

NORTHFIELD MIDDLE SCHOOL

Class Summary

Grade 8

Required Core Classes

English: Continues the development of reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills. The study of literature includes vocabulary, writing, reading and interpreting. Selected novels and plays include *The Outsiders*, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, *The Miracle Worker*, and *The Diary of Anne Frank*. These units are supplemented with nonfiction articles and poetry. Independent nonfiction reading is supported through close reading strategies and guided questions. Composition skills are developed through narrative writing, creative writing, literary analysis, and the study of grammar. Other units combining reading, writing, and speaking are short stories, poetry, and a research-based speech unit.

Geography: Students in Geography explore the regions of the world using geographic information from print and electronic sources. They analyze important trends in the modern world such as demographic change, shifting trade patterns, and intensified cultural interactions due to globalization. Participants learn that governments are based on different political philosophies and serve various purposes. By learning economic principles of trade and the factors that affect economic growth, students understand why there are different standards of living in countries around the world.

Science 8: 8th Grade Science begins with an exploration of chemistry. The two chemistry units focus on understanding matter and the relationship between chemical reactions and energy. Then students will transition to physics by investigating how matter and light are related. The fourth unit explores thermal energy and the transfer of heat. For the final three units, the topics include forces and motion, how forces can act at a distance and sound.

Math: Students are grouped for math based on teacher recommendation, previous achievement and successful completion of prerequisite courses. All students will need a scientific calculator minimally. A graphing calculator could be used but is not required.

Algebra A - This course covers the 8th Grade Minnesota math standards.

Algebra AA - This course covers the Minnesota 8th grade standards at a faster pace than Algebra A. Due to the faster pace, additional topics will be covered.

Algebra 2 - Requires mastery of 7th Grade Algebra.

Health 8: This required semester-long course meets daily. The intent of the course is to help students take responsibility for the improvement of their own physical, mental, emotional, and social health. Students will learn to recognize the benefits of wellness and a healthy lifestyle. We will cover the following units in 8th grade: Tobacco, Alcohol, and Other Drugs; Social Health and Wellness; Human Development and Reproductive Health; and Human Sexuality.

Physical Education: (Full year, every other day) Students should change into clothes that allow them to move and are appropriate for the weather. Students will be participating in lifetime sports (tennis, badminton, ping-pong, weightlifting, and other recreational activities), and team sports (football, volleyball, basketball, floor hockey, soccer, speedball, and softball). A locker with a lock will be assigned to

each student. Written Quizzes will be given throughout the school year.

Language and Music Elective Classes

Band 8: Eighth grade band meets for a full year on alternating days. Students continue learning basic music theory and instrumental techniques while becoming exposed to a wide variety of musical selections of increasing difficulty. Evening concerts are presented and students receive a band lesson every eight school days with the band instructor. Students are expected to stay in band for the entire year, and practice for at least 60 minutes each week at home in addition to the full band rehearsals. Prerequisite: Participation in 7th grade band. Students that were not in 7th grade band and are interested in beginning a Band instrument should meet with the instructor and enroll in Level 1 Band.

Level 1 Band: This course is designed for students that have never played a band instrument and wish to learn. This course is open to students entering 6th, 7th, and 8th grades. This course meets for the first semester only, on alternating days. After the completion of Quarter 2, students in this course will transfer to their grade level ensembles.

Choir: 7th/8th Grade Choir builds on prior knowledge, however beginners are always welcome. This vocal music course is for students who have a desire to take their skills in learning, singing and performing music to the next level. This course focuses on vocal technique, singing as a member of an ensemble, reading music, developing part independence, and singing with expressiveness and confidence. Choir is a year-long class with stage performances and events throughout the school year! Our 7th/8th Grade Choir performs at evening concerts, Winter Walk, and at the District Choral Festival, which takes place during the school day. We also collaborate with the high school choirs, elementary choirs and other guest musicians. A small ensemble of 7th/8th Grade Choir members also performs at Northfield elementary schools, nearby nursing homes and other local events. Choir is a great place to make new friends! All team members are valued and work cooperatively every day. If you have any questions about choir at NMS please contact Ms. Michelle Bendett at mbendett@northfieldschools.org.

Orchestra: Eighth grade orchestra is designed to be a learning experience as well as a time for preparing for performances. Students continue to learn and review the following: scales and etudes, shifting, vibrato, tuning, solos and rhythmic patterns. Each group strives to achieve a balance of sound, good tone, and the ability to play together musically. Music is chosen to give students a well-rounded background of many composers and musical styles. Each student receives orchestra lessons, has an opportunity to participate in an orchestra festival, and may audition for an extra-curricular chamber orchestra that meets outside of the school day. Evening concerts are presented during the school year. Prerequisite: Successful participation in 7th grade orchestra or consent of the instructor. Students interested in beginning a string instrument should meet with the instructor and enroll in Level 1 Strings.

Level 1 Strings: This course is designed for students who have never played a string instrument and wish to learn. This course is open to students entering 6th, 7th and 8th Grade. Instruction will be given on the following instruments: violin, viola, cello or bass. This course meets for the first semester only, on alternating days. At the completion of Quarter 2, students in this course will transfer to their grade level ensembles.

Amistades 8: (Full year, every day): This class is designed specifically for students who have completed the elementary Compañeros program, Amistades 6, and Amistades 7. This course will contain a variety of topics including more structured language study and cultural issues. A "C" average in Amistades 7 is a prerequisite for registration in this course. Students will need a "C" average grade in Amistades 8 to be eligible for enrollment in Spanish 3+ in 9th grade.

Additional Elective Classes

Exploratory Art: Creating expressive papier-mâché masks, drawing self-portraits and producing large scale still life paintings are just a few of the approaches students will use to build their art skills. Students will have the opportunity to utilize a wide range of media and methods to express themselves visually and creatively. Students will build a portfolio of artwork they can be proud of while being exposed to influential artists and art movements and practicing artistic techniques.

Media Art: In this course, students will engage in a variety of media related art forms including digital photography, graphic design, digital illustration, animation, and film. We will examine how to communicate original ideas through digital and printed materials in exciting and eye-catching ways. Students will have access to Adobe Creative Suite and other digital programs on iPads and computers. We will practice the technical and artistic skills used by professional digital artists as we explore our own creative ideas and concepts.

Drawing and Painting: Pencil, charcoal, pastel, watercolor, acrylic...these are just a few of the 2 Dimensional mediums students will use in this class. If you've loved drawing and painting in other art classes, this course will give you the opportunity to enhance your techniques, and deepen your knowledge of 2D art styles through a variety of projects and improve your proficiency.

STEM: Embark on an exciting STEM adventure, a year-long journey unlocking awesome careers and essential skills for success! In Quarter 1, delve into post-8th-grade life, exploring trade schools to dream jobs and gaining insights into making wise budgeting decisions. Quarter 2 is a tech-lover's dream, delving into coding with Sphero Bolts and Scratch to conquer the digital world. Quarter 3 unleashes inventors and dreamers in the Shark Tank Innovation Unit, designing prototypes and exploring the entrepreneurial process. In Quarter 4, grab your tools for woodworking and carpentry, unleashing creativity in hands-on projects. Join us for a thrilling STEM journey, uncover exciting careers, acquire skills, and build a future full of possibilities! Get ready to explore, create, and build with us!

Lifetime Activities: Lifetime Activities will be based out of the fitness center and will be designed for students wanting to stay active, without the team activities. This course will include basic weight training techniques, along with lifetime activities such as cornhole, ping pong, and hiking.

***Drop/Add Policy:** Withdrawal from courses requires parental consent, and must be done the first few weeks of school.