

# 2022-2023 MIDDLE SCHOOL CURRICULUM OVERVIEW

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Learn. Grow. Become.™



Woodinville Montessori School

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*Year A = Academic years beginning in an even numbered year*

*Year B = Academic years beginning in an odd numbered year*

## MONTESSORI EDUCATION

### *MULTI-AGE LEARNING*

The Middle School curriculum is intentionally designed as a two-year cycle, referred to as Year A and Year B, where 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students have all of their classes together. All middle school students will take both Year A and Year B classes, but not in the same order.

### *WHOLE CHILD*

We respect the peace and wellness of each student, and value their social emotional, physical, and mental health. All Middle School students lead community meetings, participate in small ally groups, and have one-on-one advisory teacher check-ins.

### *LEADERSHIP*

There are multiple opportunities for students to build leadership skills in all classes, such as leading lab groups, collaborating in group projects, managing student jobs, planning field trips, and engaging with the whole school community through Middle School Student Business activities.

### *FREEDOM OF CHOICE*

Students experience freedom of choice by demonstrating their knowledge through a variety of methods. Students select specialists' classes, decide on their level of participation in Honors work, and set personal goals. Additionally, students are supported in finding work that is meaningful and authentic based on their individual interests. Freedom of movement continues to be understood and honored as an adolescent need of independence.

## COURSE OFFERINGS

Our multi-age classes provide opportunities for hands-on learning within an integrated curriculum. Students' experiences in various courses are connected through thematic units including Connection, Identity, Systems, Interdependence, Force & Power, Structure, Change, and Our Place.

All courses help students develop real world skills in an academically rich, prepared environment. Each quarter, students may choose to challenge themselves beyond the regular classroom work by participating in an Honors' version of their core classes.

### *SOCIAL STUDIES*

The Social Studies curriculum integrates history, geography, civics, economics, and culture. Students explore and actively discuss matters of social organization, power, ethics, and human rights through the study of various historical topics, helping to illuminate our current world situation by looking through a historical lens. These historical topics are chosen based on theme, rather than following a strictly chronological order, allowing students to make connections across various times and places. Students participate in individual and group work as well as long-term projects involving research, writing, presentations, art, and debate.

*Year A Themes (Topics):* Connections (the Age of Enlightenment), Identity (immigration), Systems (the American Civil War), and Interdependence (1945-1975).

*Year B Themes (Topics):* Force & Power (world revolutions), Structure (types of governments, civics and the U.S. Constitution), and Change (1914-1945).

## *ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS*

The English Language Arts curriculum includes the study of vocabulary, literature, writing, grammar and mechanics. Students are supported and encouraged to find their voice as they progress to reach their potential as readers and writers. Students work closely with the teacher to choose challenging and engaging texts. Literary elements are studied through extensive readings of all genres and forms. Students engage in formal and informal writing of various types, including poetry, stories, and speeches as well as expository, argumentative and narrative essays, literary criticism, and formative research. Socratic Seminars offer opportunities for students to practice a variety of communication skills, such as active listening, providing meaningful and specific peer feedback, group discussion techniques, and group decision-making.

*Year A Themes (Topics):* Connections (How do writers connect with their readers?), Identity (How does environment shape one's identity? How does identity shape one's environment?), Systems (How do literary devices create meaning for the reader?), and Interdependence (Music as Literature).

*Year B Themes (Topics):* Force & Power (Power of Storytelling), Structure (Observing and analyzing structure of literary works), and Change (How do beliefs change over time?).

## *SCIENCE & LAB INVESTIGATIONS*

The science curriculum focuses on laboratory investigations that allow hands-on interactions with the subject matter. Students engage in individual and group work, participate in discussions, create written and visual works reflective of their understanding, practice using inquiry to guide the scientific method, and take quizzes and tests. Team roles are assigned to students in their lab groups and are used to promote a collaborative investigative experience. Students write scientific research papers, then design and implement experiments that are presented at the annual Science Fair.

### ***Life Science***

The life science curriculum is offered in Year A and includes the study of Connections (Environmental Science), Identity (Classification), Systems (Biodiversity), and Interdependence (Cell Studies).

### ***Physical Science***

The physical science curriculum is offered in Year B and includes the study of Forces & Power (Motion and Energy), Structure (Matter), and Change (Chemistry).

## *PACIFIC NORTHWEST STUDIES*

### *Year B*

This course is an integrated Social Studies and Science class that meets Washington State History high school graduation guidelines. All topics are viewed through the theme Our Place and include the living world, geology, geography, history of Native Peoples, waves of migration to the region, earthquake mechanisms and detection, flora and fauna of the Pacific Northwest, and ecoregions of the area. A culminating activity of this course is a week-long trip touring many sites of Washington and Oregon.

## MATHEMATICS

Student placement in Math classes is based on careful consideration of prior experience, teacher recommendations, and assessments.

*All math classes are offered every year.*

### **Math 7**

Math 7, our standard math class for Grade 7 students, is a highly interactive course focused on the mastery of fractions, decimals, percentages, integers, and solving equations. Special emphasis is given to the development of number sense, pattern finding, multiple representations, and problem-solving skills through activities that require deep, creative thinking. Students learn through active participation in whole class discussions, working on open-ended problems in teams, and repeated practice of skills on individual assignments. A wide variety of hands-on materials are used to help students bridge from a concrete level of understanding to abstract representations of mathematical concepts.

### **Pre-Algebra**

Pre-Algebra is our standard math class for Grade 8 students and is available to qualifying Grade 7 students. This class is designed to reinforce students' skills in fractions, decimals, integers, problem-solving, and operations, while learning how to apply them to new contexts. The year begins with a brief review of basic skills, then moves into applying them to solving increasingly complex equations and inequalities. Other units include ratios, proportions and probability, geometric shapes and angles, applying percentages to real-life uses such as calculating interest, linear functions and graphing, data analysis and polynomials.

### **Algebra 1**

Algebra 1 is a High School Math class available to qualifying Middle School students. Students in this class receive high school credit. More information can be found in the High School Course Catalog.

### **Geometry**

Geometry is a High School Math class available to qualifying Middle School students. Students in this class receive high school credit. More information can be found in the High School Course Catalog.

## PEACE & WELLNESS

*Students participate in Peace and Wellness activities each year.*

### **Personal World**

This course focuses on the psychosocial, emotional and physical well-being of early adolescence. It is designed to provide positive and fact-based information about the journey from childhood to adulthood, while developing connections between generations to help young people make the journey safely. Students explore social topics including identity, peer pressure, belonging and friendship; health topics including pathways of disease, sexuality and nutrition; and mental health topics such as balanced living, stress management, and peace education. This course teaches mindfulness and gives students regular opportunities to practice these skills. Personal World uses an array of materials, experiences, and lessons including: anti-bias and anti-racist curriculum, The Heroic Journey, based on the work of Joseph Campbell, OWL (Our Whole Lives) curriculum for sexuality education, and the 7th-8th grade level of the Family Life and Sexual Health curriculum (FLASH) developed by the King County Department of Public Health.

### **Physical Education & Orienteering**

Middle School Physical Education (PE) consists of a variety of exercises including but not limited to running (distance and sprints), calisthenics, ab workouts, and various sports such as soccer, baseball, and frisbee. Students regularly travel off-campus to participate in the sport of Orienteering, a combination of map-reading, walking/running, and a scavenger hunt.

## **WORLD LANGUAGE & CULTURE**

*Students take one semester of Japanese Culture and one semester of Spanish Culture every year.*

### **Japanese Culture**

Students learn multiple aspects of Japanese culture including customs, lifestyle, music, art, food, folktales, history, holidays, and festivals. Class projects allow for hands-on learning and include cooking, art appreciation, singing, and special presentations. Some useful Japanese conversational expressions are also introduced.

*Year A:* History, poems, festivals and traditional society

*Year B:* School, literature, geography and modern society

### **Spanish Culture**

This class introduces students to the vast variety of experiences that comprises Spanish-speaking cultures. Students learn about some traditions of the indigenous peoples in Spanish-speaking countries as well as Spanish and Latin-American art (including music), food, literature, history, holidays, and festivals. Some useful Spanish conversational expressions are also introduced.

*Year A:* The geography of Latin Americas.

*Year B:* The cultural experiences of Latinx people in the United States.

## **SPECIALIST CLASSES**

In Middle School, specialists are semester-long classes, with specific projects and activities changing from year to year.

Students take two specialist classes every year.

### **Studio Art**

Students learn about the various ways visual art can transform spaces, influence opinions, and cultivate compassion and empathy. By making and sharing artwork, students learn more about themselves, each other, and the world. From drawing and painting to sculpture and printmaking, this course helps students to develop the skills to tell their own stories through a variety of media. Students also practice treating themselves and their peers with kindness, as they try new things and take artistic risks.

### **Innovation and Design Lab (S.T.E.M.)**

Hands on work with materials such as leather, cardboard, wood, vinyl, and adhesives helps students to develop an understanding of the properties of different materials and appropriate tool use. Students engage with various types of technology such as circuits, robotics, 3D modeling, and 3D printer operation. Adobe Illustrator software is used to help students learn vector design for laser engraving and laser cutting. Throughout the semester, students are encouraged to be creative and to use their newfound skills in projects in cross curricular subjects. Past integrated opportunities have included the creation of a chess set and a foosball table for the Middle School classroom.

### **Cooking**

Students engage in hands-on experiences with a variety of cooking styles, tools, cuisine, and spices. Through exploration of foundational cooking skills, students increase their awareness of the capabilities of many types of cooking appliances from mixers to hot plates to toaster ovens. Students have choice in recipes and seasonal foods that range from savory to sweet. Working together in small groups, students learn to read recipes, increase or decrease quantities, chop, mix, and cook. Maintaining a clean and safe kitchen is a priority of every class.

## **STUDENT BUSINESS**

*Students participate in Student Business each year.*

Student Business is a year-long program that provides opportunities for direct experience with the development and running of micro-economies. Middle School students engage in meaningful production and exchange through three components: Pizza Delivery, Kids Night Out, and Farmers Market. All money raised from these Student Business ventures offsets the costs of student overnight trips and activities.

For pizza delivery, students learn about basic safe food handling practices and procedures for delivering pizza in teams to all WMS elementary and secondary classrooms. Kids Night Out (KNO) is a bi-monthly themed event where students plan, prepare, and provide childcare for the greater school community. The Middle School Farmers Market allows students to brainstorm ideas for handmade products, then work within teams to create supply lists, marketing plans, and prototypes before launching into larger-scale production for their Winter and Spring markets.

## **ROTATING BLOCK**

*Students participate in Rotating Block each year.*

This flexible time in the Middle School schedule is reserved each week for rotating activities including discussions surrounding special topics or current events, monthly Math Enrichment, student presentations, or additional lesson time as needed.