

NORTHFIELD MIDDLE SCHOOL

Course Summary

Grade 8

Required Core Classes

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

Geometry – Requires mastery of 7th Grade Algebra.

English: Continues the development of reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills. The study of literature includes vocabulary, writing, reading and interpreting. Units include Narrative Poetry in *The Crossover* by Kwame Alexander, The Civil Rights Movement in *Claudette Colvin: Twice Toward Justice*, Exploring Antarctica through *Shipwreck at the Bottom of the World*, and Shakespeare's Theater including *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. These units are supplemented with nonfiction articles, poetry, and other works. 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.

Social Studies: Students in this class will investigate a wide variety of topics including: Geography, Government, Economics, History, and Ethnic Studies. Units will be largely interdisciplinary and focused around a central theme or question. Students will learn the importance of drawing connections and recognizing patterns, now and throughout history. Current events will also be discussed so students are aware of what is happening in our country and around the world.

Health: 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: Taking charge of your health and wellness, taking care of your mental and emotional health, nutrition, Tobacco, Alcohol and other drugs, Protecting your physical health and safety, Social health and wellness, human development and reproductive health, and human sexuality.

Science: 8th Grade Science is an introduction to Physics and Chemistry. In our chemistry units we will explore chemical reactions through the lenses of matter and energy. In our physics units we will investigate how light and matter interact. We will explore thermal energy and the transfer of heat. We'll study how forces relate to motion and how forces can act at a distance. And finally we will learn about sound.

Visual And Media Art 8: In Visual and Media Art 8, students will explore a wide variety of art forms, including drawing, painting, sculpture, digital photography, graphic design, digital illustration, film, and animation. Building on skills learned in earlier art classes, students will use traditional materials and digital tools and will cover state fine arts standards in both Visual Art and Media Art. Students will have access to our computer lab and Adobe Creative Suite and will cover basic computer skills such as keyboarding and digital workflow, along with foundational digital art concepts. Students will take part in the full creative process—brainstorming ideas,

practicing new techniques, creating finished projects, and reflecting on their work. Along the way, they will learn about different art styles, techniques, art history, and current art trends. This class is designed to help students discover their interests, build confidence in their creativity, and explore possible art pathways for high school and beyond.

Physical Education: Students are expected to wear tennis shoes and 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, dancing, and other recreational activities), and team sports (football, volleyball, basketball, floor hockey, soccer, speedball, and softball). Students can request a locker to store items. Written quizzes & skills tests will be assessed throughout the school year in most activities.

Additional Classes

STEM: This hands-on, project-based STEM course gives students opportunities to design, build, and create while exploring real-world applications of STEM. Students will begin by studying roller coaster design through engineering and physics concepts, using *RollerCoaster Tycoon 3* and building marble roller coasters from recyclable materials. They will then participate in a Shark Tank-style entrepreneurship unit, inventing or innovating a product and developing branding, websites, and presentations. The course also includes coding and computer science using Sphero BOLTs, Ari Ozobots, and Scratch. The year concludes with a woodworking unit focused on tool safety, basic construction skills, and hands-on projects. Throughout the course, students develop problem-solving, creativity, collaboration, and career awareness skills.

Band 8: 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.

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 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.

Prerequisite: Successful participation in 7th grade orchestra or consent of the instructor.

Amistades 8: 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.