

MIDDLE SCHOOL



Grade 8 Course Guide 2019-2020



Community in the Middle School @ ICS

+ Our commitment to meeting the personal, social, and academic needs of every student is integrated into the curriculum and structural organization of the Middle School at ICS.



Four Roots

Promoting
Balance

Building Courage
and Resilience

Developing
Meaningful
Relationships

Cultivating
Responsible
Citizenship

Advisory: Every student is placed in a small advisory group, which consists of a core unit of learners connecting through experiences grounded in the four foundational roots. The Advisor is the central point of contact (and is an advocate) for the student. The Advisor is one of the adults with whom students can build meaningful relationships. Advisory groups meet for thirty minutes on four of the five days in the week with the fifth day reserved for Community Time.

Community Time includes the following activities:

1. House Events: Every student, through his or her Advisory, is assigned to one of the MS houses, which allows learners to collaborate in mixed grade groupings and enhances the MS community and citizenship through competitive and collaborative

2. Grade Level Meetings: Designed to enhance grade level community and citizenship through celebrations of achievements and sharing of expectations.

3. MS Assemblies: Designed for Leadership to communicate with and celebrate, the whole MS community in terms of the mission, vision and priorities.

4. Child Protection and Digital Citizenship: a variety of special activities and events are organized to ensure all students understand the essential components of the ICS curriculum for child protection and digital citizenship.



The ICS mission is to nurture the talents, character and intellect of all learners, challenging them to be a positive influence and empowering them to excel in their world.

MIDDLE SCHOOL

Dear Parents;

This Course Guide is intended to help students and parents know more about our programs and courses. We have carefully structured our curriculum to ensure a smooth transition from Elementary School to Middle School to High School. Although we are a small school, we attempt to provide a broad range of options to cater to students' interests and abilities. We aim to provide a rigorous program, which allows for greater student choice and personalization while providing balance and focusing on the Arts and skills essential in the 21st century.

Important Information

1. The Middle School's timetable is based on a block system and has eight blocks in the schedule meeting once every two days. All of our classes meet every other day for 75 minutes (55 minutes on Wednesdays).
2. Some exploratory courses, such as Band and Choir, will meet all year long while some will meet for a semester or quarter. There are requirements within the exploratory options that ensure our students receive a broad experience during Middle School. Some students may be required to take a certain course such as Academic Resource, EAL, or Foundations, to support their learning in literacy and math. Details about the exploratory options and requirements are included in this guide.
3. We have an early release every week. The early release days are important days for our faculty and staff to work together on school improvement issues, on professional development tasks, and on curriculum writing or review. As there is no adult supervision, all students are to be picked up immediately after release on the early release day unless they are in a school-sponsored activity such as Mother Tongue or Community Service.
4. All of our classes, including exploratory courses, are assessed using internationally recognized standards and effort is graded separately from academic achievement.

The following pages will provide a description of the classes our Middle School students can take. Please also take note of our commitment to building a Middle School community on the facing page and the final page on which the Personalized Learning Experience (PLEx) is described.

If you have any questions regarding the Middle School at ICS, please do not hesitate to contact the MS counselor, Ms. Friend, or the deputy principal, Mr. McBride.



Grade Eight Core Classes

Students in Grade Eight are required to take the following mandatory year-long classes:

- English Language Arts
- Social Studies
- Mathematics
- Science
- World Language (French or Spanish) or an Academic Support program
- Physical Education

English Language Arts

Following the Common Core State Standards (CCSS), students will develop their English language skills in listening, writing and oral communication following a readers/writers workshop model. A variety of assessments and instructional methods will be used, including multimedia presentations, research papers, journals, video work and drama. Language Arts activities will be integrated with Social Studies or other subject areas.

Social Studies

Social Studies incorporates the four dimensions of the C3 Framework: Developing questions and planning inquiries, Applying disciplinary concepts and tools, Evaluating sources and using evidence, and Communicating conclusions and taking informed action. Many Social Studies activities will be integrated with Language Arts or other subject areas.

Mathematics

Grade 8 students will take one of two math courses and student placement is based on teacher recommendation for the most appropriate challenge to the student. The courses will focus on all four main areas of mathematics: numeracy, algebra, geometry and data-handling/probability, building on the skills and concepts learned throughout Grade Seven. Reasoning and problem solving will be an integral part of the course, working both with and without a calculator, as appropriate.

All Grade Eight students will be expected to have their own scientific calculator (available in the school store).

Science

The Science curriculum incorporates the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) and covers content related to Matter, Earth Systems, Ecology, and the Structures and Functions of in Living Organisms. The Next Generation Science Standards emphasize a “3-D” method of science learning that ensures students gain an understanding of scientific knowledge, scientific practices & processes and overarching scientific principles.

World Languages

The Middle School World Language classes (French and Spanish) incorporate the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) standards and are designed for students working to acquire an additional language. Each ascending language level develops the student's increasing fluency in speaking, listening, reading and writing skills and overall communicative competence. Students also study the target language culture.

Physical and Health Education

Students are expected to dress in the assigned ICS uniform for PE lessons. During outdoor units, the proper uniform includes a hat and water bottle.

Physical and Health Education courses incorporate the Society of Health and Physical Educators standards (SHAPE). All students in grades six through eight take Physical and Health Education in mixed gender classes. Units include health, team building, fitness testing and various sports. Some units will have written tests or assignments. Students may be asked to keep a journal for each unit as well as a record of fitness tests throughout the year. The Health Program in Middle School is provided so that students will gain a better insight into the nature and function of their bodies, their environment and their relationships with each. Topics include: making good decisions, setting healthy goals, leading a healthy life, and resisting pressure from others.

Academic Support Programs

We also offer Academic Support Programs as part of the ICS belief in being responsibly inclusive. Generally students enrolling in an academic support program do not take a World Language however we look at the needs of every student.

Academic Support Programs

Academic Resource

Middle School Resource provides identified students with an environment for guided study. Students will receive support in written language skills, organizational skills, math skills and other study skills.

English as an Academic Language

Our English as an Academic Language Program (EAL) offers intensive support in the acquisition of English. The course curriculum focuses on all four language skills—listening, speaking, reading and writing—with emphasis on reading fluency, comprehension, and academic writing.

Foundations

Quarter course

Foundations will give students an opportunity to engage in either enrichment or remediation in connection with their core courses as a short-term intensive intervention. This course is an opportunity for direct instruction in foundational literacy and numeracy skills and lessons are tailored to meet the specific needs of each learner.

**Some students may be required to take this course after a review of data by faculty.*

Required Exploratory Courses

1. Global Issues Local Action (GILA)

Semester course

As a culmination of middle school service learning initiatives and in preparation for the “Creativity, Action and Service” (CAS) program in high school, all students in the eighth grade will take GILA. This course is designed to help students apply their leadership skills in the school and local community. Working cooperatively, students will identify sustainable ways in which they can give service to others and come up with solutions to help build the community. The class will be results based; therefore participants must be involved in providing community service to others.

2. Music*

Grade Eight students will take a performance-based course, either Choir **OR** Concert Band **OR** Drama.

Choir: All Year course

This course examines solo and ensemble performing skills as students work on a variety of choral repertoire. Students will also learn aspects of music history, theory and composition. As a part of this course, students are invited to attend the East African Middle School Choir Festival, which is a collaborative choral festival with five other international schools from Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia. Each year, the festival is held in a new location. Students will also be expected to perform in a spring concert and some other smaller concerts throughout the semester.

OR

Concert Band: All Year course

This course gives students an opportunity to focus on a particular instrument or range of instruments and practice with an ensemble. Students in this course are expected to perform at all school events and participate in other performance opportunities, including trips abroad. Students will learn aspects of music history, theory, performance and composition.

OR

Drama Semester course

Drama focuses on the following standards: Performance Skills; Production and Design and Scriptwriting. This course will lead to an evening performance in which students are required to take part either on stage or back stage.

Additional Exploratory Courses:

Depending on their choice for the performing Arts requirement, grade eight students may choose either **one** or **two** of the following semester courses (see course selection sheet for details)

- **Art** This course is intended to build upon concepts taught in the grade seven Art course.
- **Technology** This course is intended to build upon concepts taught in the grade seven Technology course.
- **Survey of Music** Designed for students with minimal background in music this course explores music through a variety of pathways using a personalized learning model.
- **Drama** See Drama description above.

Personalization and “Our Best With Africa”

Every student in the middle school will engage in a personalized transdisciplinary project beginning in May. Using the Learning Process framework, students will explore an area of personal interest (while engaging in research, writing, and data analytics) that also highlights their commitment to the school’s vision of “Our Best With Africa”. Students will determine a pathway for their inquiry and be assessed on select transdisciplinary skills. The project culminates in a presentation of learning.

