COURSE REQUIREMENTS

The curriculum for the Middle School is designed to provide a firm background in basic discipline areas and learning skills in preparation for Upper School courses. All sixth, seventh, and eighth graders take English, mathematics, science, history, a world language, and a physical activity. In addition, all middle school students will take drama, music, wellness, physical education, STEM X, computer science and art.

In all disciplines, the middle school courses focus on skill acquisition. Coursework progresses from the concrete to the abstract as a student moves from sixth through eighth grade. Dedicated Derryfield teachers make themselves fully present in their students’ classes and their lives to challenge, nurture, and support them as they navigate the social, emotional, physical, and intellectual challenges of early adolescence.

PROGRAM OF STUDIES

GRADE 6
- All Courses Required:
  - English I
  - Geography
  - Introduction to Algebra and Geometry
  - Science as Inquiry
  - Latin IA
  - STEM X
  - L.E.A.D. (Leadership, Ethics, and Development)
  - Creative Arts sequence: Drama, Music, and Art

GRADE 7
- All Courses Required:
  - English II
  - Civics
  - Algebra and Statistics
  - Understanding Connections in Science
  - Spanish IA or Latin IB (cont. from Grade 6)
  - Computer Science
  - Music
  - L.E.A.D. (Leadership, Ethics, and Development)

GRADE 8
- All Courses Required:
  - English III
  - World Justice
  - Geometry
  - The Web of Change
  - Spanish IB or Latin IC (cont. from Grade 7)
  - L.E.A.D. (Leadership, Ethics, and Development)
  - Art
  - Drama

MIDDLE SCHOOL CURRICULUM

The program seeks to begin a journey that will enable young people to be educated and responsible citizens. Beginning with an exploration of the physical world in the sixth grade, the program then moves to the American political system, and then to a global examination of justice. The progression acknowledges a sixth grader’s more concrete view of the world (Geography), a seventh grader’s emerging understanding of the abstract concepts of government (Civics), and an eighth grader’s increasingly sophisticated view of justice (World Justice). The sequence gives students not only an appreciation of the world around them, but also an awareness of civic responsibility, and the moral responsibilities associated with justice in a free society. These courses challenge students to think creatively, become fully involved in their own education, and explore the world around them. Lastly, each middle school history course has an integrated service learning opportunity embedded in its curriculum.

MIDDLE SCHOOL EXPLORATION BLOCK

Middle School Exploration Block is a time dedicated each day for students to pursue their interests and passions. Each Exploration offering will occupy three days in our eight-day cycle, leaving students five days of a fifty-minute study hall (in addition to their daily extra help period). Each course will be offered on a pass/fail basis, and every student must sign up for at least one offering per term but not more than two. Middle School Chorus, Band, and Strings are offered each term (descriptions below in the Creative Arts Section) while other Exploration courses will be offered on a rotating basis. Some of the additional offerings may include mini-courses on public speaking, investment, computer programming, film study/making, life fitness, digital photography, songwriting, ecology, inventors’ workshop, and philanthropy.

THE PROGRAM

THE PHILOSOPHY

The study of English in the Middle School concerns itself as much with process as with products; teachers help students develop and deepen their skills in language arts. Building on students’ earlier experiences in elementary school, middle school English teachers provide opportunities for students to explore the call of stories, discover ideas, appreciate language, and find their voices. The Upper School then builds upon this foundation through a wide variety of literature and cultivates students’ personal and intellectual growth while also deepening their appreciation of and skill with the English language.

THE PROGRAM

English I (Grade 6)
English II (Grade 7)
English III (Grade 8)

THE PHILOSOPHY

The middle school history curriculum seeks to begin a journey that will enable young people to be educated and responsible citizens. Beginning with an exploration of the physical world in the sixth grade, the program then moves to the American political system, and then to a global examination of justice. The progression acknowledges a sixth grader’s more concrete view of the world (Geography), a seventh grader’s emerging understanding of the abstract concepts of government (Civics), and an eighth grader’s increasingly sophisticated view of justice (World Justice). The sequence gives students not only an appreciation of the world around them, but also an awareness of civic responsibility, and the moral responsibilities associated with justice in a free society. These courses challenge students to think creatively, become fully involved in their own education, and explore the world around them. Lastly, each middle school history course has an integrated service learning opportunity embedded in its curriculum.

THE PROGRAM

Geography (Grade 6)
Civics (Grade 7)
World Justice (Grade 8)

CONTINUED...
THE PHILOSOPHY
The middle school...that health affects and is affected by all aspects of one’s life. The curriculum is based on The National Commission’s recommendations and the most current research in health education. The goals are to provide the students with accurate information and to help develop healthy individuals. As an integral part of the Leadership, Ethics, and Development (LEAD) program, the wellness classes are utilized to help students confidently navigate adolescence and be purposeful citizens in any community. These activities will continue to aid students’ character development, and personal and peer leadership capacity.

THE PROGRAM
In the Middle School, sixth-grade students will participate in LEAD (Health8) every other day throughout the year. The eighth grade will have a full trimester of LEAD (Health8). Grading is on a pass/fail basis.

ATHLETICS
In the Middle School, each seventh- and eighth-grade student is required to participate in two (2) seasons of physical activity each year. Only one independent activity per school year is permitted. Sixth-grade students will not participate in interscholastic competition on teams with seventh- and eighth-grade students. Sixth-grade students are involved in a yearlong daily physical education/health program using a skill-based curriculum.

THE PROGRAM
The middle school sports program offers the following competitive and non-competitive sports options:

Fall — competitive boys’ and girls’ cross-country running, boys’ and girls’ soccer, and field hockey for girls

Winter — competitive basketball teams for boys and girls, an introduction to strength training class, alpine skiing, and Nordic skiing

Spring — competitive boys’ and girls’ lacrosse, boys’ baseball, and a non-competitive introduction to tennis.

For eighth graders interested in upper school sports, there is the possibility of playing for an upper school team. Participation at the upper school level is dependent on a number of factors, primarily if there are not enough upper school students to sustain the program. Also required are the middle school faculty’s permission, coach’s permission, and NHIAA approval. Interested students must present a letter of request to the Head of the Middle School at least one month prior to the start of the season. Seventh graders may not participate in upper school sports.

Download the full 2020-2021 Curriculum Guide at derryfield.org/academics