

**AMERICAN OVERSEAS
SCHOOL OF ROME**



**PROGRAM OF STUDIES
2009-2010**

MIDDLE SCHOOL Grades 6-8

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	3
MISSION STATEMENT.....	3
STATEMENT OF PHILOSOPHY	3
PRINCIPAL’S LETTER TO PARENTS AND STUDENTS.....	4
MIDDLE SCHOOL PHILOSOPHY AND GOALS	5
ADMISSIONS INFORMATION.....	5
SCHOOL CALENDAR FOR ACADEMIC YEAR 2009-2010.....	7
AOSR GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS.....	8
GRADING	8
ACADEMIC PROBATION.....	8
INCOMPLETE GRADES	9
RETENTION.....	9
HOMEWORK/OTHER ASSIGNMENTS	9
MIDDLE SCHOOL COURSES	10
ENGLISH	10
ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE (ESL).....	12
MIDDLE SCHOOL EXPLORATORY CYCLE.....	12
FOREIGN LANGUAGES	15
MATHEMATICS	17
PHYSICAL EDUCATION.....	18
PHILOSOPHY	18
SCIENCE.....	19
PHILOSOPHY	19
COURSE DESCRIPTIONS	20
SOCIAL STUDIES	22
PHILOSOPHY	22
RESOURCE	24
MIDDLE SCHOOL CULTURAL TRIPS.....	24
GENERAL MIDDLE SCHOOL CLASSROOM POLICIES AND IMPORTANT INFORMATION	25

INTRODUCTION

MISSION STATEMENT

The American Overseas School of Rome is an independent educational institution catering to the needs of the English speaking community, offering teaching methods and curricula that prepare students for admission to American and international colleges and universities. By assuring a welcoming, supportive and safe environment, the school intends to foster a love of learning, to build personal excellence and to nurture curiosity, creativity and critical thinking, providing our graduates with the confidence, self-discipline and courage to face the world's future challenges. While supplying a comprehensive foundation in the core academic subjects, AOSR is proud of its rich programs in the fine arts and computer technology, and our students are given a special understanding and appreciation of Italian language, literature and culture.

STATEMENT OF PHILOSOPHY

WE BELIEVE IN

LEARNING

All humans have the ability to learn, and learning is a life-long process. Because individuals learn in different ways, we provide different strategies and techniques to nurture the love of learning in every student.

RESPECT

The dignity and self-worth of every person must be balanced with the needs of society. Understanding the ethical values of honesty, modesty and self-discipline, we pledge to build and inspire respect, including an acceptance and appreciation of cultural diversity.

RESPONSIBILITY

Personal responsibility builds independence and is a key to self-development. Helping students to acquire motivation, we monitor appropriate behavior, building self-sufficiency and compassion our graduates will need, as productive citizens of the global community.

TRUST

We are dedicated to promoting trust through the honest and free exchange of ideas and opinions, showing that differences can be resolved through communication, compromise and understanding.

EMPOWERMENT

In order for students to assert themselves in the community, we help them to build resourcefulness, to take risks and to develop leadership skills. Together with teachers, parents and administrators, students are encouraged to participate in decision-making and planning.

COLLABORATION

We stress the importance of working together and interacting in the dynamics of large and small groups, using teamwork to stimulate learning and nurture interpersonal relationships.

COMMUNITY

Our success is built upon solid bonds with parents and community, which we recognize as crucial partners in the educational process. The rich blend of American, Italian and International cultures are our greatest asset in building a special learning environment.

PRINCIPAL'S LETTER TO PARENTS AND STUDENTS

AMERICAN OVERSEAS SCHOOL OF ROME

It is with great pleasure that I welcome you to the Middle School at the American Overseas School of Rome. AOSR is an American international school that provides an educational program comparable to that of the some of the best U.S. private schools, leading public school districts and outstanding international schools throughout the world.

Rome, with its rich history, traditions, and culture, is an exceptional setting for learning and exploration. This unique environment is enriched even more by the truly international student body at AOSR. Our students come from over 50 different countries. Of the approximately 620 students overall, about 160 students are members of our Middle School.

At AOSR we recognize that middle level students (grades 6, 7, and 8) are a special group of people with particular needs and perceptions. With this in mind, we provide our students with diverse programs and activities that enable them to reach their potential as individuals and as valuable members of our school community. Our goal is to create a community of learners where students can achieve their maximum potential and feel like they are a part of a team.

Our classes operate on a special schedule designed to maximize the study of the core subjects - English, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies and Foreign Languages - while allowing sufficient time for the study of electives such as Art, Computers, Drama, Music, Physical Education, and Study Skills. Students also have the opportunity to engage in a number of special academic projects throughout the school year.

Special services are offered for those students requiring additional assistance. These services include counseling, English as a Second Languages (ESL), reading and resource support.

We encourage students to participate in our After-School Activities Program that offers sports, fine arts, and a number of others activities. There are numerous field trips available to our Middle School students throughout the year. These include our annual Middle School Cultural trips (week-long trips to places such as Spain, Greece, Poland, Portugal, among others), as well as day-long and over night field trips in and around Rome. Students also have the opportunity to participate in such popular annual events as the Shakespeare Festival, the International Fair, and the Science Fair. The Middle School has an extremely active Student Council with officers elected from the student body. There are a number of social activities that include Sports Day, Mayfair, holiday celebrations, dances, and fundraising.

The Middle School years are full of tremendous change and growth in a students' academic, social, emotional, and physical being. The American Overseas School of Rome offers a safe, exciting, and challenging learning environment that respects and nurtures our students during this transitional time.

Once again, welcome to the AOSR Middle School. We look forward to working in partnership with you.

Mr. Tom Connolly
Secondary School Principal

MIDDLE SCHOOL PHILOSOPHY AND GOALS

The Middle School of the American Overseas School of Rome is committed to challenging each student academically, fostering a love of learning and enhancing a feeling of self-worth.

We believe learning to be a process in which each student discovers and constructs meaning from information and experience. The individual needs, background, and developmental level of each student serves as the starting point for all Middle School learning activities. The classroom teacher functions in a guiding, supportive role as an instructor of content and skills seeking to challenge each student intellectually and personally. Student self-confidence emerges through successful achievement in a challenging and supportive academic environment. Opportunities for student choice, self-direction, and responsibility are provided. Students learn interpersonal skills and the importance of community. They are valued and accepted, and in return, learn to value and accept others. Assessment is formative and, along with appraisal by the teacher, includes self and peer evaluation. Positive feedback and encouragement are essential components of all Middle School assessment.

The Middle School provides a transition for our students by building on the solid foundation established in the Elementary School while at the same time providing them greater independence and responsibility for their own learning. The students are supported in their academic and social growth through small classes, through participation in a variety of co-curricular activities and through intramural athletic programs. Middle School students go on many trips in Italy and to other parts of Europe, such as France, Great Britain, and Spain. Students study the Italian language and are encouraged to study Spanish or French as a second foreign language. Selected students may be accelerated in mathematics, in foreign languages and occasionally in language arts, depending on their backgrounds and their levels of performance in the classroom and on assessment procedures established by the faculty.

MIDDLE SCHOOL GOALS

Students in the Middle School of the American Overseas School of Rome will

1. acquire an academic foundation which promotes continuing scholastic success and personal growth.
2. develop confidence in their learning ability.
3. develop problem solving skills.
4. communicate effectively.
5. experience foreign languages and culture studies.
6. recognize the value of cultural diversity.
7. develop an appreciation for the fine, applied, and performing arts.
8. understand and practice sound personal physical health.
9. recognize the relevance of current schooling to future learning and living.
10. explore a variety of education, social and personal experiences and/or interests.
11. contribute to the development of an honest and trusting school environment.
12. acquire an awareness of the role of technology in their futures and develop the skills to use and expand this awareness.
13. develop an environmental and global awareness.

GENERAL INFORMATION

ADMISSIONS INFORMATION

The American Overseas School of Rome accepts admission applications throughout the year for admission at any time during the school year. Applicants to AOSR must submit all documents as required in the Admissions Procedures, available from the Admissions Office and on the school web page (www.aosr.org).

As part of the admissions process, students may be asked to take placement tests in English and in mathematics. The results of these exams will help facilitate decisions regarding admission, grade level, and/or the need for additional support in the English language. All of the required documents **MUST** be received before registration can be completed.

Specific items of interest with regard to admissions are as follows:

- ◆ All applicants must submit complete, **official** school records for the past two years (three years for students applying to Grade 12). Records must be forwarded by the applicant's previous school(s) **directly to AOSR**. In the case that records are not in English, an official English translation must also be submitted.
- ◆ In the high school, students intending to graduate from AOSR must spend the senior year in residence and complete all the graduation requirements before their 20th birthday.
- ◆ Non-native speakers of English who are not fluent in the language may be admitted in the ESL (English as a Second Language) program. In the secondary school, admission to the ESL program also depends upon the applicant's achieving a sufficient score on the English language placement examination. Upon successful completion of the ESL program, the ESL teacher will recommend the student be mainstreamed into classes.
- ◆ Students enrolled in the American Overseas School of Rome must reside with their parents or with a legal guardian. If parents are absent from home for an extended period of time, an adult guardian must take responsibility for the student's day-to-day welfare. Parents should submit written notice of such temporary guardianship to the respective Principal.

All questions regarding admission should be directed to the Admissions Office, Head of School or respective school Principal.

We look forward to welcoming you to the American Overseas School of Rome.

Admissions Committee

admissions@aosr.org

SCHOOL CALENDAR FOR ACADEMIC YEAR 2009-2010

AMERICAN OVERSEAS SCHOOL OF ROME

2009-2010

Academic Year Calendar



September 2009	October 2009	November 2009	December 2009
Su M Tu W Th F Sa / 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30	Su M Tu W Th F Sa 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31	Su M Tu W Th F Sa 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30	Su M Tu W Th F Sa 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31
January 2010	February 2010	March 2010	April 2010
Su M Tu W Th F Sa 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31	Su M Tu W Th F Sa 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28	Su M Tu W Th F Sa 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31	Su M Tu W Th F Sa 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30
May 2010	June 2010		
Su M Tu W Th F Sa 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31	Su M Tu W Th F Sa 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30		

Via Cassia, 811 00189 Rome, Italy
Tel. +39 06.33438.1 Fax. +39 06.33262608
www.aosr.org info@aosr.org

Notes

- Sept. 1 - Teacher Meetings - No Students
- Sept. 2 - Orientation New Students, Parent Reception at 9:15 AM
- Sept. 3 - 6th Grade Orientation
- Sept. 4 - First Day of Classes, Bus Service Begins
- Sept. 7 - First Day of Classes KG
- Oct. 1 - Session I-After School Activities & Late Bus service begins
- Oct. 12 - Teacher Meetings - No Students
- Oct. 30 - No After School Activities & No Late Bus
- Nov. 13 - Parent/Teacher Conferences - No classes
- Nov. 26-27 - Thanksgiving Holiday - SCHOOL CLOSED
- Dec. 8 - Italian National Holiday - SCHOOL CLOSED
- Dec. 11 - Last Day of After School Activities & Late Bus service until January
- Dec. 21 - Winter Break Begins - SCHOOL CLOSED
- Jan. 7 - Winter Break Ends - SCHOOL OPEN
Late Bus service running
- Jan. 15 - SEMESTER I ends
- Jan. 18 - SEMESTER II begins
- Feb. 11 - Last Day of Session I -After School Activities
- Feb. 15 - Settimana Bianca Begins - SCHOOL CLOSED
- Feb. 22 - Settimana Bianca Ends - SCHOOL OPEN
Session II After School Activities begins
- Mar. 31 - Last Day of After School Activities & Late Bus service
- Apr. 1 - Early Dismissal at 12:30
- Apr. 2 - Spring Break Begins - SCHOOL CLOSED
- Apr. 12 - Spring Break Ends - SCHOOL OPEN
- Apr. 16 - Parent/Teacher Conferences - No classes
- May 26 - Last Day of After School Activities program
Last Day of Late Bus service
- May 28 - COMMENCEMENT IN THE QUAD - 18:30
- June 2 - Italian National Holiday - SCHOOL CLOSED
- June 10 - Last day of school for ES & MS students - Dismissal at 12:30
- June 11 - Last day of school for HS students - Dismissal at 12:30

AOSR GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

For Academic Year 2009 – 2010 (Grade 12)

- Four (4) credits in English;
- One, four (4) credit sequence from math, social studies, science, or foreign language;
- Two, three (3) credit sequences from math, social studies, science, or foreign language;
- One, two (2) credit sequence from math, social studies, science, or foreign language;
- Two (2) credits in fine and performing arts (music, art, theater);
- One (1) credit in physical education;
- Three (3) credits in electives.

A total of 22 credits are needed for graduation.

A minimum of seven classes are required per semester for high school and eight classes for middle school.

A minimum of five passing classes per year are required to advance to the next grade level.

GRADING

For the middle school, students must pass a minimum of five classes to advance from one grade to the next. There are no “credits” for classes in the middle school. For the high school, credit is awarded by completing all the requirements of a course. One full credit is earned by completing two semesters of a course that meets for 200 minutes each week. The school year consists of approximately 180 teacher-student contact days from early September through the middle of June.

Number grades are given for all courses. The following grading scale shows the standard letter grades with corresponding percentage equivalents:

Letter Grade	% Range	
A+	97 - 100	excellent or superior
A	93 - 96	
A-	90 - 92	
B+	87 - 89	very good/above average
B	83 - 86	
B-	80 - 82	
C+	77 - 79	acceptable/average
C	73 - 76	
C-	70 - 72	
D+	68 - 69	below average
D	65 - 67	
D-	63 - 64	
F	below 63%	unacceptable or failing

ACADEMIC PROBATION

A student will be placed on academic probation for a period of one semester for any of the following academic deficiencies:

1. Academic grade point average of 1.70 or less for the preceding semester;
2. Failure (below 63%) in two subject areas in a given semester;
3. Failure in one subject and grades of D (63–69%) in two or more subjects.

A student who is on academic probation for two semesters may be recommended for dismissal. In addition, all students failing one or more courses during a quarter will be reported to the Counseling Office and the Principal. The counselor will meet with the student and his/her parents to determine possible reasons for the failure(s) and to make recommendations to the student and his/her teacher for a plan of improvement.

INCOMPLETE GRADES

An incomplete grade (I) may be issued if a student has not completed required course work. An incomplete assignment or grade becomes a zero if the work is not made up within two weeks after the grading period ends. After the two weeks, the grade is averaged in with the rest of the course work for a quarter of semester grade. Exceptions to this require special permission from the Principal. In addition, an incomplete grade may be given in the event of a medical circumstance, bereavement or family emergency.

RETENTION

A student in grades 6 – 8 who earns a year grade of “F” in two or more core subjects (Mathematics, English, Social Studies, Science) may be retained at his/her grade level for the following school year.

A student with one “F” and one or more “D’s” in core subjects for the year, as well as a student with overall very low passing grades, may also be retained, based on input from his/her teachers and the counselor in the following areas:

- ability to achieve success academically in the next grade level;
- maturity level of the student relative to peers;
- social development; and
- emotional development.

After careful consideration of the above criteria and consultation with the parents, the student may be retained if it is felt that repeating the grade will benefit the student more than being promoted to the next grade level.

A student who finishes the year with passing but weak grades may be passed on to the next grade on academic probation for the first semester of the following school year.

HOMEWORK/OTHER ASSIGNMENTS

In general, academic requirements are such that students should expect to spend 1½ to 2½ hours daily on work outside of class. Students are expected to use the **homework agenda/diary** (provided by the school) throughout the year to record assignments for each lesson in this agenda as well as long term projects. This record of assignments is necessary to help students organize themselves and remember their assignments, due dates, tests, etc. Additionally, it provides information to parents so that school work can be monitored at home. Teachers may use this diary to send messages to parents about homework/school work concerns.

MIDDLE SCHOOL COURSES

ENGLISH

PHILOSOPHY

The Middle School English program assists students in the development of language skills in reading, writing and speaking. The curriculum emphasizes the development of reading fluency and comprehension as well as critical thinking and inferential skills. Both native and non-native English speakers will learn to employ coherence, clarity, conciseness, voice, structure and fluency in the communication of ideas through oral and written communications. Students study reading through the use of shared literature and independent reading to develop skills in reading, writing, and analyzing ideas to promote a sense of aesthetics, imagination, and cultural awareness. The reading and writing program is organized by genre so as to promote a comprehensive study of literature while offering the students outstanding models of writing.

COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

English 6

English 6 uses a Balanced Literacy approach to teaching reading and writing. The cornerstone of the curriculum is the idea that 6th grade students are developing readers and writers.

6th grade readers enjoy strategy-based reading instruction that accesses the 7 Essential Reading Skills—using shared texts as the basis for inquiry and independent reading as the foundation for application. A mastery model is used in assessment allowing students the opportunity to demonstrate mastery of content objectives over the course of a year. The scope and sequence of 6th grade reading is as follows: Character Studies/Short Text Studies/Non-Fiction Studies/Book Clubs/Poetry.

6th grade writers use a process-based approach. Students move through the writing process to develop strategies for collecting ideas, drafting, revising, editing and publishing. Specific points of focus in revision include voice and craft. Grammar is taught in context during the editing process. Writing scope and sequence is as follows: Vignette/Literary Essay/Persuasive Essay/World View Essay/Poetry.

Texts: *Elements of Literature, Introductory Course*, Holt Rinehart and Winston

6th grade English classes use an extensive independent reading classroom library of both fiction and non-fiction.

English 7

The Seventh Grade English program continues to develop proficiency in reading and writing while encouraging the appreciation of literature. Units are organized by genre and a variety of literary selections are chosen to expand the student's active reading ability. Follow-up discussions and activities ensure understanding and application of literary elements intrinsic to each selection. Outside reading is encouraged by the assignment of book reports throughout the academic year.

The students will develop the ability to organize ideas for effective writing for a variety of purposes. Rules of grammar, syntax, and punctuation will be applied to the writing process that will facilitate the student's ability to write well-organized paragraphs and essays to expound their ideas. Additionally, oral presentations will encourage positive speaking behaviors, including clarity and expression as well as thoughtful and attentive listening. Vocabulary enrichment is an integral part of the curriculum.

- Texts:** *Elements of Literature* (First Course) Holt, Rinehart and Winston 2007
Elements of Language, Grammar Usage, and Mechanics (First Course), Holt, Rinehart and Winston 2007
- Novels:** *The Giver* by Lois Lowry
Freak the Mighty by Rodman Philbrick
Song of the Trees a Novella by Mildred D. Taylor
- Tales:** *Tales of King Arthur: The Sword in the Stone*
Merlin and the Dragons
Sir Gawain and the Loathly Lady
- Plays:** *Twelfth Night* by William Shakespeare

English 8

The Eighth Grade English Program continues to develop proficiency in reading and writing while preparing students to be independent readers and successful writers in the high school. The course is organized into core units that focus on specific Reading and Writing skills.

Eighth grade readers focus on mastering reading skills through independent reading and classroom practice. The scope and sequence of the reading portion is Character Study and Diction/ Novel Study: Theme, Symbol, and Irony/Nonfiction Study/Poetry

Eighth grade writers also use a process-based approach, working through the five step writing process and crafting a variety of writing throughout the year. The scope and sequence of the writing portion is Vignette/Personal and Literary Essay/Research Paper/Poetry

Grammatical concepts and proper application are reinforced throughout the year. Weekly vocabulary study builds the students' use of language. Independent reading allows students to choose books that interest them and practice essential reading skills. Varied and frequent writing assignments facilitate the understanding of writing as a process.

- Texts:** *Explorations in Literature*, Scott-Foresman Company, 1998
Vocabulary Workshop Level C by Sadlier-Oxford
 Extensive independent reading classroom library

- Novels:**
The Outsiders by S.E. Hinton
The House on Mango Street by Sandra Cisneros

Plays: A selection from William Shakespeare is chosen in correspondence with the annual theater festival

Study Skills, Grades 6 - 8

The Study Skills program is designed to teach students strategies to improve their capacity to learn as well as give them support in reading, writing and independent work.

Topics across grades 6-8 include: organization, study habits, reading, writing, planning, prioritizing, responsibility and leadership.

Skills across grades 6-8 include: outlining/note taking, techniques for preparing for tests and oral presentations.

The collective program will enhance their ability to organize and prepare for their core subjects more effectively.

- Texts:** *Study Smart*, Center for Applied Research in Education, 1990
Strategies for Study, Perfection Learning Corporation, 1991
Help Yourself, New Readers' Press, 1982

ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE (ESL)

PHILOSOPHY

We believe it is necessary to be sensitive toward ESL students who comprise a group of linguistically and culturally diverse learners and to structure a successful academic experience for them. A variety of approaches are used to help students develop language proficiency, learn the central concepts and build knowledge in various disciplines. A caring, inclusive and safe learning atmosphere is established where students take intellectual risks and work both independently and collaboratively.

ESL (MS)

The ESL program in the Middle School exists to help the non-native English speaker acquire and refine the language skills necessary to succeed in the regular classroom. Placement in the program is determined by testing.

Texts: Printed material provided by instructor.

MIDDLE SCHOOL EXPLORATORY CYCLE

PHILOSOPHY

Exploratory classes are an integral part of an effective middle school program. They are taught by specialists in their fields and are offered in eight week time blocks. It is important that middle level students experience a range of exploratory offerings so that they can make informed choices about electives when they become high school students.

COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

The goal of the art program is to create a comfortable and safe environment for our students. The students will be exposed to various media and the richness of our international context. The visual arts in the Middle School include drawing, painting and collage to promote visual literacy and develop problem solving skills. We foster art connections between the students' world and the world around them. To promote student growth, we weave relevant and constructive assessment. Every art activity is not subject to formal grading and assessment. Artwork and projects, which are assessed, will be conducted with prime consideration to peer evaluations, and individual efforts and abilities.

Art 6

Art 6 provides students with opportunities to experiment with basic design elements and principles through various techniques and art media. Students will build on drawing and rendering skills, using these to communicate ideas and information. Associations between past and present cultures world-wide will be discussed and incorporated in the class activities

Art 7

This course extends the skills introduced in sixth grade art classes. The two-dimensional drawing and painting will be explored as they continue to develop their knowledge of the elements of art as well as their appreciation of art works. Increased art vocabulary and multi-cultural emphasis and exposure to a variety of cultures are emphasized.

Art 8

This visual art course extends students' understanding and use of design elements and principles with the aim of visually communicating ideas and information. Students will build on painting, drawing and design skills, further exploring rendering with a range of media. Computer graphics will also be incorporated.

The after school program offers various art courses. Students are encouraged to participate in art exhibits and competitions. The Rome International School Association (RISA) sponsors an annual art exhibition; furthermore, at different times in the year we take part in the United Nations poster competitions on different themes.

MIDDLE SCHOOL MUSIC

The Music Program at AOSR strives to provide an atmosphere suitable to all of the students. The program is taught by certified music specialists. Teachers use melody, rhythm, movement and speech to involve the whole child. The basic elements of pitch, dynamics/intensity, duration, form, timbre, tempo and texture/harmony are specific educational goals which are taught by means of games, folklore, chants, poetry, word patterns, dramatic plays, dance, music notation and especially singing.

Music is also linked to the academic curriculum to teach and reinforce such concepts as cultural awareness, colors, sounds, counting, sequencing, history, geography and English. The Music program works jointly with the Middle School Italian Curriculum to prepare Italian students for their national examinations, term papers, performance and playing evaluations. In this respect, students study these areas in more depth: instruments of the modern symphony orchestra and their origins in Grade 6; listening and performing music from Medieval and Renaissance periods in Grade 7; listening and performing American music, from its origins, in Spirituals, to George Gershwin's, "Rhapsody in Blue". Grade 6 will also have the opportunity to be a class 'orchestra' for the Drama Department's annual Shakespeare Festival production, in May.

Through involvement in an active music program, children learn to participate in a group or ensemble at their own level of achievement and to experience the delight and satisfaction this participation brings. Singing in the languages of the cultures represented by the student body is a very important and anesthetically fulfilling activity in this program. All the major nationalities in the school are recognized through a common artistic venue which is enjoyable for everyone involved. There are four annual concerts scheduled throughout the school year: United Nations Day, Winter/Holiday, Spring, and End-of-Year.

Students are also taught to play simple instruments such as Orff xylophones, hand percussion and recorders as well as being encouraged to bring their own orchestral instruments to class. These activities reinforce the basic goals of the program.

A variety of extra-curricular music activities are available to the students of all grade levels. The After School Program offers private lessons in piano, flute, voice, violin and guitar, five days a week with certified music instructors. A String group meets once a week after school and encourages students at any level to participate.

Middle School Chorus meets once a week after school. Students in sixth through eighth grade audition to participate. The Mediterranean Association of International Schools (MAIS) and the Association for Music in International Schools (AMIS) host annual honor choir festivals for selected middle school singers.

Overall, AOSR's Middle School Music Program stresses creativity at every level and in every medium – singing, speaking and moving – because the things the children create will be the most

thoroughly learned. Through this program, a love of all kinds of music is gradually developed on a firm foundation including an increase in understanding musical literacy.

MIDDLE SCHOOL DRAMA

Students will spend eight weeks learning about the theater, gaining skills as performers, and stretching out their creative thinking. The class will work on building an imaginatively-rich and supportive environment, a space where all members can feel good about taking the creative risks that are an essential part of making art and an artistic lifestyle.

In the first part of our quarter, students will learn theatrical warm-ups, exercises, and games designed to loosen the imagination and gain an artistic confidence which is stronger than the habitual urge to be embarrassed by our own creativity. In the second half of the class, students will use the developed skills to create a performance project to share with other exploratory classes. In the past, final performance projects have included:

6th Grade: Greek Mythology Adaptations or Parody Fairy Tales

7th Grade: Theatrical adaptations of Twelfth Night by William Shakespeare

8th Grade: Shakespeare studies in correspondence with the annual Shakespeare festival

Although class efforts will be concentrated on the world of theater and sharing our mental inventions through performance, classes are geared towards developing an overall sense of voice and joy in the ‘creative-self.’ Lessons are taught with the belief that an expressive and empowered imagination is an asset in any choice of career or lifestyle.

MIDDLE SCHOOL COMPUTERS

The philosophy of the computer department is to help students learn to use computers as a tool in their thinking. We want our students to move beyond computer literacy to computer fluency – to know how to approach the computer with ease and use it as a tool in their writing, in their research, in their connection to the world around them and in their asking of questions. Computers should be easily accessible and support is provided when problems are encountered, although a strong effort must be made to promote a culture of independent learning and mutual support amongst the members of the computer-using community. Our philosophy regarding course offerings is based on the premise that rapid change will make the learning of any application or system obsolete within a short time. Therefore, the focus of computer instruction must be on creating, within the students, a sense of adaptability and confidence in their ability to handle new situations and challenges.

Middle School students have computing skills for a quarter as part of an exploratory block which includes theater, art and music. Additionally, teachers of core subjects in grades 6 – 8 have students use computers as a research and writing tool in their classes.

FOREIGN LANGUAGES

PHILOSOPHY

The primary goal of the middle years study of foreign languages is to prepare students to communicate accurately in languages other than their native tongue. In addition, this department aims to foster respect for the culture of others in order to function in a multilingual/multiethnic world. The native language courses provide an in-depth study of the Italian language and cultural heritage for students whom Italian is their first language.

COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

ITALIAN 1 REGULAR

This introductory course enables students to develop beginning Italian language skills. The emphasis is on communication, shaping oral expression, and developing reading skills.

Texts: *Parlando Italiano Junior*, Guerra ed. textbook and workbook

ITALIAN 2 REGULAR

This course is conducted in Italian and aims at improving the students' oral proficiency and ability to communicate and express their ideas in Italian. Reading and writing are also further developed. During the year the students are taught how to read short stories and to report the main points both orally and in writing.

Texts: *That's Allegro 1*, Edilingua ed. textbook and *Un Tuffo nell'Azzurro* workbook

ITALIAN 3 REGULAR

This course aims to further develop the students' linguistic proficiency and to train the students to read general topics, to identify the key points in a text and to shape written expression.

Texts: *Un Tuffo nell'Azzurro* di Amati, Bacci- Panozzo and other supplemental materials

Italian as a Native Language

Preparation for the Italian Scuola Media Programs

The following courses prepare students to take the Italian Scuola Media exam at the end of the 6th, 7th and 8th grade years. These courses are open to all students who are fluent in the language and who wish to pursue its study in more depth.

ITALIAN 1 NATIVE

This course further develops the Italian grammar and writing skills of the student through reading and analysis of literature in Italian. History study focuses on ancient civilizations such as Romans, and the Middle Ages. Geography study focuses on Italy and Europe.

Texts: Provided as per the Italian State Exam Syllabus

ITALIAN 2 NATIVE

This course continues the development of Italian grammar and writing skills. Passages from ancient and contemporary authors are read. Historical studies cover the middle Ages, Renaissance, Baroque, and Enlightenment in Europe. Geography study focuses on Europe, the European Union and Italy within the EU.

Texts: Provided as per the Italian State Exam Syllabus

ITALIAN 3 NATIVE

Following the program of the Italian *terza media* as required by the Italian state system, the course covers the nineteenth and twentieth century with emphasis on current events. Geography includes the extra-European continents. The literature of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries is studied.

Texts: Provided as per the Italian State Exam Syllabus

FRENCH 1 MS

The aims of this course are the development of genuine communicative competence in French and to foster cultural awareness of France and of the French speaking world and its people. Students develop the ability to communicate using the four basic skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing. This class prepares students for the Italian Scuola Media Exam of the corresponding level.

Texts: *Le kiosque 1*, Student book and activity book,
Petite Nouvelle, modules A-B
Cassettes/Audio-video Program

FRENCH 2 MS

This course seeks to continue the development of communicative competence started in French I. Students will continue to practice the four basic skills of speaking, listening, reading, and writing. More emphasis is placed in the written form and in the acquisition of new vocabulary. This class prepares students for the Italian Scuola Media Exam of the corresponding level.

Texts: *Le kiosque 2*, Student book and activity book,
Petite Nouvelle, modules C-D
Cassettes/Audio-video Program

FRENCH 3 MS

This course aims to consolidate the vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation patterns learned in the first two years of Middle School French. It provides further practice of the four communicative skills: speaking, writing, listening, and reading. More emphasis is placed on formal writing and cultural issues concerning France and/or the French speaking world. This class prepares students for the Italian Scuola Media Exam of the corresponding level.

Texts: *Le kiosque 3*, Student book and activity book,
Petite Nouvelle, modules E-F
Cassettes/Audio-video Program

SPANISH 1 MS

Spanish I Middle School is a course designed to meet the linguistic needs of young teenagers. It is mainly a communicative class where students learn to express basic concepts and practice from the very start. All four skills are emphasized: speaking, writing, reading and listening. The course consists of varied materials suitable for the interests of this particular age group. It integrates the needs of the students following the Italian *Scuola Media* Curriculum and those of the students who pursue a regular language track. The students will be exposed to authentic sources of information for language and culture acquisition such as videos, films, music, dance and art. This class prepares students for the Italian Scuola Media Exam of the corresponding level and for promotion to MS Spanish Level 2.

The textbook used is *Nuevo Chicos Chicas Level 1* and includes a workbook and audio CD.

SPANISH 2 MS

Spanish 2 Middle School is designed for students who have completed the first level of Spanish or who have placed in this level after testing. This level continues the development of the four basic skills of language learning: listening, speaking, reading and writing as well as demands more phonetic and grammar accuracy from the students. Linguistic competencies become more complex and structured and the students' exposure to the cultures of the Spanish-speaking world more in-depth. There is emphasis in expanding and using new vocabulary. This class prepares students for the Italian Scuola Media Exam of the corresponding level and for promotion to MS Spanish Level 3.

The textbook used is *Chicos Chicas Level 2* and includes a workbook and audio CD.

SPANISH III

This class completes the sequence of Spanish levels offered in Middle School and prepares Italian students for the Terza Media exams. The emphasis of this course is to continue to develop written and oral communicative skills in Spanish, using settings and materials which authentically reflect the realities and varieties of the Hispanic World. This program takes into consideration themes which are relevant to this particular Middle School age as well as more complex linguistic structures which will help students make a successful transition between Middle School and High School Spanish.

The textbook used is *Chicos Chicas Level 3* and includes a workbook and audio CD.

MATHEMATICS

PHILOSOPHY

Middle School Mathematics reinforces and extends students' knowledge of arithmetic, geometry, algebra, and number theory. They apply knowledge gained from computations to more refined problem-solving strategies and acquire, refine, and apply them to real-life applications. Technology and manipulatives are regularly used. Strong communication skills are stressed throughout Middle School math courses and a number of investigations as well as projects add to a students' command of how their mathematical abilities translate in real-life. Projects emphasize clear organization and communication of information and include skills for real-life scenarios.

Our Middle School program is designed to:

- Apply and adapt a variety of strategies to solve problems.
- Use mathematical language to clearly communicate mathematical thinking.
- Recognize, identify, and apply mathematics in situations outside of the classroom.
- Impart the skills and knowledge necessary to pursue college preparatory mathematics at the high school level.

COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

MATH GRADE 6

The sixth grade curriculum continues to emphasize the study of whole numbers, decimals, and fractions. Students make conversions within a given measurement system, make geometric constructions, classify three-dimensional figures, and solve algebraic equations in one variable. While learning mathematics, students will be actively engaged, using concrete materials and appropriate technologies such as calculators. However, facility in the use of technology shall not be regarded as a substitute for a student's understanding of quantitative concepts and relationships or for proficiency in basic computations. Students will also identify real-life applications of the mathematical principles they are learning in science and the other disciplines they are studying.

Texts: *Math Course 1*, McDougal Littell, 2007

ITALIAN 1 NATIVE MATHEMATICS (Math 6 for Native Italians)

This course meets the requirements of the Italian State system covering the following subjects:
Arithmetic – whole numbers, decimals, fractions, etc.
Geometry – segments, angles, triangles, squares, rectangles, etc.
Science – cells, plants, terrestrial environments, etc.

Texts: Provided as per the Italian State Exam Syllabus

MATH GRADE 7

The seventh grade math curriculum continues to prepare students for the shift to more advanced mathematical topics while enhancing their basic knowledge of algebra, measurement, geometry, data analysis, probability, and arithmetic. These skills are applied to more complex mathematical studies and observations. Complex word problems and deductive and inductive reasoning skills are enforced. Logic and patterning are strongly emphasized through mathematical puzzles and games. A range of manipulatives help to enhance knowledge of real-life applications while technology, such as Geometry Sketch Pad and calculators, helps to strengthen understanding.

Texts: *Math Course 2*, McDougal Littell, 2007

PRE-ALGEBRA GRADE 8

This Pre-algebra course is centralized on preparing students for the advanced mathematical topics covered in algebra. The course begins by reinforcing basic knowledge of algebra, geometry, data analysis, probability, and arithmetic before moving on to more complex algebra with topics such as, linear equations and inequalities, linear graphing, and systems of equations. Complex, higher order thinking skills, decision-making, and logical thinking are strongly emphasized through the continued implementation of the various problem-solving strategies. A range of manipulatives are used to escalate students' ability to model and explain more complex mathematical situations.

Texts: *Pre-Algebra*, McDougal-Littell, 2005

ALGEBRA GRADE 8

The eighth grade Algebra course is the same as our high school Algebra I course. All students are expected to achieve proficiency in problem solving, graphing, writing and solving equations, understanding and using ratios, and symbol manipulation. Students make connections between algebra and geometry through practical applications. This approach to teaching algebra helps students attach meaning to the abstract concepts.

Students are required to use algebra as a tool for representing and solving a variety of practical problems. Tables and graphs are used to interpret algebraic expressions, equations, and inequalities and to analyze functions. Throughout the course, students are expected to become proficient in the use of a graphing calculator (TI series 83, 84). Students are required to talk about mathematics, to use the language and symbols of mathematics to communicate, to discuss problems and problem solving and to develop confidence in their ability to use mathematics to solve problems.

Texts: *Algebra 1*, McDougal-Littell, 2007

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

PHILOSOPHY

We believe that Physical Education makes a significant and unique contribution to the students' overall education and well-being by providing an opportunity to improve movement skills, acquire knowledge and develop positive attitudes toward playing games and sports which will be useful both now and throughout their lifetime. Challenging the students to play cooperatively with and,

sometimes, lead their peers is the heart of the program. Furthermore, learning is enhanced through participation in class situations that provide challenging, successful experiences and enjoyable exercise. In a wide range of activities suitable to the diversity of the school population, students are taught to accept differences and work together. Fundamental to the approach is the development of sound skill progressions, lead-up games and activities that best facilitate student learning and skill acquisition.

Physical education classes are co-educational.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

PHYSICAL EDUCATION – GRADE 6

The students will be given sequential practical lessons which target improving major-motor skills, coordination, cardio-respiratory endurance, flexibility, physical strength, and posture. Fundamental team sport skills will be practiced to instruct correct technical performance in a variety of play-based games and activities.

Students will learn to identify specific muscle groups and understand their purpose and range of movement. They will be able to make a positive critical observation of self and peer-group performances as well as learn game rules, officiating duties, and team strategies. They will be given the opportunity to assume leadership roles and become involved with the organization and operation of a variety of classic tournament formats. Team competition inside of each grade level will be used to stimulate and mobilize mental and physical efforts. Music will, at times, be included during class in order to expose the students to the natural feeling of fun brought out by the combination of rhythms and physical movement.

An overall emphasis will be placed on positive social play to encourage sportsmanship and correct group behavior both as participant and spectator.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION / HEALTH – GRADES 7 and 8

Students will improve upon intermediate level sport-specific skills for individual, dual, and team sports. They will learn the basic offensive and defensive strategies and engage in activities which develop and maintain cardio respiratory endurance, muscular strength and flexibility. Appropriate standardized physical fitness tests and measurements will be administered. The health portion of the course, which meets one day a week, is devoted to introducing the students to various topics to lead them to make healthy decisions within their lives. Units of instruction will include the following: local health services, products and information; environmental and external factors affecting health; family and emotional health; sport injury prevention and safety; nutrition and diet; maintaining and promoting personal health; prevention and control of disease; substance use and abuse; and concepts of growth and development.

SCIENCE

PHILOSOPHY

Advances in science and technology have produced a rapidly changing world. Students must be well prepared in science and, more importantly, in the application of science to help them make decisions everyday.

Our middle school program is based on the following guiding principles:

- To help students recognize and appreciate the applications of science to everyday living.
- To develop scientific, technological, and mathematical literacy in all our students.

- To educate students to use scientific principles and processes appropriately in making personal decisions.
- To help students to experience the richness and excitement of knowing about and understanding the natural world
- To teach students how to engage intelligently in public discourse and debate about matters of scientific and technological concern.

COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

SCIENCE – GRADE 6 (Life Science)

Grade 6 Science is dedicated to the study of life. Throughout the course, the scientific method is studied and applied to achieve a complete understanding of organisms' internal and external environments. All organisms' life activities are based on the structure, function and interaction of its body parts. Scientists classify organisms into groups based on these body structures and life activities. Although each organism is an individual, the lives of organisms are related to each other and to the environment. Survival of an organism depends on its ability to adapt to the environment. Integral to this course are activities that enable the student to develop important inquiry skills. It is vastly important at this level that students are intrigued and inspired by their newfound understanding of living systems. With such interest they can then address situations with a focus on the scientific method of problem solving. Often the historical background of a scientific discovery and its implications are presented along with the basic science content. Important experiments that have had a major impact on the development of life science are presented and analyzed. This knowledge from past research pairs nicely with the students own hands-on experiences in the laboratory to give the students the feeling of thinking and working as scientists. The practical applications of life science presented in this course help the students to understand the impact of life science decisions in the fields of health, medicine, nutrition, and agriculture, as well as gain a greater appreciation for the specific activities occurring within their own bodies.

Major themes in the course are:

- stability and change
- systems and interactions

Course Outline:

Cells and Heredity
Diversity of Living Things
Human Biology
Ecology

Texts: *Science Explorer: Life Science*, Pearson / Prentice Hall 2009

SCIENCE - GRADE 7 (Earth Science)

Earth Science provides an adequate balance between the study of physical geology, historical geology, meteorology, oceanography, and astronomy. It is a study of Earth - its matter, features, processes, and place in the universe. The course emphasizes the constant changes that Earth undergoes and how these changes affect landforms, rock structures, and life itself. Important concepts are treated historically and logically. Attention is given to important principles, concepts, and science processes that serve as a framework for understanding and interpreting the general characteristics of Earth. This framework then is applied to the problems facing society such as energy shortages, earthquake and hurricane prediction, and resource management.

Several unifying themes serve as a conceptual framework for the science course and provide a rationale for the sequence of topics in the curriculum. Major themes in the course are:

- energy
- evolution
- stability

- patterns of change
- scale and structure
- unity and diversity
- systems and interactions

Course Outline:

**Exploring Planet Earth
Earths Changing Surface
Earth's Waters
Weather and Climate
Astronomy**

Texts: *Science Explorer Earth Science*, Pearson / Prentice Hall 2009

SCIENCE - GRADE 8 (Physical Science)

Physical Science is a study of matter and energy. The approach of this course emphasizes everyday applications of physical laws. As students progress through the course, they soon realize that most of the technological advances they have taken for granted are merely applications of basic physical science principles.

Several unifying themes serve as a conceptual framework for a physical science course and provide a rationale for the sequence of topics in the curriculum. Major themes in the course are

- energy
- stability
- patterns of change
- scale and structure
- systems and interactions

Course Outline:

**Unit One.... Physical Science
Unit Two... Energy and Motion
Unit Three.. The Nature of Matter
Unit Four... Kinds of Substances
Unit Five.. Interaction of Matter
Unit Six.... Waves, Light, and Sound
Unit Seven.. Electricity and Energy Resources**

The course provides a wide range of experiences that help students develop and apply thinking process skills. Critical thinking skills developed in the various courses include

- observing and inferring
- comparing and contrasting
- recognizing cause and effect
- defining operationally
- formulating models

Process skills developed and reinforced in the course are

1. Organizing Information
 - classifying
 - sequencing
 - outlining

2. Thinking Critically
 - observing and inferring
 - comparing and contrasting
 - recognizing cause and effect
 - defining operationally
 - formulating models
3. Experimentation Skills
 - measuring in SI
 - hypothesizing
 - using variables, constants and controls
 - collecting and organizing data
 - interpreting data
 - experimenting
 - analyzing
4. Graphic Organizers
 - concept mapping
 - making and using tables
 - making and using graphs
 - interpreting scientific illustrations
5. Others
 - communicating using numbers
 - using computer technology

Texts: *Science Explorer Physical Science*, Pearson / Prentice Hall 2009
NASA Educational Materials, NASA, 1994

SOCIAL STUDIES

PHILOSOPHY

The Middle School Social Studies program is based on cooperative learning.

COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

SOCIAL STUDIES 6 (The Eastern Hemisphere)

The Sixth Grade Social Studies program provides a strong foundation in geography. The curriculum provides practice in understanding graphs, interpreting information, understanding time zones, comparing regions and people of the eastern hemisphere, understanding and selecting resource maps, comparing political maps in different periods, skimming and scanning for information, exchanging currency, trying to make predictions, summarizing information, and understanding points of view.

The focus of the course will be:

- The Eastern hemisphere, and how the varied geography and climate of this area shaped the lives of the people living there;
- The civilizations in Mesopotamia, Egypt, India and China;

- The contributions of the civilizations of the Middle East, Greece, and Rome to religion, government, and art.

Students will be able to identify, organize, and remember a great deal of information about people, places, and events. Maps, charts, graphs and images of artifacts will provide a wealth of information about people and the earth. To interpret maps, it is necessary for students to understand scale, symbols, latitude, longitude, and projections. The sixth grade student will be a reflective participant in classroom discussions. The student will present personal opinions and understand differing points of view, distinguish between fact and opinion, and analyze the effectiveness of group communication skills. The student will do a variety of projects independently for appreciation and comprehension, including a significant number of field trips. In addition, writing research papers will be used as a tool for learning academic concepts and available technology will be used as appropriate.

Texts: *A Message of Ancient Days*, Houghton Mifflin, 2003
Junior Scholastic, Scholastic Company, bi-weekly magazine

SOCIAL STUDIES 7 (The Western Hemisphere)

The Seventh Grade course is part of a two-year sequence beginning in the Sixth Grade which builds a foundation with geography of the Eastern Hemisphere. Therefore, the Seventh Grade course will focus on the further development of skills acquired in the Sixth grade. The objective of these two courses is to introduce students to physical and cultural geography. However, the historical content of the Seventh Grade course (1492-present) is meant as a chronological continuation of the Sixth Grade curriculum and as a transition to the Eighth Grade curriculum. An exciting and pertinent new addition to the seventh grade curriculum will be the study of Islam and its role in the modern world. Geography, religion, culture and history of each focus country will be discussed in both small and large group settings.

The course will begin with a review of physical geography. Students will focus on map reading: scales, keys, oblique, contour, etc. Students will also examine world climates, land formation, weather patterns, and natural phenomena (volcanoes, earthquakes, hurricanes, etc.) which complement the Earth Science curriculum of the Seventh Grade Science course.

By the end of the academic year, students will be expected to understand various systems of organizing society and conditions of life in North and South America and parts of the Middle East. The geography of the United States is also integrated into the course by way of discussion and independent projects.

Key units will focus on economics, culture and politics. Units will cover global economic competition and comparisons will be made in the lives of the peasants, warriors and nobles across the centuries. Finally, nineteenth century independence movements of the Americas will expose students to themes of nationalism, socialism and constitutional democracy.

Texts: *Across the Centuries*, Houghton Mifflin, 2003
Junior Scholastic; Scholastic Company, bi-weekly current events magazine

SOCIAL STUDIES 8 (United States History)

The goal of this course is to introduce methods used in the study of history and to help students to develop critical thinking and communication skills. Emphasis is placed on the acquisition of study and research skills. Note taking exercises will include the outlining of: sections of the textbook, the instructor's notes on the board, and notes from oral presentations. Students will also be called upon to develop oral skills through speech making and mock debates.

The central theme of this course is the study of the United States from independence to present day. While focusing on the history of the United States, students will also learn about Europe, Africa, Asia and the Americas during the age of world exploration and colonization (1492-1783).

Unit lessons will focus on the U.S. Constitution and stress the importance of constitutional democracy in general. Group projects include simulations of U.S. Congress through history with mock debates on issues like slavery, the economy, and the balance of power in the federal system.

Students will also be asked to examine the world around them and to behave responsibly as citizens in the world community. Through group projects, students will also be confronted with contemporary global issues and problem solving.

The course is interdisciplinary, relying upon unit projects in computer research, library research, history in literature and essay writing. Subjects as diverse as science and foreign languages are also incorporated through units like the International Fair or the Model UN. Other projects which integrate other curricula are a power point project on the American Revolution and a multimedia project on World War II.

Texts: *American Nation*, Prentice- Hall, 1997
Junior Scholastic, Scholastic Company, weekly magazine

RESOURCE

Students in Resource class work individually and in small groups to improve reading comprehension, writing skills, and basic math skills. In addition, organizational skills, study skills, and problem solving skills are taught as indicated. This is a general support class and students must qualify for the program by going through a referral process.

Eligibility determined by referral process

MIDDLE SCHOOL CULTURAL TRIPS

During the second week in November the middle school students are given the opportunity to experience the “living laboratories” around them. The experience begins in September when our students are provided with a list of possible destinations that they may choose to explore. These diverse destinations include an English speaking country, Western European countries, an Eastern European country and an Italian destination. This program is organized on a three-year rotation cycle so that students are not presented with the same choice of countries during their years in middle school.

The annual trips are organized around the common educational theme: The Development of Cultures. Before, during and after the trips, students take part in and contribute to an interdisciplinary experience that focuses on their travels. On site professional art historians are employed to assist the middle school junior ambassadors and their teacher chaperones with an in-depth exploration. The students are required to report data in travel journals daily. Parental sharing and input is greatly encouraged upon return while students are completing their work. These projects are then submitted to group leaders and the history department for evaluation. During the International Fair, journals are displayed and extensive projects are presented.

What better way to learn about a country and its people than a week of total immersion and direct experience! We hope to challenge our students to become mature, resourceful, well-informed, ethical global citizens.

GENERAL MIDDLE SCHOOL CLASSROOM POLICIES AND IMPORTANT INFORMATION

How To Be Prepared For Class

Bring all Materials to Class Each Day:

- Homework journal (provided by the school)
- Pencils
- Pens
- Pencil Case
- Binders with section dividers and/or notebook and/or folder
- Plenty of Paper
- Book and/or workbook
- Any extra class-specific items such as a ruler, scientific calculator, colored pencils / marker, highlighters)

Complete Homework:

- Has a proper heading, including name, subject, date and assignment
- Has work shown and/or has fully answered questions
- Is done in pencil or pen as instructed
- Is done neatly
- Is done before the start of class

Maintain Clean and Organized Notebooks, Binders and Folders:

- Is in good condition, for example, the rings work properly and the binder has both a front and back cover
- Has sections with labeled section divider tabs
- Has papers and handouts placed orderly in the proper sections
- Has no loose paper

Class Guidelines

- **Be on time:** When the bell rings, students should be in their seats with all materials needed for class
- **Use the homework journal:** Write your homework assignment from the board into your homework journal when you enter the class
- **Stay on task:** When given an assignment, class work, group work or any mission – you are to get involved by following directions and staying focussed
- **Encourage a positive learning environment:** Class participation, support of classmates, asking relevant questions, communicating when you need help and keeping a positive attitude are all ways that you will contribute to a productive and positive classroom
- **Respect for all:** The most important rule we have. Please listen to whoever has the floor, be courteous, honest and helpful to others and treat others as you wish to be treated.

Sample Grade Categories for Subjects:

Homework: 20%

Notebook / Journal: 10%

Binder Check: 5%

Tests: 30%

Quizzes: 10%

Projects / Research / Labs: 15%

Final (per semester): 10%

Please note: All late assignments may be subject to reduced grades. Students should be timely with homework, projects and all class responsibilities.

Communication Steps

If communication is needed, teachers will write a note in the student's homework journal or send a letter home. It is helpful that student's homework journal is checked daily for teacher notes and also to check progress with daily assignments. It is essential that parents respond to teachers' messages in a prompt manner with a signed and dated response.

Approximately every eight weeks, the grading quarter will cumulate with a report card. Midway through each grading quarter, students will receive a progress report stating their current progress in class, any missing work and grade update. Both the progress reports and report cards are sent home with the students. Distribution dates for Progress Reports and Report cards are posted on the school web site calendar.

Together, with regular communication between the student, parents and teachers, we can make this year as successful as possible for your child.