

St. Mark Middle School Course Description 2026-2027

A note about electives:

St. Mark offers a variety of elective choices across the middle school grade levels. These offerings may fluctuate year to year based on student interest and the expertise and availability of our staff. St. Mark provides the opportunity for families to select their **preferences** for these classes. Completing a course request **does not guarantee** that a student will be scheduled for a class. Some higher level elective courses require placement, such as Spanish I, or require an essay which is reviewed, such as Yearbook or Iron Lions. But above all, academics are always scheduled first and sometimes preferred electives occur during a scheduled academic class.

This year rising, 7th and 8th grade students will complete their course preferences on a designated day during homeroom through Plus Portals. This change will allow the scheduling process to begin earlier and will help to eliminate gaps in student schedules due to non submissions.

New to St. Mark families may see our front office or use a linked PDF on the school website to complete a hard copy of a course request form. All forms should be returned to Mrs. Kelly Parks, Assistant Principal, which can be a hard copy or scanned email.

8th Grade

Rising 8th grade students will be able to select 3 elective classes. Electives for the upcoming school year will rotate on a trimester schedule and will meet 3 days a week.

Each 8th grader is required to participate in the following classes: Spanish, Research, Living in Virtue, and PE.

Year round electives:

Spanish I

This course is designed to prepare students to communicate and understand basic Spanish by acquiring functional vocabulary, everyday expressions and foundational grammar with complex sentences. It aims to help students develop the four fundamental skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing at a novice level. In addition to learning the language, students will also begin to study the different countries and become familiar with cultural practices and celebrations which are common in the Spanish-speaking world.

Students will be notified of placement in Spanish I in early summer. Students in this high school level class will meet five days a week for the full year. Students who place in Spanish I will not have the option of choosing additional electives.

Band: This class develops musicianship skills and instrumental techniques through the performance of both classical and popular music. This class requires registration through MACS. Band classes are year long classes that will meet at least twice a week as a full grade level. Students will also meet in small group lessons during the week. **Students in Band will not have the option of choosing additional electives. Students in Band can not accommodate Spanish I in their schedules**

Vocal Performance Ensemble: This is a performance-based class that will meet for the year. Students will work with aspects of musical theater, liturgical, and singing across genres that will challenge them to reach new notes! Students fine tune their art with practice with whole group chorus, harmonizing and solos. Members of the ensemble will have opportunities to participate in Mass, school vocal programs and may even compete in the Carowinds Festival of Music! **Ensemble is a full year class- if students select this class their schedule will not accommodate another full year elective such as Band or Spanish I**

8th grade Trimester Electives-

Yearbook II : This course picks up from Yearbook I, which covered the fundamentals of yearbook design. Students in this advanced section will be required to complete an Encore Participation Form. This form is due by **Friday, May 8th, in hard copy**, to the front office. Forms will be available through the homeroom teacher via Google Classroom. Yearbook II will be responsible for the production of the school yearbook and will require more in depth involvement by participating students. Students will focus not only on photography, but also design, layout, marketing and sales. Students who have already experienced Yearbook I in 7th grade are encouraged to continue in Yearbook II. Students with experience from Yearbook I preferred.

Art 8: Students will be exposed to various art elements such as color theory, design and work with a variety of artistic mediums. Projects and mediums vary grade to grade.

Journey of Choices: A class designed specifically for rising 8th graders. Journey of Choices is intended to offer a project based learning setting for students to learn the basics of financial literacy/ budgeting/investment. In addition, students will explore career and entrepreneurial options as they prepare for high school and beyond.

Iron Lions: An advanced physical education class focusing on fitness and higher-level team games. Students in this class must be willing to push themselves, set goals, and be accountable for their progress. This counts as an elective and will be in addition to the regular 8th grade PE class. If you are interested in this course, you must complete an Encore Participation form. Forms will be available through the homeroom teacher via Google Classroom. This form is due by **Friday, May 8th, in hard copy**, to the front office for review by the teacher.

Theater 8 : In this class, each student will discover and analyze popular scenes throughout musical history, create a variety of characters, and learn about the roles not only of actors, but tech, design and behind the scenes.

Digital Design:- The world is filled with so many different forms of art- including digital art! In this elective, you will explore this unique genre of art found in everything from advertising to animation, photography and beyond. Students will learn to integrate different forms of media to communicate ideas effectively.

Critical Thinking through Games: NEW Class! This course introduces students to the strategic and engaging games of Mahjong and Rummikub, both of which combine elements of pattern recognition, critical thinking, and probability. Mahjong is a traditional tile-based game that challenges players to build specific sets and sequences, while Rummikub involves organizing numbered tiles into runs and groups. Through guided play and skill-building activities, students will develop problem-solving abilities, improve concentration, and strengthen mathematical thinking. Additionally, these games encourage patience, planning, and social interaction, making the course both intellectually stimulating and enjoyable for middle school learners.

7th Grade

Rising 7th grade students will be able to select 3 elective classes this year. Electives for the upcoming school year will rotate on a trimester schedule and will meet 3 days a week.

Each 7th grader is required to participate in the following classes: Spanish, Speech, Living in Virtue, and PE. Students will be provided with a study hall.

Year Round Electives:

Band: This class will continue to develop musicianship skills and instrumental techniques through the performance of both classical and popular music. This class requires registration through MACS. Classes will continue to be year long and meet at least twice a week as a full grade level and in small group lessons during the week. **Students in Band will not have the option of choosing additional electives.**

Vocal Performance Ensemble: This is a performance-based class that will meet for the year. Students will work with aspects of musical theater, liturgical, and singing across genres that will challenge them to reach new notes! Students fine tune their art with practice with whole group chorus, harmonizing and solos. Members of the ensemble will have opportunities to participate in Mass, school vocal programs and may even compete in the Carowinds Festival of Music! **Ensemble is a full year class- if students select this class their schedule will not accommodate other electives.**

Trimester Electives:

Theater 7: This course is an introduction to theater. Each student will discover and analyze popular scenes throughout musical history, create a variety of characters, and learn about the roles not only of actors, but tech, design and behind the scenes.

Art 7: Students will be exposed to various art elements such as color theory, design and work with a variety of artistic mediums. Projects and mediums vary grade to grade.

Yearbook I: This introductory course explores the fundamentals of yearbook design. Students will begin to learn the basics of photography, design, layout, sales and marketing for the production of the school yearbook. This course requires the student to complete an Encore Participation Form. This form is due by **Friday, May 8th, in hard copy**, to the front office. Forms will be available through the homeroom teacher via Google Classroom.

STEM 7: STEM will be a project based learning environment that will promote creative solutions to class generated problems. Students will collaborate on research, model and project design.

Critical Thinking through Games: NEW Class! This course introduces students to the strategic and engaging games of Mahjong and Rummikub, both of which combine elements of pattern recognition, critical thinking, and probability. Mahjong is a traditional tile-based game that challenges players to build specific sets and sequences, while Rummikub involves organizing numbered tiles into runs and groups. Through guided play and skill-building activities, students will develop problem-solving abilities, improve concentration, and strengthen mathematical thinking. Additionally, these games encourage patience, planning, and social interaction, making the course both intellectually stimulating and enjoyable for middle school learners.

6th Grade

Rising 6th grade electives for the upcoming school year will rotate on a trimester schedule and will meet 3 days a week.

Each 6th grader is required to participate in the following classes: Spanish, Study Skills, Living in Virtue, PE, Art, Music and Computer. Students will be provided with a study hall.

Band: This class will continue to develop musicianship skills and instrumental techniques through the performance of both classical and popular music. This class requires registration through MACS. Band classes are year long classes that will meet at least twice a week as a full grade level and in small lesson groups during the week. **Since this class is year round, students will not be rotated into music or art.**

Music 6:

Students will spend time throughout the trimester exploring aspects of musical history, theory along with an introduction to theater and choral elements. This class is meant to be a survey of various interests to prepare students for elective options in 7th and 8th grade.

Art 6:

Students will be exposed to various art elements such as color theory, design and work with a variety of artistic mediums. Projects and mediums vary grade to grade.

Living in Virtue:

Living in Virtue covers a variety of topics to help our students develop socially, personally and spiritually. Units include goal-setting, internet/technology safety, college and career exploration and discussing healthy living with physical and mental health."

Computer:

A continuation of practical skills that highlight typing, Word, PowerPoint, Excel. With a focus on digital citizenship.

Study Skills:

A course specifically designed to meet the needs of our students transitioning into middle school. Areas of knowledge will include: how our memory works, short/long term planning and organization, styles of note taking, and approaches to study habits.

PE:

Personal goal setting through physical fitness with a focus on team building, life skills and sportsmanship.

Spanish 6:

This course is specifically designed for students with little to no prior knowledge of the language, providing a foundation in phonics, simple vocabulary, basic grammar, and conversational phrases. Along with language skills, students will also learn about Spanish speaking countries.