

# NORTHFIELD MIDDLE SCHOOL

## Class Summary

### Grade 8

#### Required 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:** This course employs an exploratory, investigative, and inquiry based approach to study the major interacting components of the earth system: the geosphere (Earth's interior and its rocks and soils), the hydrosphere (Earth's waters), the atmosphere (Earth's air), and the biosphere (Earth's living things). This course also explores basic Chemistry and Astronomy concepts. Instructors will focus on the Minnesota Science standards in the earth and space sciences.

**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:** (Full year, every other day): This year long course is required for all eighth grade students. The intent of the course is to help students to take responsibility for the improvement of their own personal, mental, and emotional health. Students will learn to recognize the benefits of wellness and a healthy lifestyle. They will develop a basic understanding of human growth and development. As well as, an understanding and concern for the community's health and wellness.

**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

**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 9<sup>th</sup> grade.

**Band 8:** Students continue learning basic theory and technique while becoming exposed to a wide variety of musical selections of increasing difficulty. Evening concerts are presented, and students receive a weekly lesson with a band instructor. The 8th grade band tours one day each year. Students are expected to stay in band for the entire year. Students are expected to practice for at least 60 minutes per week, in addition to the full band rehearsals. If you took a year off from band or delayed joining band due to the pandemic or any other reason, please join us!! We would love to have you and will do everything we can to help you catch up to your classmates. **Prerequisite:** Successful participation in 7th grade band is desired. Students having no prior band experience are welcome to contact the director to begin lessons on a band instrument. These students will be included in band rehearsals after they have gained sufficient technique on their band instrument.

**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 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](mailto: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 7<sup>th</sup> grade orchestra or consent of the instructor. Students having no prior orchestra experience are welcome to contact the director to begin lessons on an orchestra instrument. These students will be included in rehearsals after gaining sufficient technique on their instrument.

## Additional Elective Classes

**Exploratory Art:** Creating expressive cardboard/papier mâché masks, drawing self-portraits, producing large scale paintings, and making stop motion films are just a few of the approaches students will take to practice their artistic skills. Students will have the opportunity to utilize a range of media and methods to increase their confidence in expressing themselves visually while receiving exposure to influential artists and art movements. The course goal is to have all students realize that they can create great artwork!

**Media Art:** Students will engage in a variety of multimedia art forms including photography, film, animation, digital illustration and graphic design. We will examine how to communicate our ideas through digital and printed materials in exciting, eye catching and creative ways.

**Drawing and Painting:** Pencil, charcoal, pastel, watercolor, acrylic...these are just a few of the 2D mediums you'll use in this class. If you've loved drawing and painting in other art classes, this course gives you the opportunity to enhance your technique, and deepen your knowledge of 2D styles and projects.

**STEM:** To start the school year, students will complete a basic Google Suite training along with a self-paced keyboarding course. Following this portion of the class, the goal is to provide the ultimate problem solving experience. Students will gain a basic understanding of block coding while playing with Sphero Bolts. Next, they will advance into our Scratch unit where students will design and create their own games using more advanced block coding techniques. After moving on from coding, students will be challenged to invent their own product and create prototypes during the Shark Tank unit. Last, but no least, students will gain basic woodworking skills using a variety of tools throughout their wood projects.

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