



## COUNTRY DAY SCHOOL COSTA RICA

A NORD ANGLIA EDUCATION SCHOOL

### Country Day School Middle School

#### Core Academic Subjects: Standards and Mastery

In each of the core academic areas, we have developed a set of core standards, written as student-friendly “I can” statements. These statements guide our work with Middle School students across the middle school learning experience.

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#### English Language Arts

Our English Language Arts program applies the reading and writing workshop approach to learning. Students are taught to read and write across the genres including narrative, informational, and argumentative texts. There is an emphasis on the practice of effective researching by analyzing knowledge and ideas from multiple sources. Students must demonstrate comprehension of key ideas and details of grade-level literary and informational texts. They practice the correct use conventions and language through application in their writing. With learning activities such as TED-Talk styled presentations, panel debates, and Socratic seminars, we provide further practice in speaking-listening and presentation skills.

#### Math

In math, students learn the core areas of study including the number system, ratios and proportional relationships, functions, expressions, equations, inequalities, geometry, and statistics and probability. From 6th to 8th grade, these core areas are defined and practiced according to the grade and/or class level work, with deepening practice as the math course scope and sequence progresses. Our mathematics learning focus is on problem-solving with an

emphasis on real-life problem application and math enjoyment. Students also learn to write about and discuss their mathematical thinking.

## **Science**

In our science program, we apply the cross-cutting concepts to scientific study including data analysis, scientific process, and research. Scientific discourse and the understanding and usage of scientific vocabulary in discussion and written work is highlighted. Students study earth science, life science, and physical science throughout the different grade levels. We teach and practical application of the scientific method, including how to design, carry out and analyze experiments. Engaging activities such as roller coaster competitions and cardboard boat teams are favorite culminating activities.

## **Social Studies**

Social studies provides the learning students need to analyze the origins, structure, and functions of governments and their impacts on societies and citizens. Students seek and evaluate multiple historical sources with different points of view to investigate a historical question and to formulate and defend a thesis with relevant evidence. They understand how geography, demographic trends, and environmental conditions shape modern societies and regions while analyzing key historical periods of patterns of continuity and change over time within and across nations and cultures. Through the analysis of individual choice, market interaction, public policy, and trade, students also understand the allocation of scarce resources in societies. Whether they are acting out scenes for a living Ancient Roman museum or making advertisements for the Thirteen colonies, their work is active and hands-on.

## **Spanish**

Our Spanish curriculum targets interpersonal communication so that students can express themselves fully not only on familiar topics but also on some concrete social, academic, and professional topics. We want students to talk in detail and in an organized way about events and experiences in various time frames and to share their point of view in discussions on some complex issues. We also want them to listen and understand the main idea and most supporting details of the topic at hand. To do this, students practice interpretive reading, writing, and listening skills on a wide variety of general interest, professional, and academic topics. Students

also practice delivering well-organized presentations on concrete social, academic, and professional topics. Mini-plays and debates are an integral part of their presentations.

## **PE**

Through our Physical Education curriculum, students learn the importance of physical activity and fitness, motor skill and movement competency, as well as personal and social behavior that respects self and others. They are able to demonstrate competency in a variety of motor skills and movement patterns while applying their knowledge of concepts, principles, strategies, and tactics related to movement and performance. Students learn skills to achieve and maintain a health-enhancing level of physical activity and fitness, recognizing the value of physical activity for health, enjoyment, challenge, self-expression and social interaction.

## **Art**

Our Art curriculum puts creation, connection, and presentation at the heart of the students' learning. They learn to develop, organize, refine and complete artistic ideas and work. Students develop and refine artistic techniques and work for presentation to others. Finally, they synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make art.

## **Band**

In Band, students build their musical knowledge and skills choosing to play from a variety of brass instruments. We focus on technique and sound quality, as well as musicality. Our curriculum enhances their musical literacy and performance skills through such activities as listen and respond exercises. As they practice and perform together at school events throughout the year, their ensemble skills flourish.

## **Choir**

Choir students develop skills in music theory, vocal technique, repertoire, and ensemble. They learn the ability to read and notate music to advance their work as vocalists. They also learn and practice different vocal exercises to enable the body to work correctly when singing. Together, these skills help them to sing with expression and technical accuracy a varied repertoire.

## **Electives**

Students choose from a range of offerings that are provided for that year. These might include electives such as Video Media, Drama, Green Team Ecology, STEAM, and Robotics.

## Middle School



Dear MS Parents ,

In my first three weeks as MS Principal, I've been blown away by the warm welcome from this professional, caring and knowledgeable community. It's such a joy to walk in every day and be greeted by so many smiling faces on this beautiful lush green campus full of fruit and flowers.

A bit about me: I was born in Devon, England and I studied Philosophy and Literature at Edinburgh University before moving into a challenging school in South East London as part of the Teach First program which sends graduates to work in challenging inner city schools. I spent the last seven years living in Santiago, Chile, where I was Middle School Principal at Santiago College, an incredible IB school in Santiago. I'm married to a Chilean lady, Maria Eugenia, and we have a little girl called Lucy who's two years old and will be in the EC at CDS. I'm currently working on a certificate in advanced educational leadership from the Harvard Graduate School of Education.

I'm passionate about the wellbeing of young people and ensuring that they can all make excellent progress. I hope to build strong relationships with your children and the wider community; it "takes a village to raise a child" and education is all about collaboration between the family and the school. One of the big changes we will make this year is the transition to standards based grading. In a standards based grading model, student's progress will be tracked against learning standards and both parents and students will be given quality feedback and regular updates on

their learning. We are trying to move beyond the limited information contained in a traditional grading system towards a more accurate measure of progress against specific standards over time. In short, we'll look at how much learning is taking place regarding specific goals and give feedback on how to move forwards. The ultimate aim is that all students should master the learning goals we present to them. I look forward to explaining this to you in more detail as time goes on.

Two of my other passions are social emotional learning and service, and I look forward to working with the community to promote wellbeing and finding ways to engage in meaningful, connected service. I'm really excited to learn that Nord Anglia education is prioritizing the global development goals of peace, justice and strong institutions, and quality education. From these we have derived this year's school wide theme: Compassion over judgment, curiosity over fear. This ties in well with our [Mission](#) that states we provide children with the skills, values, and courage to become responsible leaders. Our [Profile of the Graduate](#) describes in detail the qualities that we expect our CDS graduates to embody.

Middle School students are at an exciting, intense and challenging stage of their development. It's a foundational time: they forge their character, identify and nurture their passions and mould their flourishing personalities. They want more independence but need caring and consistent adults to guide them. They want to use their critical capacity to fix the world's problems but need guidance on how to implement their often brilliant ideas. They are passionate about their communities but need a caring environment to enable them to speak up, act and flourish. We will work closely with parents and students to provide the personalisation, support and high expectations that will nurture the CDS student profile we seek to develop.

This handbook contains important information about the processes and functioning of the school. Please read through it carefully and pay close attention to the important information contained within

I'm really excited about my first year as CDS MS Principal and look forward to an enriching, happy year full of joyful learning.

Sincerely,

**James Tucker**

Middle School Principal

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