Middle School Curriculum Guide
Grades 6-8

2026-2027

Middle and Upper School
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Wildwood School

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Wildwood School cultivates reflective scholars, bold innovators and compassionate leaders equipped with the skills, ethics and inspiration to transform their world.

Middle School Curriculum: Introduction

Wildwood's middle school curriculum offers every student intellectual and creative opportunities in an active learning environment sustained by teachers who understand and fully support adolescent development. Classes and programs in Humanities, STEM, World Languages, and arts tap into students' natural curiosity while satisfying their growing desire to direct their own learning and make relevant connections between the classroom and the world.

Building on the critical thinking skills developed in elementary school, Wildwood middle school students cultivate an ability to examine and understand complex concepts, find and analyze evidence, and present and share findings. Along with a rigorous interdisciplinary Humanities course, each year of middle school includes mathematics, science, languages, physical education, and a choice of electives. All teaching and learning intentionally supports students as they develop skills in inquiry, information literacy, and self-expression.

Middle School Course of Study

6th grade:	**7th grade:**	**8th grade:**
Humanities	Humanities	Humanities
Mathematics	Mathematics	Mathematics
Science	Science	Science
6th Grade Rotations • World Languages • Electives	World Languages	World Languages
	Elective	Elective
Physical Education	Physical Education	Physical Education
Advisory	Advisory	Advisory

Adding/Dropping Courses

A student may request to add or drop a course for a limited number of days at the beginning of the school year.

Requests to add or drop a course may be made for the following reasons:

- Gaps in the required course load
- Correction due to system errors
- Adjusted placement level for mathematics or World Languages
    - Note: Placement level is contingent on departmental approval, placement diagnostic, completion of prerequisite courses, and/or space in the other level class.
- Desire to take a different elective

Requests to add or drop a course cannot be made for the following reasons:

- Requests for a specific teacher
- Requests for a specific block or section
- Requests for a class with specific peer(s)

Open Add/Drop Period: Up to the End of Week 2 of the School Year

During this period, a student may request to add or drop courses in their schedule. The open period is the only time during the school year when a student may add or drop a new course in their schedule.

Week 3 and On

After the Open Add/Drop Period closes at the end of Week 2, no courses may be added or dropped in a student's schedule. The school may make exceptions in the following circumstances:

- Extended illness or injury resulting in medical leave from school
- Placement of new students joining the school within the first month of the school year

Students are encouraged to consider schedule changes carefully. Changes may not be reversed after they have been finalized or may require shifts in the student's other classes to different sections/blocks and/or different teachers. Additionally, the student is responsible for completing work assigned before their arrival in the new class.

Humanities

Wildwood students study social studies and language arts as Humanities throughout their middle school experience. This interdisciplinary course is team-taught. All classes include literature that complements historic themes to encourage deep engagement. Essential questions connect ideas across language arts and social studies as students discuss historic and modern events, making connections to literary texts or current events. Students work individually and in small cooperative groups, learning to closely collaborate, exchange ideas, and share feedback in a variety of contexts.

Humanities 6: Ancient Civilizations

In Humanities 6, students explore the relationship between social studies, language arts, and culture. During 6th grade, each unit will focus on the ancient world and its influence on our own modern experience: from our earliest ancestors, through the agricultural revolution, to the first civilizations and empires of the ancient world. Throughout the year, students cultivate the skills of being an active reader, a skilled writer, a conscientious researcher, a thoughtful historian, and a critical thinker. Students develop these skills through inquiry and a variety of projects intended to expose students to diverse cultures, civilizations, and voices. The overall goal this year is for sixth graders to use these skills and experiences to better understand the foundations of our society so that they can develop possible solutions to today's issues and understand their role as changemakers.

Humanities 7: Global Perspectives

The units in Humanities 7 will build upon the work of Humanities 6, emphasizing empathy for others through a focus on individual perspectives in a variety of world cultures. Students will deepen their understanding of the world by analyzing moments throughout history in which continuity and change hang in balance. Each unit begins with students developing inquiry questions before gaining relevant historical context about each region. Through a study of fiction and nonfiction texts, students identify and analyze the values and limitations of individual stories as representations of a larger community or culture. Ultimately, students will deepen their understanding of themselves as readers, researchers, writers, historians, and collaborators and will hone their academic skills through a variety of assignments, including research, literary analyses, creative writing, and group projects and presentations. Through the course of the year, students will reflect deeply on who they are within an increasingly complex world and, by the end of the year, will have cultivated stronger collaboration skills that help them understand how their actions can contribute to continuity and change in our global community.

Humanities 8: United States History & Literature

Each course unit of Humanities 8 will explore stories that have been buried or reinterpreted throughout history, considering which voices have been acknowledged, ignored, or silenced throughout the continuing expansion of this democratic republic. Students grow to understand their own rights and responsibilities as citizens, reinterpreting and applying Constitutional principles to a modern world. Through an emphasis on multiple perspectives, students take a deep look at conflicts and compromises of a young nation’s growing pains in units of study on Westward Expansion and Invasion, the Civil War, and Reconstruction. Understanding the struggle for civil rights and racial equality guides students through our selected American literature texts. As students explore examples of justice and injustice in US history, they also apply the UN Sustainable Development Goals to explore equity, sustainability, and social justice issues on a global scale. The vehicle for this exploration is the Into the Wild capstone project, which asks students to engage in an iterative design thinking process. By the end of the year, students have a sense of the elements necessary to effectively engage a specific audience with their own cultivated writing style and voice.

Mathematics

Building on the skills and content mastered during the elementary years, students move through concepts, processes, mindsets, and skills that provide readiness for algebraic thinking. Experiential activities, using visual and kinesthetic approaches, help students broaden their sense of mathematical reasoning. Hands-on equations and project-based learning provide real-world connections to abstract concepts, allowing students to learn answers to the perennial question, “Why do I need to know this?”

Direct instruction coupled with cooperative group work fosters collaboration, creative problem-solving, and an appreciation of multiple means of finding solutions. Students gain confidence as they master concepts through a range of assessments, including peer and teacher feedback, demonstrations of knowledge, and projects. Student projects include components of engineering applications, art, and social justice. Individual courses support the development of additional skills as specified.

Pre-Algebra A

Sixth-grade mathematics is about (1) connecting ratios, rates, and percentages to whole number multiplication and division and using them to solve problems; (2) deepening understanding of division of fractions and extending the notion of “number” to include the system of rational numbers, especially focusing on negative numbers; (3) writing, interpreting, and using expressions and equations; (4) developing an understanding of statistical thinking; and (5) developing an understanding of volume and surface area as part of the Cardboard Regatta Project.

Pre-Algebra B

Seventh-grade mathematics is about (1) developing proportional reasoning through the use of percents to draw comparisons and identify relationships; (2) formulating and reasoning about expressions and equations, including modeling an association in bivariate data with a linear equation, and solving linear equations and systems of linear equations; (3) analyzing two-dimensional space and figures using distance, angle, similarity, and congruence; and (4) developing a sense of how to sample a population statistically to enable reliable inferences to be drawn from limited data.

Algebra

Eighth-grade Algebra students will explore linear, quadratic, and exponential functions, create multiple representations of each function (equation, table, graph, words), and connect these representations with real-life situations. Students will investigate the properties of functions, discover the relationship between inputs and outputs, and understand the significance of domain and range. Students make sense of real-life problems by analyzing the given information, creating equations or inequalities based on the constraints of the problem, graphing the solution set to the equations or inequalities, and interpreting the solution. Students will collect, represent, and analyze statistical data in order to observe patterns and make predictions on future outcomes. Students will explore the shapes and centers of distributions and will calculate and interpret measures of center and spread.

Science

Middle school science students learn to engage in the ongoing process of scientific thinking by asking and reasking questions, collecting and analyzing data, and drawing conclusions rooted in evidence. They learn to apply these skills to engineer solutions to real-world global problems with the aim of cultivating a love of scientific investigation that will contribute to a sense of personal connection to the world around them and their place in it.

Science 6: Physical Science

Sixth grade science is an opportunity to explore the fundamental skills of being a scientist. Students will look at the tools, the writing, the math, and the questions that drive scientific inquiry. The experiments will help them understand the workings of atoms and their relationship with energy. Students will be introduced to the instruments of lab science by boiling and freezing matter in beakers, flasks, and graduated cylinders. As the curriculum becomes more complex, they will explore how atoms give, take, and share electrons in chemical reactions. Students will learn what an acid is and mix acids and bases together to trigger reactions. As the year progresses, they will apply their knowledge of Newton's Laws and potential energy to compete in engineering challenges. In the second semester, the focus will shift to the study of energy types. Students will interact with a "lightning machine" and build working circuits while studying the movement of electrons and charge. They will explore how energy travels in waves and how this applies to their perception (hearing and sight), as well as to how seismic energy travels through the Earth. The year will culminate in a STEM engineering challenge that connects students' learning in math class with the content knowledge and iterative design skills they have learned in science. The goal of the challenge is to race a cardboard boat that carries at least two students across a pool. They will make prototypes, make volumetric calculations, apply Archimedes' Principle, and finally, use scaling calculations to bring their designs to life. Throughout the year, students are assessed on both their understanding of the material and their approach to scientific inquiry, both of which are the foundations of later scientific skill-building.

Science 7: Life Science

The seventh grade life science class offers students the opportunity to explore the natural world in many similar ways that notable scientists have done in the past. Students will learn how to use scientific instruments and methods to complete laboratory experiments, hands-on activities, and projects as part of a team. In the first semester, students investigate science at the molecular level where everything is small. Working their way through cellular structure and function, cell division and replication, and cellular energy processes, students become experts on how and why living organisms function. Throughout the first semester, students complete labs and cumulative assignments that stretch their thinking and challenge their perceptions of the natural world around them. As the year progresses, students explore the subjects of genetics and heredity, revealing how traits are passed down generationally, and how certain traits are distributed in a variety of probable sequences. Students use probability and computational skills to predict the outcomes of various traits in organisms. In the second semester, students build on concepts they learned by investigating evolution and natural selection and interactions of living things from bacteria to plants and animals. The culmination of the academic year is a unit on anatomy and physiology where students learn about the intricate workings of body systems. The year is formative for students building skills they will later refine in high school biology classes. From the smallest unit of life to the largest, seventh-grade life science is a journey to discovery, inquiry and investigation, and collaboration.

Science 8: Environmental Science

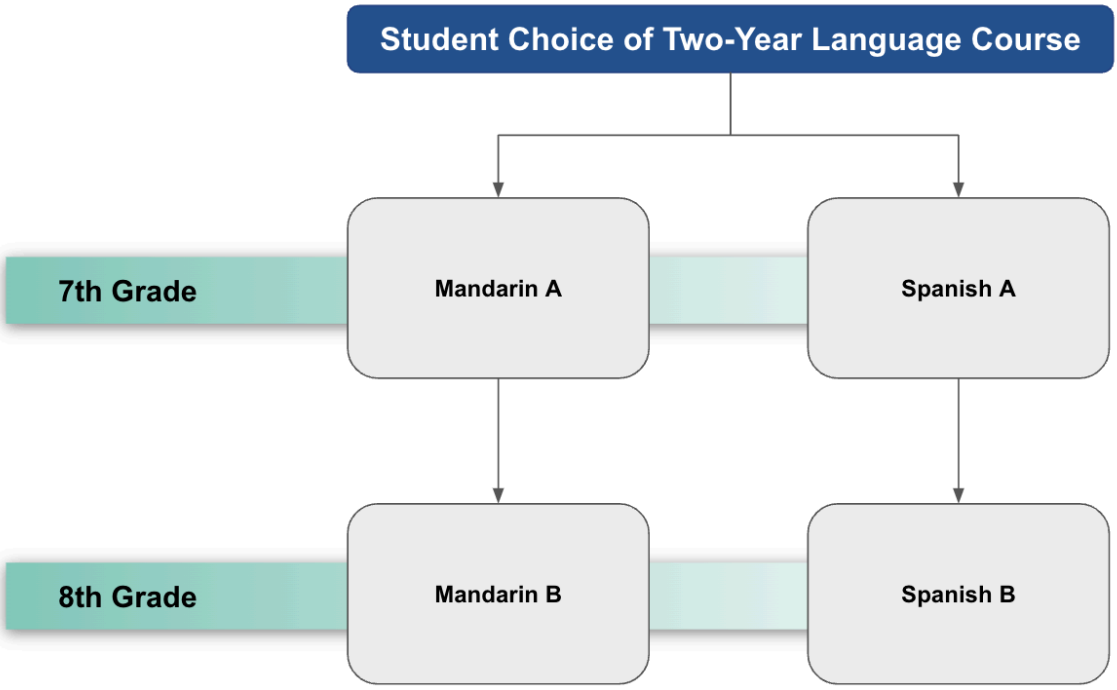
Through experimentation, inquiry, systems modeling, research, and design thinking, eighth-grade scientists investigate environmental systems and global challenges, including biodiversity loss, microplastics, water scarcity, and warming temperatures. Students integrate biology, chemistry,

ecology, atmospheric science, and engineering to explore the connections among natural and human-made systems and their impacts on Earth's biomes. After defining the environment's critical biotic and abiotic factors early in the year, students explore Earth's life-sustaining systems and evaluate how human population growth influences these natural processes. The overarching questions of the course include: What is the environment's value? How do Earth's systems work together to support life, and what happens when those systems change? How can we learn from nature's designs to create sustainable solutions for the future? When it comes to the Earth, what is your responsibility to future generations? As part of their preparation for upper school environmental science courses, students apply their scientific knowledge and skills to assess the health of local ecosystems, engineer potential solutions to environmental issues, educate others on the natural world's value, and inspire others to take environmental action.

World Languages

Middle school students have the opportunity to explore two different World Languages: Mandarin and Spanish. Students then select one of these two languages to study over the next two years in 7th and 8th grades. Students do not switch languages between 7th and 8th grades.

MIDDLE SCHOOL WORLD LANGUAGES COURSE PROGRESSION



MANDARIN

With an emphasis on communication, each course is designed to create opportunities for students to speak, listen, read, and write Chinese in every class. While learning vocabulary relevant to daily life, students work on a range of rigorous projects using visuals to reinforce the spoken language. Units of study include increasingly sophisticated vocabulary and grammatical structures, encouraging students to expand their communication skills. By the end of middle school, students should be able to communicate about basic daily life topics in Mandarin, demonstrating mastery of the language at the novice level.

Mandarin 6

6th Grade Rotations

Part of a quarter-long rotation, Mandarin 6 is designed to introduce students to Mandarin. Through fun, interactive activities and hands-on projects, students will explore the beauty and uniqueness of the language, including pronunciation and tones, hieroglyphics, the fundamental writing system, simple vocabulary, and conversational phrases. This course features a variety of basic topics for students to explore. The topics comprise self-introduction, basic greetings, name and family, numerals, and expressions of likes. In addition, students will get a taste of Chinese culture by celebrating Chinese traditional festivals such as the Mid-autumn Festival, the Lunar New Year, or the Dragon Boat Festival.

Mandarin A

Mandarin A focuses on the Chinese Pinyin system, learning tones, rules of phonetic spelling, and pronunciation through drills. This course uses the Pinyin phonetic system and simplified characters. Using a basic text, along with a variety of supplemental reading and listening materials, students will engage in writing and speaking tasks, as well as projects to help them communicate effectively in a wide range of situations. Chinese history and culture will be woven into each lesson, providing cultural context. Additionally, the course will cover computer skills, not only for using Chinese programs but also as a tool for studying and enhancing Chinese language learning.

Mandarin B

Building on the foundation of Mandarin A, this course further develops students' basic knowledge of Mandarin. Emphasizing listening and speaking, it also enhances reading and writing/typing skills. Students will explore topics such as time, dates, and hobbies. As we continue to celebrate Chinese holidays, students will deepen their understanding of these cultural traditions. They will engage in activities that allow them to draw connections and contrasts between U.S. holidays and Chinese holidays, exploring the similarities and differences in cultural values, customs, and celebrations. This will help them appreciate the rich diversity in how different societies observe important occasions, fostering a broader cultural awareness. By the end of Mandarin B, students will be able to ask and answer questions about personal preferences and availability, as well as express agreement or disagreement about a range of topics.

SPANISH

With an emphasis on effective communication, the middle school Spanish journey offers students many unique opportunities to listen, speak, read, and write in Spanish. As they progress on their linguistic journey, they will learn how to navigate the three modes of communication: interpretive, conversational, and presentational. The goal is for students to use their language skills inside and outside of the classroom in order to better understand themselves, their communities, and the world. In doing so, they explore the connection between language and identity in increasingly complex situations.

Spanish 6
6th Grade Rotations

Part of a quarter-long rotation, Spanish 6 introduces students to the language and cultures of the Spanish-speaking world. The student's language journey begins with communication on familiar topics such as giving and asking for biographical information and preferences, as well as talking about family, the weather, and the date. Students will learn Spanish through repeated, comprehensible messages, presented in stories and songs using high-frequency verbs and other grammatical structures. As they acquire the language, students will begin to narrate events in Spanish. They will also communicate about themselves and others through special-person interviews. In the rotation, students get a sense of the many vibrant cultures of the Spanish-speaking world.

Spanish A

With a focus on using the language for communicative purposes, students will explore the products, practices, and perspectives of the Spanish-speaking world. Their learning will be reinforced through reading a novella in basic Spanish, listening to and studying the roots of Afro-Latin music, writing cards, recording Spanish-language videos for pen pals in Mallorca, Spain, and engaging in interpersonal exchanges with the instructor on topics related to their lives. The course is built upon four units: What do we have in common? What do foodways reveal about a culture? How do music and dance convey identity? Is your city similar to or different from mine? Throughout the year, students will continue to ponder the essential question they started exploring in Spanish 6: How does speaking Spanish help me understand myself and others?

Spanish B

In Spanish B, students will build on previous Spanish courses to reinforce and expand their ability to effectively communicate in Spanish about familiar topics related to themselves, their lives, and their surroundings. They will also deepen their understanding of the perspectives, products, and practices of the Spanish-speaking world, including geography, sports, and cultural events. Their linguistic and cultural competence will be enriched through reading a novella in accessible Spanish, listening to a variety of pop songs, writing letters to pen pals in Mallorca, Spain, and presenting about themselves and their communities. Students reflect upon the following essential question: How does language impact and inform our identities? By the end of Spanish B, students are able to communicate about diverse topics that comprise their daily lives.

Electives

Sixth Grade Rotations

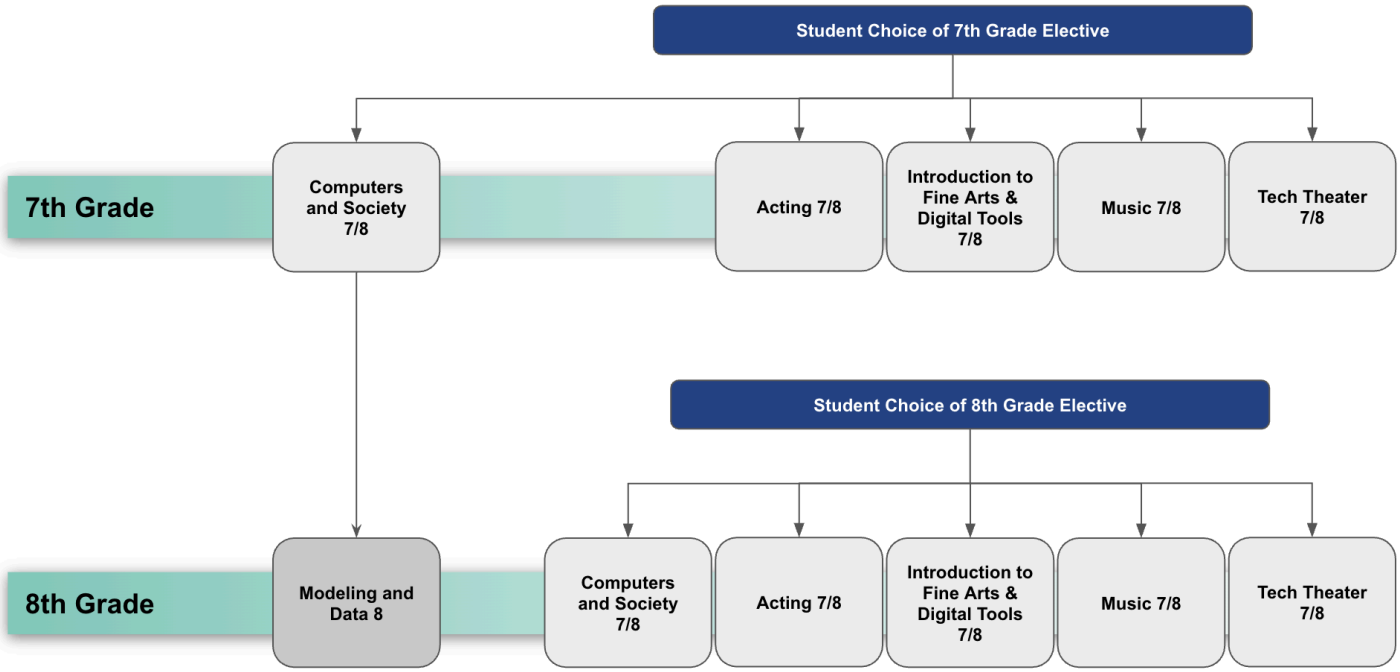
During sixth grade, students rotate through courses each quarter in the 6th Grade Rotations: Music 6, Performing Arts 6, Visual Arts 6, Navigating the Digital Landscape, Digital Storytelling, Computer Literacy Foundations, Mandarin 6, and Spanish 6.

Subject matter from other coursework is woven into a range of arts, technology, and world languages that deepen knowledge and develop creative skills and talents, giving them introductions to skills and content they can choose to extend later in the middle school years.

Electives 7/8

Seventh and eighth graders may then choose from among five electives that range across the arts and computer tech. In 8th grade, students may choose to take a second year of the same elective class or switch to a new elective. One exception is the elective Computers and Society, which can be taken in 7th or 8th grade. In order to take the 8th-grade-only offering (Modeling and Data), students will need to complete the Computers and Society pre-requisite in 7th grade.

Note: Students also select a World Language that is a two-year commitment.



MUSIC ELECTIVES

Music 6

6th Grade Rotations

During this quarter-long rotation, each student learns basic techniques on the ukulele, piano, bass, drums, keyboards, and guitar. Students also sing and can learn trumpet, flute, clarinet, and saxophone, depending on their interests. Together, students create music using ensemble instruments, learning to fill multiple distinct roles of rhythm, melody, and harmony. The chromatic scale and major and minor chords on the piano and guitar are introduced. Students play together and create short rhythmic and

melodic compositions and improvisations. They work in small groups to create original compositions and perform them for the class. They also participate in guided discussions on the role of music in society, ancient and modern.

Music 7/8

Students learn to sing and play in small ensembles. They learn to thoughtfully choose repertoire and to transcribe arrangements as well as create their own arrangements with consideration for their instrumentation and playing abilities. Students learn to notate music and to understand the basics of music theory. Students learn to cover songs and then write their own songs and play them with their groups. Students have the opportunity to try different instruments and are encouraged to do so. Students become acquainted with the elements of music including instrumentation, form, melody, harmony and rhythm by learning music from around the world and from the American tradition of the blues or rock (the focus alternates each year). Music history and conventions of various genres and the basics of notation are introduced. With these new skills, the students write, notate, and perform their own original compositions with lyrics, collaborating in small groups to prepare and practice. Students research artists, along with cultural, historical, and social issues relevant to the music, and participate in discussions using the language and vocabulary of music. Students also listen to a variety of musical styles and learn to appreciate and understand music in its cultural context.

PERFORMING ARTS ELECTIVES

Performing Arts 6

6th Grade Rotations

During this quarter-long rotation, the primary goal of the performing arts class is to introduce students to the fundamental knowledge of acting, as well as a broad survey of different topics in technical theater. Students will perform scenes and monologues, design sets and costumes, and explore experimental forms of puppetry and improvisation. Students gain skills, cultivate their talents, and take risks beyond their comfort zone to understand the demands of dramatic discipline. A nurturing, safe ensemble environment allows students to experience artistic growth.

Acting 7/8

In this hands-on theater class, students dive into acting, writing, directing, and creating original work through theater games, improvisation, scene study, and ensemble work. Students will perform scripted scenes, write and stage their own monologues and short plays, explore bold comedic and dramatic characters, and learn how to break down a script like a pro, all in a supportive space that encourages risk-taking and being themselves. Highlights include participating in the Drama Teachers Association of Southern California theater festival, creating an original ensemble piece centered on activism, developing a character in a full-class production, sharpening audition skills, and completing a student-choice capstone project. Aspiring directors will also have the chance to step into leadership and bring their creative vision to life.

Technical Theater 7/8

This course is an introduction to the basic terminology, skills, and practices used professionally in technical theatre and theatrical design. This course will provide students with introductory knowledge of the design process and the practical application of designs, as well as creative and production team structure, and how to properly communicate your ideas. Through hands-on learning, students will learn technical skills that are applicable in this field, as well as in life in general (i.e. carpentry, working with electrical systems, sound routing, teamwork, communication skills, etc.)

VISUAL ARTS ELECTIVES

Visual Arts 6

6th Grade Rotations

The 6th grade visual arts quarter-long rotation introduces students to the processes of artists and designers through observation, interpretation, and experimentation with ideas and materials. Students build upon prior knowledge and practice artistic conventions in traditional and digital art media. Exploring the signs and symbols in our vast visual landscape, students gain a deeper understanding of the elements and principles of art and design—the building blocks of good visual communication. Projects encourage iterative imagining and give opportunities to express messages and hopes for an envisioned future through art. Lessons incorporate lettering, illustration, branding, and logos and culminate in a personalized digital portfolio for their art journey at Wildwood. Lessons emphasize the notion of artists as storytellers and recorders of their period, with particular reference to the Humanities civilizations under study.

Introduction to Fine Arts and Digital Tools 7/8

In this year-long course, students develop fluency in both traditional fine art and digital media, responding to a series of prompts that build skills in artistic conventions such as composition and color theory. Students learn to manipulate the elements of art and principles of design to convey personal ideas, stories, and designs through exercises in figure drawing, still life, illustrative storytelling, graphics, sculpture, and more. Conceptual development and artistic inquiry is supported by essential questions that deepen students' explorations of realistic, symbolic, and abstract forms of expression. These include: *How is art a reflection of our lives and of our time? What makes a powerful pose?, and How do artists build, borrow, and break tradition?* Students keep a sketchbook to collect ideas and influences and to practice, experiment, and reflect on their creative process. Visual literacy skills are developed through the study of historical and contemporary art references. Class shares and presentations give opportunities to collaborate as an artistic community by articulating artistic intentions and sharing feedback. Students are encouraged to develop individual areas of interest to apply to independent projects. The course can be repeated both years with a rotating curriculum that alternates between a 2D and 3D focus. No prior art experience is required, just a curious mind that is willing to explore and take creative risks.

TECHNOLOGY ELECTIVES

Digital Storytelling

6th Grade Rotations

How can we combine the ancient art of storytelling and digital tools, to learn about ourselves and connect with others? For thousands of years, people have shared stories to pass down knowledge, spark imagination, and connect with one another. In this quarter-length course, students will explore how artists tell stories by combining words and images in creative and powerful ways. Using both analog and digital methods, including sketching, collage, Procreate, drawing, zine-making, graphic storytelling, and animation, students will develop skills in sequential storytelling, panel composition, and the integration of text and image. Experimenting with visual styles and creating original stories that communicate ideas, emotions, and experiences will invite students to share their unique voices through the work they make in the studio.

Navigating the Digital Landscape

6th Grade Rotations

How do we navigate the digital landscape with a critical lens in informed, positive, and healthy ways? In Navigating the Digital Landscape, a quarter-long class, students will explore various technology tools to support digital creation and production, investigate and dissect information and news sources

with a detective's lens, and consider ways to use technology in healthy, constructive, and humane ways. Students are inheriting the most complex digital landscape in human history and together we will explore the tools necessary to engage successfully in our digital lives.

Computer Science Foundations
6th Grade Rotations

The quarter-long rotation introduces students to user centered design within the world of computing, as students move beyond simply using technology to making meaningful decisions about its design and development. Throughout the course, students explore how computers can impact our lives, covering computer systems, user-centered design, and programming basics. Students develop logical thinking and problem-solving skills while exploring the creative ways they can use computing technology to express themselves and connect with others.

Computers and Society

This course, open to 7th and 8th graders, provides a broad introduction to computer science, with a focus on human centered computing in the design and development of digital works. Students investigate how computing technologies and society interact, from computing's origins in code breaking, to the development of the Internet, to emerging technologies and their social impacts. Throughout the year, students create apps for social impact, justifying their design choices and development, create and publish websites for the world to see, and explore new ways that computing devices can interact with the physical world, such as wearable technology and e-textiles. Students also consider how different roles of designers, adopters, and citizens allow them to direct the path of technological development, discussing various frameworks for making informed and ethical choices in those roles.

Modeling and Data

This 8th grade-only course builds on the foundation of the previous course, Computers and Society, focusing on the growing role of data and modeling in modern computing. Students investigate how data-based models help us to understand and affect the world, and where those models can break down. Over the course of the year, students develop websites that collect data from users and respond in appropriate ways, design computational models of basic games, create non-player characters using classical artificial intelligence, and use sensors to build systems that collect data from the environment. They also explore the fundamentals of machine learning and its relationship to statistical reasoning, and how these data-based models are used across disciplines. The course culminates in a student-driven project that allows for deeper study of a particular interest using the skills developed over both computer science courses.

Physical Education

The Physical Education program at Wildwood School is designed to educate minds, develop healthy bodies, and promote positive attitudes towards physical activity, fitness, and sports. Our students will learn the physical, mental, and emotional skills that will provide them the confidence, ability, and desire to be physically active for life in a wide range of activities.

6th and 7th Grades

The main focus in 6th and 7th grade physical education is on team building and collaboration, as well as developing basic skills. Framed by the essential questions, “How does a team work best together?” and “What is my role on my team?” students gain awareness of productive collaboration and positive team play. Students are taught about healthy competition, respecting their opponents, and how to demonstrate good sportsmanship in all situations.

Physical coordination and general sports skills are enhanced as students rotate through a variety of units, such as cooperative games, invasion games, multicultural games, net sports, diamond sports, target games, and rhythmics/fitness. Emphasis in every unit is on “peer coaching” so that students with higher skills can help others improve and develop more confidence in themselves, while still continuing to grow their own individual skills.

8th Grade

In 8th grade physical education, students will use the skills they’ve developed over the past two years of middle school to independently participate in a variety of games and activities. Life skills like responsibility, leadership, and integrity are reinforced every day in class. Students also explore lifetime fitness activities and develop confidence in designing, teaching, and participating in a variety of workouts. Emphasis is placed on why we train, how to train, and how to make adjustments based on individual needs. Towards the end of the year, students will engage in choice-based units, where they apply their skills and interests.

Middle School Advisory Program

Advisory is essential at Wildwood School, grounded in research showing that strong relationships with caring adults support student success in school and in life. Every Advisory group is led by an intentionally trained educator who knows students well and supports their growth, serves as an integral link between school and home, and facilitates learning and connection. Each Advisory session, through guided and informal learning, helps students develop an understanding of who they are, how they feel, how they think, what they can do, and why.

GRADE LEVEL ADVISORY SKILL DEVELOPMENT

6th Grade: Transitioning to Middle School

Whether students continue from Wildwood's elementary school or are new in 6th grade, the transition to the middle and upper campus is new for everyone. In Advisory during this important time, students focus on the scaffolds to support their growth through middle school and beyond: academic goal setting, long-range project planning, managing independent work time, building systems for organization, deepening metacognitive skills, developing civil discourse skills, and establishing relationships with new adults and mentors.

7th Grade: Mind and Body

Seventh grade is a year of continued transition from childhood to adolescence. With the transition comes the possibility of starting fresh as students gain an increased understanding of themselves and others. This thread of the Advisory program explores the personal changes they are experiencing as well as the choices they increasingly face during middle school and beyond. Through group discussion, writing, simulation games, and role-plays, each student has the opportunity to develop self-confidence, learn to manage emotions, cultivate friendships, and learn decision-making and stress-management skills. Topics covered include mindfulness and stress awareness, communication, values, relationships, the teen brain, media literacy, puberty, and drugs and alcohol.

8th Grade: Gateway Preparation

Eighth grade students conclude their middle school experience at Wildwood with their 8th Grade Gateway Presentations. These presentations provide an opportunity for students to demonstrate fluency and mastery of their learning by exhibiting a specific body of academic work reflecting on their middle school experience. In preparation, students are individually coached by advisors in reviewing their academic work portfolio, identifying strengths and stretches, setting goals, and demonstrating readiness to advance to the next grade level. Gateways, delivered at the end of the school year to teachers, family, and peers, are a bridge between the work completed in one division and the work that is about to begin in the next.

Technology and Library Resources

In middle school, presentation skills are enhanced as students learn to use and gain fluency in software that helps them organize and showcase academic projects. All middle school students are introduced to the fundamentals of cloud computing with the use of Google Drive, allowing the use of collaborative apps such as Google Slides, Google Docs, and Google SketchUp.

Students also use managed devices, which allow for deeper learning without distractions. The delayed introduction to the responsibility of having their personal laptops for school in middle school is developmentally appropriate. MacBooks and the tech-integrated curriculum allow students the many benefits of using a computer for learning and will ultimately prepare them to manage their own devices in high school when they have developed stronger decision-making skills.