

Middle School Course Description Handbook

Advisory & Exploratory Program

Advisory

Advisory class is designed to support the social, emotional and academic needs of Middle School Students. Students are supported in developing academic success skills such as goal setting, homework completion and organization. The Virtues Program aligns with our Mission and Guiding Statements. Students reflect upon the meaning of each virtue, while holding discussions and collaborating with their peers on projects that allow them to apply each virtue to themselves and everyday life.

Exploratory

Exploratory classes are designed to expose students to new skills that are typically the focus of extra-curricular activities. Students are grouped based on interest and collaborate in mixed-age groups of 6th, 7th and 8th graders. Some examples of Exploratory classes are woodwork, photography, community service, yoga, gardening, nutrition and cooking. These classes rotate quarterly and are marked either P (pass) or F (fail) on the report card.

World Languages & EAL

Arabic Level 1

This course teaches the basics of Arabic with respect to the four language skill areas: Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing. Students are introduced to the cultures and societies of the Arabic speaking world. Vocabulary and grammar are taught in a variety of contexts, including making introductions, giving directions, buying goods and making telephone calls. The emphasis will be on the spoken language, as well as on providing a foundation of basic Arabic script.

Arabic Level 2

This course focuses on Modern Standard Arabic that is used in written and spoken contexts throughout the Arab World. In addition to the textbook, students explore a variety of reading texts and audio-visual materials. One of the materials is an Arabic newspaper describing current events and issues. In order to study the language in connection with its natural contexts, some exposure to Sudanese and other spoken accents will be included. In order to teach within the context of the one to one program, students use computers to enhance their learning.

Arabic Level 3

This course is a continuation of Arabic 2. It continues with more sophisticated, yet essential topics of daily and literary use of the Arabic language. The emphasis of this course is on expanding student vocabulary and improving reading and writing skills for a variety of practical purposes. It also enhances the student's ability to read, understand and discuss Arabic writings, while utilizing a variety of magazines, newspapers, journal articles, documents, short stories and other materials of interest to the students.

French Level 1

The objective of the Level I French course is to introduce students to the basics of the language and the cultures that speak the language. It assumes that the students have minimal or no prior knowledge of the language and culture. We address all four areas of language development: reading, listening, writing, and speaking. Students focus on communicating about their immediate world and daily activities, read material on familiar topics, and write short compositions. Instruction is given primarily in the target language and in a variety of contexts to meet the needs of students.

French Level 2

This course provides an introduction to grammatical principles and vocabulary and their correct usage is emphasized in numerous exercises and dialogues. The course includes the study of the present and passé compose tenses of regular and irregular verbs, pronouns, adjectives, idiomatic expressions and sentence structure. In this course, students complete numerous exercises requiring the use of appropriate vocabulary and grammatical structures for a wide variety of everyday scenarios. In addition, students read passages in French and answer questions about the passages using complete French sentences. Translation from English to French is also a skill developed in this course.

French Level 3

This course aims to develop greater confidence in writing and speaking French so that common forms of written expressions may be better mastered and writing style improved. The goals of this course include: further acquisition of grammatical skills and appropriate spelling through intensive drilling (both oral and written), the development of a better mastery of the language, familiarizing students with idiomatic expressions and encouraging students to use more natural ways to express their thoughts in French. The various types of activities used are sentence reconstructions, filling in blanks in a previously studied text, simulated conversation on a specific topic, brainstorming for synonyms and the search for roots of complex words. The development of translation is achieved by pointing out the differences between different languages and the way people express their thoughts.

English as a Second Language (EAL)

The ESL program provides extra English language support for students whose first language is not English. In this program, students improve their English language skills in reading, writing, listening, speaking, and grammar to enable them to become successful in the mainstream classroom, the school, and the community. In the Middle School, support takes place in an ESL classroom and/or through a push-in program in mainstream Language Arts classes. Educational practices used with ESL students correlate with approaches used in mainstream classes with adaptations and modifications made by the mainstream teacher and the ESL teacher.

Specials

Art – Grades 6-8

The Middle School Visual Arts program is designed to give students the opportunity to gain confidence in producing art, to reinforce artistic skills, and to introduce how art can be a great way for self-expression. Students strengthen their abilities to self assess choices and adjustments when planning and creating their art. A variety of materials and techniques are used in creating artwork. The students also learn how to organize their compositions and ideas of their artwork.

Computers – Grades 6-8

Music – Grades 6-8

This program teaches students about music history, lives of composers and their works, and learn how to identify music styles. Students also study music during the ancient civilizations and compares characteristics and instruments with modern day music styles. Chorus is a regular activity in class, in addition to music theory. The repertoire will depend on what school event is being organized at the time. The students gain mastery of musical terms and symbols. Students discuss the element of rhythm by mastering note types and their note values. They learn how to incorporate their knowledge through a rhythm band, using available percussion instruments. Singing is an activity that students enjoy and the objective of chorus is to acquire accuracy of tones. Students learn to observe proper singing techniques and interpretation. They learn how to enunciate, project their voice and improve their voice range. Students prepare their song choices and create a short presentation of an artist's music style, instrumentation, lyrics and identifying sections. Music projects bring the student's enthusiasm to a higher level as they sit and brainstorm and discuss their strategies intelligently. Students will be allowed to share their song favorites and collaborate with each other using technology. Students engage in lively discussions to debate music styles and artist/performers or bands.

Physical Education – Grades 6-8

The KAS Physical Education program for Middle School is about lifelong fitness and student development, at their own time and pace. This is done through participation in physical activities (team and individual) with an emphasis on the importance of lifelong physical activity. The program is designed to, through scaffolding, give students experience in the skills needed to be successful in various sports and activities as they develop those skills throughout the years in PE. Improvement and effort are more important than mastery of the skills. At Middle School and High School levels, knowledge of the rules and how the activities are important. Another part of Physical Education is developing the fitness of the students through strength and endurance activities each week, which will contribute to their overall health and lifestyle.

Language Arts

Grade 6 Language Arts

This course builds upon existing language skills of reading, writing, speaking, and listening, while introducing inferred reading, critical reading and thinking, as well as presentation skills. An emphasis on vocabulary development and writing skills will be included throughout the program. The course includes studies of various literary genres including: short story, poetry, novel, drama/role play with an introduction to Shakespeare's Macbeth, and non-fiction texts focusing on biography.

Grade 7 Language Arts

This course builds upon existing language skills of reading, writing, speaking, and listening, while developing inferred reading, critical reading and thinking as well as presentation skills. An emphasis on vocabulary development and writing skills will be included throughout the program. The course includes studies of various literary genres including: short story, poetry, and novel with an introduction to the Dystopian Novel, drama/role play, and non-fiction texts.

Grade 8 Language Arts

This course builds upon existing language skills of reading, writing, speaking, and listening, while developing inferred reading, critical reading and thinking as well as presentation skills. An emphasis on vocabulary development and writing skills will be included throughout the program. The course includes studies of various literary genres: short story, poetry, novel, drama, and non-fiction texts with an introduction to Media English. The course will introduce students to literary devices such as metaphor and simile, hyperbole, alliteration, allegory and personification. The course aims to build a bridge between Middle School and High School Language Arts.

Writing Lab – Grades 6-8

This course focuses on building the writing skills of middle school students. Throughout the quarter students learn the skill of topic generation, pre-writing, organization, revision, editing, a variety of writing conventions. Students create creative writing pieces, either fiction or creative non-fiction, and edit their own pieces as well as peer-editing. Students should be able to write using a variety of sentence structures and lengths and do so descriptively. In order to show that they have met the standards, students will complete a final writing project using what they learned throughout the quarter.

Mathematics

Grade 6 Mathematics

This course advances students' understanding of pre-algebraic concepts. The topics to be covered will include: operations and properties, variables and expressions, decimals, number theory and fractions, an introduction to geometry, data collection and analysis, proportions and graphing. The required text is Mathematics/Grade 6 by Holt McDougal. Students are expected to come to class prepared with a notebook, pencil, eraser and calculator.

Grade 7 Mathematics

This course advances students' understanding of pre-algebraic concepts. The topics to be covered will include: variables and integers, equations, fractions, exponents, rational numbers ratios and proportions, percent, linear functions, real numbers, and probability. The required

text is Mathematics/Grade 7 by Holt McDougal. Students are expected to come to class prepared with a notebook, pencil, eraser and calculator.

Algebra 1 (Grade 8 Mathematics)

This course advances students' understanding of the concepts of Algebra I. The topics to be covered will include: equations, inequalities, functions, systems of equations, exponents and polynomials, and factoring quadratics. The required text is Algebra I by Holt McDougal. Students are expected to come to class prepared with a notebook, pencil, eraser and calculator.

Science

Grade 6 Science

This course serves as a hands-on introduction to science education. The nature of science is used as a springboard for exploration of topics including measurement, chemistry, biology, and physics. This course reinforces the scientific method and fosters active involvement through beginning laboratory experiments and demonstrations. Students will investigate how atoms and matter interact, and practice using the atom's sub atomic particles.

Grade 7 Science

This course begins with a unit introducing the importance of recognizing and understanding the role of Science in our world. Students participate in weekly scheduled experiments, which help them integrate knowledge and write essays and lab reports. In small groups, they present findings and write summaries in the form of technical articles reflecting the conceptual part of physics. Students research and work out their projects using and analyzing the utilized physics principles.

Grade 8 Science

The goal of this course is to build upon concepts learned in middle school science through hands-on investigations and practical research. Students will continue to develop their investigation skills through research, experimentation and lab writing. Grade eight science focuses on the chemical, physical and biological sciences. The major topics are matter and energy, the nature of science and the role of technology, and plant and animal physiology.

Social Studies

Grade 6 Social Studies

This course explores the concept of 'Global Citizenship' by asking what it means to be an active participant at home, school and in our greater communities. Students learn to understand their place in the world and reflect on how to improve it. During the course of the year, students consider the following questions: What are Human Rights? How can individuals and societies uphold Human Rights? How will studying Human Rights help us

prevent stereotyping others? Students also complete a Media Literacy unit and analyze how media messages can create stereotypes. This course allows students to express their thoughts and interpretations through projects, presentations and essays. The course concludes with a Service Learning Project in which students put their philosophies to use by developing a project to serve their local community.

Grade 7 Social Studies

This course allows students to develop their geography skills by understanding the components of maps, including scale, title, the compass rose, the key and the grid. Students illustrate their knowledge of these concepts by creating class maps. The highlight of this course is a trip to Meroe. Students learn about the history and culture of the ancient city and gain research and note-taking skills over the course of the unit as they acquire new information. Students then begin a study of the Water Cycle and Water Scarcity. The course concludes with a focus on Human Geography. Students study immigration trends and routes in the context of immigration from Sudan to Europe and the United States. The course concludes with an essay-writing unit in which students analyze elements of the film “God Grew Tired of Us” to draw connections between immigration stories of the Lost Boys and the immigrations trends they have studied in class. Students also take time throughout the year to enhance their knowledge of geography through map work.

Grade 8 Social Studies – Ancient World History

Ancient World History covers world history from the origins of mankind to approximately 1450 AD/CE. The first part of the course will examine the earliest humans and several ancient civilizations, including Mesopotamia, Egypt, India, China, and Meroe. Students then study the classical civilizations, and the first large-scale empires, including Ancient Greece and Ancient Rome. Students explore and compare the development, contributions and decline of these civilizations, and the historical forces that have formed the beginning of the modern world. Students also learn basic concepts of historical research and analysis using a variety of primary and secondary sources.