



2026-27 MIDDLE SCHOOL COURSE CATALOG

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Dana Hall reserves the right to make changes to its course offerings and programs based on enrollment and staffing availability. The School makes every effort to satisfy each student's course requests; however, scheduling limitations may require a student to enroll in alternate courses. In particular, if a student decides to change one or more of their course requests after June 15, there is no guarantee that they will be able to enroll in other alternate choices.

MIDDLE SCHOOL OVERVIEW

Philosophy

The Dana Hall Middle School provides its students with an environment that stimulates intellectual curiosity and a love of learning. In varied academic settings, students are encouraged to master skills and form habits that prepare them for life-long learning.

The School realizes the unique needs of early-adolescent girls and is sensitive to their overall development. In addition to developing a strong foundation in academic skills and knowledge, Dana Hall's Middle School program encourages students to explore and develop talents in technology, the performing and visual arts, athletics, and leadership. It fosters in students high levels of self-esteem and self-confidence by recognizing individual and group accomplishments.

Dana Hall raises individual and community consciousness by placing an emphasis on community service, integrity, and high standards of conduct.

Framework of the Middle School Program

The Middle School program is designed to reflect and accommodate the skills, interests, and developmental levels of fifth, sixth, seventh, and eighth graders. The skills and content taught in the Middle School build upon the students' foundation as they move through the Middle School program, a program that is well-articulated, sequential, and designed to best prepare the students for a successful Middle School experience and a successful transition to the Upper School program.

Overarching themes form the framework for the skills and content taught in the Middle School. Each piece of the framework, highlighted in the list below, is incorporated into all four grade levels. Students gain greater facility in each skill area as they move from the fifth grade through the eighth grade.

Awareness
Exploration
Inquiry and Investigation
Connection
Analysis
Reflection
Application

Interdisciplinary Curriculum – a Plug-In Model

The Middle School schedule was created to foster the integration of skills and content across disciplines. It includes protected times for teachers to meet on a weekly basis for planning, a critical component of this model. The visual arts, performing arts, and technology teachers, the librarian, and the learning specialist each provide lessons within academic classes to support and enrich the students' learning experience. Examples of lessons have included the learning specialist instructing Spanish students on effective ways to memorize tenses; the computer science teacher supporting science students as they code their own computer games, in order to demonstrate their understanding of conductive materials; the librarian teaching information literacy skills in preparation for the students' work on a Social Studies research project; and the visual arts teacher leading an activity on botanical drawings in Science class.

MIDDLE SCHOOL ACADEMIC POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Homework Guidelines

It is expected that students plan and use their time wisely both in and out of classes, allowing them to successfully complete their schoolwork and maintain a healthy balance in their lives among their academic, extra-curricular, and social commitments.

The School assists students in planning their use of time in a number of ways: teachers announce assignments, projects, and tests well in advance; all tests and projects are posted; a customized Dana Hall planner is required of all Middle School students, and clear homework guidelines are provided.

Students should anticipate 1-2 hours of homework nightly in fifth and sixth grade and 2-3 hours of homework nightly in seventh and eighth grade.

Dana Hall School provides homework guidelines with the understanding that the times given are averages, and that the pace at which students complete their work will vary with the individual.

In addition to working on any assignments that fall under the above guidelines, students should use weekends and study halls to read ahead, study for tests, catch up on missing work, and work on long-term assignments.

Dana Hall defines the extended winter and spring vacations as times to recharge outside the restrictions of the regular academic routine. Vacations provide a time to re-establish contact with friends and family and an opportunity to explore intellectual, artistic, and cultural interests. With this in mind:

- Long-term assignments given before vacation will not be due until at least one week after the end of the vacation.
- Teachers will assign no more than one day's worth of homework over the Thanksgiving Break and long weekends.

Please note:

- Reading assignments may be given by English teachers over the extended winter and spring vacations. (Assignments given over vacation periods in courses other than English must be approved by the Director of the Middle School.)
- In preparation for class discussions in the fall, students are required to read specific books over the summer as prescribed by the faculty of the English Department.

Guidelines for Reduced Homework Days

There are times during the school year when attendance at evening activities is required of students. On other days, religious holidays or other pre-approved events make it difficult for students to complete work that is due the next day. On those days when Middle School students are unable to do a full load of homework because of identified school activities or religious holidays, they have a "Reduced Homework Day." Homework will be assigned in no more than three subjects.

MIDDLE SCHOOL ACADEMIC RESOURCES

Dana Hall is committed to providing a variety of academic resources to assist all students in accessing the curriculum and finding success. All students are required to use the Dana Hall *Student Planner* or a digital planner to record all assignments weekly. In fifth and sixth grades, all students take Learning Strategies 5 and Learning Strategies 6. These courses offer instruction in skill areas, such as organization, note-taking, and reading comprehension.

Math Lab

Middle School students can access comprehensive math support and enrichment in our combined Middle School/Upper School Math Lab. Students can drop in without an appointment to receive one-on-one or small-group assistance.

At Math Lab, students can:

- Review classroom concepts and get help with homework.
- Receive feedback and prepare for upcoming tests or quizzes.
- Play math games and explore special interests beyond the standard curriculum.

MS Math Lab Schedule 2026-27:

Tuesdays and Thursdays 3:45 - 4:45 pm.

Before School (final schedule will be determined and shared at the start of the academic year)

Conference Period

Held three days per week, Conference Period is a school-wide study period during which no classes, or non-academic student activities are scheduled. The period is designed to:

- support students as they engage in Dana Hall's academic program
- allow all students regular access to the various academic resources available on campus
- provide protected time for student/teacher conferences
- provide a time for students to study, work on assignments, prepare for class and complete make-up work
- provide a time for students to organize materials and plan out their time effectively

MIDDLE SCHOOL CURRICULUM

SUMMARY

	<u>Class Meetings per week</u>
Fifth Grade	
English	5
Math	4
Science	4
Social Studies	4
Computer Science and Technology	2
Chorus	2
Dance	1; 1 trimester
Library Skills	1; 1 trimester
Learning Strategies	1; 1 trimester
Studio Art	2
Forum	1
Physical Education	1
Sixth Grade	
English	4
Mathematics	4
Physical Science	4
Social Studies	4
Computer Science and Technology	2
Digital Literacy and Research Skills	1
Performance Workshop: Dance, Music, and Theatre	1; by trimester
Chorus	2
Studio Art	2
Learning Strategies	1
Forum	1
Seventh Grade	
English	4
French, Latin, Mandarin or Spanish	4
Mathematics	4
Life Science	4
Social Studies: What Does it Mean to be "American?"	4
Art 7 Workshops: Music, Costume Design, and Studio Art	2; by trimester
Music Ensemble	2
Forum	1
Eighth Grade	
English	4
French, Latin, Mandarin or Spanish	4
Mathematics	4
Earth Science	4
Social Studies	4
Art 8 electives	2; by trimester
Music Ensemble	2
Forum	1

ENGINEERING AND COMPUTER SCIENCE

Fundamentals of Computer Science and Technology 5

This course introduces students to academic technology at Dana Hall and to fundamentals of computer science. Students build fluency with software applications and explore the ways iPads, laptop computers, and other devices can be used to support their learning. They are encouraged to identify the differences between public and private information, to think critically about their own decisions, and to become responsible digital citizens. As students learn to write computer code, design games, and program a robot, they develop a vocabulary for fundamental concepts in computer programming. Through hands-on projects, including newspaper design, students are encouraged to embrace the many ways technology and computer science are integrated in the world around them.

Fundamentals of Computer Science and Technology 6

Students develop proficiency in the use of iPads and computers, and they build fluency with specific software applications while integrating concepts from other sixth-grade courses. During Trimester I, students explore the use of their iPads for organization, note taking, reading, and presentations. They identify the differences between public and private information and the decisions required to be responsible digital citizens. During Trimesters II and III, students develop their problem-solving and critical-thinking skills as they create their own computer games or stories in Scratch, and learn how to apply the problem-solving process to many different kinds of problems. They use a variety of presentation methods, such as online journals, movies, and screencasts to develop stories and tutorials. Students also practice touch-typing, design spreadsheets, and finish the year programming robots.

ENGLISH

The Middle School English curriculum is designed to teach students to be sensitive readers, thoughtful writers, and effective speakers. Close reading and writing skills are emphasized through instruction in the use of textual evidence to support ideas. Students write frequently and are encouraged to embrace the process of revision in developing their ideas. Creative writing opportunities invite students to reflect upon personal experiences as they explore various genres. Students learn to be more confident, articulate speakers through class discussions and public speaking activities. In addition, students learn and review grammar, mechanics, and vocabulary at each level.

English 5

Fifth-grade English builds the foundational skills and strategies for reading comprehension and written expression that will serve students throughout their middle school years. Students strengthen both literal and inferential reading comprehension as they read novels related to the immigration-themed social studies content, such as Karen Hesse's *Letters from Rifka*. As the fifth grade strives to build an inclusive, safe community, students explore issues related to class, privilege, prejudice, bullying, and friendship in their discussions of novels like Phyllis Reynolds Naylor's *Faith, Hope, and Ivy June* and Katherine Applegate's *Home of the Brave*. A third of the year is devoted to nonfiction reading and writing skills, practiced through a research project in which each student chooses their topic. Students enhance their oral skills through class discussions, debates, and presentations. Writing instruction draws on students' enthusiasm for self-expression, providing many opportunities to develop their skills as expository, persuasive, and creative writers. Grammar, vocabulary, and spelling are taught as tools that foster effective communication and expression.

English 6

The English 6 curriculum includes the study of literature, creative and expository writing, vocabulary development, and grammar skills. Students read literature in a variety of genres, including fantasy, realistic modern fiction, historical fiction, and poetry. Representative texts include Lois Lowry's *The Giver* and *One Last Word* by Nikki Grimes. While studying novels, students explore theme, character development, foreshadowing, and conflict; while studying poetry, they discuss structure, theme, tone, and the author's message. Students read two books of their own choosing each trimester and discuss them in informal book talks with the Middle School librarian. Throughout the year, students write stories and poems, incorporating the literary elements studied in class. Students also write beginning essays based on the literature and learn to defend a point of view with supporting details and examples. Vocabulary development has two goals: students learn new words from the literature read in class, with the emphasis on improving reading comprehension, and they study Greek and Latin roots. In grammar and skills lessons, students identify parts of speech and review basic writing conventions. In all these activities, the development of critical thinking is fostered, along with a love for literature and the written word in all its forms.

English 7

The English 7 curriculum includes the study of literature, creative and analytical writing, vocabulary development, and grammar skills. Texts studied correspond to the theme of "finding your voice." Works may include Veera Hiranandani's *Night Diary*, Pedro Martin's *Mexikid*, Louisa May Alcott's *Little Women*, Anne Frank's *The Diary of a Young Girl*, and Traci Chee's *We Are Not Free*. Students read and report on free-choice reading selections regularly. Writing instruction focuses on the writing process, from gathering ideas and drafting outlines to following assigned structures and using evidence from the text to support ideas. There is an emphasis on revision and editing, both independently and in a workshop setting.

Creative writing opportunities focus on poetry. Vocabulary lessons focus on words from the assigned texts and build on previous work with Greek and Latin word roots; lessons are completed through an online, game-based vocabulary learning tool. Grammar lessons build on previous knowledge and are taught in the context of writing and vocabulary learning.

English 8

The English 8 curriculum includes the study of literature with an emphasis on close reading and analysis. Works may include Darcie Little Badger's *Elatsoe*, Elizabeth Acevedo's *Clap When You Land*, George Orwell's *Animal Farm*, the essay collection *This I Believe*, and William Shakespeare's *Much Ado About Nothing*. Students read classic short stories and free-choice selections as well. Writing assignments invite students to undertake creative and personal writing in addition to analytical and persuasive writing. Projects include a personal essay and autobiographical speeches written for the end-of-year Moving Up Ceremony. Vocabulary lessons focus on words from the assigned texts and build on previous work with Greek and Latin word roots; lessons are completed through an online, vocabulary learning tool. Grammar lessons help students identify and correct common errors as they compose more sophisticated sentences.

LIBRARY AND RESEARCH SKILLS

Library Skills 5

The Library Skills course introduces the fifth grade to the space and resources available in the Helen Temple Cooke Library. Students meet once a week with the middle school librarian and work toward navigating the physical library and the library's digital assets. In collaboration with other major subject classes, students walk through the phases of the research process, learning to think critically and evaluate information sources. The course also addresses the 21st century skills of digital citizenship, media literacy, and news literacy. In addition to exploring nonfiction and informative texts, students discuss and share books as part of the library's mission to foster a lifelong appreciation of literature for pleasure and personal growth.

Digital Literacy and Research Skills 6

The Digital Literacy and Research Skills course teaches sixth-grade students how to conduct research and navigate the digital world. In collaboration with research projects in other academic classes, students walk through the research process and learn best practices for selecting and citing reputable resources and extracting and organizing information. Students will also learn about digital and media literacy using real world examples, exploring mis-and-disinformation by evaluating the kinds of photos and claims they encounter online regularly. Finally, students learn basic AI literacy, including what AI is, how to use it, its potential drawbacks, and how to use it ethically.

MATHEMATICS

The Dana Hall Mathematics Department cultivates mathematical thinkers who are prepared for the challenges they will face in a dynamic world. Students succeed when they are appropriately challenged; thus, we provide differentiated instruction. Collaboration, the utilization of technology, and investigative tasks are some of the tools used to encourage students to be resourceful, questioning, curious, independent, and confident mathematical thinkers. We seek to inspire students to build connections between mathematical topics, to other disciplines, and to the world around them. We encourage perseverance in problem-solving using iterative, logical, and creative thinking. Students investigate patterns, data, geometric figures, graphs, numbers, functions, and applications. Dana Hall fosters a rigorous program of study, and ensures that every student has the support needed to succeed by providing the time, space, and resources to enhance their understanding.

Preparation for continued mathematics study at the high school level is a goal of Dana Hall's Middle School Math Department. Students develop an understanding of the concepts and a proficiency in the skills needed as the foundation for further math studies. Placement into math courses for seventh and eighth grade is made by the Middle School Math Department, the Middle School Math Coordinator, and the Math Department Head.

Math 5

This course is designed to transition students to middle school mathematics and build confidence and number sense. Through a variety of activities and by using estimation, algorithms, and alternative strategies, students strengthen their conceptual understanding and practice in whole-number computation. Students gain experience with multi-digit multiplication and division, fractions, and decimals. Throughout the course, students hone their skills in problem-solving and logic-building; an emphasis is placed on connecting learning to real-world contexts.

Math 6

This course strengthens students' number sense while exposing them to concepts that will prepare them for pre-algebra and algebra topics. Students build skills with decimals, fractions, percentages, ratios, signed numbers, and geometric reasoning. Skill development is embedded in problem-solving activities to encourage critical thinking. There is increasing exposure to abstraction and algebraic reasoning. Students learn to work together, to communicate their thinking, and to persevere through challenges.

Foundational Pre-Algebra

This course allows students to solidify their arithmetic skills while also being exposed to new pre-algebra topics in preparation for Upper School-level math courses. A variety of activities help students develop conceptual understanding and apply mathematical rules to their problem solving. Topics include integers, rational numbers, exponents, algebraic expressions and equations, inequalities, applications of proportions and percentages, and the geometry of two-dimensional and three-dimensional figures.

Pre-Algebra

This course transitions students from arithmetic to algebra, preparing them for Upper School-level math courses. The focus is on the basic principles of algebra and geometry. Topics include algebraic expressions, operations with rational numbers, solving equations and inequalities, exponents and roots, the geometry of two- and three-dimensional figures, the Pythagorean Theorem, and probability. Problem-solving investigations challenge students to develop critical thinking skills. (*Open to students*

who have completed Math 6 with a minimum grade of B and with permission of the Mathematics Department.)

Transitional Algebra

This course focuses on establishing a strong foundation of mathematical and problem-solving skills in order to prepare students for Algebra I in ninth grade. Topics include rational numbers, solving equations and inequalities, linear functions, systems of equations, angles, and the Pythagorean Theorem.

Algebra I

This course is an Upper School-level algebra course that explores algebraic concepts through quadratic functions. Topics include algebraic expressions, equations, inequalities, functions (linear, absolute value, exponential, and quadratic), systems of equations and inequalities, exponents, and polynomials. Emphasis is placed on graphing and problem-solving skills. Because students often work in groups, they have ample opportunities to explain their reasoning and to encounter various approaches. Some 7th-grade students may be ready to take this accelerated course. *(Open to students who have completed Pre-Algebra with a minimum grade of B-, or to students who have completed Math 6 with a minimum grade of A, with permission of the Mathematics Department.)*

Geometry

This Upper School course covers traditional topics in geometry, emphasizing discovery along with the development and application of algebraic skills. Topics include the Pythagorean Theorem, parallel lines, similar triangles, congruent triangles, an introduction to trigonometry, circles, area, and volume. The course includes work with formal geometric proofs. *(Open to students who have completed Algebra I, and with permission of the Mathematics Department.)*

PERFORMING ARTS (*curricular*)

The Middle School Performing Arts program prepares students for the more specialized and intensive courses in the Upper School, and it offers students an appreciation of the skills and excitement of performing. All students are exposed to music, theatre, and dance in ensembles and in Performing Arts classes.

In the fifth and sixth grades, all students take the same classes. In the seventh and eighth grades, students begin to specialize and explore specific performing arts areas in more depth. Students may choose to dance as a co-curricular option or be part of a cast or crew in the Middle School play or musical.

Grade 5

Dance

5th Grade Dance is an exploratory, movement-centered class in which students use guided improvisation and structured movement tasks to develop confidence, focus, and ensemble skills. Students investigate fundamental movement concepts such as shape, space, dynamics, and spatial awareness, with an emphasis on creativity, problem-solving, and intentional movement. The course supports physical coordination, creative thinking, collaboration, and self-expression and serves as a foundation for future dance study. (*This course meets once per week, during the school day, for one trimester.*)

Grades 5 and 6 Chorus

The 5th and 6th students come together to form this choral group. The Chorus sings a variety of music while learning about breathing, intonation, and reading music. Chorus performs throughout the academic year, including a featured performance in the annual Revels production. (*This course meets twice per week for the full year.*)

5/6 String Ensemble

The 5th and 6th grade string ensemble is open to violinists, violists, cellists, and double bassists with at least one year of experience and the ability to read sheet music. Under the Music School strings faculty leadership, the ensemble learns and performs works flexibly arranged and tailored to accommodate varying playing levels and instrumentation. This develops technique, musicianship, teamwork, and ensemble skills by exploring and playing repertoire that ranges in genres and styles, from the Western classical music tradition to the present day. Students hone their skills in performance, leadership and ear-training. Students should be supported by private lessons on their instrument in addition to the ensemble, at Dana Hall School of Music or outside of Dana Hall. This year-long ensemble meets once per week for 45 minutes, after the Middle School co-curricular block. (Additional tuition required.)

Grade 6

Workshops

The Performance Workshops are taught as seminar-style classes. Each workshop meets one day per week for one trimester.

Dance

Dance Workshop is a creative, ensemble-based course that introduces students to foundational movement concepts through exploration, collaboration, and performance, while building community and confidence through shared creative projects. Students develop body awareness,

musicality, and expressive intent as they learn how dances are created, practiced, and shared with an audience, with an emphasis on creativity, cooperation, and thoughtful reflection.

Music

Music Workshop studies the concept of rhythm through aural repetition, notation, dictation, and improvisation. Students play rhythmic games and learn to read, write and improvise rhythm patterns through the lens of bucket drums, culminating in a final project.

Theatre

Students gain an understanding of the key elements of theatre: focus, imagination, collaboration, and communication. Culminating projects, including workshopping plays and scene work develop an appreciation for the creative process.

Grade 7

Workshops

Seventh graders take one trimester each of music, theatre, and visual arts. These courses meet two days per week.

Costume Design

In this theatre workshop, students engage in character driven, collaborative projects. Through explorations of theatre terminology, superstitions, costume design, and playwriting, students develop a clearer understanding of how a play is created from concept to performance.

Music Composition

Students will be introduced to the art of composition through the use of Garageband as well as various web-based tools. Through listening, studying, and analyzing a varied selection of music, students will begin to understand the basic fundamentals of musical structure and form. Students will cover concepts of musical contour, question/answer phrases, and basic chord progressions. Overall, students will be given the tools to be able to express themselves through their own original music. Students will explore how music can be a powerful tool for expressing and communicating emotions and ideas on both a personal and societal level.

Grade 8

Workshops

In eighth grade, students take one trimester-long Performing Arts workshop and one trimester-long Visual Arts workshop. In the remaining trimester, students choose another workshop in either the Performing or Visual Arts. These courses meet two days per week. Students indicate their preference for placement in the following workshops:

In the Director's Chair: Directing and Acting Workshop

Students focus on stage direction, acting, and scene design. Each student directs a scene from contemporary dramatic literature. Activities include individual and group acting and directing exercises, individual and group in-class performances, peer response sessions, and viewing and discussion of performance clips from notable directors.

Introduction to Technical Theatre Design

Artistic creativity and hands-on work combine in this introductory course, which explores the backstage world of theatre. Students will delve into the creative aspects of production and design, focusing on prop fabrication, scenic painting, basic sewing, and introductory woodworking. Using these skills and more, students help create the magic of Bardwell Auditorium's mainstage productions. Students may enroll in this class multiple times. The topics covered in this class are varied and will change from trimester to trimester; with each additional trimester, students will add creative and practical skills to their toolbox.

Musical Theatre

In this class, students will be learning about musical theatre and its importance as an art form. Students will learn about the history of musical theatre and be able to view excerpts of various shows starting with early examples all the way up to the current popular shows. Various styles and musical characteristics of particular musicals will be explored and discussed with the chance for students to learn specific songs both as an ensemble member as well as a soloist. Some basic singing technique and music reading will be covered and will culminate in an informal performance at the end of the trimester.

Step It Up: Dance Composition and Performance

This course invites students to explore dance as a form of creative expression, communication, and interpretation. Students develop foundational skills in choreography, movement exploration, collaboration, and performance while learning how dancers generate ideas and make artistic choices. Students practice observing, reflecting, and responding to artistic material through movement, strengthening their ability to connect ideas, emotions, and intention to physical expression. Emphasis is placed on creativity, problem-solving, teamwork, and thoughtful decision-making, helping students grow as confident movers and reflective young artists.

Public Speaking

In this course, students learn how to effectively organize their thoughts, maintain focus on the main idea, and articulate their points clearly. These acquired skills are not only beneficial for public speaking engagements but also highly applicable in one-on-one interactions with peers and when communicating within a team.

Grade 7 and 8 Ensembles

Students choose to participate in one of the following music groups. Middle School performance ensembles may perform at informal showings each trimester as well as at the spring all-school concert. This course meets twice per week for the full year. In addition, students who take lessons on a string instrument and play at an advanced beginner level may audition for the 7/8 Strings Ensemble.

Chorus

Chorus is a performance ensemble that sings a variety of music ranging from folk songs to musical theatre pieces to neo-classical arrangements. Intonation and music theory are key elements of this ensemble.

Beginning Piano / Keyboard

In this class, students will learn beginning piano technique on keyboards with the goal of being able to play melody and harmony with both hands. Basic piano skills will include proper hand position, scales and chord progressions in major and minor keys. With basic technical exercises,

students play and read through repertoire pieces. Students will learn solo repertoire for short informal performances IN class at the end of each trimester and are encouraged to learn pieces both by ear and also through reading notation.

Ukulele Ensemble

This ensemble does not require any previous ukulele experience or ability to read notation; it is geared towards beginners. Students will learn how to read standard music notation as well as tablature. They will learn to tune their ukuleles, play scales, read and play a melodic line, and read and strum several different chords. Students will work both as a large ensemble and in smaller chamber ensembles, culminating in projects on songs of their own choosing. For these small group projects, students will create their own arrangements, decide how the melodic line is played or sung and invent their own strum patterns. This ensemble performs in the All School Music Concert the 3rd or 4th Thursday in May as well as Informal Showings and class recitals throughout the year.

String Sisters Ensemble (7/8 Strings Ensemble)

Violinists, violists, cellists, and double bassists with 2+ years of experience and the ability to read sheet music come together as a dynamic performance ensemble. Under the Music School strings faculty leadership, the ensemble learns and performs works flexibly arranged and tailored to accommodate varying playing levels and instrumentations. This develops their technique, musicianship, teamwork, and ensemble skills by exploring and playing repertoire that ranges in genres and styles, from the Western classical music tradition to the present day. Meeting and rehearsing twice a week, students hone their skills in performance, leadership and ear-training. In addition to the ensemble, students should be supported by private lessons on their instrument at Dana Hall School of Music or outside of Dana Hall. Performance opportunities include events such as Family Weekend, Middle School Informal Showings, and collaborative music department events, and additional school performances. (Informal audition required. Additional tuition required.)

Dragon Fire Brass Ensemble

The Dragon Fire Brass Ensemble is a musical group made up of trumpets, trombones, and tubas. Prior experience on brass instruments is not required. Beginners are welcome and encouraged! Students in this ensemble will learn the intricacies of playing a brass instrument of their choosing, read musical notation, and work together on exercises and pieces, culminating in performances throughout the year. (Additional tuition required.)

Private Music Lessons

Dana Hall students, regardless of previous music experience, may enroll in private music lessons through the Dana Hall School of Music. Instruction is offered in voice and a wide variety of instruments, including piano, violin, viola, cello, double bass, guitar, drums, flute, clarinet, trumpet, French horn, oboe, saxophone, trombone, harp, electric guitar, electric bass, and erhu. Private music lessons take place once per week at the Dana Hall School of Music and are scheduled after school for Middle School students. Dana Hall music faculty members are professional musicians and educators drawn from the Boston area, and they tailor private lessons to address the learning style and goals of each student, from the beginner to the advanced student aspiring to a career in music. Numerous recital opportunities are available to students throughout the year. Students and their families may also enjoy music faculty and guest artist performances at Beveridge Hall throughout the year. Students may enroll in private music instruction over

multiple years. *(Open to students in grades 5-12. Full year. Ongoing registration. Additional music tuition charges apply. Please visit the Music School portion of the Dana Hall website at www.danahall.org for more information.)*

SCIENCE

The study of natural science is an effort to observe and describe the world we see around us every day. The science curriculum at Dana Hall is therefore designed to develop observational, experimental, and problem-solving skills, and endow students with the confidence to formulate and answer their own questions concerning the natural world. Given the underrepresentation of women in many science-related careers, a strong foundation in the natural sciences is especially important for young women seeking leadership roles. The science program at Dana Hall fosters the development of the students' understanding of the natural world and their role in it, their ability to apply the methodology of science, and their awareness of the impact of science on society. Courses are designed to be challenging and encourage responsibility, independence, and precision of thought among the students. The sequence of Dana Hall's courses highlights the interconnectedness of the natural sciences and allows a student to apply the knowledge she has gained in previous years. Traditional classroom and laboratory work provide students with the sound background needed for the future study of science, medicine, or engineering.

Grade 5 Science

Fifth-grade scientists are encouraged to let their wonder and curiosity guide them through topics such as properties and changes in matter, human impact on Earth's systems, and matter and energy in ecosystems. During daily course meetings, students are asked to think about the physical world around them creatively, critically, and quantitatively. Topics of study are anchored in real-world contexts and problems, and experiential learning and fieldwork on and around the Dana Hall campus are integral to this course. Using hands-on experiments and activities, fifth graders practice the scientific method by creating hypotheses, collecting data, examining cause-and-effect relationships, making observations about their investigations, and suggesting possible solutions.

Grade 6 Physical Science

Sixth-grade science emphasizes observation, critical-thinking, measurement, and experimental skills. Students investigate topics in the physical world around them such as simple machines, motion, forces, and energy. Sixth graders develop their abilities to ask questions, look for patterns, record and analyze evidence, and draw conclusions. Through hands-on building challenges, such as the construction of catapults, water wheels, parachutes, and battery and solar powered cars, students apply scientific principles and develop problem-solving and engineering skills. Group work, reading comprehension, and the effective use of technology are also important components of the course.

Grade 7 Life Science

Life Science focuses on the study of living things. Major topics include biodiversity, classification, the plant kingdom, bacteria and viruses, cellular structure and processes, Mendelian genetics, and human physiology and body systems. There is an emphasis placed on experimental design. Students learn to ask sound scientific questions, plan and carry out controlled experiments, and collect their own data. They analyze their data and communicate their findings in the form of written lab reports. Throughout the year,

students participate in long- and short-term experiments and hands-on activities, including a nature journal.

Grade 8

Earth Science

Earth Science focuses on the study of the inorganic components of our planet and universe. Major topics include geology, oceanography, meteorology, and astronomy. Through their study of the Earth's seasons, the moon's phases, plate tectonics, and basic principles of physics, students improve their understanding of the physical world around them. Students also gain confidence and competence in group problem solving, and in collecting, manipulating, interpreting, and presenting data.

SOCIAL STUDIES

Social Studies courses in the Middle School foster an appreciation of both Western and non-Western worlds. In addition to the study of United States history, each student investigates a number of regions around the world. Students examine social and cultural developments, the history of political institutions, and the interaction of traditional and modern societies. Teachers ask students to read closely, think critically, write persuasively, present powerfully, and collaborate effectively.

Grade 5

Immigration, Identity, Community, and Belonging

This course focuses on how people define and create identity as individuals and as members of communities. Stories of individual and group movement help students appreciate the similarities and differences between immigration experiences and of cultures around the world. Students learn about the three branches of government, how they interact, and why the checks and balances system is a key component of democracy in the United States. Units about immigration through Ellis Island and Angel Island provide historical context for discussions and investigations of modern immigration patterns. Throughout the course, each unit involves exploration of relevant literature and primary sources as well as opportunities for field trips, cross-disciplinary projects, and experiential learning. Students develop critical-thinking, organization, and interpretation skills through conducting research, writing reports, and giving oral presentations. The curriculum also emphasizes the skills of listening, questioning, visualizing, making connections and inferences, synthesizing, and comparing and contrasting.

Grade 6

Rise of Ancient Civilizations

The sixth grade course opens with an introduction to the tools that historians and other social scientists use to study the past. Students build an understanding of historical units of time and world geography to prepare for a year-long exploration that begins with the migration of early humans in the Paleolithic Era and the journey over tens of thousands of years across continents. Students examine the impact of the Neolithic Revolution during which the introduction of agriculture promoted more complex societies. Through a study of selected civilizations that developed across time and region, we investigate the impact of geography and study the defining features of each civilization, noting patterns as well as variations. Our studies stretch from the first advanced civilization of Mesopotamia to ancient Egypt, Greece, China, and the Americas. Students gain an appreciation of each civilization's rich history and culture through the exploration of art, architecture, and everyday artifacts. They build understanding through the reading of selected texts and primary sources. Critical thinking and research skills are developed through a variety of projects; and students learn to navigate a variety of sources including databases in preparation for written work, oral presentations, and debates. When students leave sixth grade, they do so with an understanding of the contributions of ancient civilizations and their enduring impact on modern society.

Grade 7

What Does it Mean to be "American?"

In this course, we study U.S. history and identities using a variety of secondary and primary sources, including stories, laws, art, music, and speeches. In the fall, topics include Indigenous regions of the Americas, European exploration, the colonial period and American Revolution, a study of the Constitution and the compromises and demands of creating a new government, and the structure of the government. Topics for the winter trimester cover westward expansion and its effects on both white populations and marginalized groups such as Indigenous Americans, Chinese immigrants, and enslaved people.

Additionally, students explore the economic, political, and personal realities of slavery, the abolitionist movement, the women's rights movement, and the Civil War. In the spring, explorations of the post-Reconstruction struggle against Jim Crow discrimination prepare students for a more global consideration of movements for human rights in the eighth grade. The final project of the year asks students to engage with a famous example of protest art from the 20th or 21st Century, research its historical context, and analyze the goals and effectiveness of the piece.

Grade 8

Identity and (In)justice: A Case Study Approach to Social Justice

The year begins with a study of major world religions from an historical and modern standpoint. Students then explore case studies of social justice and injustice, applying their knowledge of world religions into their understanding of the identities, beliefs, and decisions made within the case studies. We begin with the U.S. Civil Rights Movement, providing a bridge from the 7th grade course into the 8th grade material. We study the anti-Apartheid movement in South Africa, including Nelson Mandela's leadership as South Africans fought to achieve justice and restore human rights. We analyze the roles of both nonviolent and violent protests as well as different conceptions of reconciliation and justice. We then study the movement for Indian independence from British colonialism, including the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi and the controversial and tragic Partition of India and Pakistan. Finally, we learn about the actions of victims, perpetrators, bystanders, and resisters during the Holocaust, and the year culminates with a research project into hidden Holocaust stories. Throughout the year, students use a blend of primary and secondary sources and a variety of media for study and research.

VISUAL ARTS

The Middle School Visual Arts curriculum builds the students' fundamental visual arts skills while fostering an appreciation for art and culture. Visual Arts classes encourage students to observe, think creatively, make decisions, problem solve, collaborate, create, analyze, and reflect throughout their art-making experience. Students are offered additional opportunities in the Visual Arts through Art Club and interdisciplinary projects that connect learning in the arts with the other subject areas. Furthermore, student artwork is exhibited throughout the Middle School.

Grade 5

Exploration and Expression

Fifth-grade Visual Arts focuses on examining the world and self through a creative lens. Students engage in projects that foster creativity and develop the skills of envisioning, observation, expression, perseverance, risk-taking, and connecting. Students experiment with different media and art forms to discover the various techniques and multitude of ways they can represent the world around them and reflect on their experiences. Units covered include drawing, painting, two- and three-dimensional design, color relationships, and printmaking. Students explore art both in and outside of the classroom through on-campus outings and visits to the Dana Hall Art Gallery. This course also explores art related to the ancient civilizations studied in Social Studies.

Grade 6

Studio Art Immersion

Students participate in art-making experiences that emphasize careful observation, critical thinking, and creative exploration. They are introduced to a variety of media and approaches to making art. Units covered include drawing, two- and three-dimensional design, color relationships, and printmaking. Students also look at historical and contemporary artists to broaden their appreciation and understanding of the visual arts. Sixth-grade visual arts class meets twice a week for the full year.

Grade 7

Fundamentals of Art

Students build upon and solidify their knowledge of art terms and techniques. They focus on refining their imaginative and observational drawing skills through a variety of two-dimensional projects. Students continue to practice applying the elements and principles of design in their artwork while engaging in new concepts and materials. Seventh-grade visual arts class meets twice a week for forty minutes for one trimester.

Grade 8

Electives

In eighth grade, students choose one performing arts elective and one visual arts elective. In the remaining trimester, they choose either a performing arts elective or a visual arts elective. Each class meets twice a week for one trimester.

Ceramics

Students are introduced to fundamental hand-building techniques for working in clay. They learn the processes of wedging, pinching, coiling, modeling, and hollowing clay to create three-dimensional forms. Students are also introduced to the basics of throwing clay on the pottery wheel and the use of low-fire glazes.

Drawing

Students work on honing their skills of observation and the rendering of form. They concentrate on shape, value, and composition. Students are introduced to projects of greater complexity that challenge them to problem solve and reflect.

Painting

Students explore different styles and techniques of painting, and they experiment in watercolor, tempera, and acrylic paints. They continue to investigate and strengthen their understanding of composition, color relationships, and expression through both individual and collaborative painting projects.

WORLD LANGUAGES

As Dana Hall strives to make its students true global citizens, the language program emphasizes the skills of language acquisition. In seventh grade, each student chooses French, Latin, Mandarin, or Spanish as the language she will formally learn. She can then continue the study of that language in the Upper School or choose to begin a new language. Overall, students develop communication skills through frequent conversational activities, make global connections, and expand their cultural understanding of the world.

Grades 7 and 8: Level 1

At the end of sixth grade, students choose to study French, Latin, Mandarin, or Spanish. They are expected to complete the two-year course so that they are prepared to enter the Upper School at Level II of the language. Regular visits to the Language Lab enrich the students' aural/oral proficiency. Each trimester, projects provide additional interest, depth, and motivation as students explore the language as it relates to the greater world around them.

French

French 1A and French 1B cover a traditional Level I curriculum designed to provide students with a comprehensive foundation in French. Students master fundamental grammar concepts, build essential vocabulary, and learn idiomatic expressions that enable them to use the target language spontaneously and authentically in speaking, reading, writing, and aural comprehension. Learning to communicate confidently in French on a basic level is a priority. A variety of innovative technology tools are used regularly as resources in practicing speaking and listening skills. In grades 7 and 8, short readings are introduced and there are frequent writing assignments and oral presentations. Additionally, throughout the two-year course, students explore the history, geography, and culture of the French-speaking world through projects and discussions.

Latin 1

Latin teaching has changed considerably in recent years, incorporating more modern language-acquisition techniques to help learn this vibrant language. As outlined in descriptions for the modern languages, Latin classes draw upon all language skills: the reading that is traditionally emphasized in Latin classes, as well as the essential skills of writing, listening, and speaking. Students will begin building a foundation of Latin vocabulary concerning mythology, homes, family, and public spaces, which will support them through the higher levels of Latin. They will begin using Latin phrases and sentences, and writing in Latin. Cultural understanding will be created through reading and discussion. Students will develop novice language skills and learn about Roman culture. (Open to students in grades 7-12. Full year. 1 credit.)

Mandarin Chinese 1 (MS)

In this beginner-friendly course, students dive into the basics of Chinese, mastering the phonetic system (tones and pinyin) and the art of Chinese character strokes. Through engaging and interactive classroom activities, students will build confidence in speaking, listening and reading, with a strong focus on perfecting tones and understanding the cultural context behind the language.

By the end of the course, students will be equipped with essential language skills to ask and answer questions, narrate events, express their likes and dislikes, and make short oral presentations—all in Mandarin! They'll also explore short reading and writing exercises, opening the door to the beauty of Chinese language and culture.

Spanish

Spanish 1A and Spanish 1B cover a traditional Level I curriculum designed to provide students with a comprehensive foundation in the language. Students master fundamental grammar concepts, build essential vocabulary, and learn idiomatic expressions that enable them to use the target language spontaneously and authentically in speaking, reading, writing, and aural comprehension. Learning to communicate confidently in Spanish on a basic level is a priority. A variety of innovative technology tools are used regularly as resources in practicing speaking and listening skills. In grades 7 and 8, short readings are introduced and there are frequent writing assignments and oral presentations. Additionally, throughout the two-year course, students explore the history, geography, and culture of the Spanish-speaking world through projects and discussions.

CO-CURRICULARS

The Middle School schedule is designed to balance core academic courses with robust visual and performing arts classes. The last period of the day is devoted to fitness, athletic, theatrical, and club options, which change each trimester. Every Middle School student participates in a co-curricular during each trimester of the year.

During a week-long add/drop period at the start of each co-curricular season, students may request to change their co-curricular selection; requests will be granted only if there are open spots in the desired activity.

FITNESS/ATHLETICS

Dana Hall's athletic program is an integral part of the School's curriculum, and as such, it provides opportunities for instruction, participation, and growth. The athletic program strives to promote healthy competition and embody the highest ideals of sportsmanship and respect. Students are encouraged to compete at the highest level that their ability and performance will allow. Accordingly, Dana Hall provides appropriate levels of competition for each athlete.

The Fitness/Athletics Department meets the challenges of its athletic philosophy through the cultivation of the following values:

- achieving individual and team goals
- diligent preparation, fair play, and self-discipline
- exercise and competition that contribute to the development of an athlete's mental, emotional, and physical well-being
- age- and skill-appropriate coaching and competition at every level

Middle School Teams

- Every student is provided an opportunity to play on a team. In some sports, there may be cuts due to space.
- The emphasis at this level is on instruction, development, teamwork, fair play, and sportsmanship.
- Participation is a key component for Middle School teams. At this level, it is anticipated that all team members will play in every game. Middle School A policy states that all students will get playing time but not necessarily equally. Middle School B policy states that all students should get equal playing time.
- When there are large numbers of students participating in a sport, there may be multiple teams based on ability level.
- In those sports where a Middle School program is offered, exceptionally proficient eighth-grade athletes in that sport may petition the Director of the Middle School and the Director of Athletics, Health, and Wellness to participate on an Upper School varsity team.

- When the School does not offer a particular sports program in the Middle School, Middle School students may be eligible for the Upper School team at the discretion of the head coaches, in consultation with the Director of the Middle School and the Director of Athletics, Health and Wellness.

Fall Team Sports

Cross Country (US team)
Field Hockey
Soccer
Volleyball

Winter Team Sports

Basketball
Fencing (US team)
Ice Hockey (US team)
Squash
Swimming (Intramural or US team)

Spring Teams Sport

Lacrosse
Softball
Tennis

Additional Elective Courses Per Trimester:

Dance
Fitness
Instructional Squash
Riding (times to be determined on an individual basis)

Rock Climbing
Introduction to Swimming

Independent Study in Athletics

The School maintains a strong belief in the value of participating in Dana Hall team sports and ensemble programs. However, we recognize that on occasion, a Middle School student's involvement in an organized athletic activity not offered at Dana Hall may be significant enough to provide a similar learning experience. Students must be active participants in their activity for at least eight hours per week and receive approval from a committee chaired by the Director of Athletics in order to qualify for Independent Athlete status. Students may not submit an Independent Athlete proposal to start an activity which is new to them.

EQUESTRIAN PROGRAM

Individual Lessons

The Karen Stives '68 Equestrian Center staff makes a concerted effort to accommodate each student's lesson requirements so that riding may be incorporated into even the busiest schedules. Students will be placed into lesson time slots of 45 minutes for private and semi-private lessons, while group lessons meet for at least 1 hour.

Co-Curricular Option

Students who elect to take riding for co-curricular credit must take two lessons per week along with horsemanship, which is a comprehensive lecture series on Wednesdays.

Teams

Dana Hall offers two interscholastic competitive riding teams: IEA (Interscholastic Equestrian Association) and AEL (Athletic Equestrian League). Both teams welcome riders of all abilities, including beginners. IEA team members are required to attend a minimum of two lessons per week. AEL team members must attend a minimum of one lesson per week and participate in our biweekly horsemanship lesson.

PERFORMING ARTS (*co-curricular*)

Dance

The Middle School co-curricular dance program cultivates technical proficiency while fostering a deep appreciation for dance as a performing art. Through weekly instruction in Ballet, Modern, Jazz, Tap, and Hip Hop, students engage in a comprehensive curriculum that balances rigorous technique with the study of dance history, anatomy, and creative expression. This inclusive, high-energy course welcomes dancers of all experience levels, providing frequent opportunities for students to showcase their growth in performances throughout the year. *(Open to students in grades 5-8. This course meets four times per week during the Co-Curricular period. Students enroll per trimester.)*

MS Fall Play

During the first trimester, students in Grades 5-12 have the chance to join the cast of the Fall Play. Through a series of exercises, games, and scene work, participants will enhance their understanding of character development, emotions, and stage presence. The cast convenes daily for rehearsals, affording everyone the opportunity to refine their acting abilities, collaborate with fellow actors, and work towards a common goal. The program culminates in performances showcased both during school for the entire Middle School and audience and in an evening performance.

MS Winter Musical

Each year a new musical is chosen and is a collaboration among the theater, dance, and music departments. Just like the Fall Play, the musical is presented to the entire Middle School during the day and an evening performance, both with a live band. Participating in the Winter Musical allows students to express themselves, foster new friendships, and craft memories that will last a lifetime.

Technical Theatre

In technical theatre, students bring the magic of the stage to life, from lights and sound to stage management and prop design. Technical Theatre thrives on teamwork and communication, making it a collaborative effort where creativity can flourish. Joining the tech crew for the MS Fall Play or MS Winter Musical offers a chance to learn valuable skills and play a vital role in the production.

CLUBS (*co-curricular*)

Students who choose a co-curricular option that meets fewer than four days a week (such as rock climbing, fitness, instructional squash, and instructional swim) will do a club one or two days a week. Clubs for the 24-25 school year included art, Mandarin, creative writing and Makerspace. Clubs for the 25-26 school year will be determined based on student interest and faculty availability.

SPECIAL PROGRAMS

Forum

Dana Hall is committed to providing developmentally-appropriate health, wellness, and character education at all grade levels. This education is offered through regular meetings with an adult Forum facilitator, speakers, and special programs. The Forum curriculum is based on the belief that adolescents are faced with challenging issues and ethical dilemmas and are able to make more appropriate and healthier decisions and personal choices when they are well educated and provided with a process for self-reflection. The Forum program provides opportunities for discussion on important adolescent topics under the themes of community, communication, identity, self-awareness, and self-care and encourages the expression of each student's opinion while establishing an environment of respect for the diversity within our community and world.

Community Service

As part of Dana Hall's commitment to preparing students to be citizens of the world, the community service program challenges students to move beyond their own experiences within their communities by engaging in sustained, meaningful, hands-on work that improves the lives of others. As part of this challenge, we empower students to develop and use leadership skills. Throughout the year, Middle School students have opportunities to be involved in volunteer service projects both within and outside of the Dana Hall community. Recent service activities in the Middle School have included participating in a school-wide food drive, packing meals for people facing food insecurity, and reading books to younger students at nearby elementary schools.