

Middle School
COURSE
DESCRIPTION GUIDE
2026-2027

ACS Mission and Vision

Our community empowers all students to define and shape their futures for learning, service, and global citizenship. We are a compassionate, student-centered community of learners that engages, prepares, and inspires.

Core Values

- **Courage:** Having the confidence to take risks and do the right thing.
- **Curiosity:** Being eager to learn and explore to gain a deeper understanding through inquiry and critical questioning.
- **Compassion:** Taking actions to understand how others think and feel and appreciate the value of difference.
- **Integrity:** Being honest, fair, and responsible in words and actions, and staying true to one's principles.

Core Beliefs

- Curiosity and an enthusiasm for learning foster creativity, innovation, and deeper understanding.
- An ethical and compassionate community is built through participation, collaboration, and mutual respect.
- Reflection on learning experiences in and out of the classroom enables learners to define and shape their futures.
- Intellectual, physical, social, and emotional balance contribute to one's well-being.
- Leadership is developed through courage, resilience, and integrity.

ACS Learners Are ...

Collaborative team members who...

- promote and sustain learning.
- communicate and listen actively and openly.

Responsible people who...

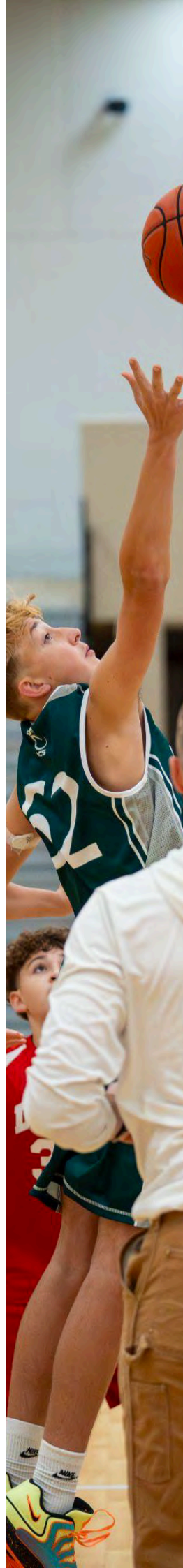
- balance their intellectual, physical, social, and emotional well-being.
- act with integrity and courage.

Self-directed learners who...

- are curious problem solvers and resourceful critical thinkers.
- persevere in the face of challenge.

Global citizens who...

- respect diversity.
- actively contribute to their world with empathy and compassion



Overview of the Middle School Program

Early adolescence is a time of remarkable growth and discovery—a unique stage in life when students begin to define who they are, what they value, and how they learn. The Middle School years are a special period, and our program is designed to inspire a love of learning, challenge students in meaningful ways, and foster a safe, supportive environment where risk-taking is encouraged and met with kindness, understanding, and a healthy dose of humor.

We are committed to nurturing the whole child, supporting healthy minds, creative spirits, and a lifelong passion for learning while promoting balanced growth in academics, the arts, athletics, and service learning. By empowering students to explore their interests, take initiative, and discover their unique potential, we help them grow into confident, compassionate individuals prepared for success in school and beyond.

Academic Program

Our curriculum is grounded in American educational standards to provide a student-centered learning experience that promotes critical thinking, problem-solving, and inquiry-based learning. These standards ensure students are engaged in meaningful, relevant, and appropriately challenging academic experiences, equipping them with the skills needed to succeed in an increasingly complex and dynamic world.

We follow the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) for English Language Arts and Mathematics, the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) for Science, the C3 Framework for Social Studies (College, Career, and Civic Life), and the SHAPE America Standards for Physical Education and Health. Our World Language program aligns with ACTFL (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages) standards, while the National Core Arts Standards (NCAS) guide instruction in the Visual and Performing Arts. In Technology and Innovation, we follow the International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) standards, ensuring students develop strong digital literacy and fluency.

By using these comprehensive, research-based frameworks, we emphasize inquiry, collaboration, and real-world application—moving beyond memorization to foster deep understanding, creativity, and lifelong learning. This approach helps students build the knowledge, skills, and habits of mind needed to thrive in a global, interconnected future.

Our Experiential Learning Program: *Viper Venture*

Viper Venture is a dynamic, experiential learning program that allows students to explore, discover, and grow beyond the classroom. Whether through local excursions in Abu Dhabi, regional explorations, or international trips, students engage with new cultures, environments, and perspectives, deepening their understanding of the world and their role in it. This program nurtures students into compassionate, responsible global citizens who embody our school's core values:

- **Courage:** Taking risks, embracing challenges, and doing what's right
- **Curiosity:** Exploring, questioning, and seeking to understand more
- **Compassion:** Developing empathy and care for others
- **Integrity:** Acting with honesty, fairness, and accountability in all we do

Through immersive, real-world experiences, students develop essential skills in self-directed learning, teamwork, communication, and creative problem-solving. They gain a deeper appreciation

for how their actions impact their communities and the environment, fostering a sense of responsibility and global awareness.

The Viper Venture experience extends beyond the trip itself. Students prepare through engaging pre-trip lessons, immerse themselves in active learning during the journey, and reflect on their experiences by sharing insights at school assemblies, family events, or presentations. Each step of the process reinforces meaningful learning, personal growth, and lasting connections, making Viper Venture a truly transformative experience.

Service Learning

Service is a pillar of ACS and is recognized in the profile of a graduate. Service-learning is integral to the student experience and aims to foster independence, taking on challenges, a responsibility to others, and community involvement. All students experience service during each school year. Students are empowered to engage in service experiences independently and through co-curricular activities (such as Viper Venture).

Our Advisory Program: Oasis

Oasis is a developmentally responsive advisory program designed to support every student. In small groups of 10–13, students meet daily with an advisor to check in, share information, and get organized for the day. Each grade level engages students in activities that promote critical thinking and self-reflection to develop a broader understanding of themselves and the world. This experience builds a strong sense of community by encouraging students to explore their unique cultural identities, appreciate diverse backgrounds, and embrace the richness of our community. Oasis nurtures essential skills such as empathy, compassion, and effective communication, ensuring our students are connected each day and prepared to thrive.

Ministry of Education Requirements

Arabic

Per UAE Ministry of Education regulations, students who are registered at the school as citizens of Arab countries are required to enroll in Arabic. For all other students, Arabic is an optional course in Middle School. Students will be enrolled in Arabic courses based on their language background and proficiency. There are two pathways to study Arabic:

- **Modern Standard Arabic (MSA):** A literacy-based program for heritage speakers focusing on communication and literary analysis.
- **Arabic as a World Language (AWL):** A communication-based program for speakers of other languages, emphasizing practical language skills and cultural understanding.

Islamic Studies

Islamic Studies is a compulsory course for all Emirati students in Grades 6–8 and High School, in accordance with UAE Ministry of Education requirements. Non-Emirati Muslim students may choose to opt out.

Following UAE Ministry of Education standards, the Middle School program is designed to meet students at their developmental level while deepening their understanding of Islamic belief, worship, history, and values. Through structured study, reflection, and practical application, students

strengthen their knowledge and character while developing critical thinking and personal responsibility.

The program includes *Foundations of Islam: Belief and Practice* and *Islamic Studies: History and Values*, guiding students from core beliefs and acts of worship to a broader exploration of Islamic history and moral development.

Course Selection Timeline and Load

Timeline

The course selection process begins in February with grade-level assemblies, where students are introduced to the elective options available for the upcoming school year. Following these sessions, students can explore their choices more deeply in small-group Oasis sessions, receiving personalized guidance from their advisor and counselor.

To keep families informed and involved, we also host a parent information session where we review course offerings and welcome questions. By encouraging open dialogue among students, parents, counselors, and teachers, we ensure that students are supported in making confident, thoughtful decisions about their academic path.

Course Load

Students enroll in six core classes—English, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, Physical Education, and World Language—and choose two electives each year. Electives offer opportunities for exploration and in-depth study, with some offered as semester courses and others as year-long courses.

In Grade 6, all students are required to take **Design & Innovation** as part of their elective rotation. This course provides a foundational introduction to technology skills and digital tools, ensuring every student gains essential experience in creative problem-solving, collaboration, and responsible tech use.

GRADE 6



Grade 6 students enroll in eight classes: six core courses and two electives.

Core Courses

- English
- Mathematics
- Science
- Social Studies
- Physical Education
- World Language

Electives

- Band
- Choir
- French
- Design & Innovation and Visual Arts
- Design & Innovation and Drama
- Islamic Studies

Core Courses

English 6

Aligned with the Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts, this course helps students build strong reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills while exploring a wide range of engaging texts. As they read stories and informational texts from diverse perspectives, students learn to think critically, ask thoughtful questions, and make meaningful connections to the world around them. Students have regular opportunities to express their own ideas through writing and discussion, helping them grow into confident creators and communicators who can share their perspectives with others. Throughout the course, they are encouraged to appreciate different viewpoints and develop a love of reading and writing.

Mathematics 6

Aligning with the Common Core Math Standards and Practices, this course emphasizes conceptual understanding, problem-solving and reasoning, modeling with mathematics, strategic use of tools, and procedural fluency. Students engage in rich tasks that promote deep thinking and meaningful discourse as they progress through Grade 6 concepts and selected Grade 7 concepts. Students will focus on four critical areas: developing understanding of area, surface area, and volume while using area models to support arithmetic with rational numbers; reasoning with ratios, rates, and percentages to analyze proportional relationships, including applications involving circles; extending number sense to all rational numbers through fraction, decimal, and integer operations; and writing, interpreting, and solving expressions and equations, and applying statistical reasoning to data.

Science 6

Aligned with the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS), this course is an inquiry-based course in which students explore scientific concepts through hands-on investigations and real-world problem-solving. Students develop foundational skills in questioning, experimentation, data analysis, and evidence-based reasoning. Students explore Life Science by studying the structure and function of living organisms, including growth and reproduction. In Earth and Space Science, they investigate weather, climate, and the impact of human activity on the environment. In Physical Science, students examine forces and motion and explore the structure of matter.

Social Studies 6

In this course, students are on a thematic, inquiry-based journey through the history of our world with a focus on early humans and ancient civilizations. Students explore how various regions have interacted, making connections among historical developments across different cultures and eras. Aligned with the College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework, the emphasis is on inquiry-based learning, where students ask thoughtful questions, examine evidence, and build their understanding of the past. By analyzing sources and evaluating evidence, students develop critical thinking, analytical, and civic engagement skills that prepare them to appreciate diverse perspectives and become informed, active global citizens.

Physical Education and Wellness 6

The Physical and Health Education program, based on SHAPE standards, helps students develop physical skills, personal and social responsibility, and a lifelong commitment to wellness. Students engage in various activities, including invasion games, net/wall games, target games, fielding/striking games, fitness exercises, dance/gymnastics, and aquatics. These activities are tailored to their grade level, promoting motor skill development and an understanding of sports and athletic pursuits. Integrated into the program, Health Education focuses on the four dimensions of wellness—physical, social, mental-emotional, and spiritual—through interactive discussions. Students learn proactive health strategies, mindfulness practices, and self-care techniques to support overall well-being.

World Language (Arabic, French, Spanish)

In Middle School, students must study a World Language, choosing from Arabic, French, or Spanish. Our World Language program follows ACTFL (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages) standards, ensuring a proficiency-based approach emphasizing communication, cultural understanding, and global connections. **For more details on each program, see page 23.**

Electives

Beginning Band 6 (Full Year)

This course follows the National Core Arts Standards, providing students a comprehensive introduction to instrumental music through performance, creation, and response. It allows students to begin learning a concert band instrument with no prior musical experience or knowledge of reading music required. Students will start on a woodwind instrument (flute, oboe, bassoon, saxophone, or clarinet) or a brass instrument (trumpet, trombone, euphonium, French horn, or tuba). Those interested in percussion can audition during the year to help balance concert band instrumentation. Regular home practice is essential, and students will perform in at least two major concerts, with additional opportunities for smaller performances throughout the year. *Note: ACS offers a large instrument inventory, with instruments available for year-long rental at AED 500.*

Choir 6 (Full Year)

Choir 6 follows the National Core Arts Standards, providing a foundation in vocal music through performance, creation, and response. In this course, students will be introduced to the basics of vocal music, focusing on proper vocal technique, posture, and breathing. Students will explore various music genres, learn to read simple music notation, and perform in unison and simple harmonies. The class will foster teamwork, build confidence, and develop a love for singing while introducing students to the joy of performance in group settings. Emphasis will be placed on developing healthy vocal habits, ear training, and an appreciation for music from different cultures and periods. Students will have several opportunities to perform throughout the school year.

French (Full Year)

Students can add French as an elective choice if Arabic or Spanish is selected as a core class. For example, a student enrolled in Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) or Arabic as a World Language (AWL) can also choose French as an elective language. Students will be enrolled in courses based on their language background and proficiency. See page 23 for course descriptions.

Design & Innovation 6 (Semester)

Students learn how to use design thinking to solve real-world problems. Through hands-on, project-based learning, they explore digital literacy and responsible technology use, aligning with International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) standards, while developing creative solutions to authentic challenges. Students use beginner-friendly apps and platforms to design simple digital projects both independently and collaboratively. They are introduced to basic coding, multimedia creation, and CAD modeling while examining how technology impacts their everyday lives. Throughout the course, they strengthen collaboration and problem-solving skills as they complete engaging tech challenges, practice safe and responsible technology use, and use AI at a foundational level to support learning and project planning.

Visual Arts 6 (Semester)

Guided by the National Core Arts Standards, Visual Arts 6 introduces students to the fundamental elements and principles of art. In this course, students experiment with drawing, painting, ceramics, and printmaking using various traditional and contemporary materials. They learn to observe, interpret, and communicate ideas visually through guided projects and independent exploration. Emphasis is placed on creativity, critical thinking, and problem-solving as students develop basic composition, color, form, and design techniques. They also begin to explore how art reflects culture and history. Collaborative discussions and peer critiques encourage personal reflection and help students understand visual storytelling, laying a solid foundation for future artistic growth.

Drama 6 (Semester)

In this course, students explore theater to build creativity, confidence, and collaboration. Through various hands-on activities, they learn to use their voice, body, and expression effectively while developing key performance and presentation skills. Units such as tableau, choral dramatization, scene study, and trust-building exercises guide students through the rehearsal process and introduce them to different theater styles. Aligned with the National Core Arts Standards, this course fosters a supportive environment where students take risks, grow as performers, and deepen their appreciation for theater. *Note: Students will be responsible for purchasing a black ACS uniform shirt and black full-length pants for performances.*

Islamic Studies: Belief and Practice (Semester)

In this course, students gain an understanding of Islam through two core areas: belief and practice. They study the building blocks of Islam to reflect on their meaning and relevance in their daily lives. Students are exposed to the essential acts of worship with greater depth and clarity, with a focus on prayer and fasting. Seasonal topics, such as Hajj, may be included when appropriate. Through presentations, reflective writing, collaborative learning, and guided discussion, students engage with Islamic concepts and connect classroom learning to lived practice, including participation in communal prayer.

Islamic Studies: History and Values (Semester)

This course deepens students' understanding through a broader, deeper exploration of Islam, focusing on history and values. Students study a structured overview of Islamic history, beginning with the birth of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ and tracing the emergence and development of the early Muslim community. Alongside historical study, the course emphasizes Islamic values through selected Qur'anic verses and Prophetic traditions, exploring how akhlaq (character) and adab (etiquette) are practiced in daily life. Through guided learning, reflection, and practical application,

students examine how Islamic values (akhlaq and adab) are practiced in daily life. Through guided discussion, reflection, and application, students continue to develop intellectually, spiritually, and personally at the middle school level.

GRADE 7



Grade 7 students enroll in eight classes: six core courses and two electives.

Core Courses

- English
- Mathematics
- Science
- Social Studies
- Physical Education
- World Language

Electives Full Year Options

- Band
- Choir
- French

Semester Options

- Design & Innovation
- Visual Arts
- Exploring Music 1
- Drama
- Theater Production
- Theater Medley
- Stagecraft
- Musical Theater
- Islamic Studies

Core Courses

English 7

This course develops a wide range of literacy skills that encourage students to inquire about the world, shifting them from content consumers to thoughtful creators of ideas. Students are challenged to embrace diverse perspectives, cultivate a love for reading and writing, and find the confidence to use their unique voices to make a positive impact. Aligned with the Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts, the course emphasizes sustained reading across multiple genres and formats (fiction and nonfiction), writing in informational, narrative, and argumentative styles, and the development of effective speaking and listening skills. Students explore these areas through engaging units such as independent reading, realistic and historical fiction book clubs, realistic fiction narrative writing, literary analysis, and structured argumentative writing.

Mathematics 7

This course follows the Common Core Math Standards and Practices, developing students' conceptual understanding, reasoning, modeling, and procedural fluency. Through rich, challenging tasks, students strengthen their ability to think critically and apply mathematics with confidence. Instruction focuses on developing and applying proportional relationships, operating with rational numbers, and working with expressions and linear equations. Students also solve problems involving scale drawings and geometric constructions, analyze two- and three-dimensional figures to determine area, surface area, and volume, and draw inferences about populations based on sample data.

The progression chart for Mathematics in Middle and High School is available on page 27.

Science 7

Aligned with the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS), this course is an inquiry-based course where students explore scientific concepts through hands-on investigations and real-world problem-solving. Students develop skills in questioning, experimentation, data analysis, and evidence-based reasoning. Students will learn about Life Science, where they study ecosystems and the flow of matter and energy; Earth and Space Science, focusing on Earth's history and dynamic systems; and Physical Science, exploring forces, motion, and waves.

Social Studies 7

In this course, students embark on a thematic, inquiry-based journey. They explore how diverse regions have interacted, making connections across historical developments and cultures. Aligned with the College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework, the course emphasizes inquiry-based learning where students ask thoughtful questions, examine evidence, and build their own understanding of the past. By analyzing sources and evaluating events, students develop critical thinking, analytical, and civic engagement skills that prepare them to appreciate diverse perspectives and become informed, active global citizens.

Physical Education and Wellness 7

The Physical and Health Education program, based on SHAPE standards, helps students develop physical skills, personal and social responsibility, and a lifelong commitment to wellness. Students engage in various activities, including invasion games, net/wall games, target games, fielding/striking games, fitness exercises, dance/gymnastics, and aquatics. These activities are tailored to their grade level, promoting motor skill development and an understanding of sports and athletic pursuits. Integrated into the program, Health Education focuses on the four dimensions of wellness—physical, social, mental-emotional, and spiritual—through interactive discussions. Students learn proactive health strategies, mindfulness practices, and self-care techniques to support overall well-being.

World Language (Arabic, French, Spanish)

In Middle School, students must study a World Language, choosing from Arabic, French, or Spanish. Our World Language program follows ACTFL (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages) standards, ensuring a proficiency-based approach emphasizing communication, cultural understanding, and global connections. **For more details on each program, see page 23.**

Electives

Band 7 (Full Year)

Prerequisite: Music 6 or equivalent

This course follows the National Core Arts Standards, emphasizing performance, musicianship, and artistic expression. It builds on the foundations of Beginning Band, allowing students to refine their technique, articulation, tone, and overall musicality on woodwind, brass, and percussion instruments. Regular home practice is essential, and students participate in two formal concerts, as well as additional performance opportunities throughout the year. Students may also audition for the MESAC Junior Fine Arts and the AMIS International Honor Band.

Choir 7 (Full Year)

This course follows the National Core Arts Standards, fostering musical growth through performance, creation, and artistic expression. Choir 7 builds on the foundation established in Grade 6, expanding students' vocal technique, musicality, and performance skills. Students engage in more complex music, exploring vocal parts such as soprano and alto and learning to sing in two- and three-part harmony. They will also develop more advanced sight-reading, ear training, and rhythmic skills. Ensemble work emphasizes collaboration, musical interpretation, and group cohesion, with performances providing opportunities to showcase progress. Students can also audition for the Middle East South Asia Middle School Arts Invitational (Junior Fine Arts) and the International AMIS Middle School Honor Choir. This course is accessible to all students, regardless of prior musical experience.

French (Full Year)

Students can add French as an elective choice if Arabic or Spanish is selected as a core class. For example, a student enrolled in Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) or Arabic as a World Language (AWL) can also choose French as an elective language. Students will be enrolled in courses based on their language background and proficiency. **See page 23 for course descriptions.**

Design & Innovation 7 (Semester)

This course follows the International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) standards and engages students in real-world digital challenges using advanced tools and applications. Through hands-on, project-based learning, students explore programming, game design, 3D modeling, and digital storytelling while solving problems connected to global and community issues. Students design, test, and refine their solutions both independently and collaboratively, applying creativity and critical thinking throughout the process. They strengthen coding and CAD skills, explore product design, practice safe and responsible technology use, improve information presentation, and use AI at a foundational level to support learning and project planning.

Visual Arts 7 (Semester)

Students build upon the foundational skills developed in Visual Arts 6, further expanding their art and design capabilities. Guided by the National Core Arts Standards, emphasis is placed on refining techniques and exploring new tools, processes, media, and artistic styles. Students can deepen their artistic pathways, experimenting with more advanced concepts in drawing, painting, ceramics, printmaking, and digital art. As they continue to explore the connections between art and history, students refine their ability to create meaningful visual narratives. Collaborative critiques and independent projects encourage critical thinking and foster creativity. Although this is a semester-long course, it can be taken in both Semester 1 and Semester 2, allowing visual art students to engage with art for the full year. Each semester offers different content, providing students with a unique learning experience.

Exploring Music 1 (Semester)

This introductory course is designed for students interested in learning the basics of playing in a Rock/Pop Band. No prior musical experience is required. This course is perfect for beginners who want to explore the exciting world of popular music. Aligned with the National Core Arts Standards, this course emphasizes creativity, collaboration, and performance as students develop their musical skills. Students will be introduced to various instruments, including guitar, bass, drums, keyboard, and vocals, with an emphasis on learning the fundamentals of their chosen instrument. By the end of the semester, students will have a foundational understanding of how a rock band functions and be able to perform at least two simple rock/popular songs as part of a group.

Drama 7 (Semester)

Drama 7 allows students to learn through doing and engaging in collaborative, creative, and performance-based experiences. Through improvisation, original storytelling, and rehearsal, students develop presentation skills, stage presence, and a deeper understanding of how theater reflects and connects to the real world. They explore how art conveys meaning, building their ability to interpret and express emotion through performance. Aligned with the National Core Arts Standards, the course includes monologues, clowning, playwriting, and Shakespeare, allowing students to experience various styles and techniques. *Note: Students must wear a black ACS uniform shirt and full-length black pants for performances.*

Theater Production (Semester)

This course follows the National Core Arts Standards, emphasizing collaboration, creativity, and performance. Students work together to create a production of a professionally written play, gaining experience in both technical and performance aspects of theater. They take on different roles and responsibilities within the production team, learning about technical and publication jobs. As actors, students focus on audition techniques, character development, physicality, and vocal expression to bring their roles to life. The course culminates in a live performance for an audience. *Note: Students will be responsible for purchasing a black ACS uniform shirt and black full-length pants for performances.*

Theater Medley (Semester)

In this course, students develop theatrical skills through movement, characterization, and technical theater, in alignment with the National Core Arts Standards. Units include stage combat and characterization, where students learn approximately 20 stage combat moves—such as rolls, slaps, kicks, and punches—before choreographing a fight sequence with a partner. These scenes incorporate these moves, allowing students to balance physical action with character development. For the final performance, students also take on technical roles, learning to program the lighting board and use music to enhance the theatricality of their production.

Stagecraft (Semester)

This introductory course immerses students in the fundamentals of technical theatre design and production. Aligned with the National Core Arts Standards, students gain hands-on experience while developing problem-solving, collaboration, organization, and creative thinking skills. Through active participation in school productions and events, students explore specialized areas of technical theatre, including set and large prop construction, costume design and construction, and technical operations such as lighting and sound design, cueing, and board operation. Students learn how technical choices support storytelling, mood, and audience engagement in live performance. Working alongside the Musical Theatre and Drama Production classes, students contribute directly to live performances and experience the production process from planning to performance.

Musical Theater (Semester)

In this dynamic and performance-based course, students explore the fundamentals of musical theatre through singing, acting, and movement. Aligned with the National Core Arts Standards, the course emphasizes artistic expression, ensemble collaboration, and disciplined rehearsal practices. Students learn about the history and defining characteristics of musical theatre while developing skills in audition preparation, rehearsal etiquette, time management, and taking direction. Students will then move into Group and Solo Performances, applying their learning in rehearsed musical numbers and demonstrating growth in vocal technique, character development, stage presence, and storytelling. The course includes multiple opportunities to perform for live audiences, helping students grow in confidence, discipline, and appreciation for the collaborative art of musical theatre. The course includes multiple opportunities to perform for live audiences, helping students grow in confidence, discipline, and appreciation for the collaborative art of musical theatre.

Islamic Studies: Belief and Practice (Semester)

In this course, students gain an understanding of Islam through two core areas: belief and practice. They study the building blocks of Islam to reflect on their meaning and relevance in their daily lives. Students are exposed to the essential acts of worship with greater depth and clarity, with a focus on prayer and fasting. Seasonal topics, such as Hajj, may be included when appropriate. Through presentations, reflective writing, collaborative learning, and guided discussion, students engage with Islamic concepts and connect classroom learning to lived practice, including participation in communal prayer.

Islamic Studies: History and Values (Semester)

This course deepens students' understanding through a broader, deeper exploration of Islam, focusing on history and values. Students study a structured overview of Islamic history, beginning with the birth of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ and tracing the emergence and development of the early Muslim community. Alongside historical study, the course emphasizes Islamic values through selected Qur'anic verses and Prophetic traditions, exploring how akhlaq (character) and adab (etiquette) are practiced in daily life. Through guided learning, reflection, and practical application, students examine how Islamic values (akhlaq and adab) are practiced in daily life. Through guided discussion, reflection, and application, students continue to develop intellectually, spiritually, and personally at the middle school level.

GRADE 8



Grade 8 students enroll in eight classes: six core courses and two electives.

Core Courses

- English
- Mathematics
- Science
- Social Studies
- Physical Education
- World Language

Electives Full Year Options

- Band
- Choir
- French

Semester Options

- Design & Innovation
- Visual Arts
- Exploring Music 1or2
- Drama
- Theater Production
- Theater Medley
- Stagecraft
- Musical Theater
- Islamic Studies

Core Courses

English 8

This course builds literacy skills that empower students to move beyond consuming content to actively producing and sharing ideas. Through diverse reading, writing, speaking, and listening experiences, students develop their unique voices, deepen their appreciation for different perspectives, and cultivate a lifelong passion for literacy. A key focus is fostering sustained reading habits across multiple genres and formats, including fiction and nonfiction. Writing instruction emphasizes informational, poetic, and argumentative techniques, with units aligned to the English Language Arts Common Core Standards. Students engage in poetry reading, analysis, and narrative writing, as well as critical literacy book clubs, informational writing, dystopian book clubs combined with argumentative writing, and literary nonfiction book clubs paired with argumentative writing. By strengthening their literacy skills, students gain the confidence to think critically and express their ideas.

Mathematics

In Grade 8, students are enrolled in one of two math courses: **Mathematics 8 or Integrated Math 1**.

The Math Department takes a comprehensive approach to course placement, using a range of data, including MAP scores, academic performance, learning approaches, student motivation, and teacher observations. In addition to these metrics, they consider key qualities such as adaptability in learning, the ability to apply concepts to new situations, perseverance, independent problem-solving, and a willingness to seek feedback. This placement process ensures that students receive the appropriate level of challenge and support, allowing them to build confidence, deepen their understanding, and prepare for future mathematical success. **The progression chart for Mathematics in Middle and High School is available on page 27.**

Mathematics 8

This course follows the Common Core Math Standards and Practices, developing students' conceptual understanding, reasoning, modeling, and procedural fluency. Through rich, challenging tasks, students strengthen their ability to think critically and apply mathematics with confidence. Instruction focuses on formulating and reasoning about expressions and equations, modeling linear relationships in bivariate data, and solving linear equations and systems of equations. Students also develop a strong understanding of functions to describe quantitative relationships and analyze two- and three-dimensional figures using distance, angle, similarity, and congruence, including application of the Pythagorean Theorem.

Note: Students who complete this course will enroll in Integrated Math 1 in Grade 9.

Integrated Math 1

Prerequisite: Successful completion of Math 7 and Math Department placement.

Integrated Math 1 (IM1) builds the foundations of algebra by developing students' understanding of linear and exponential relationships, systems of equations, and inequalities through quantitative reasoning and pattern recognition. Principles of geometry are connected to algebra through the study of transformations and congruence with a focus on triangles. Students will also be introduced to statistical measures and models. Throughout these topics, an emphasis is placed on communicating mathematics and understanding the mathematical concepts behind each new skill.

Note: Students who complete this course will enroll in Integrated Math 2 in Grade 9.

Science 8

Aligned with the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS), Science 8 is an inquiry-based course in which students explore scientific concepts through hands-on investigations and real-world problem-solving. Students continue to develop skills in questioning, experimentation, data analysis, and evidence-based reasoning. Students explore Life Science by investigating the mechanisms of biological diversity, including genetic, environmental, and evolutionary factors. In Earth and Space Science, they examine space systems and the dynamic interactions within our solar system and beyond. In Physical Science, students study the structure and properties of matter, chemical reactions, and the role of energy in physical processes.

Social Studies 8

In this course, students embark on a thematic, inquiry-based exploration of our contemporary world while imagining the future. They investigate how historical developments continue to shape modern issues and how global interactions drive change in today's society. Aligned with the College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework, the course encourages students to ask thoughtful questions, evaluate evidence, and construct informed understandings of current events and emerging trends. Through this process, students build critical thinking, analytical, and civic engagement skills, empowering them to appreciate diverse perspectives and become proactive, active global citizens prepared for the future.

Physical Education and Wellness 8

The Physical and Health Education program, based on SHAPE standards, helps students develop physical skills, personal and social responsibility, and a lifelong commitment to wellness. Students engage in various activities, including invasion games, net/wall games, target games, fielding/striking games, fitness exercises, dance/gymnastics, and aquatics. These activities are tailored to their grade level, promoting motor skill development and an understanding of sports and athletic pursuits. Integrated into the program, Health Education focuses on the four dimensions of wellness—physical, social, mental-emotional, and spiritual—through interactive discussions. Students learn proactive health strategies, mindfulness practices, and self-care techniques to support overall well-being.

World Language (Arabic, French, Spanish)

In Middle School, students must study a World Language, choosing from Arabic, French, or Spanish. Our World Language program follows ACTFL (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages) standards, ensuring a proficiency-based approach emphasizing communication, cultural understanding, and global connections. **For more details on each program, see page 23.**

Electives

Band 8 (Full Year)

Prerequisite: Music 6 and Band 7, or equivalent

This course is designed for students with approximately two years of playing experience and focuses on advanced musicianship and instrumental technique. Emphasis is placed on refining skills in technique, articulation, tone, and understanding diverse musical styles for woodwind, brass, and percussion instruments. Aligned with the National Core Arts Standards, this course fosters artistic expression, collaboration, and technical proficiency in instrumental music. In addition to regular

home practice, students attend full ensemble sessions and occasional after-school rehearsals. They perform in two formal concerts and other events, with opportunities to join combined performances with the Grade 7 and High School Bands, as well as to audition for the MESAC Junior Fine Arts and the AMIS International Honor Band. *Note: ACS offers a large instrument inventory, with instruments available for year-long rental at AED 500.*

Choir 8 (Full Year)

In this course, students will continue to refine their vocal technique and musical skills while engaging with more challenging and advanced repertoire. The focus is on developing a balanced, blended choir sound through four-part harmony and intricate vocal arrangements that push students to grow as individual singers and ensemble members. Aligned with the National Core Arts Standards, the course emphasizes leadership, musical expression, collaboration, and technical development. Students will strengthen their sight-reading abilities, expand their vocal range, and deepen their understanding of music theory, all while preparing for future high school-level choral experiences. Regular performance opportunities allow students to showcase their progress and passion for vocal music. Students may also audition for prestigious events such as the Middle East South Asia Middle School Arts Invitational (Junior Fine Arts) and the International AMIS Middle School Honor Choir.

French (Full Year)

Students can add French as an elective choice if Arabic or Spanish is selected as a core class. For example, a student enrolled in Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) or Arabic as a World Language (AWL) can also choose French as an elective language. Students will be enrolled in courses based on their language background and proficiency. **See page 23 for course descriptions.**

Design & Innovation 8 (Semester)

Designed for students eager to create real-world digital solutions, this course explores advanced coding, app development, and multimedia tools through hands-on, project-based challenges. Aligned with International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) standards, it emphasizes innovation, problem-solving, and responsible technology use. Students develop skills in programming, AI, game development, CAD modeling, and product design while applying entrepreneurial thinking to business, social impact, and global challenges. Throughout the course, they create professional-quality digital products and build a portfolio that showcases their technical expertise and independent thinking.

Visual Arts 8 (Semester)

This course challenges students to apply artistic techniques and creative problem-solving to produce works of art. Guided by the National Core Arts Standards, students refine their abilities in various media, including drawing, painting, print-making, sculpture, and digital art, while exploring complex composition, color, and design concepts. Emphasis is placed on developing a personal artistic voice and critically analyzing artworks from diverse cultural and historical perspectives. Through more individually guided projects and collaborative critiques, students learn to articulate their creative vision and experiment with innovative ideas, preparing them for high school art by fostering independence, technical mastery, and expressive creativity. Each semester offers different content, providing students with a unique learning experience.

Exploring Music 1 (Semester)

This introductory course is designed for students interested in learning the basics of playing in a rock band. No prior musical experience is required. This course is perfect for beginners who want to explore the exciting world of popular music. Aligned with the National Core Arts Standards, this course emphasizes creativity, collaboration, and performance as students develop their musical skills. Students will be introduced to various instruments, including guitar, bass, drums, keyboard, and vocals, with an emphasis on learning the fundamentals of their chosen instrument. By the end of the semester, students will have a foundational understanding of how a rock band functions and be able to perform at least two simple rock/popular songs as part of a group.

Exploring Music 2 (Semester)

Prerequisite: Exploring Music 1 or a basic knowledge of musical concepts and/or previous experience playing an instrument.

This course is designed for students who have completed Level 1 of the Introduction to Exploring Music 1/Rock Band or have some basic understanding of music and instruments. Level 2 will deepen students' knowledge of rock/popular music, amplify advanced techniques, and foster teamwork through collaboration in an ensemble setting. Students will continue to explore various instruments, including guitar, bass, drums, keyboard, and vocals, with an emphasis on ensemble performance. The course, aligned with the National Core Art standards, encourages creativity and self-expression while promoting collaboration, leadership, and communication within the band. Students can choose songs to rehearse, experiment with their instruments, and work on live performance dynamics. By the end of this course, students will have honed their musical skills, built confidence in their abilities, and gained experience playing in a rock band setting.

Drama 8 (Semester)

In this course, drama is taught as an experiential subject through collaborative learning experiences and creative opportunities. Drama focuses on developing presentation and performance skills, creating original work, connecting the real world and the world of theater, and responding to how art conveys meaning. Aligned with the National Core Arts Standards, this course emphasizes artistic expression, collaboration, and the development of theatrical techniques. Drama 8 includes units exploring puppetry, scene studies, and devised theater, allowing students to deepen their understanding of performance and storytelling. *Note: Students will be responsible for purchasing a black ACS uniform shirt and black full-length pants for performances.*

Theater Production (Semester)

In this course, students work together to create a performance of a professionally written play. Aligned with the National Core Arts Standards, this course emphasizes artistic collaboration, technical theater, and performance skills. Students take on different roles and responsibilities within the production team, gaining experience in both technical and publication jobs. They also focus on their performance skills as they switch gears and become the actors in the show, working on their auditions, character development, physicality, and vocal traits for their roles. The students then perform their show for a live audience. *Note: Students will be responsible for purchasing a black ACS uniform shirt and black full-length pants for performances.*

Theater Medley (Semester)

In line with the National Core Arts Standards, this course allows students to explore theatrical movement, characterization, and technical production. Units include stage combat and characterization, where students learn approximately 20 different stage combat moves - including rolls, slaps, kicks, and punches - before choreographing a fight sequence with a partner. These scenes incorporate these moves, allowing students to balance physical action with character development. For their final performance, students also take on technical roles, learning how to program the lighting board and use music to enhance the theatricality of their performance. *Note: Students will be responsible for purchasing a black ACS uniform shirt and black full-length pants for performances.*

Stagecraft (Semester)

This introductory course immerses students in the fundamentals of technical theatre design and production. Aligned with the National Core Arts Standards, students gain hands-on experience while developing problem-solving, collaboration, organization, and creative thinking skills. Through active participation in school productions and events, students explore specialized areas of technical theatre, including set and large prop construction, costume design and construction, and technical operations such as lighting and sound design, cueing, and board operation. Students learn how technical choices support storytelling, mood, and audience engagement in live performance. Working alongside the Musical Theatre and Drama Production classes, students contribute directly to live performances and experience the production process from planning to performance.

Musical Theater (Semester)

In this dynamic and performance-based course, students explore the fundamentals of musical theatre through singing, acting, and movement. Aligned with the National Core Arts Standards, the course emphasizes artistic expression, ensemble collaboration, and disciplined rehearsal practices. Students learn about the history and defining characteristics of musical theatre while developing skills in audition preparation, rehearsal etiquette, time management, and taking direction. Students will then move into Group and Solo Performances, applying their learning in rehearsed musical numbers and demonstrating growth in vocal technique, character development, stage presence, and storytelling. The course includes multiple opportunities to perform for live audiences, helping students grow in confidence, discipline, and appreciation for the collaborative art of musical theatre. The course includes multiple opportunities to perform for live audiences, helping students grow in confidence, discipline, and appreciation for the collaborative art of musical theatre.

Islamic Studies: Belief and Practice (Semester)

In this course, students gain an understanding of Islam through two core areas: belief and practice. They study the building blocks of Islam to reflect on their meaning and relevance in their daily lives. Students are exposed to the essential acts of worship with greater depth and clarity, with a focus on prayer and fasting. Seasonal topics, such as Hajj, may be included when appropriate. Through presentations, reflective writing, collaborative learning, and guided discussion, students engage with Islamic concepts and connect classroom learning to lived practice, including participation in communal prayer.

Islamic Studies: History and Values (Semester)

This course deepens students' understanding through a broader, deeper exploration of Islam, focusing on history and values. Students study a structured overview of Islamic history, beginning with the birth of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ and tracing the emergence and development of the early Muslim community. Alongside historical study, the course emphasizes Islamic values through selected Qur'anic verses and Prophetic traditions, exploring how akhlaq (character) and adab (etiquette) are practiced in daily life. Through guided learning, reflection, and practical application, students examine how Islamic values (akhlaq and adab) are practiced in daily life. Through guided discussion, reflection, and application, students continue to develop intellectually, spiritually, and personally at the middle school level.

World Languages

Our World Language program follows ACTFL (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages) standards, ensuring a proficiency-based approach emphasizing communication, cultural understanding, and global connections. In Middle School (Grades 6-8), students must study a World Language, choosing from Arabic, French, or Spanish. Students are enrolled in courses based on their language background and proficiency. **The progression chart for World Languages in Middle and High School is available on page 28.**

Arabic

Arabic as a World Language (AWL) - Novice Level

Grades: 6-7-8

This multi-year course is designed for beginners with little or no prior Arabic experience. In a supportive environment, students build essential communication skills by focusing on listening and speaking in everyday situations. They will express personal meaning by relying heavily on learned phrases (memorized language) and responding to direct questions. Integrated reading and writing activities further reinforce their oral communication abilities. By the end of the course, students will understand the main ideas of simple sentences and short texts on familiar topics.

Arabic as a World Language (AWL) - Intermediate Level

Grades: 6-7-8

Prerequisite: AWL Novice or equivalent

This multi-year course is designed for students who have completed the Novice proficiency level. Students advance their communication skills and cultural understanding through intermediate-level tasks in a supportive learning environment. They engage in everyday conversations on topics such as family, home, daily activities, and personal interests, learning to creatively recombine learned materials to express personal meaning and produce sentence-level language. By the end of the course, students will confidently discuss familiar topics and effectively communicate in Arabic.

Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) 6

Prerequisite: MSA 5 or equivalent

This course is designed for students who are heritage learners of Arabic. The course focuses on strengthening the students' reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills by exposing them to descriptive, narrative, and informative texts. Throughout the course, students participate in reading and writing workshops that enhance their reading comprehension and writing skills. Emphasis in this course is placed on structured writing tasks and on-level text comprehension. At the end of the course, students will be able to engage in text rendering, speaking, and writing tasks across the following genres: short narratives and descriptive informational texts.

Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) 7

Prerequisite: MSA 6 or equivalent

This course is designed for students who are heritage learners of Arabic. The course aims to increase proficiency in reading and writing. Students in this course will continue participating in reading and writing workshops, which will expose them to a range of reading and writing tasks across genres. Emphasis in this course is placed on cohesive writing and on-level text analysis. At the end of this course, students will be able to write short narratives and descriptive informational texts and respond to texts orally and in writing.

Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) 8

Prerequisite: MSA 7 or equivalent

This course is designed for students who are heritage learners of Arabic. The course aims to enhance and strengthen the language skills that the students have acquired in previous years. Students in this course are expected to function with increased proficiency in reading comprehension and writing. At the end of the course, students will be able to write short stories, articles, invitations, and descriptive texts, and to respond orally and in writing to texts across various genres.

French and Spanish

French Novice

Prerequisite: None

This course is designed for students with little or no French experience. It provides students with the foundational skills to understand and engage in meaningful communication about themselves, their families and activities, their school, and their immediate community. The course focuses on developing listening and speaking through interpersonal communication, where students can manage a range of uncomplicated communicative tasks in familiar social situations. They can express personal meaning by relying on learned phrases and responding to simple, direct questions or requests for information. Students will be exposed to authentic videos and audio materials to further support their listening comprehension.

French Novice High

Prerequisite: French Novice or equivalent

This course promotes communication skills and cultural understanding by engaging students in communicative tasks to support their growth toward Intermediate proficiency. These tasks are designed for students to interact using the target language in familiar life situations covering topics such as lifestyle habits, eating out, making plans while traveling, and personal tech use. At the end of this course, students will be able to express themselves in speaking and writing using simple sentences. Students will also be able to determine key parts of the main idea and some supporting details in short texts and authentic audio materials on familiar topics.

French Intermediate

Prerequisite: French Novice High or equivalent

This course promotes communication skills and cultural understanding by engaging students in intermediate-level communicative tasks in familiar situations. The skills of writing and reading are integrated into the course to the extent that they foster students' oral communication. By the end of the course, students will be able to express their thoughts and sustain conversations by asking and answering questions on familiar topics such as school, home, social life, food, healthy living, interests, and travel. They will also be able to determine the main idea and understand many supporting details in short texts and authentic audio materials on familiar topics.

Note: Students will be enrolled in courses based on their language background and proficiency. If a student's proficiency in French exceeds the levels we offer, they must select a different language. However, they can resume studying that language in High School, where more advanced levels are available.

Spanish

Spanish Novice

Prerequisite: None

This course is designed for students with little or no Spanish experience. It provides students with the foundational skills to understand and engage in meaningful communication about themselves, their families and activities, their school, and their immediate community. The course focuses on developing listening and speaking through interpersonal communication, where students can manage a range of uncomplicated communicative tasks in familiar social situations. They can express personal meaning by relying on learned phrases (memorized language) and responding to simple, direct questions or requests for information. Students will be exposed to authentic videos and audio materials to further support their listening comprehension.

Spanish Novice High

Prerequisite: Spanish Novice or equivalent

This course promotes communication skills and cultural understanding by engaging students in communicative tasks to support their growth toward Intermediate proficiency. These tasks are designed for students to interact using the target language in familiar life situations covering topics such as lifestyle habits, eating out, making plans while traveling, and digital trends and personal tech use. At the end of this course, students will be able to express themselves in speaking and writing using simple sentences. Students will also learn to identify the main idea and key supporting details in short texts and authentic audio materials on familiar topics.

Spanish Intermediate

Prerequisite: Spanish Novice High or equivalent

This course promotes communication skills and cultural understanding by engaging students in intermediate-level communicative tasks in familiar situations. The skills of writing and reading are integrated into the course to the extent that they foster students' oral communication. By the end of

the course, students will be able to express their thoughts and sustain conversations by asking and answering questions on familiar topics such as school, home, social life, food, healthy living, interests, and travel. They will also be able to determine the main idea and understand many supporting details in short texts and authentic audio on familiar topics.

Note: Students will be enrolled in courses based on their language background and proficiency. If a student's proficiency in Spanish exceeds the levels we offer, they must select a different language. However, they can resume studying that language in High School, where more advanced levels are available.

Learning Support

The Learning Lab provides instruction to students who need support to be successful in their grade-level classrooms. Students enter the program for various reasons. Most students are referred by their teachers; however, some may be placed in the program due to psychometric testing results or a history of support in a previous school setting. Students enter and exit Learning Support with approval from the SST (Student Support Team), which includes the principal, counselor, parents, teachers, learning support teachers, and the Director of Student Support Services. Learning Support consists of two components:

Curricular Support

The Learning Lab is not a remedial program but a supportive environment designed to help students strengthen their skills and develop effective strategies for independent learning. Students receive targeted support in core academic areas, focusing on writing development, reading comprehension, and math skills. Instruction is tailored to help students apply these skills across various content areas, empowering them to build confidence and succeed in the classroom.

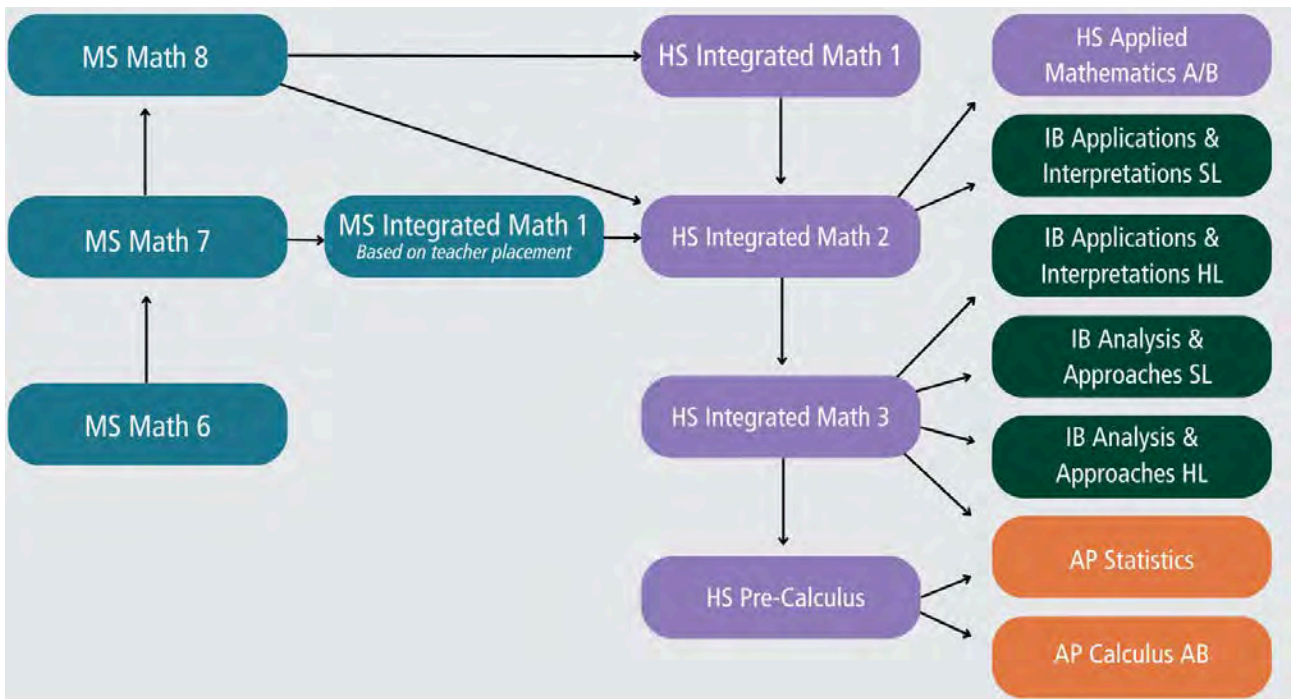
Study Skills

Independence and responsibility are essential to academic success. Students are taught executive functioning skills (organizational skills, self-advocacy, note-taking, and test-taking skills). Learning preferences are also explored. An emphasis is placed on learning these skills within the context of their daily assignments. Students are encouraged to take personal responsibility for maximizing their learning potential and educational opportunities.

Progression Charts for Mathematics and World Language

Below are pathway charts for proficiency-based courses to help students and families navigate their academic journey. While commonly used in High School, these charts also serve as a valuable guide for Middle School students, illustrating how their current placement connects to future opportunities.

Mathematics

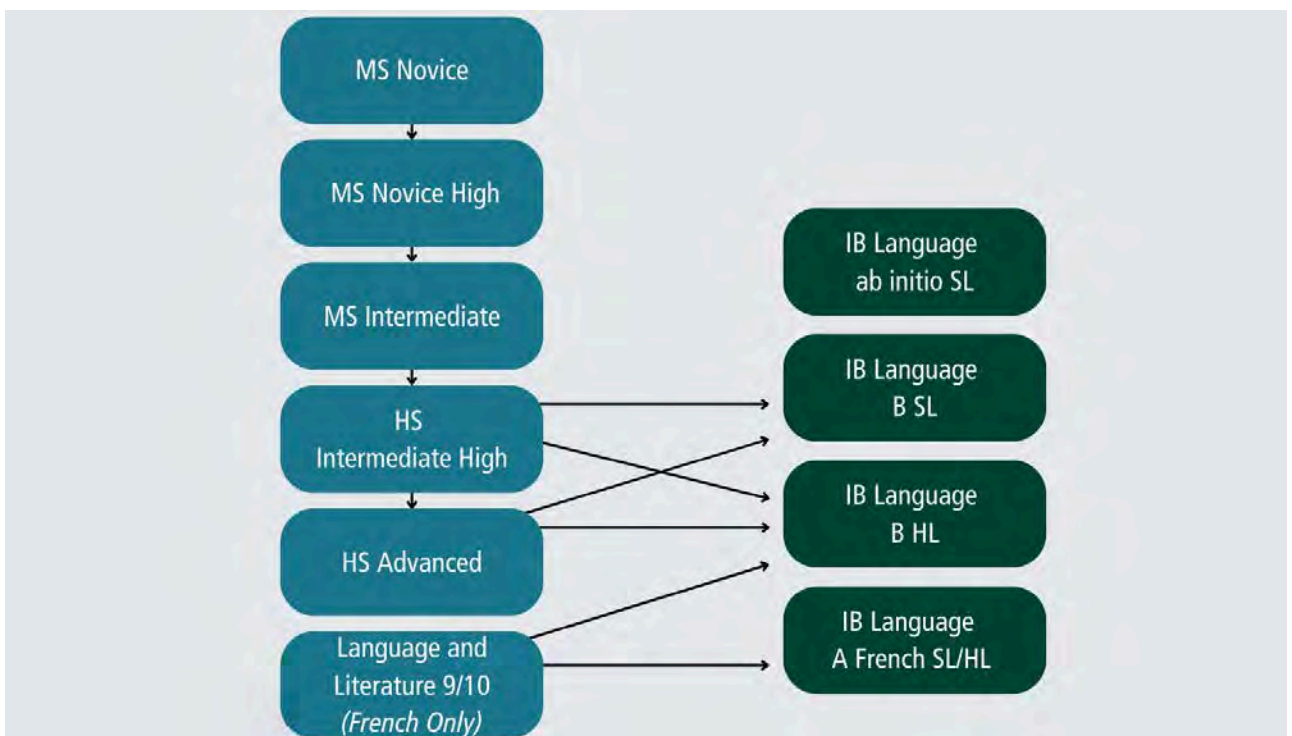


Note: IB Math courses are structured as a two-year program spanning Grades 11 and 12, while AP courses are completed in one academic year.

Arabic



French and Spanish



Note: IB World Language courses are structured as a two-year program spanning Grades 11 and 12.