The Harvey School

Rigor with Heart

2025 – 2026

Middle School Program of Study

Academic Overview & Course Descriptions

“Our students are active, engaged creators of their own educational experience, demonstrating how thoughtful, caring, confident, creative, and courageous they can be on a daily basis. They use their voices to share their knowledge and tackle big questions, both inside and outside the classroom. Each student’s story and learning experience is unique and encouraged at Harvey, nurtured by a highly committed and dedicated faculty and staff.”

| Bill Knauer, Head of School

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OUR PHILOSOPHY

At The Harvey School, we realize that each of our students brings a blend of talents and abilities that contributes to the uniqueness of our school. To help students realize their potential, we ask our faculty members to bring out the best in each of our students so that they discover their strengths, develop confidence in their own abilities, and reach their highest level of academic achievement.

Attentive, knowledgeable, caring teachers seek the right mix of encouragement, support, discipline, and challenge to help students experience success within our school and as members of society. Small classes, averaging 10 students, are a major feature of the School, allowing our teachers to work closely with each student. Faculty members help students develop skills and master the content in their courses. Innovative teaching methods combine with the use of cutting-edge technology to help our students thrive.

We encourage exploration and critical awareness of other cultures and traditions. We believe that to be successful as individuals, students must gain self-confidence and self-mastery, as well as learn social responsibility. Teachers are expected to be role models and guides, both in and out of the classroom.

Each student has their own contribution to make. Graduating from Harvey means that our students have not only found a level of academic success and are well-prepared for college, but they also know how to behave honorably and responsibly in society.

ACADEMICS at HARVEY

Academic Year and Grades

The school year is divided into fall, winter and spring trimesters, each approximately 12 weeks long. Each trimester consists of two marking periods. At the midpoint of each marking period, progress reports may be sent to parents indicating a student's improvement or need for improvement in a particular course. Examinations are given at the end of the fall and spring trimesters, and students are assigned projects to be completed before the end of the winter trimester. Teachers generally hold review periods before each exam, which are two hours in length.

Grades are given at the end of the marking period. Trimester and year grades appear on the transcript.

> There are five letter grades:
> A (superior accomplishments) through D (a minimal understanding of the essentials), and F (no credit)
>
> There are five effort-related grades:
> 4 (superior effort) through 0 (no discernible effort).

Homework

Homework is an essential part of the academic process. The School encourages students to budget their time so that some homework can be completed during the school day. However, most students can expect to spend some time at home working on assignments. To assist students, all teachers post homework assignments on an academic website.

Honors

Academic achievement is recognized at the end of each marking period. Students who earn a 3.3 grade-point average and have no grade lower than a B- (2.7 weighted) are named to the Honor Roll. Students who earn a 3.7 average with no grade lower than a B (3.0 weighted) are named to the Head's List. Students on the Head's List whose averages are 4.0 or higher are designated as Cavalier Scholars and receive a special certificate.

Technology: The Krasne Project

The Krasne Project, named for Charles A. Krasne, *trustee emeritis*, provides cutting edge technology to students and teachers alike, in order to best prepare Harvey students for a rapidly advancing world and workplace. The project's chief goal is to allow faculty to create new and innovative programs, using the newest technology, and get that technology into student hands as quickly as possible, sometimes in just days.

The project provides the latest computers, Chromebooks, iPads, 3D printers and lab equipment. Robotics, Video Production and Graphic Arts are just a few of the academic programs that are available as a result of the Krasne Project.

Extra Help

Extra help is a cornerstone of the Harvey academic program. Although it is a student's obligation to seek additional help when needed, a teacher also may require a student to meet during study halls or other free periods.

MIDDLE SCHOOL at HARVEY

Middle school represents a bridge from the intimate settings provided by elementary programs to the more rigorous of the high school years. Therefore, our Middle School seeks to provide a developmentally appropriate academic program that is both challenging and empowering for young adolescents. It offers an engaging learning environment that encourages students to reach their potential in a broad range of academic and extracurricular pursuits. Middle School faculty members develop skills in students that will help them succeed in high school and beyond. Communication, critical thinking, problem-solving, and collaboration are all areas of focus. Our teachers work diligently to understand the individual learning styles and natural strengths of their students so that they can bring out the best in each of them. Intellectual development takes place by presenting an integrated course of study that focuses on key content areas. Interdisciplinary work is an important aspect of the Middle School curriculum that allows learning to take place across multiple disciplines as students study relevant themes and topics.

INSTRUCTION AND ASSESSMENT

At Harvey Middle School we believe that how we teach is as important as what we teach. We prepare students for continued academic success; perpetuate their love of learning; and inspire them to reach their potential in a stimulating learning environment. Our curriculum balances innovation and tradition, is responsive to the changing world, and is delivered by a faculty who are gifted, attentive, and dedicated to every child's learning experience. Approaches to instruction may include critical exploration, differentiation, project-based learning, inquiry-based instruction, scaffolding, and service learning.

The Middle School uses both summative and formative assessments that are purposefully planned, measure student progress, inform instruction, and maximize learning. Formative assessment provides continuous insight into a student's comprehension and happens while teaching is underway, creating an ongoing stream of information. Summative assessment fulfills the more formal approach of measuring student progress or mastery of a subject at a particular moment. These assessments are measured against expectations set by the teacher, the department, and by best practices in the field.

A typical Middle School academic program includes the following:

Sixth Grade
English
Math 6
Science
Geography
Spanish or Latin
Theater & Fine Arts
Electives

Seventh Grade
English
Pre-Algebra/Algebra
Science
Early America & Goverment
Spanish or Latin
Theater & Fine Arts
Electives

Eighth Grade
English
Pre-Algebra/Algebra
Science
America & the World
Spanish or Latin
Theater & Fine Arts
Electives

ENGLISH

The English curriculum develops thinking and language together through discussion and emphasizes students' ability to communicate in a clear, coherent manner. This communication encompasses reading, writing, listening, and speaking. An integrated approach to instruction allows students to learn and develop these skills centered on a theme or work of literature. Whole class shared novels and independent reading enhances vocabulary and grammar instruction. Multicultural voices are introduced through short stories, poetry, nonfiction works, and plays. Writing instruction is based on the Six Traits of Writing model, which includes ideas, organization, voice, sentence fluency, word choice, and conventions.

ENGLISH 6

Students study developmentally appropriate novels, short stories, nonfiction, myths, and poetry. Instruction and class discussions encourage students to examine ideas related to theme, plot, character, conflict, and setting. Grammar and vocabulary skills are taught using an integrated approach. Throughout the year, students are introduced to strategies in the Six Traits of Writing, focusing on organization and conventions. Written responses encourage them to transfer their thoughts to paper and develop narrative, expository, descriptive, and persuasive writing styles. Literature selections may include *The Wednesday Wars*, *Refugee*, *Freak the Mighty*, and *El Deafo*. An interdisciplinary study of the Hudson River Valley is a highlight of the year.

ENGLISH 7

This course further develops students' reading, writing, and communication skills. Students use resources such as Write Source and the Elements of Literature to support written responses to discussions and literature. In addition, the Six Traits of Writing supports the writing process, with increased emphasis on sentence fluency and word choice. Literary analysis and discussion accompany the reading of traditional and contemporary literature, including *The Outsiders*, *Stargirl*, *A Long Walk to Water*, and *Bronx Masquerade*.

ENGLISH 8

English 8 continues to develop and refine the reading, writing, and communication skills developed earlier in middle school. Students use advanced versions of Write Source and the Elements of Literature, 3rd Course. Higher-level thinking is supported through discussions and written responses to universal themes, plot development, character analysis, and critical reading for literary devices. Students explore short stories, dramatic writings, poetry, non-fiction, and traditional and contemporary novels. Literary selections include *Revolution of Evelyn Serrano*, *One Last Word*, *Animal Farm*, and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

MATHEMATICS

Middle School mathematics guides and challenges students as they transition from concrete thinking to abstract and conceptual reasoning. During these years, students learn the process of mathematical thinking along with the fundamentals that inform it, developing valuable analytical and problem-solving skills. Students are placed in the math class that will provide an appropriate level of instruction. The goal is to encourage students to be successful math learners as they gain the various levels of mastery and independence. Across the math curriculum, instruction highlights abstract and quantitative reasoning, problem-solving, real-life application, and implementation of tools and strategies.

MATH 6

Math 6 focuses on building and supporting the strong foundational skills of mathematics. Daily lessons and investigations are carefully sequenced to develop a spectrum of skills and other concepts incrementally. Units covered during Grade 6 include number operations, proportionality, expressions, equations, geometry, and measurements. A coherent and focused progression builds from each unit to the next throughout the year.

The curriculum covers Rules of Exponent, Scientific Notation, and their applications, including solving word problems. It explores Angle Relationships from intersecting parallel lines, the sum of angles in a triangle, and properties of exterior angles. The focus is on solving equations with variables on both sides, graphing Linear equations, and converting between Standard and Slope-Intercept forms. Students learn to solve Systems of Linear equations using graphing, elimination, and substitution and apply these methods to real-world problems. Transformations on a coordinate plane are studied, including reflections, translations, rotations, and dilations, along with their rules and effects. The curriculum also includes Volume calculations for 3D shapes, properties of Similar Triangles, Functions, domain and range, and Analyzing Scatter plots and Two-way frequency tables.

PRE-ALGEBRA

The curriculum covers Rules of Exponent, Scientific Notation, and their applications, including solving word problems. It explores Angle Relationships from intersecting parallel lines, the sum of angles in a triangle, and properties of exterior angles. The focus is on solving equations with variables on both sides, graphing Linear equations, and converting between Standard and Slope-Intercept forms. Students learn to solve Systems of Linear equations using graphing, elimination, and substitution and apply these methods to real-world problems. Transformations on a coordinate plane are studied, including reflections, translations, rotations, and dilations, along with their rules and effects. The curriculum also includes Volume calculations for 3D shapes, properties of Similar Triangles, Functions, domain and range, and Analyzing Scatter plots and Two-way frequency tables.

ALGEBRA 1

The curriculum focuses on solving complex equations, graphing and solving Compound and Absolute Inequalities, and graphing linear equations in Slope Intercept form and Standard form. It involves analyzing and solving Systems of Equations and Inequalities using multiple methods. Functions are explored through tables, mappings, and graphs, focusing on domain, range, and real-world applications. Polynomials are studied by identifying types, performing operations, and applying these skills to geometry. Quadratic equations are solved using factoring and the Quadratic formula. The curriculum also covers the Pythagorean Theorem, volume calculations for 3D shapes, scatter plots, and graphing Quadratic and Absolute functions. Additionally, it distinguishes between Exponential and Linear functions, graphs exponential functions, and applies growth, decay, and interest formulas to practical contexts.

LANGUAGES

All students entering Grade 6-8 are required to take Spanish. The Middle School places students in the most appropriate language class, allowing them to be successful and to gain levels of excitement and enthusiasm toward learning and mastering the subject.

INTRO TO SPANISH

This introductory Spanish course is designed for students who have minimal experience with the language. It reinforces the four basic language skills of reading, writing, speaking, and listening. It also aims to improve student appreciation of Spanish-speaking cultures. Students will learn common vocabulary terms and phrases, participate in simple conversations, and develop the confidence to move on to the next level of Spanish. Multiple resources including digital and multimedia are used to support student learning.

SPANISH 1

This class is designed for students with prior experience in learning Spanish. More challenging vocabulary and phrases will be emphasized and students will engage daily in conversational Spanish. Continued emphasis will be placed on appreciating Spanish-speaking cultures and understanding the growth of these cultures in America and beyond.

SPANISH 2

This class is mainly conducted in Spanish. Student review and expand upon the grammar and vocabulary presented in previous years. Students study expressions, verb conjugations, direct and indirect pronouns, and sufficient vocabulary to support their continued growth, and oral and written expression. Additionally, students continue to learn about various cultural and historic aspects of the Spanish-speaking world.

SPANISH 3

This class is mainly conducted in Spanish. Student review and expand upon the grammar and vocabulary presented in previous years. Students study expressions, verb conjugations, direct and indirect pronouns, and sufficient vocabulary to support their continued growth, and oral and written expression. Additionally, students continue to learn about various cultural and historic aspects of the Spanish-speaking world.

INTRO TO LATIN

Introduction to Latin is a middle school class designed to introduce students to the basics of the Latin language and ancient Roman culture. The course typically covers foundational Latin vocabulary, simple grammar structures, and common Latin phrases. Students also explore Roman mythology, history, and daily life to better understand the cultural context of the language. The class emphasizes critical thinking and word analysis, helping students recognize Latin roots in English and other modern languages. By the end of the course, students gain a solid linguistic foundation and a deeper appreciation of the classical world.

Note: Two years of a foreign language beyond the Middle School level is a graduation requirement for the Upper School. The Upper School offers Latin, Spanish, and Japanese.

HISTORY

The Harvey Middle School history curriculum aims to equip students with an understanding of what it means to be a citizen in their communities, in our country, and in an increasingly interdependent world. By providing them with an awareness of community, country, and world, we hope to prepare them to emerge as global citizens. Instruction in these classes revolves around inquiry, decision-making, curiosity, and interdisciplinary applications. We recognize that this is a crucial time to help our young people understand what it means to be actively engaged in the democratic decision-making process.

HISTORY 6: GEOGRAPHY

This course begins with a focus on local geography and history. The goal is for students to have a sound understanding of the history and geography of the communities in which they live. Considerable attention is given to the Hudson River Valley as part of an interdisciplinary unit. As the year unfolds, students explore world cultures and the geography of various regions of the world. Class discussions focus on cultural achievements, economic factors, and the religious affiliations of countries and geographic regions. Students study political and physical maps, participate in group projects, and complete journal writings to enhance this experience. Students' understanding of the material is evaluated through assessments, writing activities, and daily homework assignments, in addition to a research project on a specific culture and country.

HISTORY 7: EARLY AMERICA & GOVERMENT

This course provides students with an overview of the Native American experience, colonization by early European settlers, and the western expansion. Significant time is devoted to the Revolutionary War and all its causes and implications.

The fundamental principles of American government are studied, emphasizing the executive, legislative, and judicial branches. Students are also expected to become familiar with the political leaders in their communities and understand the election process. Field trips to local government sites such as courthouses and police stations support these efforts. Expository writing instruction and research skills are points of emphasis throughout the year.

HISTORY 8: AMERICA & THE WORLD

After a review of early 19th-century topics, such as expansion and slavery, students focus, in more detail, on the Civil War, Reconstruction, and the development of American culture and the economy as a result of the Spanish-American War. The course also concentrates on the beginning of the 20th century, exploring the decisions made by the United States at home and abroad. This includes a study of the World Wars and the political decisions made by world leaders. In addition, students learn about the problems and the decision-making processes of America's late-20th-century presidents. Notable projects include a 1960s assignment and a Black History Month presentation. The ability to express oneself verbally and in writing is essential in this class, and students are expected to use primary and secondary sources.

SCIENCE

Middle School science introduces students to broad disciplines of the subject including life science, earth science, and physical science. The curriculum supports and challenges students' intellectual curiosities by providing them opportunities to complete inquiry-based labs and hands-on experiments. Teachers also take advantage of the School's campus to explore plant life, geology, and animal life. Additionally, field trips to local reservoirs, Pound Ridge Reservation, Norwalk Aquarium, and Museum of Natural History support in-class instruction. Science in the Middle School emphasizes hands-on, differentiated, inquiry-based practices that create "aha" moments for students.

SCIENCE 6

In the sixth grade, science instruction includes an in-depth study of life science and physical science. Students are introduced to cell structure and function, reproduction, adaptation, and ecosystems. Physical science topics include the study of heat, matter, motion, light, sound, and color. Sixth graders end the year by studying, building, and launching rockets on campus.

SCIENCE 7

Seventh grade science builds on the physical science and earth science concepts learned in the sixth grade. Students begin to understand and connect the unifying concepts of scientific thought, in addition to making observations and practicing scientific inquiry. Topics include weather, Earth and space, waves, rocks and minerals, and animal/plant structure. The year ends with a unit devoted to biology. Students also study and participate in the dissection of selected organisms.

SCIENCE 8

Eighth grade science continues to build on the study of physical science, chemical science, and life science. Students understand and connect the unifying concepts of scientific thought, in addition to making observations and practicing scientific inquiry. Topics include matter, physical and chemical change, elements, compounds, the Periodic Table, and bonding. Additional topics include light and heat, transmission of light, photosynthesis, chromatography of plants' pigments, solar energy, chemistry, and the study of elements and compounds. The academic year ends with a unit devoted to the study of biology, human anatomy and physiology.

PERFORMING ARTS, FINE ARTS & ELECTIVES

The Middle school electives program encourages students to explore their interests, express their creativity, and develop new skills beyond the core academic subjects. The Performing Arts, Fine Arts, and Electives program offers a dynamic range of courses designed to inspire imagination, promote collaboration, and provide hands-on learning experiences that go beyond the traditional classroom. Whether creating visual art, performing musically, or exploring the world of robotics, students will find exciting ways to grow both academically and artistically. These courses aim to enhance students' creativity and innovation while also inspiring them to build confidence and discover new areas of interest.

UPCYCLE ART

A creative middle school elective that teaches students how to transform everyday discarded items into unique works of art. By combining artistic techniques with environmental awareness, students explore sustainability through hands-on projects like sculpture, collage, and mixed media. The course encourages imagination, resourcefulness, and responsible use of materials. Students learn to see the artistic potential in what others might throw away.

CERAMICS

This class teaches students the basics of ceramics, and they have the opportunity to learn a variety of techniques through different projects. Students utilize different tools and glazing techniques, and they will be introduced to the craft of wheel-thrown pottery. Introduction to traditional and contemporary ceramic arts will be incorporated into the classroom experience.

THE LANGUAGE OF RAP MUSIC AND PERFORMANCE

This elective explores creative techniques of rap music. Students learn to write their own lyrics, develop rhythm and flow, and confidently perform original verses. The course emphasizes self-expression, storytelling, and the power of words to inspire and connect.

CHORUS

Students enhance their ability to sing in tune, sing harmony, read music, and interpret music. Participants perform in the winter and spring concerts; other performance opportunities may arise. The choral program is closely connected to the music program and students of all experiences and abilities are encouraged to become involved.

BAND

Students who have had some prior experience with an instrument collaborate in studying age-appropriate works. The program provides opportunities for collaboration and individualized instruction while enhancing intonation, rhythmic accuracy, dynamics and tonal blend. The band performs at both the Winter Concert and Spring Concert.

DANCE

Dance meets in a professional studio space in the Arts Center and provides students with the opportunity to explore various dance styles, learn techniques, and develop choreography skills. Some of the styles include jazz, hip-hop, modern, and contemporary. Body alignment, posture, and sequencing will be developed and there will be performance opportunities in the dance studio.

ACTING AND DIRECTING

An engaging middle school elective that introduces students to the fundamentals of theater performance. Students explore character development and improvisation, script analysis, blocking, and vocal techniques while working on scenes, short plays, and ensemble-building exercises. The course also offers hands-on experience in creative writing and directing, allowing students to lead their peers and bring their creative visions to life. Collaboration, creativity, and confidence are at the heart of this exciting theatrical journey.

HISTORY OF ROCK & ROLL

This exciting elective takes you on a musical journey through the decades, starting with the birth of rock 'n' roll in the 1950s and rocking all the way through the 1990s. Students will discover how legendary artists like Elvis Presley, The Beatles, and Jimi Hendrix shaped the sounds we still hear today. From electric guitars to powerful lyrics, students will learn how rock music influenced culture, fashion, and even social change.

CINEMA STUDIES

Students learn about the history of film and analyze elements of movies. Themes such as "the hero's journey" and "coming of age" are discussed. Techniques related to cinematography, directing, and acting are highlighted. A focus of the elective is to enhance student appreciation of the art of filmmaking. This elective is offered in the winter trimester.

CURRENT EVENTS

Students explore the events that are taking place in our ever-changing world. As students become familiar with relevant issues impacting our world, they may share opinions and participate in discussions and debates. The class encourages students to broaden their perspective of the world in which they live and see themselves as global citizens. Students are expected to share their thoughts and be respectful of the opinions of others.

DEBATE

Students develop skills related to public speaking and communication. Debate topics related to current events and student interests are studied, researched, and discussed. Instruction related to argument and response are areas of focus. Students have the opportunity to participate in debate competitions with other schools in the region. Extensive time and preparation takes place prior to the debate competitions, which often take place on weekends.

FASHION

This elective covers figure drawing and design, while giving students the opportunity to explore and create their own fashion aesthetic. Students learn to use different media and techniques that are used by fashion designers. This elective is offered in the fall and winter trimesters.

PUBLICATIONS

This class provides students with the opportunity to develop and collaborate on several publications, including the newspaper, The Rambler, and the literary magazine, Equinox. Students also share writings and recordings on our podcast. This elective is offered in each trimester.

ROBOTICS

Students have the opportunity to construct and operate mini-robots using kits that vary in levels of sophistication. Collaboration, creativity, and design are all areas of focus. Students may become involved in VEX robotics, which leads to interscholastic competitions. Students may also participate in robotics as an after-school activity during winter. This elective is offered in the fall and spring trimesters. The Middle School's robotics team has been recognized at both the regional and international level for its work.

SCENE STUDY

Students perform scenes from different genres of plays throughout the course of this class. For each scene, they execute scene and character analyses that influence the choices they make on stage. The class explores several different techniques for actors to use in rehearsal. Students have informal performances throughout the term. This elective is offered in the spring trimester.

Other Aspects of Middle School Academics:

STUDY SKILLS

All students in grades 6th-8th participate in a dedicated Study Skills course that meets several times each week. This course is designed to help students build the foundational habits necessary for a successful middle school experience. Through direct instruction and hands-on practice, students develop essential skills in organization, time management, note-taking, test preparation, and effective study strategies.

INTERDISCIPLINARY UNITS

Middle School teachers often collaborate to focus student learning on a central theme or topic. Community, country, and world are themes that are introduced in sixth grade and emphasized throughout Middle School. For example, the Hudson River Valley is a subject that is studied across discipline areas and each grade level studies the subject through a different lens. Research indicates that interdisciplinary work makes learning more meaningful for young adolescents. This work is supported by creative projects and field trips.

STUDY HALL

Every middle school student has a scheduled study hall built into their academic day. These sessions are supervised by faculty and offer a structured environment for completing assignments, reviewing material, and seeking additional support. Given that students are engaged in campus activities until 4:45 p.m. daily, study hall is a key time for managing academic responsibilities.

TECHNOLOGY

The Middle School embraces the use of technology to enhance learning. All students have access to chromebooks in every classroom. This allows students to use devices in a responsible manner only for academic purposes. The main academic platform that is used for accessing and posting assignments is Canvas, which can also be viewed by parents who wish to support their child's learning as home.

SPEECH CONTEST

In alignment with our school's ongoing emphasis on communication and public speaking, each year the English department sponsors a schoolwide Speech Contest that begins with every student choosing a topic and presenting a short speech before their English class. Based on the quality of their content, form, and presentation, students make their presentations before the entire English faculty, who select approximately 15 speakers for the final round. The culmination of the contest is a formal event held before the entire school, as well as family and guests. Outside judges choose a Middle and Upper School winner. The recipients of these awards are presented with the Wells Speech Cup at the end of the school year.

POETRY RECITATION CONTEST

Each spring, students at Harvey are required to memorize and recite a poem for their English class for entry in the Michael Lopes Poetry Recitation Contest, an annual competition that helps develop an appreciation for poetry throughout the school. Several students are selected from each class to compete in the semifinals of the competition, which is judged by the English faculty. The final competition, which is presented before the entire school, includes the works of many budding poets and makes for an exciting event.

GEOGRAPHY BEE

All Middle School students participate in a spelling bee, which begins with a preliminary written round and finishes with an oral competition that continues until a winner is determined. Students can also participate in the annual National Geography Bee as an activity. Students from our Middle School have annually qualified for the Nationals.

SUMMER READING

In English, the year begins with an assessment of the summer reading assignment. Each student participates in class discussions and then completes a writing assignment in response to the summer reading. Summer reading allows classes to begin the year having studied and reflected upon a common work of literature. This assignment is considered an important launching step into the English curriculum for the year.

1916
Scientia et Veritas

The Harvey School

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