



# MIDDLE SCHOOL

COURSE DESCRIPTIONS



ST. JOHN'S  
INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL





## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Mission statement	2
Philosophy	2
General goals	2
The Middle School	3
Middle School goals	3
Admissions policy and procedures	4
Organization of the Middle School	5
Extra-curricular activities	6
Guidance, interdisciplinary teams	7
Support Services	7
Courses taught in the Middle School	8
English/Language Arts	9
Foreign Languages	9
Mathematics	10
Grade 8 electives	11
Physical Education, Health	12
Sports	12
Related Arts	15
Religious Studies	16
Science	17
Social Studies	17
Technology	18

## MISSION STATEMENT

St. John's International School provides an English-language education based on Christian values, demands personal excellence and stimulates individual responsibility within a culturally diverse environment.

## PHILOSOPHY

St. John's International School provides a quality education, which is inspired by Christian values, while respecting other religious traditions. Within a caring environment, students are cherished as individuals, encouraged to reach full potential, prepared to think globally with a commitment to justice, and challenged to act responsibly in a constantly changing society.

## GENERAL GOALS

1. St. John's Board and Administration will offer effective leadership and sound direction through clearly formulated statements of policy.
2. St. John's will manage its resources efficiently and responsibly in order to sustain a sound educational program consistent with its stated philosophy.
3. St. John's will attract, employ, support, and manage an outstanding faculty of diverse backgrounds and complimentary talents who are role models dedicated to the mission of the school.
4. St. John's will provide a well-rounded program of instruction and inquiry appropriate to the diverse intellectual, social, emotional, spiritual and physical needs of its international student body.
5. St. John's will promote strong interpersonal relationships among students, teachers and administrators.
6. St. John's will encourage and support appropriate parental involvement in the school community.
7. St. John's will reinforce a sense of individual responsibility, self-discipline, self-reliance, and respect for self and others, while fostering racial, cultural and religious harmony.
8. St. John's will nurture global awareness in a multi-cultural environment and encourage students to make a positive contribution to society.
9. St. John's will offer the opportunity for all students to attain fluency in at least one language other than their native tongue.
10. St. John's will ensure a safe and secure environment for the spiritual, physical and emotional well-being of its students.

## THE MIDDLE SCHOOL

St. John's Middle School was founded in order to become more responsive to the developmental needs of the 11–14 year old student.

The primary aim of St. John's Middle School is to provide a community of learning which addresses the intellectual, emotional, social, spiritual, moral and physical development of the early adolescent student in Grades 6–8.



Early adolescence is a period of great developmental changes. St. John's Middle School recognizes these developmental needs by providing a program which allows each student to grow according to his/her capabilities.

St. John's is interested in the success of all its students. Teaching techniques are utilized which will enhance learning. Integrated learning and hands-on activities are used throughout the Middle School. Students are taught to master basic skills from concrete to abstract thinking as they mature intellectually. Later, more sophisticated learning activities are emphasized which help to develop the students' natural creativity, curiosity and critical thinking skills.

The Middle School provides an educational experience which facilitates the transition from Elementary School to the more rigorous High School learning environment.

St. John's is dedicated to provide an early adolescent program which includes the universally recognized components of exemplary Middle School programs. They include the Advisory program, a core academic program, interdisciplinary teaming, related arts courses, exploratory opportunities, community service projects, environmental awareness, intramurals and age-appropriate instructional strategies.

## MIDDLE SCHOOL GOALS

St. John's Middle School faculty and administration support the following goals to provide a quality education for the early adolescent in an environment supported by Christian values.

1. We will provide a stimulating and well-rounded Middle School program that promotes high achievement for students at all levels and prepares them for High School.
2. We will provide a variety of courses both academic and exploratory to accommodate students of diverse abilities, interests and differing rates of learning.
3. We will encourage students to explore intellectual, moral, spiritual, and ethical issues and to make responsible decisions in solving problems.
4. We will, through the Advisory program, promote strong interpersonal relationships between students and teachers and strive to maintain excellent communication between home and school.
5. We will provide opportunities for our students to develop cultural, aesthetic, creative and physical abilities through field trips, special programs (e.g. theme days, intramurals, activity nights, athletics, theater, etc.), and through the standard program offered in the Middle School.
6. We will, through interdisciplinary teaming, coordinate and monitor student academic achievement and behavior.
7. Recognizing that students learn best in an environment which is flexible, nurturing, and organized, we will provide a standard course of study consisting of academics, exploratory and an Advisory program which focuses on the intellectual, emotional, social and physical needs and characteristics of the early adolescent.
8. By integrating the different courses of study, we will develop stimulating materials and activities that stress higher-level thinking skills.
9. Recognizing the unique learning style of each student, we will incorporate a variety of teaching strategies and instructional materials into our program.
10. We will, in an ecumenical environment, provide students with the opportunity to experience Christian community.
11. We will provide developmentally appropriate instruction to help students acquire a feeling of personal efficacy and a sense of responsibility for themselves and others.
12. We will encourage and teach environmental awareness in all courses and activities.
13. We will provide a healthy school environment which is safe, both physically and emotionally.

# ADMISSIONS' POLICY AND PROCEDURES

## **Middle School Admissions policy**

Admission to St. John's Middle School is non-selective. The school is structured to accommodate a range of academic abilities. Students are expected to be able to function in a regular classroom.

In certain instances, the school reserves the right to refuse admission to an applicant whose learning or behavioral disabilities are considered to be so severe that he or she could not function within the existing academic and instructional programs, even with full support of the school's Support Services Department.

## **Admissions procedures**

The following procedures constitute the admissions' process.

1. There will be an interview with the student and family and the Admissions director, principal or the director of the school.
2. The Admissions' Committee will review the student's current academic records and those from previous schools. Prospective students should bring these records to the interview. A discussion of the student's goals and expectations will occur.
3. If desired, a prospective student may spend a half day at St. John's attending classes at the appropriate grade level.
4. Application paperwork (Application Form, Health Form, and Academic Information Form with transcript) is an essential step. Provisional acceptance may be granted until a student's file is complete. It is the family's responsibility to provide a record in English of the student's previous reports and grades.
5. St. John's reserves the right to place a student in the grade level judged most appropriate for his/her school experience.
6. Students whose native language is not English, or students with special learning needs are referred to Support Services for evaluation and testing before final acceptance.
7. When appropriate, an interview with the guidance counselor and/or coordinator of Support Services will be scheduled.
8. The school reserves the right to adjust a student's program, based on the student's needs, as well as the results of testing, education, or subsequent class performance. When a student's academic record or pattern of behavior at previous schools suggests he or she might encounter difficulties at St. John's, conditional acceptance is given. The student is then re-evaluated periodically during the year to determine whether the adjustment is satisfactory and in the best interest of the student.

# ORGANIZATION OF THE MIDDLE SCHOOL

## Grade 6

The sixth grade year establishes the transition from the more structured Elementary School environment to Middle School, where students are encouraged to make choices, and at the same time develop a sense of responsibility for their own learning.

Courses offered in Grade 6 include language arts, mathematics, religion, science, social studies, French, physical education, health, Advisory, technology, art, music and drama. Students are required to take all courses.

Subjects are taught through an interdisciplinary approach. Themes are incorporated into the curriculum and the related arts team works closely with the academic teachers.

The guidance counselor determines the daily schedule for EAL and LAE students.

Each year, as an integral part of the Grade 6 program, the students enjoy a learning experience on the "outdoor trip" which incorporates social and educational aspects. Perhaps the most important result of the trip is the personal growth of each student as he/she learns to relate to peers, to be responsible and to participate in group activities. All students are expected to attend.

## Grade 7

In Grade 7, the core subjects are taught by an interdisciplinary team of teachers of mathematics, science, social studies and language arts, with teachers from the related arts team, foreign language team and PE team.

All students in Grade 7 are expected to enroll in the full course of study. This includes mathematics, language arts, social studies, science, French, religion, physical education, Advisory, technology, art, music and drama.

The guidance counselor determines the daily schedule for EAL and LAE students.

Each year as a part of the regular course of study an outdoor, "Outward Bound" style excursion is taken for a week. Traditionally, this activity has been in the Ardèche area of Provence in southern France. All students are expected to attend.

The Grade 7 curriculum is enhanced by theme days and field trips during the year.

In the past, these trips have included visits to the coal mine at Blegny, the African Museum and Fort Breendonk.

## Grade 8

Preparation for a more rigorous High School environment is one of the major objectives of the Grade 8 program. Students are given the opportunity of adding subjects to their daily schedule, which, if completed successfully, will advance them in their High School studies. These subjects include Introduction to Spanish or Introduction to German. Students must, however, meet certain criteria before they may enroll in any of the above-mentioned classes.

Swedish and Dutch courses are offered if sufficient numbers enroll.

In Grade 8, the core subjects are taught by an interdisciplinary team. These teachers are joined by teachers from the related arts team and the PE team.

All students in Grade 8 are expected to enroll in the full course of study. This includes mathematics, English, science, social studies, French, religion, Advisory, technology, physical education, art, music, drama and an elective. The school reserves the right to place students in an alternative elective if his/her first choice cannot be scheduled.

The guidance counselor determines the daily schedule for EAL and LAE students.

As part of the regular course of study, each year a class field trip is planned. This is an integral part of the Grade 8 program. In the past, students have visited Costa Blanca in Spain, Normandy, Bordeaux and Landes region in France, Austria, England and Scotland. All students are expected to attend.

## EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

St. John's Middle School offers a variety of extra-curricular activities—some of which carry a fee. Some programs include competition with and travel to other international schools. Options vary and may include:

### Activities

- Activity evenings/dances
- Art club
- Assemblies
- Chess Club
- Chamber Orchestra
- Choir
- Class trips
- Community service projects
- Dance classes
- Drama club
- Drama presentations
- Math club
- Music ensemble
- Field trips
- Honor choir
- Honor orchestra
- ISTA (International Schools' Theatre Association)
- Liturgies
- Recognition awards' assemblies
- Student Council
- Sustainable schools activities
- Theme days and fairs
- Visiting artist programs

### Sports

#### Fall

- Boys and girls soccer
- Girls volleyball
- Boys and girls cross country

#### Winter

- Boys and girls basketball
- Boys and girls swimming

#### Spring

- Baseball
- Softball
- Tennis
- Track and field
- Golf
- Intramural basketball
- Intramural volleyball
- Intramural indoor soccer



## GUIDANCE

Middle School students are characterized by rapid physical growth, curiosity about their world and an emerging self-identity. The Middle School guidance counselor works as a team member with students, faculty, administration, parents and the community to create a caring, supportive atmosphere whereby our young adolescents can continue to achieve academic success and psychological maturity.

The Middle School guidance counselor works with individual students, small groups and entire classes to promote academic, social and emotional growth, in addition to coordinating the Advisory program. Placement and standardized testing are co-coordinated by the guidance counselor, along with the orientation of all new Middle School students.

Helping parents learn how they can assist in the total development of their child is another important aspect of the program. Parent seminars and the support services/guidance newsletter, in addition to parent conferences, help parents focus on the special needs, interests and issues of the Middle School student.

The guidance counselor can provide support on transition issues to both parents and students, and is able to provide information on special resources available to families in the Brussels area.

## INTERDISCIPLINARY TEAMS

At St. John's, students are organized in grade-level teams with their own group of core academic teachers. These teachers meet on a regular basis to discuss individual student achievement, grade-level activities, coordination of homework, tests, quizzes and the planning of integrated learning units. All instruction in the Middle School is offered in a supportive atmosphere which recognizes and values individual differences, and which fosters self-esteem and personal growth.

## SUPPORT SERVICES

The Support Services Department provides academic support to the Middle School through supplemental programs organized and supervised by the coordinator of Support Services.

### Supplemental Educational Programs

1. English as an Additional Language (EAL) is offered to those students whose first language is not English or students whose previous educational work has been in a language other than English. The Support Services Department determines which students fall into this category, and provides small group lessons. Instruction is adjusted to the student's needs with a balanced emphasis on language comprehension and production of the written and spoken word. Pronunciation, vocabulary, spoken idiom and composition are all incorporated into the student's program. The goal for each student is to achieve fluency in speaking, reading and writing in English so that he/she can integrate fully into the regular academic program.
2. Language Arts Enrichment (LAE) classes are offered for the development of reading, writing and organizational skills. Instruction takes place in a resource room, where students are instructed in small groups. Specific learning programs are created to suit the needs of the students who have learning challenges and for those who are having difficulty in coping with the academic standard required in their grade level.  
  
The course follows the regular curriculum, though the materials and assignments are specifically adapted to the skill level of individual students in these support groups. The objective is to help students cope with the academic requirements of Middle School and promote a smooth transition into mainstream classes.
3. Students making the transition from English as an Additional Language (EAL) classes to the mainstream or, native English speakers fine-tuning their English skills, are given in-class support by members of the Support Services Department. This support is always done by the specialist teacher working directly with the classroom teacher and with the same curriculum. The objective is to develop the skills and confidence in English language expression which are necessary in Middle School.
4. Additional services: arrangements can be made for students who require additional services such as speech therapy, physical therapy, occupational therapy and psychological testing.

There is an extra fee charged for all individual lessons or therapy.

Close monitoring of these programs is maintained through regular meetings with the coordinator of Support Services, specialist teachers, subject teachers, the counselor and parents.

## COURSES TAUGHT IN THE MIDDLE SCHOOL

### Advisory

Advisory is a program whose purposes are:

1. to have every student known well by at least one adult
2. to provide a framework for addressing academic and social issues and concerns related to our students' stage of development
3. to develop and practice social and communication skills that will support and encourage personal growth and development
4. to help students identify and deal with changes and normalcy of their growth and development
5. to provide a safe environment for any student experiencing a transition here within St. John's
6. to foster opportunities for students to develop and utilize the following skills: teamwork, problem solving, interpersonal skills, oral communication, listening, creative thinking, organizational development, and motivation

The core curriculum of Advisory is based on a social and personal development course. Students meet several times a week and participate in a variety of activities that allow them to develop important fundamental skills key to this age. These activities include role plays, work sheets, writing, discussion, problem solving, and team work. Additionally, celebrations, physical activities, community service activities, and unstructured discussion will take place as the opportunity arises. Students work with their advisors to develop the self-assessment skills necessary for preparation of the spring Student-Led Parent Teacher Conferences.

Areas of development include:

1. responsibility and self-confidence
2. effective communication and cooperation
3. positive relationships with family and friends
4. organizational and decision-making skills
5. goal setting
6. time management and study skills
7. cultural awareness
8. health issues



## ENGLISH/LANGUAGE ARTS

The overall aim of the St. John's Middle School English/Language Arts program is to provide a whole language approach for the students in heterogeneous groupings.

Our goals are:

1. to teach students the use of language in order to communicate facts and ideas correctly, succinctly and creatively through speech and the practice of the writing process
2. to increase the student's reading ability while nurturing a desire to read through class and individual reading of literature of all genres, including poetry, essays, novels, short stories, plays and speeches
3. to develop further skills in vocabulary, spelling, grammar, usage and punctuation in the context of reading and writing
4. to incorporate library, research and computer skills into the core curriculum

All elements of the Language Arts program are presented, enriched and broadened in each successive year.

### Grade 6

The Grade 6 Language Arts program aims to encourage, develop and enrich the reading, writing and oracy skills of each student. The reading program provides a transition from the basal reader of the Elementary School to a literature-based approach. The individual student's ability to read, understand and critically respond to a variety of genres of literature is encouraged.

Interdisciplinary links are regularly made with other Grade 6 classes. Basic writing skills are linked through other subject areas, wherever possible.

### Grade 7

The Grade 7 Language Arts program aims to further develop and enrich all areas of their linguistic development. The course strengthens students' ability to read, understand and respond to all types of writing, from fiction to non-fiction. Creative writing and hands-on assignments form a strong component of this course. Students also learn to justify, defend and draw conclusions, using verbal and writing skills to express their opinions.

Through an interdisciplinary approach, the Language Arts program enriches and broadens students' knowledge of themes covered in other areas of the curriculum, such as social and religious studies and the Advisory program.

### Grade 8

The Grade 8 Language Arts program aims to further develop and enrich the skills of each student, building upon the Grade 6 and 7 Language Arts curricula and preparing the student for the High School program.

Using an interdisciplinary approach, the Language Arts class broadens students' knowledge of themes covered in other areas of the curriculum. In their study of literature from different time periods, authors and cultures, students will advance their skills in critical thinking, reading comprehension, literary analysis, writing for a variety of purposes and audiences, public speaking, research and vocabulary development.

## FOREIGN LANGUAGES

"He who does not know another language, does not know his own."—Goethe

### French

The French language courses are designed to promote language proficiency from everyday vernacular in oral French to literary expression in advanced French. Great emphasis is put on oral skills at all levels. These courses lead students through all forms of verbal expression and grammatical structures. The development of written expression and critical analysis are encouraged. This multi-level program fulfills the needs of students with little or no French to those who already have established fluency. By means of cultural activities based on interdisciplinary links, the program covers all essential aspects of French language, life, literature and civilization.

### Beginning French

This introduction to French is designed for students who have had no or limited exposure to the language. While priority is given to oral expression, students learn grammar and writing structures which enable them to communicate in the language.

### Intermediate French

These courses are designed to continue and perfect elementary speaking, reading and writing skills. Emphasis is placed on encouraging individual fluency and the understanding of the French language. Communication skills and sentence structure are improved through review and the introduction of new grammar topics. Intermediate French offers a greatly extended vocabulary, an opportunity to role-play, and the introduction of French poetry and short stories.

### Advanced French

The emphasis on oral expression remains strong. Literary texts are introduced. A more structured approach to grammar, vocabulary and idioms is undertaken.

For the more advanced students, works by French authors are read for vocabulary development, composition skills and grammar review. Elementary literary analysis, the art of debate and guided composition are introduced. Emphasis is put on the expression of opinions and feelings, and the development of a critical sense.

# MATHEMATICS

Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8	High School—Grade 9
Accelerated Maths	Pre-Algebra	Algebra	Integrated Honors Geometry
			Integrated Geometry
Regular Math 6	Regular Math 7	Pre-Algebra	Integrated Algebra
		Regular Math 8	Integrated basic Algebra (=pre-Algebra)

While the review of the basic skills will be emphasized, the students in Middle School will gradually be introduced to algebraic and geometric concepts and notations. Techniques of problem solving are emphasized throughout all levels. Manipulatives, reinforcement, enrichment and exploration exercises are used individually and in cooperative groups. The use of technology (calculators, computers, video) is also prevalent. Logical development and presentation of work in an orderly manner is stressed.

Students in Middle School mathematics are streamed in each level according to ability.

The table above shows the progression that students are likely to make, or may make, throughout Middle School and into High School.

Students who experience difficulties have the opportunity to repeat a course if necessary.

Students in Grades 6, 7 and 8 take an exam at the end of the first semester and a placement exam at the end of the year.

## Grade 6

**Regular Math 6:** This course provides a study of decimals and fractions, their interrelations and their applications to word problems. The four operations are studied in conjunction with the above, leading to work with positive and negative integers. Terms and definitions of plane and solid geometric figures are used in conjunction with perimeter, area and volume. The graphical representation of statistical information is discussed and practiced. Other topics include angles, triangles, plotting points in a coordinate plane and the introduction of abstract mathematics.

## Grade 7

**Regular Math 7:** This course covers a comprehensive range of skills relating to number work. These skills include adding, subtracting, multiplying and dividing whole numbers, fractions and decimals. This course of study also includes work with percentages, integers and rational numbers, algebraic expressions, equations and inequalities (including multi-step problems), data manipulation, charting, and interpretation of graphs. The geometry unit includes the study of plane figures, angles, perimeter, circumference, area, volume and surface area of 2-d and 3-d shapes. An introduction to ratio and proportions is part of the program.

**Pre-Algebra:** This course provides a solid preparation for the algebra course. The topics include operations with real numbers (integers and fractions in particular) and variables, emphasizing applications of proportions, percentages in every day life, as well as finance. Also included are distribution and factorization, writing simple linear equations, graphing and solving linear equations and word problems, one and two dimensional linear inequalities, exponents, surface area, volume, Pythagorean theorem, simple quadratic expressions and factorization.

## Grade 8

**Regular Math 8:** This course is considered as the first half of the pre-algebra course, completed in the Integrated Basic Algebra course in ninth grade. It covers an introduction to algebra, rational numbers, ratios and percentages. Students will also do topics such as dealing with money, wages, areas and volumes.

## Pre-Algebra: See Pre-Algebra Grade 7 above

**Algebra:** This course covers a comprehensive range of skills relating to the field of algebra. It is a study of real numbers and variables and their applications. The topics also include linear equations and inequalities approached both analytically and graphically, factoring polynomials, simplifying algebraic expressions, radical equations, rational equations, simplifying exponents and using simple trigonometric ratios in triangles. Emphasis is placed on the use of linear and quadratic equations and solving techniques applied to verbal problems.

## GRADE 8 ELECTIVES

Each year, a number of elective courses are offered for students in Grade 8. Students will be asked to make their first, second and third choices and courses will proceed depending on the number of students enrolled. All electives are year long courses.

Below are outlines for some of the electives which may be offered depending on demand.

### Spanish

The **Introduction to Spanish** course is designed for students who have no previous experience of the language. Our aim is to develop basic oral communication skills as well as skills in listening comprehension, reading and writing, by means of introduction of the necessary grammar support. At the same time, students are introduced to the Spanish-speaking world, covering aspects like art, music, traditions, customs and food. Successful students will have the opportunity to continue the Spanish program in Grade 9 and to prepare for the AP exam or the IB Standard Level exam in Grade 12.

### German

The **Introduction to German** course is designed for students who have no previous experience of the language. The aim is to develop communication skills with emphasis on speaking and listening comprehension. Basic grammar is introduced to facilitate oral comprehension, while reading and writing skills are also given consideration. German customs and traditions are introduced in the classroom to give the students an understanding of contemporary German life. Upon successful completion of this course, the student has the opportunity to continue German in Grade 9 and to prepare for the AP exam or the IB Standard Level exam in Grade 12.

### Dutch

The **Introduction to Dutch** course is designed for students who have had no or limited exposure to the language. The aim is to develop oral communication skills as well as skills in listening comprehension, reading and writing. Basic grammar will be taught in order to facilitate communication. The many similarities between the English and Dutch language structure will be pointed out. The material used will include Belgian comic books and easy educational television programs. By the end of the course students will be able to converse with Dutch speaking students and read Dutch. Upon completion of this course, the student may have the opportunity to continue Dutch in Grade 9 if there is sufficient demand and prepare for the IB Standard Level exam in Grade 12.

### Swedish for native speakers

The aim of the course is to strengthen the students' knowledge of grammar and spelling, to develop their writing skills and provide them with the basics of literature reading. The course will serve as preparation for High School studies in Swedish eventually leading to a Swedish IB course.

## COMMUNICATION STUDIES

**Communication Studies** involves the critical study and analysis of a variety of printed and electronic media. Students taking this course will spend two periods per week in Media Studies and two periods studying Journalism.

**Media Studies—Film and Video Criticism.** In this course of media literacy, students try to understand the various forms of media. Students deepen their understanding and knowledge of techniques, technologies and institutions involved in media/film production. Students will master skills that will help them decode and analyze media messages critically, and develop an understanding of the complex relationships among audience, message and the world.

**Journalism.** Throughout this course students will explore the elements of journalism and discover the roles of the various people involved in this industry. They will learn to recognize and interpret bias in both the written word and in photography, as it is used in newspapers and periodicals. Finally, students will work towards developing a journalistic style of writing with a view towards producing newspaper articles and Web pages.



## PHYSICAL EDUCATION/HEALTH

### Physical Education

Physical Education is required of all Middle School students. Our program is geared to meet the needs of an age group which is growing and developing rapidly. The activities performed in class are designed in a progressive manner to upgrade the skills and knowledge obtained in Elementary School. This prepares students for more advanced skills at the High School level. All students are required to attend classes, unless exempt with a doctor's certificate.

Activities in Grade 6 include kick ball, flag-football, soccer, handball, basketball, track and field, gymnastics, netball, longball, floor hockey, Presidentials and Lifetime Sports (tennis, fitness, rollerblading and badminton).

In Grade 7, activities are softball, flag-football, soccer, basketball, gymnastics, volleyball, floor hockey, track and field, Presidentials and Lifetime Sports (tennis, fitness, badminton and handball).

In Grade 8, activities are fitness, softball, flag-football, soccer, basketball, track and field, gymnastics, volleyball, floor hockey, handball, ultimate frisbee, circuit training and Presidentials.

### Health

The St. John's curriculum for health seeks to motivate young people to build healthy lifestyles for today and the future.

The health curriculum in Grade 6 is designed to help motivate students to develop desirable personal health habits. The aim is to arouse interest, curiosity, and eagerness to improve health habits. The curriculum includes:

1. Personal Health
2. Growth and Development
3. Nutrition
4. Safety and First Aid
5. Alcohol and Tobacco Awareness

## SPORTS

Interscholastic sports are offered in soccer, basketball, girls volleyball, and swimming. All St. John's Middle School students are allowed to try out in these sports. Cross country, track and field, tennis, softball and baseball are available to those students who qualify under the ISST (International Schools Sports Tournament Association) eligibility requirements. Cross country, track and field are open to those students who are 12 years old before or on September 1 of the school year. Volleyball, tennis, baseball and softball are open to those students who are 13 years old before or on September 1. With these exceptions, Middle School students are not invited to play on High School teams.



MASITA

**EP**

TEPPARKING  
GROUP

STUDY  
JG/B



## RELATED ARTS

The Related Arts team believes that music, drama and art are essential components of human life. Each has a part to play in the ideal growth and development of the individual. In an international school, the arts cut across cultural borders creating a sense of belonging and involvement. Each student records and assesses his/her own growth and development in the areas of art, music and drama in a Related Arts Workbook.

### Art

#### Grade 6

The Grade 6 art course provides opportunities for students to experiment in various techniques for drawing and coloring, while always examining themselves as individuals in a community. Students will confirm that reality and imagination both play a part in the creative process. The themes are often linked with Social Studies, such as units on Roman and Medieval history.

#### Grade 7

Students continue to explore the creative process in both individual and group projects. The course allows students to produce a range of expressive images; to explore the nature of icons, symbols and individual responses; and to reflect constantly on their learning. Explored themes are often linked with Language Arts, Religious and Social Studies.

#### Grade 8

The Grade 8 art course seeks to introduce the student to the issues of aesthetic judgment and self-expression. Development of a personal style and artistic sensitivity become the goals. The students will be exposed to drawing and painting in various media, and other areas of art and design, including three dimensional work and printmaking.

### Drama

#### Grade 6

The Grade 6 course uses theater games and exercises, skits and short plays to further develop the students' skills of creative expression by strengthening self-confidence, practicing positive team dynamics and exploring individual and group creativity in performance.

A reflective journal is also employed.

#### Grade 7

The Grade 7 course allows the student to further develop confidence in speaking and performance skills through improvisation and mime. There is a continued emphasis on group cooperation skills. Students explore the different forms of Asian theater and have the opportunity to plan and produce a dramatic performance involving art and music.

#### Grade 8

The Grade 8 course stresses creative collaborative work. Trust, spatial awareness and focus are the primary points in the fight choreography unit. Creative interchange and ownership are the focus in the scriptwriting and directing unit, and the Tableau unit deals with working in larger groups and an introduction to technical theater.

### ISTA

The International Schools' Theatre Association (ISTA) organizes theater festivals in Europe throughout the year. These festivals are an excellent opportunity for Middle School students interested in theater to develop, prepare and present a piece of drama at the festival. At the festival, the students have the opportunity to work with professional actors, directors and theater educators on different theatrical skills. Any Middle School student may audition for 1 of the 12 places available. The ISTA troupe will then meet once a week for approximately two months to prepare for the festival.

### Music

#### Grade 6

This is a general music course which exposes the students to a broad base of music through listening, composing, performing and singing, and links with the Social Studies unit on the Middle Ages. Students explore the creative process in both individual and group projects.

#### Grade 7

The students explore the music of Asia and Africa in both individual and group projects. The student-created compositions are used in a culminating performance. The explored themes are linked with Language Arts and Social Studies.

#### Grade 8

This course is an in-depth study of "What is music?" and "What does music mean to me?" The students continue to explore the creative process both individually and in group projects.

### Music activities

The following are offered on an extra-curricular basis.

The Ensemble, which meets once a week, is open to any student who has experience with any musical instrument. It is possible for a student with a very limited time on an instrument to gain a rewarding musical and social experience from joining the Ensemble. Performances are given at least twice a year.

Chamber Orchestra is for the more advanced instrumentalist. Performances are given at least three times a year.

Private instrumental lessons by professional music teachers are available on most musical instruments either within the school day or after school.

Choir, which meets one lunchtime per week, is open to all students in Middle School. Performances are given at least twice a year.

Students in Choir may audition for the AMIS International SSA Honor Choir Festival which performs annually in May, or the AMIS International Honor Boys Choir Festival, which performs annually in October.

Students in Ensemble or Chamber Orchestra may audition by tape for the Junior International Honor Orchestra Festival.

## RELIGIOUS STUDIES

Religious Studies in St. John's Middle School promotes and encourages students to explore and examine their own religious tradition and that of others. All students are expected to construct a family tree paying particular attention to their unique and special belief system with the intention of owning and being proud of their own particular tradition. Students explore through biblical, textual, historical and comparative religious studies, how they can take responsibility for their own decisions and actions. By looking at themselves, family, friends, and community (both local and global), they learn what it means to belong to various social groups. They will explore in-depth similarities and differences between traditions, with a view to understanding and respect. Throughout the year opportunities for reflection and exploration of the spiritual dimension of life are given.

All students will carry out a religion project. Students will be required to choose a religious topic that interests them. They will be expected to do individual research using the library facilities as well as other sources such as family experience, the internet, etc. Note cards will be used to record the necessary information before the report is written. Students will be required to make a presentation of their findings. All students will be involved in the preparation and planning of liturgies throughout the year.



A great emphasis is put on community service, which is a requirement for all Middle School students. The focus is not only on the service carried out, but also on what is learned through the opportunity.

### Grade 6

The main focus in sixth grade is on Creation, Celebration and Belonging. Religious Studies is primarily concerned with peoples and faith communities. Students will be encouraged to use their imagination when looking at their own and other traditions. They will look at their own uniqueness and the gift of life. The need to belong and to celebrate is explored in depth. The Bible will be examined in its historical context. A study of creation in the book of Genesis is carried out and compared to creation stories from other traditions.

### Grade 7

The focus in seventh grade is World Religions - the study of faith in a global context. Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism and Judaism are studied in their cultural and historical contexts. Particular emphasis will be placed on the confluence of traditions. By comparing religions in their cultural and historical contexts, it is hoped that students will learn to appreciate the dynamic and fluid quality of the religious world. Students will look at how religious beliefs influence attitudes to social issues, for example, prejudice, racism, refugees, food for the world, etc.

### Grade 8

The focus in eighth grade is Community. The year may begin with a retreat where the whole idea of community is explored. Issues such as what constitutes a community, what its needs are and who is responsible in small and larger communities are looked at throughout the year. Leadership and the responsibilities of leaders are other issues dealt with. A particular emphasis is placed on looking out for the needs of others, especially the poor and the marginalized in the world. Students continue the study of Christianity and other World Religions. They also cover the development of their own moral selves, and their duties and responsibilities as members of society.

## SCIENCE

The primary aim of the Middle School science program is to foster and enhance an interest in science and to establish a foundation in the main scientific areas: biology, chemistry and physics. There is a combined course of study in each grade level. Topics are introduced and developed through the three years.

The Middle School science program allows the students to understand and explore the physical world around them. Emphasis is placed on learning concepts through practical laboratory experiences; gathering, recording and interpreting data based on the scientific method. This is accomplished through hands-on activities, laboratory experiments and research as well as traditional teaching methods. Students are expected to work independently and in cooperative learning groups. At all levels laboratory experiments are frequent, aligned with the concepts being covered in class and promote inquiry and the use of process skills.

### Grade 6

The sixth grade science curriculum introduces the basic principles involved in exploring science. It is designed to create a foundation of scientific approaches that the students can develop through the middle and High School years. Areas of study include lab safety, beginning to be a scientist, classification, energy, investigating matter, physical and chemical changes, particle theory, atomic structure, electricity, basic cell structure.

### Grade 7

The seventh grade builds on the basic scientific concepts introduced in sixth grade. Whilst there is a focus on the physical sciences, other scientific disciplines are integrated into the instruction. Areas of study include magnetism, electricity in action, forces and motion, light and sound, introduction to metal reactivity and acids/bases.

### Grade 8

The eighth grade science curriculum includes units in physics, chemistry and biology. Forces, work, mechanical advantage and efficiency of machines, thermal energy and heat are the major areas of study in the physical science unit. Chemistry focuses on atomic structure and behavior, the periodic table, different types of chemical bonding, and acids and bases in solution. Key topics covered in the biology unit include cell structure and function, cell processes, and genetics. Mathematics, health, and earth science are integrated into the instruction and activities as well.

## SOCIAL STUDIES

The Middle School social studies program introduces students to the social sciences placing an emphasis on the process of learning and on the values which motivate decision-making. Lessons are designed to ensure that learning is exciting and participation-oriented. Students gain fundamental competencies in geographical and historical methods of inquiry. Considerable attention is paid to essential skills and strategies for writing, reading, speaking and researching. The aim is to provide the type of learning experiences that will produce empathetic and concerned world citizens.

### Grade 6

The sixth grade social studies curriculum explores mainly the geography and the history of Europe. A variety of teaching and learning approaches is used and students are encouraged to work independently and cooperatively. An interdisciplinary approach is used when appropriate with elements of historical and geographical topics being covered in language arts, art, music, drama and science. The course aim is to develop and encourage the process of investigation and to develop an awareness of the social, cultural, religious, economic and ethnic diversity of the societies covered. The units of study include the European Union, and Switzerland, the Roman Empire, Islamic Empire and the Middle Ages for history.

### Grade 7

In the history and geography units, students develop greater sensitivity toward complex global issues. Some topics are approached from a historical perspective, such as child labor in the Industrial Revolution, WWI and II, the cause and effects of WWI and WWII, the child as a victim of war, as well as the development and use of the atom bomb. Students also investigate human rights and constitutions, ancient African kingdoms, the slave trade, colonialism and building a new, independent nation.

Geographical topics include physical and political geography of Africa, the development of South and East Asia, the comparison of traditional and alternative sources of energy, and the way that people adapt to their environment. Students will research and present a personal history project. Opportunities are given to work independently as well as cooperatively on a variety of student centered tasks. In this class, other areas of study are incorporated to enhance the integrated holistic approach.

### Grade 8

The aim of social studies in grade eight is to examine the history, geography, and cultures of the Western Hemisphere. This course, which is titled "The Americas", will be taught chronologically, thematically, and comparatively, using a variety of teaching and learning methods. Students will work both independently and cooperatively throughout the year with a special emphasis on active involvement in their learning via simulations and debates. Opportunities will be given for self and peer assessment. Wherever possible, other subjects (such as language arts and information technology) are integrated. Topics covered include indigenous peoples, discovery and colonization, movements toward independence, slavery, and conflict/war. In addition, continual development and application of geographic skills will be demonstrated by the students all through the course.

# TECHNOLOGY

## Introduction

The study of technology fosters an awareness of the development, application, impact and implications of technology on society and the environment. Technology is seen as the product of human activity such as inventing, calculating, designing, making, testing and improving.

The subject relates to human ability to make and use things, support or enhance the relevant needs in their lives using creative problem solving techniques. The breadth of the subject area is flexible, vast and where possible, topical. It includes nutrition, shelter, clothing, communications, health, learning, entertainment and security.

## Information and Communication Technology (ICT)

The overall aim of ICT in the Middle School is to enable students to use the computer as a tool, providing them with the knowledge, skills and qualities required to be successful in a changing and diverse world. Information processing skills, along with clear and effective communication are key elements of the subject. Students apply and practice these essential skills in context. Thus, ICT is integrated throughout the Middle School curriculum.

Students work with Microsoft Office, and other software is introduced according to the needs of the subject. Each grade level builds on their previous technical experience, adding new skills, as they explore the software further. Research and information processing skills are developed through use of the Internet. Students have the opportunity to present their course work using multimedia presentations, spread sheets, newspaper format, writing and graphics. There are many opportunities for the students to develop and exhibit their imagination and creativity using ICT.

Hand-in-hand with these skills they discuss ICT ethics, which include understanding the importance of security and confidentiality, along with polite and safe communication via e-mail. Students learn how to organize their work as they store information on the school's network.

## Design Technology

The emphasis of Design Technology is on the design process of problem solving: investigate, plan, evaluate, redesign and present. Students experience the three branches of technology (information, materials and systems) by working with a variety of techniques and materials associated with food, textiles, woods, plastics, communications and control systems.

Design Technology is concerned with people's needs and choosing responsible, appropriate responses to these needs. Students are encouraged to consider the social framework within which they are working. Implicit in their work is an appreciation of cultural requirements and differences, as they develop appropriate tools and solutions to the problems presented.

## Food Technology

The Grade 8 Design Technology program provides students with the opportunity to investigate, design and create projects related to food production. The focus of the course, foods of the New World, correlates with and reinforces the language arts and social studies curricula of the eighth grade. Together, the students prepare foods to learn and practice various cooking skills and techniques. Then, working in teams they conduct research to design and prepare a new and original dish using a New World food as a main ingredient.