



Connecting Learning To Life



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SSIS

— MIDDLE SCHOOL —

Program of Studies 2011 - 2012



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Principal's Message

February 22, 2011

Dear Middle School Students and Parents,

This edition of the 2011-2012 Middle School Program of Studies is the version used for the official course selection process in the middle school. Please read this guide carefully in combination with the special course selection assemblies that will be held for students at each grade level.

This 2011-2012 Program of Studies handbook is designed for parents and students. Please read it carefully when completing the course selection forms. It describes the general content and units covered in each middle school subject taught at SSIS. It also provides additional information about other essential elements of our middle school program at SSIS. If you have any further questions about the Middle School Program and cannot locate this information within the pages of this handbook, please contact the MS/HS administrative or counseling offices.

Consult the calendar below for the tentative time line that we will be following in February and March of 2011 towards the MS courses selections for the next year.

February 23, 2011 – Official Middle School Program of Studies is sent digitally to MS students and made available on eNews.

- February 22, 2011- MS course selection meeting for current 7th graders
- February 23, 2011- MS course selection meeting for current 6th graders
- February 28, 2011, 9:00 am – Electronic sign-ups on PowerSchool begin for MS and HS students
- March 7, 2011, 9:00 am – Electronic sign-ups on PowerSchool end.
- Mid-March – Counselor/Administrator-initiated schedule changes
- August – Student-initiated schedule changes

Thank you for your participation in our process and for taking the necessary conversations that are a part of it.

All the Best,



Paul Johnson

MS/HS Principal

Mission Statement & Philosophy

MISSION STATEMENT

SSIS is a college preparatory school committed to the intellectual and personal development of each student in preparation for a purposeful life as a global citizen.

CORE VALUES

SSIS Believes In and Promotes...

- Academic Excellence
- Sense of Self
- Dedicated Service
- Balance in Life
- Respect for All

SSIS believes that all five Core Values are equally important to the complete development of all students.

SSIS MIDDLE SCHOOL PHILOSOPHY

The SSIS Middle School Philosophy is based on the vision presented in the This We Believe: Keys to Educating Young Adolescents position paper by the National Middle School Association. This vision presents a research-based model of essential attributes and characteristics that when present over time lead to higher levels of student achievement and overall development. The National Middle School Association affirms that the essential attributes for such a program must be:

- **Developmentally responsive:** using the distinctive nature of young adolescents as the foundation upon which all decisions about school organization, policies, curriculum, instruction, and assessment are made.
- **Challenging:** ensuring that every student learns and every member of the learning community is held to high expectations.
- **Empowering:** providing all students with the knowledge and skills they need to take responsibility for their lives, to address life's challenges, to function successfully at all levels of society, and to be creators of knowledge.
- **Equitable:** advocating for and ensuring every student's right to learn and providing appropriately challenging and relevant learning opportunities for every student.

These four essential attributes of successful middle level education can be realized and achieved best through programs and practices that are in line with the following 16 characteristics. These characteristics or qualities, while identified independently, are interdependent and need to be implemented in concert.

Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment Characteristics

- Educators value young adolescents and are prepared to teach them.
- Students and teachers are engaged in active, purposeful learning.
- Curriculum is challenging, exploratory, integrative, and relevant.
- Educators use multiple learning and teaching approaches.
- Varied and ongoing assessments advance learning

Leadership and Organization Characteristics

- A shared vision developed by all stakeholders guides every decision.
- Leaders are committed to and knowledgeable about this age group, educational research, and best practices.
- Leaders demonstrate courage and collaboration.
- Ongoing professional development reflects best educational practices.
- Organizational structures foster purposeful learning and meaningful relationships.

Culture and Community Characteristics

- The school environment is inviting, safe, inclusive, and supportive of all.
- Every student's academic and personal development is guided by an adult advocate.
- Comprehensive guidance and support services meet the needs of young adolescents.
- Health and wellness are supported in curricula, school-wide programs, and related policies.
- The school actively involves families in the education of their children.
- The school includes community and business partners.

MIDDLE SCHOOL ADVISORY AND GUIDANCE CURRICULUM

An integral component at the Middle Level is a daily Advisory class. Our advisory class is built on the idea that every young adolescent should have at least one adult to act as a mentor and advisor to provide, in a small group setting: academic, social and personal guidance. During this time the middle child's needs outside of the regular academic program are addressed. Additionally, it allows the advisors to know the unique characteristics and needs of each individual. As a result, this program promotes meaningful student-teacher, peer and community relationships. Advisory class results in student academic success, improved self-esteem and social success. The activities are varied and student centered and include themes such as: becoming a better learner, interpersonal skills, leadership skills, self awareness, serving our community, team building and self-esteem.

The Middle School Guidance program promotes knowledge, attitudes and skills through the instruction in three content areas: academic achievement, career development and personal/social growth. Guidance activities and lessons integrate with the grade level teams and are part of the team activities and planning.

LEARNING SUPPORT

As SSIS does not diagnose or designate students, we do not offer special education programs that have learning outcomes different than what is expected from every student at their perspective grade levels. Students will be given the opportunity to receive one-on-one and small group attention, as well as, receive some remediation in areas of weakness such as math or reading. Study skills, organizational skills and test writing strategies will also be areas of focus for students receiving learning support.

AT A GLANCE - TYPICAL PROGRAMS FOR STUDENTS GRADE 6 TO 8

All students will be enrolled in the following core courses.

- Humanities
- Science
- Mathematics
- PE/Health/Swimming
- Information Communication and Technology (ICT)
- Integrated Writing
- World Language (Mandarin or Spanish)

In sixth grade, students take Mandarin and Spanish 6 which exposes students to these languages prior to serious study of one of them in seventh grade.

In sixth grade, students take a quarter of each of music, dance, art and drama. In seventh grade students may take either a semester or full year of these subjects. In eighth grade students take either music, dance or art for a full year.

WEEK WITHOUT WALLS

A significant event for the middle school is our Week Without Walls (WWW) trips. Each grade level team plans trips around the school ESLRs and outcomes. Taking the students outside the classroom to various locations gives them a first hand experience to research and create authentic learning projects. This valuable experience helps the students further develop their independence, collaboration skills and confidence.

HIGHLIGHTS TO THE 2011-2012 SCHOOL YEAR

Over the past few year, the middle school at SSIS has been working hard to further development of a sound middle school program. Some of the work includes:

- continued development and focus on the MS Advisory program
- study and possible implementation of additional elective courses for the 2011-2012 school year. These mini-courses would add to our ability to allow for experiences for our MS students in a wide range of topics not currently part of their course of study.

Additional elective courses allow our program to encompass a more exploratory curriculum in line with the attributes and characteristics of a high quality Middle Level Education program. Through research it has been shown such exploratory opportunities for students lead to higher student achievement and overall development of students.



Humanities

The Middle School Humanities program integrates both Social Studies and English/ Language Arts outcomes into a single curriculum. This integrated approach develops students' knowledge and skills of Social Studies, literature, research, and communication: reading writing, listening speaking, viewing and media literacy. The major literary genres can include: short stories, novels, poetry, drama and non-fiction. All grades apply the writing process, research process of Big 6 and 6 Traits +1 model. Technology is integrated throughout all grade levels. The Middle School believes that an integrated curriculum provides a more meaningful, contextual learning experience for students.

HUMANITIES 6

Humanities 6 promotes knowledge, communication skills, research skills and media literacy through the instruction of literature and the study of the ancient civilizations: Ancient Mesopotamia, Ancient Egypt and Nubia, Ancient India and Persia, Ancient China, Ancient Greece and Ancient Rome. Additionally, the five themes of Geography are integrated into these units of study. Literature is connected to concepts discussed in Social Studies with emphasis placed on developing active reading strategies and a strong understanding of the basic literary elements. Speaking and listening skills will also be addressed through role-plays, creative projects, small and large group work and writing workshop activities. Students will complete many hands-on projects throughout the year.

Literature: *The Egypt Game, Hatchet, The Adventures of Ulysses, Dragon Wings, Holes, The Iron Ring*

HUMANITIES 7

Humanities 7 is a study in world cultures and literature. Through literature, students are able to explore the culture of Europe, Africa, Asia and Latin America. Over the course of the year students will read from a variety of genres and write in a variety of styles, such as: narrative-descriptive, expository, research, literary response and poetry. Students will also create multi-media projects, such as videos and podcasts, develop and refine their speaking skills through small group discussions to drama presentations, develop their co-operative learning skills through group work and increase their understanding of geography, history, economics, government, reading and writing.

Literature: *The Cay, The Outsiders, The Other Side of Truth, Song of the Buffalo Boy*

HUMANITIES 8

Humanities 8 introduces the students to an analysis of American history and literature over the course of the year. Students will read, analyze, and discuss literature and historical documents that link thematically to their studies of American history. Additionally, students will develop an awareness of current events and how they connect to history. In a close examination of American history, literature and current events students will write analytical essays, research papers, scripts and participate in a variety of presentations and discussions.

Literature: *The Diary of Anne Frank, Roll of Thunder Hear My Cry, The Miracle Worker* (Play)

INTEGRATED WRITING GRADES 6, 7 AND 8

This is a semester class which emphasizes student development in writing across the curriculum for various purposes and audience. Students apply the writing process and 6 Traits+1 to practice writing in all subject areas. Students will use technology to write, collaborate and publish their works. All students in Middle School are required to take a semester of Writing Development.

Mathematics

The Middle School math program helps students understand and apply mathematical principles to real world problems. Students learn to understand and apply basic properties of the concepts of numbers; use a variety of strategies in the problem solving process; use basic procedures while performing the processes of computation; understand and apply basic properties of the concepts of measurement. Most of all, students will be able to justify their reasoning for using mathematics to solve problems. They will be able to use estimation, do mental mathematics and develop a curiosity and self-confidence for doing mathematics.

MATHEMATICS 6

Mathematics 6 aims to enhance mathematical literacy by building on the foundations of computational practice learned in elementary school and apply them to a multitude of situations to promote critical thinking and reasoning skills. Units of study include operations involving decimals, number theory, fractions, collecting and displaying data, proportional and geometric relationships, measurement, functions, probability, and an introduction to algebra. Students do a number of cross curricular projects involving the arts, humanities, language arts.

MATHEMATICS 7

In grade 7 Math, students continue to build an understanding of mathematics as it becomes more abstract and less concrete. They demonstrate their understanding through writing and oral explanation. Topics include basic number operations, rational numbers (fractions, decimals, and percents), patterns and functions (linear equations), proportional relationships (ratios), geometrical figures and measurement, probability and multi-step equations and inequalities. Students do a number of cross curricular projects involving other disciplines.

MATHEMATICS 8

In grade 8 math, students solidify the basic principles of algebra and geometry through hands-on activities, everyday examples and relevant practice. Areas of focus include: rational numbers; exponents and roots; simplifying and solving single and multiple step algebraic equations; solving equations/problems that involve ratios, proportions, percents, perimeter, area, and volume; writing, graphing, and recognizing linear, exponential, and quadratic functions; and recognizing and solving problems that relate to angles and various shapes in geometry. Students do a number of cross curricular projects involving other disciplines.

ALGEBRA 1

This course is designed for students who have mastered basic mathematics skills and the concepts of Pre-Algebra. Topics covered in this course include: properties of the number system, algebraic expressions, functions, linear equations and inequalities, absolute value equations and inequalities, exponents and roots, adding, subtracting, multiplying, dividing and factoring polynomials, solving quadratic equations, solving systems of equations and inequalities, graphing of linear and quadratic functions, operations with rational expressions and solving rational equations. Mathematical reasoning, proper notation and solving word problems algebraically are integral parts of the course.

Science

The teaching of Science at SSIS aims to provide students with a stimulating and challenging science education, which fosters inquiry and exploration. Utilizing an engaging, integrated, multi-sensory approach that maximizes hands-on activities, the instructional techniques create opportunities for experimentation and collaboration and focuses on depth of understanding. The program strives to further nurture students who are open-minded, objective and reflective thinkers. Technology is integrated throughout the spiraling curriculum which includes aspects of the key strands of science in every grade. Actual scenarios, assignments and varied contextual assessment endeavor to make learning real and relevant.

SCIENCE 6

Students start the year by investigating the various methods of scientific problem solving and compare it to a historical experimental design in terms of evidence and trade-offs, and then apply this to experiments to help them learn about human body systems. Students also learn to explore biodiversity and interdependency in a living system which is further explored in the sixth grade Week Without Walls trip. After this, students explore physics by studying forces and how they affect motion. This knowledge of energy also transfers to a unit on work and then students explore the variables that give simple machines the ability to reduce effort. Electrical energy is the last phase of physical science with a culminating project that combines all of their understanding of the physical sciences. The last unit of study is about Earth's history and the processes that has shaped is surface. Students learn about rock types, the rock cycle and how to read geological features to make inferences about its past. The sixth grade Science year concludes with a project with an environmental focus.

SCIENCE 7

Building on the skills and understanding acquired in the previous year, grade 7 delves into the microscopic world of bacteria, viruses and parasites as part of an examination of the diversity of life. The cellular processes are expanded upon through looking at physiological process within human organ systems and comparing our structure to other species. Discovering how diseases impact our bodies and society extends this biological investigation. Exploration in chemistry involves using the periodic table as a tool and researching why and how chemical reactions take place. Physical sciences involve looking at the role of water as a world resource and as an essential part of what makes chemical and physical processes occur. The concepts examined stimulate and encourage a further extension of studies in the next grade.

SCIENCE 8

This course will focus on the theme of Change as it occurs in human genetics and ecosystems, weather and planetary systems, and chemical interactions and energy. Through activities, experiments, and classroom activities the students will discover the connections between energy and the systems we see and feel around us every day. Students will extend their knowledge of elements, chemical reactions, and chemical bonding, investigate the key to genetic inheritance and diversity, study the flow of energy through natural phenomena, and investigate the energy connections in weather, planetary events, and local ecosystems.



Modern World Languages

The goal of the World Language Department is to foster a lifelong appreciation and awareness of another language and culture and to prepare students to interact in a multicultural world. We recognize that SSIS students come from a variety of cultural and linguistic backgrounds, and that each student has different learning styles and needs. As such, we encourage our students to regularly enhance their listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills. Our objective is for students to become critical thinkers and independent learners, and therefore we provide them with the linguistic tools and skills needed to manage unfamiliar material, both written and spoken.

World Language teachers at SSIS offer programs in Mandarin and Spanish to help students appreciate other cultures and prepare them to communicate in multicultural settings. These languages have been chosen because they are two of the most frequently spoken languages in the world. This program begins in the Middle School with the sixth grade having a semester of Mandarin and a semester of Spanish. In seventh grade, students choose between Spanish Level I or Mandarin Level I and continue to Level II in Grade 8. Middle school students transferring from other schools enroll in an appropriate level determined by an oral and written placement evaluation.

GRADE 6 – EXPLORATORY MANDARIN AND SPANISH

The purpose of the class is to provide an introduction to the study of world languages. Students learn basic vocabulary, useful expressions and cultural information. The primary emphasis is on developing listening and speaking skills. Students foster enjoyment of the Mandarin and Spanish languages through various activities including games, songs, projects, and artistic pursuits.

GRADE 7 - SPANISH LEVEL 1

Spanish Level I provides the basic skills, vocabulary, grammar, and cultural information about Spanish - speaking lands. Emphasis is on speaking with daily oral exercises as part of the routine. This is the standard course for 7th grade students in Spanish.

GRADE 7 - MANDARIN LEVEL 1

Mandarin Level 1 provides the basic knowledge and skills of Mandarin Chinese language. Students develop their communication skills in the target language, as well as, learning the basic aspects of Chinese culture. Character writing and reading will be taught at this level. This is the standard course for 7th grade students in Mandarin.

GRADE 8 - SPANISH LEVEL 2

Students in Spanish Level 2 continue to develop their skills in Spanish, mastering new vocabulary, learning more grammatical constructions and developing their listening and reading competencies. Students use the language for authentic communication and presentation. Students learn to read stories in Spanish to help them understand the structure of the language as well as the culture of Spanish-speaking communities. This is the standard course for 8th grade students in Spanish.

GRADE 8 - MANDARIN LEVEL 2

Students in Mandarin Level 2 continue to develop their language skills, learning more complex grammatical constructions, while developing their listening and reading competencies. Students use the language for authentic communication and presentation. As a result, the students will gain a better understanding of the issues of Chinese communities and the Chinese language and culture. An interactive classroom environment enriches this cultural language and culture study. This is the standard course for 8th grade students in Mandarin.

GRADE 8 – MANDARIN LEVEL 3

Students in Mandarin Level 3 are able to move at a very fast pace in advanced study of Mandarin and are placed in Level 3 as a result of a placement test and teacher and counselor recommendation. The final decision on placement rests with the administration.

GRADE 8 – SPANISH LEVEL 3

Students in Spanish Level 3 are able to move at a very fast pace in advanced study of Spanish and are placed in Level 3 as a result of a placement test and teacher and counselor recommendation. The final decision on placement rests with the administration.

Fine Arts



EXPLORATORY ART 6

In the sixth grade quarter-long Visual Arts classes, the role of the teacher as a mentor/educator is to expose students to a variety of artistic mediums and ideas and to further develop their skills in art-making and creative problem-solving. Throughout the quarter, we will examine different types of art and artists while exploring an assortment of artistic materials and techniques, both two and three-dimensional. The sixth grade Visual Arts curriculum is designed to help students to understand creativity, journaling, and the diversity in art. This opportunity will help students decide which area they want to pursue in art as they move up to higher levels. Students will explore their creativity, learn a variety of techniques and will feel comfortable enough to take risks in order to create art work that speaks to who they are.

ART 7 AND 8

The MS Visual Art program in seventh and eighth grade is focused on the development of creative thinking and expressions. Students will experience different aspects of drawing, painting, printmaking, sculpture, mixed media, and ceramics. All students keep an

art journal of written and visual entries which includes self-assessment and reflections of the artistic process. Students use research, discussion and integrated content with their core classes to learn to make meaningful connections between the visual arts and world issues, history, culture and science. SSIS visual arts assessment consists of an evaluation of each student's body of work as a whole; both the finished products (Studio Work) and the process of artistic investigation and development (Art Journal). This two-part assessment, Studio Work and the Art Journal, is standard in Middle school and High school art classes.

EXPLORATORY DANCE 6

Dance 6 is an exploratory class that will introduce the students to the basic elements of dance. They will experience dance techniques and develop skills in different dance forms such as: Ballet, Jazz, Modern, Hip Hop, Ballroom and Latin. Additionally, they will layer compositional elements and select themes for group choreography while applying their increasing awareness of dance forms. As the quarter progresses they learn more complex dances, demonstrate initiative and collaborate actively in class, rehearsal and during performances.

DANCE 7

Dance 7 is a class in which students will expand their understanding of dance and demonstrate a variety of styles and specific skills throughout the year. They will apply an understanding of choreographic principles and structures when learning, developing, and performing dances. They will learn to self-correct in response to suggestions and to develop personal technical goals for improving their dance skills. Students will also begin to learn the vocabulary of dance. They will discuss dances and dance making in terms of style, structure and design. They will increase their understanding of musical structures and qualities in relation to dance and integrate other art forms into the creation of dance pieces. They will also use technology to research and create dance. Furthermore, they begin to understand nutrition and physical development as an important component of dance and physical movement.

DANCE 8

Dance 8 is a class in which students expand their dance techniques, style and strategies to refine their dancing. They will study techniques such as Ballet, Modern Dance Jazz, Hip Hop, Flamenco, Broadway Theater Dance, Latin Salsa and Social Dance. Students will explore various ways to express emotion using non-gestural movement. Activities will include solo and group work and the various choreographic structures and devices. Students will perform for peers and at some school events. Additionally, students will read articles and reviews of dance to broaden understanding of criteria used for dance evaluation. Also, they will post critical reviews, articles photographs and artwork on school bulletin boards, in a newsletter and in school publications.

EXPLORATORY MUSIC 6

This is a one quarter exploratory course designed to give students with little or no musical experience a brief introduction to modern musical performance techniques. Students

English as a Second Language (ESL)

will learn fundamental performance techniques using instruments such as recorder, keyboard, guitar, bass, drum kit, and percussion. Students will also participate in unison and part-singing. Music literacy skills will form an important part of this course. Students will read, write, and interpret basic musical notation on the treble and bass clefs. Students will participate in two major performances during the school year.

MUSIC 7

This is a year-long or semester performance course offering students the opportunity to participate in a large instrumental ensemble. This course is aimed at any student who currently plays a band or orchestral instrument or any student interested in beginning to play a band or orchestral instrument. The school has a range of brass and woodwind instruments available for use by beginner students. This course is not suitable for students wishing to play guitar or keyboard only. Music literary skills form an important aspect of this course. Students will read, write and interpret basic musical notation on the treble and bass clefs. Students will participate in two major performances during the school year.

MUSIC 8

Music eight is a performance course with a focus on large instrumental ensemble performance. Students with a strong commitment to improve their instrumental skills are encouraged to register for this year long course. Students will study the elements of melody, harmony, and rhythm through attention to modern music literature. Students will compose, arrange, and perform their own compositions for their peers, and the community. Students will participate in two major performances during the school year.

EXPLORATORY DRAMA 6

Exploratory Drama introduces students to some of the many facets of drama, including theatre games, pantomime, oral expression, and improvisation. Students will develop self-confidence, communication skills (both verbal and non-verbal), and performance skills while also developing skills for collaboration and social interaction through classroom and small group activities. Students in this class should consider themselves members of a “cast,” which means they will be on the same team working toward the same goals. Therefore, it is expected that students come to Exploratory Drama ready to share ideas and participate in activities.

DRAMA 7

Drama 7 builds upon skills that were introduced in Exploratory Drama 6. Students will further explore the many facets of drama, including theatre games, oral expression, and improvisation. Students will develop their self-confidence, communication skills (both verbal and non-verbal), and performance skills while also developing skills for collaboration and social interaction through classroom and small group activities. Students in this class should consider themselves members of a “cast,” which means they will be on the same team working toward the same goals. The semester-long class will culminate in a final dramatic performance that will allow students to demonstrate the skills and confidence they have built over the course of the class.

SSIS provides an English as a Second Language (ESL) Program for non-native speakers who require support to further develop their English competency skills. The ESL program prepares students with the English language skills and competencies needed for content studies in a regular classroom setting. The program stresses reading, writing, speaking and listening communication skills.

The ESL program follows a “Sheltered Immersion” model of instruction, which provides support while simultaneously immersing the student in the mainstream population. Based on their language level, ESL students are taught in a small group setting. They are also immersed in regular classrooms, with an ESL teacher providing assistance as needed.

All non-native English speakers are evaluated for their language skills. Student placement is determined by the Director of Admissions in consultation with the ESL Department and Principal. Students exit the ESL program based on the following three criteria: proficiency examinations, classroom performance and recommendations from both ESL and mainstream teachers.

Non-native speakers (ESL students) whose proficiency placement indicates they require additional support in English language are able to develop their skills in the ESL classes. Students are placed in classes by grade level and not proficiency level. For example, sixth grade ESL classes will include a range of ESL levels such as: ESL intermediate, ESL high intermediate or ESL low advanced. By grouping students by grade and not proficiency levels, ESL teachers can use the mainstream assignments and content areas as the basis for additional student instruction and development of skills.

Physical Education



PE 6, PE 7, AND PE 8

Physical Education (P.E.) provides the middle school student an opportunity to experience a selected variety of games, fitness activities, team sports and individual sports in the gym, outdoors and in the swimming pool. All middle school students are required to take Physical Education class for two quarters of the school year, along with Swimming for one quarter of the year and a Health class for one quarter of the year.

The emphasis of the middle school Physical Education curriculum will focus on an active learning environment. Participation, sportsmanship and effort comprise the majority of the program at this level. The remaining aspects of the program consist of class preparedness, fitness testing and knowledge of sports. Skill development, progressive drills using individual skills, attitude, teamwork, offensive and defensive strategies, basic game rules, scoring and match information will also be included.

HEALTH

For one quarter of a semester, all students will have the opportunity to study topics such as: mental health, social health, nutrition, physical activity, substance abuse, human development, preventing disease, body systems, relationships and healthy decision making. Health class will include some active health activities.

Textbook: *Teen Health Series* of books for Grades 6, 7 & 8 published by Glencoe/McGraw Hill.

SWIMMING

All students participate in one quarter of a semester of swimming throughout the year. Swimmers will learn “drill progressions” in their swimming class. Each stroke will be taught through a set of stroke drills. Each easy to learn drill teaches a certain aspect of the stroke and when all the drills for each stroke are learned, the stroke becomes much easier to perform and master. Students will also learn to play water polo.

ICT

Information & Communication Technology



ICT Six, Seven and Eight are project-based courses. Over the three years, students will, with increasing depth and sophistication, explore a variety of online and offline tools. Students will be exposed to tools that can be utilized for collaboration as well as for creating content that allows for the expression of ideas using alternate formats: audio, digital stories and video. In addition, students will examine problem solving strategies through the use of a basic programming language and data analysis. Literacy skills and search strategies will also be examined. Student work will be consolidated, maintained and displayed using an online portfolio in the form of a student blog.