



# SAIGON SOUTH INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL



## MIDDLE SCHOOL Program of Studies 2019-2020

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# OVERVIEW

The Middle School Program of Studies provides course information and registration guidelines. These will assist in selecting a middle school schedule for next year.

This 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 of studies and cannot locate this information within the pages of this handbook, please contact the MS Administration or Counseling offices.

Consult the calendar below for the registration timeline:

<b>February</b>	Official Middle School Program of Studies is sent digitally to MS students, posted on Moodle, and made available via eNews
<b>March</b>	MS course selection meeting
<b>March</b>	Electronic sign-ups on PowerSchool for current Grade 6 and 7 students
<b>May / June</b>	Counselor/Administrator-initiated schedule changes
<b>August</b>	Student-initiated schedule changes



# MISSION STATEMENT & PHILOSOPHY

## MISSION STATEMENT

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Saigon South International School (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

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### SSIS Believes In and Promotes:

	<b>Academic Excellence</b> A challenging academic program, based on American standards, that teaches the student how to think, to learn, to problem solve, and to work individually and in teams while acquiring a foundational knowledge base of the world.
	<b>Sense of Self</b> A community atmosphere in which each student can gain a sense of 'who he is' in the world; to develop self-confidence, strong character, conviction, leadership abilities, grace, courage, the desire to be a lifelong learner and the commitment to achieve excellence in all he does.
	<b>Dedicated Service</b> A view that looks beyond oneself to the assets and needs of the surrounding community and the world and finds fulfillment in unlocking potential in the service of humankind. The model SSIS graduate will demonstrate a caring attitude, be environmentally aware and persevere for the good of community.
	<b>Balance in Life</b> An academic program that promotes an appreciation for all of life and seeks to balance the sciences with the humanities; academics with the arts; mental wholeness with physical, social and spiritual wholeness; and future career with family relationships.
	<b>Respect for All</b> A perspective that each individual is a person of worth. SSIS believes that all five Core Values are equally important to the complete development of all students.

# PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS AND COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

## MIDDLE SCHOOL ADVISORY

An integral component at the middle level is an 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 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, 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.

## ENGLISH AS AN ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE (EAL)

SSIS offers an English as an Additional Language (EAL) program for students who are further developing their academic English skills. The EAL support service prepares students to use academic language in speaking, listening, reading, and writing, focusing on skills needed across the curriculum. The program stresses vocabulary development, sentence fluency, grammar, and academic writing structures.

EAL students in Grades 6-8 receive English language support through small-group EAL classes. Class sizes are limited, allowing for individualized instruction and enabling students to gain confidence in a risk-free environment. EAL courses generally take the place of either a foreign language or elective. In addition to EAL courses, some students also receive direct content-area support through a co-teaching model. The EAL teacher and content-area teachers collaborate, plan, and team-teach in Science, Social Studies, Math, or Language Arts classrooms to ensure that English Language Learners can successfully access the core curriculum.

Students are placed in the EAL program based on a combination of performance in core classes, an English language proficiency test, and teacher recommendations. Students exit the program when they have passed set criteria in each of these areas.

## LEARNING SUPPORT

SSIS offers Learning Support Services, which provide individualized assistance and differentiation, so that students can reach their full potential as successful, confident, and independent learners. The goal of Learning Support Services is to provide individual students who have identified learning needs with skills and strategies to help them be successful with the SSIS curriculum. Specifically, the Learning Support Services assist students with learning needs through the following:

- Providing the academic and emotional support needed to achieve success with the academic curriculum
- Instilling confidence so that students will realize and believe that they can achieve success in their coursework
- Equipping students with the tools and strategies necessary to achieve success at school.



Students receiving Learning Support Services in Grades 6-8 receive direct support through small-group Learning Strategies classes. Class sizes are limited, allowing for individualized instruction and enabling students to gain confidence in a risk-free environment. Learning Strategies courses generally take the place of either a foreign language or elective. In addition to Learning Strategies class, some students also receive direct content-area support through a co-teaching model. The Learning Strategies teacher and content-area teachers collaborate, plan, and team-teach in Science, Social Studies, Math, or Language Arts classrooms to ensure that students in the Learning Support program can successfully access the core curriculum.

Students are placed in the Learning Support program based on a variety of factors. First, new students with mild learning needs who can be supported through differentiation and accommodations in the mainstream classroom setting may be accepted into the Learning Support program at SSIS. These students may have received Learning Support services at their previous school. If students are already enrolled at SSIS, they may be referred for Learning Support through the Student Review Team process (SRT). The SRT is a collaborative process involving school personnel as well as students and their parents. A recommendation for Learning Support service is made following a thorough investigation of the student's learning needs. Once students are identified, the team comprised of the student, parents, Learning Support teacher, core teacher and administration develops an Individual Learning Plan. The plan includes services, accommodations and specific instructional goals. Parents are updated regularly regarding their student's progress. Given the student's progress, they may exit the program when they have passed set criteria and demonstrate self-advocacy skills successfully across their classes.

## WEEK WITHOUT WALLS

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A significant event for the middle school is Week Without Walls (WWW). The WWW program is an exciting opportunity for all middle school students to extend their learning beyond the classroom walls. Exploring and learning about Vietnam, extending curriculum skills and content, and developing our Core Values are the three primary goals of the WWW program. Students will embark on their exciting journey as a grade level; and will spend 4-5 days learning, growing, and making memories that will last a lifetime. This valuable experience helps students further develop their independence, collaboration skills, and confidence.



# GRADE 6 REQUIREMENTS

**All Grade 6 students will be enrolled in the following courses. All courses are full year courses unless otherwise noted:**

## **Core classes:**

1. English Language Arts
2. Mathematics
3. Science
4. Social Studies
5. World Language (Mandarin or Spanish)
6. Exploratory Writing (Semester)

## **Encore classes:**

7. Physical Education
8. Digital Literacy (Semester)
9. Exploratory Electives \*

*\* In Grade 6, students take a quarter each of art, drama, health, and music*

## GRADE 6 COURSES:

### CORE COURSES

#### ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS 6

The SSIS English Language Arts program places a strong emphasis on developing students' skill in reading, writing, speaking, and listening in order to help them become critical readers, writers, and thinkers. The workshop method, which prioritizes student choice and inquiry, provides opportunities to explore key elements of various narrative, informational, argumentative, and literary texts through reading and writing. The English Language Arts program goal is to provide students with rigorous and meaningful learning activities that help them build the literacy skills necessary for college and career.

#### MATHEMATICS 6

Math 6 aims to enhance mathematical literacy by building on the foundations of computation and number sense learned in elementary school while applying them to a wide variety of situations to promote critical thinking and reasoning skills. Units of study include, algebraic reasoning, operations involving decimals and fractions, rules of integers, ratios and proportions, data collection and representation, geometric relationships, measurement, probability, and an introduction to algebra. There is an emphasis in developing the ability to determine the reasonableness of answers. Students often do cross-curricular projects involving technology, humanities, and science. The class is differentiated to meet our students' learning needs.

## SCIENCE 6

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The Grade 6 science program focuses on critical thinking and communication of scientific thinking. Students explore concepts through the process of scientific inquiry to explain the world in which we live. Students learn how to formulate a hypothesis, identify variables, describe procedures and test conjectures of whether or not their data is conclusive. Students apply these scientific skills in “diversity of life” and learn what it means to be “alive.” Following this, students explore the transformation of energy using the design cycle to develop the most efficient and productive wind turbine blades. Next we examine Earth’s history and the processes that have shaped its surface. Finally, students will explore Earth’s place in the Solar System and relationships with the sun, moon, and other planets. Students will evaluate data coming from rovers and other tools of exploration to shed light on the nature of our solar system and our planet.

## SOCIAL STUDIES 6

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The Grade 6 Social Studies curriculum covers world civilizations from prehistory to the 6th century. The course is a thematically based exploration of the big ideas represented in history and geography. Geography themes are introduced through personal histories and timelines. Students continue to explore these themes through the lens of the Ancient Civilizations of Egypt, Greece, and Rome with emphasis on the impact of geography on human settlement, social systems, and daily life. Throughout the year, students will improve their ability to critically analyze historical sources, utilize academic language in writing and speaking, compose argumentative essays, and think critically about the past, the present, and the future through a range of creative and academic projects. Students will improve their research and writing skills by developing argumentative essays, as well as improve technology skills through projects and presentations.

## EXPLORATORY WRITING 6 (SEMESTER)

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This is a semester class that emphasizes student development in writing across the curriculum for various purposes and audiences. The types of writing explored include argumentative writing and narrative writing. Students will use technology to write, collaborate and publish their works. Students in Grade 6 are required to take a semester of Exploratory Writing.

## MANDARIN LEVEL A

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Mandarin Level A provides basic knowledge and skills of the Mandarin Chinese language. Students develop their beginning communication skills in the target language, as well as, learning aspects of Chinese culture. Pinyin, basic strokes, components of the characters, basic reading, writing and typing skills will be taught at this level. Students will also explore Chinese idioms, stories, and songs.

## SPANISH LEVEL A

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Spanish Level A provides basic knowledge and skills of the Spanish language. Students develop their beginning communication skills in the target language, as well as learning aspects of Spanish culture. Students will also explore Spanish stories and songs. Basic vocabulary, grammar, and speaking with daily oral exercises will be introduced at this level.



# ENCORE COURSES

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION 6

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The SSIS physical education program focuses on an active learning environment. Participation, sportsmanship and effort comprise the majority of the program at this level. Appropriate social interactions and gross motor skills development are emphasized at this level. The remaining aspects of the program consist of class preparedness, fitness testing and knowledge of sports. The goal for our students is that they will develop a deeper appreciation for an active lifestyle as a solid base for a healthy future.

All students will have the opportunity to study various topics including mental health, social health, nutrition, physical activity, substance abuse, human development, preventing disease, body systems, relationships and healthy decision-making. Grade 6 will focus on nutrition, safety and the environment, preventing disease, good hygiene and preventing and dealing with bullying.

All three levels of middle school at SSIS participate in swimming instruction. The instructor(s) will differentiate lessons depending on each student's level of skill development. All students will learn the basics of personal water safety, stroke development and mechanics, endurance training (swimming laps) and play games such as water polo.

## DIGITAL LITERACY (SEMESTER)

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In this course, students will explore technology. They will further develop their digital footprint while creating video, animations, and graphics. They will also be introduced to programming tools that will allow them to create games and manipulate physical objects. As they move through each topic, they will record their journey through the creation of a personal electronic portfolio.

# EXPLORATORY ELECTIVES

## EXPLORATORY ART 6 (QUARTER)

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In the Grade 6 quarter-long Visual Arts classes, the role of the teacher as a mentor/educator is to expose students to a variety of artistic media and ideas and to further develop their skills in art-making and creative problem solving. Throughout the quarter, we will examine color theory, elements and principles of art, painting, sculptural skills and digital art. The Grade 6 Visual Arts curriculum is designed to help students to understand creativity, key terminology, whilst following the design process from concept to presentation. Students will feel comfortable enough to take risks in order to create artwork that speaks to who they are. This opportunity will help students decide which area they want to pursue in art as they move up to higher levels.

## EXPLORATORY DRAMA 6 (QUARTER)

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Students in Grade 6 will have a varied and exciting introduction to Drama. This will include an introduction to core Drama skills and the use of body and voice in theatre while also developing skills for collaboration and social interaction through classroom and small group activities. Initially students will develop trust and an understanding of key Drama skills using theatre sports, games and improvisation. They will learn to develop and play a role confidently and create scenes using text and improvisation. Students will then focus on theatre design and learn how to stage scenes creatively. They will later perform short plays using props and costume. The focus of the course is very practical and students must come to class with a willingness to experiment and become part of a team. Students will be expected to take part in small and large group work, solo work, independent research and creative writing either in the classroom or at home.

## EXPLORATORY HEALTH 6 (QUARTER)

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This is a one-quarter exploratory course that focuses on the skills and knowledge students need to make healthy and safe choices – at home, at school, and in the community – and develop habits of healthy, active living that will enhance their physical and mental well-being for the rest of their lives. The course focuses on active living, healthy living, which includes Human Development and Sexual Health, and living skills. Through the curriculum, students learn to understand themselves, cope with challenges and change, communicate and interact with others in a healthy way, and think critically and creatively.

## EXPLORATORY MUSIC 6 (QUARTER)

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This is a one-quarter exploratory course. Students will be introduced to a variety of brass and woodwind instruments, learning how they function, how they are maintained and understanding their role in modern music ensembles. The course will also consist of a variety of projects that integrate technology with more traditional approaches to music education. This is not a performance class, but students with prior musical experience may choose to participate in music performances throughout the school year.



# 7TH GRADE REQUIREMENTS

All Grade 7 students will be enrolled in the following courses. All courses are full year courses unless otherwise noted:

## Core classes:

1. English Language Arts
2. Mathematics
3. Science
4. Social Studies
5. World Language (Mandarin or Spanish)
6. Exploratory Writing (Semester)

## Encore classes:

7. Technology Course (Semester)
8. Physical Education
9. Elective from the following choices. Grade 7 students select 1 full year course or 2 semester courses:
  - Art 7 (year or semester)
  - Choir (year or semester)
  - Drama 7 (year or semester)
  - Music 7 (year)
  - Yearbook (year)

## 7TH GRADE COURSES

### CORE COURSES

#### ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS 7

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The SSIS English Language Arts program places a strong emphasis on developing students' skill in reading, writing, speaking, and listening in order to help them become critical readers, writers, and thinkers. The workshop method, which prioritizes student choice and inquiry, provides opportunities to explore key elements of various narrative, informational, argumentative, and literary texts through reading and writing. The English Language Arts program goal is to provide students with rigorous and meaningful learning activities that help them build the literacy skills necessary for college and career.

#### MATHEMATICS 7

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In Math 7, students continue to build an understanding of mathematics as it becomes more abstract and less concrete. They demonstrate their understanding through written 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. There is an emphasis in developing the ability to determine the reasonableness of answers.

## ALGEBRA 1

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Algebra 1 is designed for students who have mastered basic mathematics skills and the concepts of Pre-Algebra. Algebra 1 explores the real number system, representing quantities algebraically, creating and reasoning with equations and inequalities, interpreting and building functions, as well as exploring linear, quadratic and exponential models.

## SCIENCE 7

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The Grade 7 science program focuses on learning by action. Students explore science concepts through the process of scientific inquiry to learn about themselves and the world they live in. The course is divided into four sections: Matter and Chemistry, Forces and Motion, Human Body and Watersheds. After reviewing the scientific method, students apply it to examining matter and its chemical interactions in nature. They will see how these interactions are leading to real world changes in the environment. In Forces and Motion, students will observe the streets of Vietnam to draw scientific and social inferences about the safety of vehicles and the impact of helmets on health. In studying the Human Body, students are looking at the various functioning systems found within their bodies through experimentation and dissection, while also looking at the physical and social changes occurring naturally in puberty. The Watersheds unit examines the role of waterways in the development of healthy communities and ecosystems.

## SOCIAL STUDIES 7

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The Grade 7 Social Studies curriculum covers world civilizations from the 1st through the 16th century. The course is a thematically based exploration of the big ideas represented in history and geography. The Grade 7 theme is Ideas in Action and is focused on the following units of study: the origins of Christianity and Islam, the ideological shifts of the Middle Ages, the legacy of the Byzantine Empire, and the causes and consequences of the Renaissance. Throughout the year students will improve their ability to critically analyze historical sources, compose argumentative essays, and think critically about the past, the present, and the future. Students will improve their research and writing skills by developing argumentative essays, as well as technology skills through presentations.

## EXPLORATORY WRITING 7 (SEMESTER)

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The SSIS writing program emphasizes student development in writing across the curriculum for various purposes and audiences. The types of writing explored include poetry, digital storytelling, and research writing. Students will use technology to write, collaborate and publish their works. Students in Grade 7 are required to take a semester of Exploratory Writing.

## MANDARIN LEVEL A

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Mandarin Level A provides basic knowledge and skills of the Mandarin Chinese language. Students develop their beginning communication skills in the target language, as well as, learning aspects of Chinese culture. Pinyin, basic strokes, components of the characters, basic reading, writing and typing skills will be taught at this level. Students will also explore Chinese idioms, stories, and songs.



## MANDARIN LEVEL B

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Mandarin Level B builds on level A Mandarin to provide further knowledge and skills of the Mandarin Chinese language. Students continue to develop their communication skills in the target language, as well as, learning deeper features of Chinese culture. Chinese idioms will continue to be introduced to students. Character writing, sentence structures, creating dialogues, dictionary skills and reading will be taught at this level.

## MANDARIN LEVEL C

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Students in Mandarin Level C 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.

## SPANISH LEVEL A

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Spanish Level A provides basic knowledge and skills of the Spanish language. Students develop their beginning communication skills in the target language, as well as learning aspects of Spanish culture. Students will also explore Spanish stories and songs. Basic vocabulary, grammar, and speaking with daily oral exercises will be introduced at this level.

## SPANISH LEVEL B

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Spanish Level B builds on Spanish Level A to provide further knowledge and skills of the Spanish language. Students continue to develop their communication skills in the target language, as well as learning deeper features of Spanish culture. Spanish stories and songs will continue to be introduced to students. Sentence structures, dialogues, dictionary skills and reading will be taught at this level.

## SPANISH LEVEL C

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Students in Spanish Level C 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 gain a better understanding of the Spanish language and culture. An interactive classroom environment enriches this language and culture study.



# ENCORE COURSES

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION 7

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The SSIS physical education program focuses on an active learning environment. Participation, sportsmanship and effort comprise the majority of the program at this level. Appropriate social interactions and gross motor skills development are emphasized at this level. The remaining aspects of the program consist of class preparedness, fitness testing and knowledge of sports. The goal for our students is that they will develop a deeper appreciation for an active lifestyle as a solid base for a healthy future.

All students will have the opportunity to study various topics including mental health, social health, nutrition, physical activity, substance abuse, human development, preventing disease, body systems, relationships and healthy decision-making. Grade 7 will focus on mental and emotional health, resolving conflicts and preventing violence (anti-bullying), and the human body growth and change during puberty.

All three levels of middle school at SSIS participate in swimming instruction. The instructor(s) will differentiate lessons depending on each student's level of skill development. All students will learn the basics of personal water safety, stroke development and mechanics, endurance training (swimming laps) and play games such as water polo.

## TECHNOLOGY: CREATIVE TECHNOLOGIES (SEMESTER)

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Creative Technologies allows our students to experience the frequently changing areas of technology, media, design thinking, and innovation. Through the use of tools such as 3D printers and laser cutters, this course uses hands-on group projects, that encourage collaboration and experimentation. In addition, students will use a combination of still images, video, audio animation and computer-based interactivity to communicate their thoughts and ideas.

## TECHNOLOGY: ROBOTICS AND CODING (SEMESTER)

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This course covers the basics of computer science. Students will explore different programming languages to solve problems and build interactive programs involving graphics, animations, and simple games. In addition, students will explore how these languages are used to create robotic sculptures that interact with the environment through the use of sensors and motors.

# ELECTIVES

## ART 7 (YEAR OR SEMESTER)

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The MS Visual Art program in Grade 7 is focused on the development of creative thinking and expression. Students will experience different aspects of drawing, painting, printmaking, sculpture, mixed media, digital art and ceramics. Students peer assess, self assess and reflect regularly throughout the course. They work in groups, pairs and individually and participate regularly in discussions linking to core classes, community and service whenever possible. Students are encouraged to participate in weekly art challenges, art competitions and maintain a blog to showcase their work. The visual arts assessment consists of both the finished products (Studio Work) and the process of artistic investigation and development (Art Journal and Blog). This two-part assessment, Studio Work and the Art Journal, is standard in middle school and high school art classes.

## CHOIR (YEAR OR SEMESTER)

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Choir is a performance class with an emphasis on vocal performance in an ensemble setting. This course is designed for students with little or no background in vocal training or choral performance and is an option for students who want to participate in classroom music but do not wish to study an instrument. The course will cover basic tone production, breathing techniques, sight-reading and ensemble training. As well, critical listening skills as they pertain to vocalists will be developed so that students can gain an understanding of modern singing styles and techniques. Students will participate in two major performances during the school year.

## DRAMA 7 (YEAR OR SEMESTER)

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Drama builds upon skills that were introduced in Exploratory Drama 6. The course will focus on how to use voice and body expression clearly both on and off stage. Students will have the opportunity to create and perform a variety of drama pieces. Students will develop physical theatre skills, learning from great physical performers such as Charlie Chaplin and Laurel and Hardy and devise short comic physical performances, presenting them with music, lighting, costume and props. Following this, they will focus on how to use voice to explore a short script, focusing on emotion, time, place and meaning. 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 drama showcase that will allow students to demonstrate the skills and confidence they have built over the course of the class.

## MUSIC 7 (YEAR LONG)

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This is a year long 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.

## YEARBOOK (YEAR LONG)

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Over the course of the year, yearbook students will create the annual SSIS Middle School Yearbook. During this year long course, students will have the opportunity to explore digital photography, graphic design and journalism. This course emphasizes working collaboratively to learn the process of publishing a yearbook with accuracy, effective photography, design layout, and equal student representation. Students will also focus on professional communication skills and time management.



# 8TH GRADE REQUIREMENTS

All Grade 8 students will be enrolled in the following courses. All courses are full year courses unless otherwise noted:

## Core classes:

1. English Language Arts
2. Mathematics
3. Science
4. Social Studies
5. World Language (Mandarin or Spanish)
6. Exploratory Writing (Semester)

## Encore classes:

7. Physical Education
8. Elective from the following choices. Grade 8 students select 1.5 electives; 1 full year course + 1 semester course OR 3 semester courses:
  - Art 8 (year or semester)
  - Choir (year or semester)
  - Drama 8 (year or semester)
  - Music 8 (year)
  - Technology: Creative Technologies (semester)
  - Technology: Robotics and Coding (semester)
  - Yearbook (year)

## 8TH GRADE COURSES

### CORE COURSES

#### ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS 8

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The SSIS English Language Arts program places a strong emphasis on developing students' skill in reading, writing, speaking, and listening in order to help them become critical readers, writers, and thinkers. The workshop method, which prioritizes student choice and inquiry, provides opportunities to explore key elements of various narrative, informational, argumentative, and literary texts through reading and writing. The English Language Arts program goal is to provide students with rigorous and meaningful learning activities that help them build the literacy skills necessary for college and career.

#### MATHEMATICS 8

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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.



## ALGEBRA 1

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Algebra 1 is designed for students who have mastered basic mathematics skills and the concepts of Pre-Algebra. Algebra 1 explores the real number system, representing quantities algebraically, creating and reasoning with equations and inequalities, interpreting and building functions, as well as exploring linear, quadratic and exponential models.

## GEOMETRY 8

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Geometry 8 introduces students to deductive structure and proof in mathematics. Students explore and discover geometric relationships, and then use these truths to solve problems and create logical chains. Topics include triangles, congruency, quadrilaterals, polygons, similarity, circles as well as area and volume of two and three-dimensional shapes along with transformations, geometric constructions and coordinate geometry. This advanced course is open to students who have successfully completed Algebra 1.

## SCIENCE 8

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The Grade 8 science program focuses on different types of learning environments. Students explore concepts by traditional lessons and inquiry labs, independent units and big project learning. This course will focus on the theme of change as it occurs in human genetics and ecosystems, weather and climate, and chemical and atomic interactions. Each unit of study will be approached by the student from a different angle, both in content and learning style. Students will extend their knowledge of elements, chemical reactions, and chemical bonding, investigate the key to genetic inheritance and diversity, study natural processes of ecosystems and our environment, and investigate the change in our climate and its effects on individuals and humanity as a whole.

## SOCIAL STUDIES 8

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The Grade 8 Social Studies curriculum covers world civilizations from the 16th through the 20th century. The course is a thematically based exploration of the big ideas represented in history and geography. The Grade 8 theme is Conflict and Change and is focused on the following units of study: the Reformation, the Industrial and Scientific Revolution, the Enlightenment, New Imperialism, and social justice movements. Throughout the year students will improve their ability to critically analyze historical sources, compose argumentative essays, and think critically about the past, the present, and the future. Students will culminate the year by creating their own Human Rights Campaign.

## EXPLORATORY WRITING 8 (SEMESTER)

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The SSIS writing program is a semester class that emphasizes student development in writing across the curriculum for various purposes and audiences. The types of writing explored include persuasive writing and literary analysis. Students will use technology to write, collaborate and publish their works. Students in Grade 8 are required to take a semester of Exploratory Writing

## MANDARIN LEVEL A

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Mandarin Level A provides basic knowledge and skills of the Mandarin Chinese language. Students develop their beginning communication skills in the target language, as well as, learning aspects of Chinese culture. Pinyin, basic strokes, components of the characters, basic reading, writing and typing skills will be taught at this level. Students will also explore Chinese idioms, stories, and songs.

## MANDARIN LEVEL B

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Mandarin Level B builds on level A Mandarin to provide further knowledge and skills of the Mandarin Chinese language. Students continue to develop their communication skills in the target language, as well as, learning deeper features of Chinese culture. Chinese idioms will continue to be introduced to students. Character writing, sentence structures, creating dialogues, dictionary skills and reading will be taught at this level.

## MANDARIN LEVEL C

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Students in Mandarin Level C 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.

## SPANISH LEVEL A

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Spanish Level A provides basic knowledge and skills of the Spanish language. Students develop their beginning communication skills in the target language, as well as learning aspects of Spanish culture. Students will also explore Spanish stories and songs. Basic vocabulary, grammar, and speaking with daily oral exercises will be introduced at this level.

## SPANISH LEVEL B

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Students in Spanish Level B 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.

## SPANISH LEVEL C

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Students in Spanish Level C 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 gain a better understanding of the Spanish language and culture. An interactive classroom environment enriches this language and culture study.



# ENCORE COURSES

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION 8

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The SSIS physical education program focuses on an active learning environment. Participation, sportsmanship and effort comprise the majority of the program at this level. Appropriate social interactions and gross motor skills development are emphasized at this level. The remaining aspects of the program consist of class preparedness, fitness testing and knowledge of sports. The goal for our students is that they will develop a deeper appreciation for an active lifestyle as a solid base for a healthy future.

All students will have the opportunity to study various topics including mental health, social health, nutrition, physical activity, substance abuse, human development, preventing disease, body systems, relationships and healthy decision-making. Grade 8 will focus on relationships during the teen years, violence prevention (anti-bullying), nutrition for good health, and the effects of alcohol, tobacco and drugs on the human body.

All three levels of middle school at SSIS participate in swimming instruction. The instructor(s) will differentiate lessons depending on each student's level of skill development. All students will learn the basics of personal water safety, stroke development and mechanics, endurance training (swimming laps) and play games such as water polo.

## ELECTIVES

### ART 8 (YEAR OR SEMESTER)

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The MS Visual Art program in Grade 8 is focused on the development of creative thinking and expression. Students will experience different aspects of drawing, painting, printmaking, sculpture, mixed media, digital art and ceramics. Students peer assess, self assess and reflect regularly throughout the course. They work in groups, pairs and individually and participate regularly in discussions linking to core classes, community and service whenever possible. Students are encouraged to participate in weekly art challenges, art competitions and maintain a blog to showcase their work. The visual arts assessment consists of both the finished products (Studio Work) and the process of artistic investigation and development (Art Journal and Blog). This two-part assessment, Studio Work and the Art Journal, is standard in middle school and high school art classes.

### CHOIR (YEAR OR SEMESTER)

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Choir is a performance class with an emphasis on vocal performance in an ensemble setting. This course is designed for students with little or no background in vocal training or choral performance and is an option for students who want to participate in classroom music but do not wish to study an instrument. The course will cover basic tone production, breathing techniques, sight-reading and ensemble training. As well, critical listening skills as they pertain to vocalists will be developed so that students can gain an understanding of modern singing styles and techniques. Students will participate in two major performances during the school year.

## DRAMA 8 (YEAR OR SEMESTER)

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Drama 8 will focus on how to use voice and body expressions clearly both on and off stage. Students will have the opportunity to create and perform a variety of drama pieces. Students will develop physical theatre skills, learning from great physical performers such as Charlie Chaplin and Laurel and Hardy and devise short comic physical performances, presenting them with music, lighting, costume and props. Following this, they will focus on how to use voice to explore a short script, focusing on emotion, time, place and meaning. 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 drama showcase that will allow students to demonstrate the skills and confidence they have built over the course of the class.

## MUSIC 8 (YEAR LONG)

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This is a year long 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.

## TECHNOLOGY: CREATIVE TECHNOLOGIES (SEMESTER)

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Creative Technologies allows our students to experience the frequently changing areas of technology, media, design thinking, and innovation. Through the use of tools such as 3D printers and laser cutters, this course uses hands-on group projects, that encourage collaboration and experimentation. In addition, students will use a combination of still images, video, audio animation and computer-based interactivity to communicate their thoughts and ideas.

## TECHNOLOGY: ROBOTICS AND CODING (SEMESTER)

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This course covers the basics of computer science. Students will explore different programming languages to solve problems and build interactive programs involving graphics, animations, and simple games. In addition, students will explore how these languages are used to create robotic sculptures that interact with the environment through the use of sensors and motors.

## YEARBOOK (YEAR)

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Over the course of the year, yearbook students will create the annual SSIS Middle School Yearbook. During this year long course students will have the opportunity to explore digital photography, Process of publishing a yearbook with accuracy, effective photography, design layout, and equal student representation. Students will also focus on professional communication skills and time management.





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