



# SSIS

Middle School  
Program of Studies 2009-2010



**SAIGON SOUTH INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL**

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Dear SSIS High School and Middle School Students,

It is a great pleasure for me to join SSIS as your new MS/HS Principal. I look forward to getting to know each and every one of you and to supporting your personal and academic growth throughout the 2009-2010 school year.

SSIS is quickly gaining a highly regarded reputation in the international school community, primarily due to the quality of its students and faculty. I believe that personal relationships are the cornerstone of any strong educational institution and therefore we must focus together on relationships within our school in order to ensure and enhance the quality of the education that SSIS offers. It is my goal to work closely with you, your teachers, and your parents in order to meet your needs this year. The keys to success in achieving this goal are a high level of communication, clear expectations, and mutual respect. I pledge to do my best in each of these areas and ask that you do the same.

In addition to providing you with a handbook to plan for your daily and weekly responsibilities, this important reference contains our school's academic, attendance, discipline, and other policies in an effort to promote communication and clear expectations within our school community. Please familiarize yourself with these policies so that you have a general understanding of them and know where to go to find more detailed explanations whenever you have a question. If you are still in doubt or have any question about any school policy at any time, please do not hesitate to ask me or Ms. Isley, as again, a high level of communication and clear expectations are critical to the success of our collaborative efforts this year.

The SSIS Core Values identify those attributes that we feel are essential to individual and community success in today's world. If we pursue Academic Excellence, develop a Sense of Self, engage in Dedicated Service, maintain a Balance in Life, and show Respect for All, then we will have the capacity to make a difference for our families, our communities, and ourselves. When I say "we", I mean that we are all learning at SSIS, including teachers, administrators, and parents as well as students. The faculty and administration of SSIS understand that in order to promote your education in an ever-changing world, we must continue to learn with you over the course of this year. With our new 1-1 Laptop initiative, for example, (which will be piloted in some grades this year), learning will definitely be a two-way street between teachers and students, and we are counting on you to support us as teachers and administrators to live by the Core Values.

Have a great 2009-2010 school year! Please drop by to see me at any time about any issue, or just to say hi, as my door is always open and I am here to serve you.

Sincerely,

Mr. Paul A. Johnson  
MS/HS Principal

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## General Information

### SSIS Philosophy and 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 5 Core Values are equally important to the complete development of all students.

### SSIS Curriculum Philosophy

Curriculum at Saigon South International School emanates from the school's mission, incorporates our many cultures, and is broader than the content of study. All courses of study are child centered, focused on making meaning for students, and rooted in conceptual understanding augmented by skill development. Work is celebrated by a flexibility of thought, relies on prior experience, and is process oriented. Studies are an interactive process involving students, teachers, parents, and administrators – all working to support the learning process. Learning is enhanced by an understanding of child development, social interactions, scientific pedagogy, and proven best practices of teaching.

Faculty understands the importance of incorporating various teaching strategies into their instruction. School standards are clearly articulated and US based standards are incorporated appropriately. Teachers continually assess educational progress and integrate lessons clustered around themes so that students can appreciate relevancy and the connectedness of events.

### Admissions Statement

Saigon South International School (SSIS) is a Pre-school through grade 12 not for profit, coeducational day school, which provides quality education based on an American curriculum. In an effort to be a truly international school, SSIS admits second language learners on a limited basis, always aware of nationalities and level of support needed for each individual student, class and grade level. English is the language of instruction.

### Grade Placement

Grade placement is based on an admission screening process, prior educational level and previous school records as well as physical and emotional maturity. Students who enter SSIS

during the second semester from a school with a different school calendar will be placed in the same grade level they have just completed.

### **Special Needs/Learning Disabilities**

SSIS does not offer any diagnostic or special education programs for those with learning disabilities. Therefore, only students with mild disabilities, who can learn in the regular academic program, can be admitted.

### **Continuing Enrollment**

Registration is an annual responsibility for all Middle School students. SSIS expects that students will make continual progress through the Middle School Program. Evidence of this should be reflected in the grades they achieve in core courses. Continuing enrollment for ESL students is dependent upon continued progress through the ESL Program.

### **At a Glance - Typical Programs for Students grade 6 to 8**

All Grade 6 thru Grade 8 students will be enrolled in the following core courses.

- Social Studies
- Language Arts
- Science
- Mathematics
- PE/Health/Swimming
- Information Computer Technology

Students may choose the following courses to complete their areas of study for the year.

- Instrumental / Vocal Music
- Dance / Art
- Chinese
- Spanish

*\*Students enrolled in our ESL program will participate in our ESL support class before beginning to study another language.*

*\*Students in Grade 8 may be placed in Intermediate Level Chinese or Spanish*

## LANGUAGE ARTS

The Language Arts program in the Middle School develops skills in literary analysis, writing process, vocabulary development, reading comprehension strategies and accurate use of grammar and mechanics in the English language. Students will analyze a variety of literature pieces focusing on the literary elements, use the 6 + 1 Traits for writing development, incorporate research and technology skills into language arts assignments and demonstrate, through presentations, their oral performance abilities. The Language Arts curriculum will also integrate with the social studies curriculum throughout the school year.

### Language Arts 6

Textbooks: *Prentice Hall Literature (Copper)*, *Write Source 2000*

Novels/Short Fiction: including *The Egypt Game*, *Hatchet*, *The Adventures of Ulysses*, *Dragon Wings*, *Holes*, *Iron Ring*

Students will develop their writing skills through the 6 Traits + 1 writing program with a focus on sentence fluency. Emphasis is also placed on using the writing process as a means of developing strong writing habits. Literature will be 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. As the year progresses, students will be introduced to structured methods of developing their research skills.

### Language Arts 7

Textbooks: *Prentice Hall Literature (Bronze)*, *Write Source 2000*

Novels: *The Outsiders*, *Song of the Buffalo Boy*

Students will use the 6+1 Traits of Writing to focus on organization, sentence fluency, and word choice. Frequent writing assignments include imaginative writing, personal narrative, and multiple paragraph expository writings. In the study of literature, students will read short stories, novel studies, poetry, and other fiction and non-fiction works. During the poetry unit students will perform readings of published poetry and create an illustrated anthology of their own poems. In addition, through class discussion and public speaking opportunities, students will hone their listening and speaking skills.

## **Language Arts 8**

Textbooks: *Prentice Hall Literature (Silver)*, *Write Source 2000*  
*The Diary of Anne Frank*, *A Single Shard*, *My Brother Sam is Dead*

The continuation of the 6 traits + 1 writing, students will be introduced to the more complex structures of the English language while using the writing process to create multiple writings. Emphasis will be placed on developing ideas and content and organization within their writing. Students will also read, analyze, and discuss novels, short stories, poetry, drama and non-fiction. In a close examination of the literature, students will write analytical essays after each major reading and participate in structured literature circle discussions on a variety of books.

## ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE (ESL)

SSIS provides an English as a Second Language (ESL) Program for non-native speakers whose English competency skills fall below grade level. The ESL program prepares students with the English language skills and competencies needed for content studies in the regular classroom setting. The program stresses reading and writing skills as well as oral and listening communication.

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 protected or sheltered environment for part of the school day. 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.

### **ESL Support 6, 7, and 8**

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 Support classes.

Students are placed in Language Support classes by grade level and not proficiency level. For example, 6<sup>th</sup> grade ESL classes will include a range of ESL speakers, some of whom are designated 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. ESL teachers will also help ESL students through remediation, reinforcement and development of their reading, writing, speaking and listening skills.

# 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

Textbook: *Mathematics: Course 1* (Holt)

Students begin a three-year middle school math program including the study of operations involving decimals, number theory, fractions, collecting and displaying data, proportional and geometric relationships, measurement, and an introduction to Algebra. The program 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 problem solving strategies.

## Mathematics 7

Textbook: *Mathematics: Course 3* (Holt)

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. As in the other grades, students work individually, with partners, in small groups, or as a part of the whole class. 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.

## Mathematics 8

Textbook: *Mathematics: Course 3* (Holt)

As a conclusion to the middle school math program, students are introduced to 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. This course will introduce students to the basic functions of the graphing calculator. (*TI 84 Plus Silver Edition is recommended as the students will continue to use the calculator in high school*)

## SCIENCE

Students in Middle School Science begin their studies learning about scientific procedures and how to set up and perform experiments. They learn to use scientific techniques to study and date earth's history, common science vocabulary, the structure and importance of the earth's ecosystem, how environmental changes may influence future life on earth and are able to identify similarities and differences in vertebrates. During the middle school years, students learn about the periodic chart, how to understand and adapt to a world that is constantly changing, write chemical formulas and balance simple reactions, understand the composition of our earth and the effects plate tectonics, earthquakes, volcanic activity, weathering and erosion have on it. Finally they examine how genetic information is passed on from one generation to another and develop a basic understanding of biology, chemistry and physics.

### Science 6

Textbook: *Science Explorer Series* (Prentice Hall)

The emphasis in Grade 6 is on Earth Science. Through activities, models, and experiments, students will learn about plate tectonics, earth's early history, earthquake and volcanic activity, and the rock cycle. In addition, they will study water and its properties, and its importance as a resource. Finally, they will explore the solar system and universe to gain further insight into the special features which allow Earth to be a habitat for living things. The core vocabulary of science is emphasized as well as scientific habits of mind, methods, and laboratory skills. Students will learn how to ask good research questions, and design and perform their own experiments.

### Science 7

Textbook: *Science Explorer Series* (Prentice Hall)

Life on our planet is unique and fragile. Students begin the year learning about the variety of living things around us and that each species is important for the overall health of our ecosystem. They study the increasing complexity of life from the simplest bacteria to the most complex vertebrate. Students also learn how genetic information is passed from one generation to another via the DNA molecule. Environmental changes and how they may alter the future of our world are discussed. Students are continually challenged to understand as well as learn their work, and to design and carry out their own data collection projects and experiments.

### Science 8

Textbook: *Science Explorer Series* (Prentice Hall)

Through hands on activities, experiments, and classroom participation, students will learn about the world around them. Students will discover the basics of elements, compounds, bonding, and chemical reactions; matter and changes in matter; the periodic table of

elements; and acids and bases. The students will then discover the relationships between Newton's three laws of motion and the forces at work in our daily lives. Students will describe and measure motion, forces in fluids, work, energy, and power. Finally, the students will explore the nature of and the relationship between electricity and magnetism.

## **SOCIAL STUDIES**

The Social Studies Curriculum in the middle school has three targeted areas of instruction. In the 6<sup>th</sup> grade, students explore Ancient Civilizations; in the 7<sup>th</sup> grade, they examine the five themes of geography; in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade, the focus is on the growth of the United States from its early colonial origins. The social studies curriculum is integrated with Language Arts throughout the year.

### **Social Studies 6-Ancient Civilizations**

Textbook: *Ancient Civilizations* (Harcourt)

Integrated into the study of the civilizations of: Ancient Mesopotamia, Ancient Egypt and Nubia, Ancient India and Persia, Ancient China, Ancient Greece and Ancient Rome, is an introduction to the key themes of social studies and the five themes of Geography. Students will complete many hands-on projects throughout the year and will develop their study skills throughout the course. Study skills emphasis will be placed on note-taking and reading skills in the content area.

### **Social Studies 7- Geography**

Textbook: *World Explorer* (Prentice Hall)

Students will build on their understanding of the themes of social studies and will focus primarily on the five themes of geography. The five themes of geography are location, place, human-environmental interaction, movement and regions. Students will complete units on the geography of Asia, Europe, North America, and Oceania.

### **Social Studies 8-U.S. History**

Textbook: *Call to Freedom, 1865 to the Present* (Holt)

Students will be introduced to an analysis of American history, geography, economics, and politics from the early explorers' initial landings in the New World thru their founding of colonies to the American Revolutionary War. Student will also be introduced to world events and major world leaders as they develop an understanding of historical study through the use of primary sources. Students will be expected to apply their research skills in a number of different projects, role-play key events and debate key issues in early U.S. history.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION/HEALTH/SWIMMING

The Physical Education program encourages fitness and health, teamwork and sportsmanship. Students develop the skills to enjoy and play many sports with the ultimate focus on developing healthy bodies and healthy minds. The program offers training and skill development for all students but most of all, students will be taught how to remain physically fit for life. The Health component of the PE program in Grades 6-8 focuses on promoting wellness, life skills, and assessing the effects of risk behaviors on an individual's total well being. Emphasis is placed on helping students develop a positive self-concept and learning to build a healthful lifestyle. A firm foundation of health knowledge will enable students to make informed decisions and become responsible members of the world community. The swimming program will concentrate on stroke development and refinement, as well as strength and endurance training.

### Physical Education/Health/Swimming 6

The theme for Sixth Grade Physical Education program is Learning Skills through Cooperation. The program will include fitness testing, cooperative activities, locomotor skill instruction and body management skills. It also includes instruction on throwing and catching, striking with body parts (for volleyball and soccer), striking with objects (for softball, hockey) and circus skills (juggling, balance boards, stilts). Students will also learn how to be safe when they are in, on, or around the water with an emphasis on personal safety. Water activities and games of many kinds will be explored, including water polo, water basketball and water volleyball.

### Physical Education/Health/Swimming 7

The seventh grade Physical Education program's theme is: Taking Acceptable Risks Through Problem Solving. Students will participate in fitness testing, outdoor adventure education, racket sports, track and field. In the Outdoor adventure units, students will begin to learn how to use a compass and topographical map. Simulated activities can be used in the gym or on the school campus to learn how to orient oneself while reading maps, following route directions, and recognizing symbols. In racket sports, students will learn the essentials of tennis, table tennis, badminton, pickle ball, and racket ball. In the track and field unit, also called "Medieval Times Activities," the focus will be on *taking appropriate risks* by having students challenge themselves in activities that were played during Medieval times. Students will also learn how to be safe when they are in, on, or around the water with an emphasis on personal safety. Water activities and games of many kinds will be explored, including water polo, water basketball and water volleyball.

### Physical Education/Health/Swimming 8

During the last year of Physical Education in the Middle School, students will focus on cooperative learning in physical education. The Eighth Grade Physical Education Program theme is: "Working as a Team to Develop Strategies for Success." The units of instruction include fitness testing, outdoor adventure, invasion sports, and net games. The Invasion Sports unit of instruction in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade curriculum ties together several invasion games to focus on working as a team to develop strategies for success. Concentration will

be on the similarities and differences of these games by focusing on the positive transfer of learning to facilitate acquiring new skills. Games that will be covered in this unit are basketball, soccer, team handball, and ultimate disc play. Lastly, the main focus of Net Games will be volleyball; however the other net sports of badminton and table tennis will be introduced as well. Students will learn basic skills of pass, set, spike and serve. Students will also learn how to be safe when they are in, on, or around the water with an emphasis on personal safety. Water activities and games of many kinds will be explored, including water polo, water basketball and water volleyball.

# INFORMATION COMPUTER TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

ICT is a project-based course. Over the 3 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. 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 class wiki or class blog.

## Grade Level Projects

### Grade 6 Project

Major Project

- \* Wiki Portfolio in collaboration with Bonnie

Minor Projects

- \* build on what Rhonda did with Gmail and extend into Gdocs/survey/Tinkerplot

### Grade 7 Project

Major Project

- \* Wiki Portfolio in collaboration with Bonnie

Minor Projects

- \* build on what Rhonda did with Gmail and extend into Gdocs/survey/Tinkerplot

### Grade 8 Project

Major Project

- \* Blog Portfolio (move Bonnie's Blog portfolio over to Bluehost as a base)

Minor Projects

- \* Grade Level Blog Magazine used to integrate different tools

### Tools to be utilized:

- \* Word Processing MS Word
- \* Digital Stories Premiere Elements2-6, Voicethread.com3-6 (ssis.ed.voicethread.com)
- \* Podcast Premiere Elements2 Audacity1
- \* Programming Scratch 1
- \* Wiki PBwiki3-6
- \* Web Browser Firefox1-6 Search strategies safety in a digital world (my addition part of the wiki/or moodle) (Resource 1)
- \* Graphing Excel7
- \* Video Premiere Elements2-8
- \* Three D Design Google Sketch1-7
- \* Data Analysis Tinkerplots 2-7
- \* Collaborative Group Work Gdocs<sup>1-7</sup>
- \* Reflective Writing Blog3-8
- \* Online Magazine Blog3-2\*-8
- \* Concept Mapping Inspiration2-7 CMAPS1-9 Freemind instead of inspiration
- \* Programming IDE Eclipse1-1

## **FOREIGN LANGUAGE**

All students will begin foreign language study during the middle school years. This area of study is designed to introduce students to a foreign language and provide them with the basic building blocks in order to complete levels of study during their high school years. As students progress through the middle school program they will also progress through intermediate and advanced levels of study.

**Grades 6-8 Spanish**

**Grades 6-8 Chinese**

## **ART**

Part of a student's education at SSIS Middle School focuses on the encore program. Encore classes are courses designed to meet the needs of early adolescents by providing high-interest topics that relate more to students' personal worlds than academic subjects. In grades 6 thru 8, students take a rotation of semester or quarter long courses of Music, Art and Dance.

### **Art 6**

This art course will focus on continuing to learn about the elements of art. Students will be introduced to a wide range of media and methods, and practice skills and techniques in drawing, painting, sculpting, printmaking, textiles and ceramics. Art appreciation is incorporated into the course as students study how to analyze and learn from traditional and contemporary artworks. All students are encouraged to solve problems creatively and express their personal ideas through their artwork. Students will be introduced to keeping a sketchbook and recording their creative process through, drawings, mind maps, reflective writing and various visual examples.

Students will be involved with organizing a spring art show to exhibit their work.

### **Art 7**

This course will introduce the students to the principles of design. Students will focus on the various principles as they practice skills in drawing, ceramics, block printing, collage, watercolor & acrylic painting, and mixed media sculpture. Projects are also designed to develop creative problem solving skills, and students will continue to use sketchbooks as a valuable way to explore ideas and record their creative process. Students will continue to study and appreciate artists and their artworks, and will be introduced to the teacher led group critique process. Students will be involved with organizing a spring art show to exhibit their work.

### **Art 8**

This course introduces students to various art movements and groups as they continue to focus on the principles of design. They will receive more in depth instruction into the use of artist's materials, and create projects using various media and methods. These will include drawing, ceramic sculpture, acrylic painting, printmaking, mixed media and computer design. Students will continue to keep a sketchbook, participate in group critiques, and be introduced to the process of reflective self-assessment. Students will be involved with organizing a spring art show to exhibit their work.

# DANCE

## Dance 6

Throughout their ongoing participation in dance, students will develop strength, flexibility, and endurance. They will develop dance techniques and improvise skills in different dance forms such as Ballet, Jazz, Modern, Hip Hop, Ballroom and Latin. They will layer compositional elements and select themes for group choreography, apply their increasing awareness of dance forms as they learn more complex dances, demonstrate self-initiative, and collaborate actively with others in class, rehearsal and performance.

## Dance 7

Students will expand their understanding of dance and demonstrate a variety of style-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, and begin to understand nutrition and physical development as an important component of dance and physical movement.

## Dance 8

Students will investigate and apply complex processes to movement invention and execution during this time of study. Students will share and discuss their original creative dance work in small groups to continue their growth of skills and expression in dance. Students will focus on various styles and techniques of dance to further develop their abilities to challenge themselves physically and creatively.

# MUSIC

## **Music 6**

This is a twelve-week course designed to give students with little or no musical experience a brief introduction to modern musical performance techniques. Students 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.

## **Music 7**

This is a year-long performance course offering students the opportunity to participate in detailed study of instrumental and vocal music techniques. Students will play and sing in a variety of musical styles and forms. Students will also create their own musical compositions and perform for their peers. 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.

## **Music 8**

Music eight is a performance course with a focus on instrumental or vocal specialization. Students with a strong commitment to improve their instrumental or vocal music 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.