattern: Using Mechanical objects, students start to develop concepts of abstract artworks. Pupils work from primary sources creating first hand observations. They explore drawing for purpose, repeat pattern and lino print

Seasons: Students develop a piece of writing and create a visual response using varied mixed media techniques. The focus is developing skills in expressive painting/drawing for purpose and composition.

Year 9

Portraiture: This project is designed to improve drawing and sketching skills. Students capture age and character in portraits using charcoal, paint and pencil. They reference and create connections among a range of artists, discussing techniques and concepts within the artworks. The final piece is creative and personal, and demonstrates high-quality skills.

Figure: Students explore the proportions of the body and learn how to draw movement and create mood.

Messages and Meanings - Creative Concepts: Studying public sculpture from around the world, students explore concepts whilst working across 2D and 3D mediums.

Engineering and Design

Moving to a two project year - i.e. one topic per semester, with a goal to incorporate a more cohesive approach to the integration of a range of engineering and design skills in the projects we teach.

All student work at MS will be documented in online folders and available to be presented for continued assessment by the teachers or SLT at any time. Assessment of student work is ongoing each week through the projects and takes the form of both classwork assessment of skills as well as HW based activities.

There will be end of year exams to assess the progress made by the students which will form a part of the final assessment in addition to the continuous assessment and use of KPIs throughout the year.

Year 7

Project A: CAD/CAM

Students will learn how to develop their understanding and use CAD/CAM within the scope of a design and build engineering project. Students will be introduced to the use of Sketchup and Autodesk Fusion design software and will learn how to construct CAD models to create engineering drawings and design renderings. Following on from the design, students will then learn how to manufacture the final product using a range of additive and subtractive manufacturing tools such as the 3D printers and laser cutter.

Project B: Jumping Bug

Students will use their engineering and design skills to develop a Jumping Bug. This project introduces the students to the use of basic electronics and the concepts associated with an Input/Process/Output approach to engineering. Students will use their CAD skills to design the final product and work with a range of materials in the development and manufacture of the final product. This project introduces the student to the concepts of Research/Design/Build/Evaluate which we build further upon the coming years.

Year 8

Project A: F1 in Schools

The students will work in groups to design and build a race car which is restricted by a set of criteria. During the project they will learn many engineering and design skills associated with working to a demanding set of rules and regulations. The project will build upon the CAD skills first learned in Y7 with the introduction of more complex geometric design tools and a far greater demand for accuracy in their design work. The final designs will be tested in a school competition where each team will race their final design to determine the fastest car.

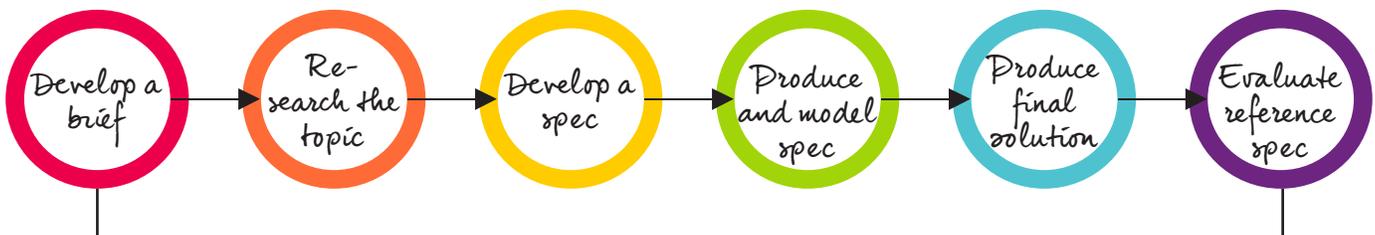
Project B: Micro Controlled Music

This Systems and Control project introduces the students to programming a microcontroller to manage a small music player which they build themselves from a PCB based kit. With a strong focus on our collaboration with MIT and Julliard, the students will learn about the components as well as the integration of the programming required to make the circuit function as intended.

Year 9

Stereo Amplifier: Students will design and build a stereo amplifier with speakers in this project. They will learn and apply advanced modelling skills in the developing of their CAD designs using Sketchup and Autodesk Fusion and will create their final products using a range of subtractive and additive manufacturing techniques. During the development and building of the project the students will learn about the use of Input/Process/Output systems and electrical components such as the Opp Amp. This project encompasses many of the engineering and design aspects which are associated with the requirements of the HS Engineering and Design and forms a solid foundation for the students to experience the coursework and expectations at that level.

Structures and Forces: Students study the fundamentals of engineering and design in this project where they are introduced to the various aspects associated with the design of buildings and bridges. They will explore links between man made and natural structures as well as developing an understanding of how forces impact structural design. They will work individually and in groups to explore Young's Modulus and to create a final structural design which will be loaded against a set of strict design criteria.



Information & Communications Technology

The study of Information & Communications Technology (ICT) is unique because of the ever-changing subject matter, as software evolves at a rapid pace. ICT introduces students to the fundamentals of programming, data analysis and visual design. At our school, Middle School students work under three umbrellas of learning that build in complexity each year: Digital Literacy, Programming, and Digital Design & Graphics. Students learn how and why a task is completed to understand the significance of the practical activities they perform. Learning is based on individual projects, through which students are assessed on their written understanding and practical skills.

Students develop and improve skills through practice. They creatively demonstrate their skills to ensure they can adapt them in real-life situations and build upon previously acquired skills, which encourage confident use of computers and other technology tools. We also discuss related real-world topics such as digital divide and home and leisure. We teach ICT using Windows PCs on platform-independent software, so we can discuss and plan projects with the world's many operating systems in mind.

Year 7

Digital Literacy: Students explore the fundamentals of ICT, learning how to effectively and responsibly use computers, and the computer skills they will need in the coming years. They cover topics such as e-safety and spreadsheet modeling.

Programming: Using a variety of software (such as Scratch), students learn to program and create their own computer game using different types of coding.

Digital Design & Graphics: Students learn to design with a computer and use a range of software from Windows Movie Maker to Adobe Photoshop.

Year 8

Digital Literacy: Students develop their knowledge of Digital Literacy and cover more safety features such as cyber security and the workings of a computer. Students learn how to use databases in Microsoft Access and create their own queries and reports.

Programming: Web development skills are the focus, with students learning how to use HTML and CSS, and creating their own website. They are also exposed to Kodu, a visual programming language, and create their own computer game.

Digital Design & Graphics: While students are learning to create their website, they also learn how to design it and produce web graphics. They use professional software such as Adobe Fireworks and Adobe Photoshop to create buttons, navigation bars and rollover animation.

Year 9

Digital Literacy: Students continue to learn about databases, preparing them for future Computer Science courses. They take on more advanced learning, like relational databases and SQL, the standard programming language for relational database management systems.

Programming: Students start to look at higher-level programming languages, like Python. They learn how to create “if” statements, loops and arrays. They also learn basic Computer Science skills like flow diagrams and pseudocode.

Digital Design & Graphics: Using industry software like Adobe InDesign, Adobe Photoshop and Adobe Fireworks, students learn to create different graphics and designs.





Athletics

Athletics

Our Athletics courses provide students with opportunities to learn about personal health and fitness, and develop and maintain a healthy lifestyle. Each week, all Middle School students take part in Physical Education and Games, resulting in three hours of physical activity. Both courses are designed to give each student a chance to explore a variety of activities. Physical Education is assessed on academic reports, while Games is not. Physical Education is assessed on students moral, social and physical skills.

Course Topics

- Badminton
- Baseball
- Basketball
- Cricket
- Dance
- Gymnastics
- Indoor rowing
- Activities (OAA)
- Soccer
- Softball
- Swimming
- Track & Field
- Volleyball
- Yoga
- Pop lacrosse
- Rounders'
- Kinetic wellbeing (personal fitness)
- Sports Leadership
- Field Hockey
- Rugby





*Assessment,
Guidance &
C.A.S.E.*

Assessment

Purpose of Assessment

Assessment is the gathering and analysis of information about student performance. It identifies what students know, understand, can do and feel at different stages in the learning process; this information guides teachers in instruction. Assessment is an ongoing and daily part of school life, and the formative comments students receive develop their understanding of the skills and knowledge required to be successful in each course. At BISC South Loop, the aims and purpose of assessment are to:

- Provide information to enhance and improve learning and teaching.
- Provide information for target-setting for individuals, groups and cohorts.
- Share learning goals with students.
- Involve students in self-assessment.
- Help students know and recognize the standards they are aiming for.
- Raise standards of learning.
- Identify possibilities for academic interventions.
- Inform parents of their son/daughter's progress.

Setting Targets

Regardless of previous academic achievement, students are expected to make appropriate progress and continually improve. Our teachers are highly trained in estimating and setting academic targets that challenge student learning.

We continually track and monitor the academic achievements of every student in every subject

to ensure they are reaching their goals. Students also reflect on their academic achievement during every lesson and after homework assignments and assessments. If a teacher identifies a student whose progress is slowing, the school administers an individual learning plan to help ensure the student is back on track by the next academic report.

Key Performance Indicators

In Middle School, our aim is to prepare students for success on the Honors track in High School and beyond. Teachers are able to be targeted and strategic in their student feedback by measuring attainment against Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). Each subject area has 9-12 KPIs that represent the skills and understanding required to demonstrate outstanding learning.

Middle School students progress through four attainment levels for KPI: Beginning, Developing, Meeting and Exceeding. The target for students is to reach Meeting or Exceeding by the end of Summer Term. Teachers regularly provide learners with individualized learning targets, helping them reach their highest potential.

If a student achieves Meeting by the end of the school year, they are on track for success on the Honors route in High School. Meeting our high academic standards is certainly cause for celebration.

Some students may reach Exceeding during the course of the school year, which is an outstanding achievement. We are committed

to ensuring that students are challenged and feel challenged; it is important that students experience the "positive struggle" required to improve. As such, students who achieve Exceeding are provided with specific steps for further improvement, referred to as the Beyond Exceeding Plan. Just as we would for students who may have slowed in their progress, we work in partnership to deliver learning plans that stretch these students.

Academic Reports

Teachers communicate with families about academic progress and areas for focus in four academic reports in October, January, March and June. Middle School academic reports outline progress against each KPI in every subject.

Parents are invited to discuss academic progress with teachers during consultations, which are held at key points throughout the school year. Parents may also meet with teachers outside of the consultation dates.

Guidance and C.A.S.E.

Form Groups

Every Middle School student is part of a Form Group led by a teacher (Form Tutor) that meets daily for meetings, notices and Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE). Form Tutors are students' first point of contact for mentoring and academic guidance.

PSHE helps students acquire the knowledge, understanding and skills needed to manage their lives now and in the future. The wide-ranging curriculum prepares students to manage the most critical opportunities, challenges and responsibilities they will face and helps them connect and apply the knowledge they gain in all school subjects to practical, real-life situations.

- **Health:** physical, mental and emotional wellbeing; drug, alcohol and tobacco education
- **Career Choices:** enterprise, business and finance
- **Managing Risk:** financial and career choices; personal safety; Internet safety and violent incidents
- **Loss:** bereavement, separation and divorce
- **Relationships:** developing and maintaining positive relationships; dealing bullying and sexual violence
- **Personal Finance:** savings, debt and budgeting
- **Change:** managing transition, adversity and developing resilience

C.A.S.E.

Creativity, Action, Service and Enrichment (C.A.S.E.) boosts students' holistic learning, enabling them to develop new skills, take on new challenges, and perform community outreach. Every half-term, students may select one of five C.A.S.E. projects to pursue. They range from documentary filmmaking and MIT challenges, to Philosophy 101 and initiatives with local community organizations. Students work on projects, vertically in Middle and High School, on Friday afternoons during the last two lessons of the day.



Questions?

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Be Ambitious!