

MIDDLE SCHOOL
Academic Learning Programme
2019/2020

Contents

Middle School Academic Learning Programme.....	1
Academic Learning Programme structure	2
English	3
English as an Additional Language (EAL).....	3
Language Other Than English (LOTE)	4
Humanities.....	5
Mathematics.....	5
Science	6
Design and Technology	7
Physical Education.....	8
Arts.....	8
Life Skills	11
Study Skills	11
Outdoor Education.....	12
Additional curriculum information.....	12

Middle School Academic Learning Programme

The learning programme at UWCSEA consists of five interlinking elements—academics, activities, outdoor education, personal and social education, and service—that provide our students with a holistic, values-based education. The academic programme provides students with a stimulating and challenging experience that is differentiated to allow for differing learning styles. This guide focuses on the academic element of our learning programme.

As students progress to the Middle School, they refine the core interdisciplinary skills initiated in the Primary School. They have more subject specialist teachers guiding them in fundamental subject specific skills required for higher studies. Students are still exposed to a broad and balanced range of subjects, with the opportunity to develop in all relevant areas; from physical, technical, creative, numerate and deductive, rational and experiential, to empathic and evaluative.

Our courses are created from best practice design principles which are research-based and provide an age-appropriate, varied and challenging experience for our students.

Grade 6 courses are designed to ensure a smooth transition from Primary to Middle School while at the same time challenging students developing levels of cognition and curiosity.

Grade 7 courses are designed to allow students the opportunity to build on concepts learned in Grade 6 and to meet the needs of developing Middle School students as they become more independent and responsible for their learning.

The **Grade 8** programme is designed to give students the opportunity to take greater responsibility for their learning and develop a sense of metacognition in order to effectively reflect on the learning process. The courses are designed to meet the needs of Middle School students, while preparing them for the Grade 9 (I)GCSE programme.

Currently, we have a team of experienced international school educators continuing to define, develop and implement College-wide K-12 standards for all subject areas. The goal is to ensure a cohesive concept-based curriculum that offers a linked progression between the curricula in the different schools. This ongoing work is to ensure that we continue to develop an academic curriculum that focuses on the process of learning, is challenging and reflects our mission, vision and values.

The Middle School academic curriculum comprises:

English – English and Humanities are taught as an integrated course in Grade 6. English courses focus on developing students’ skills for reading, writing, speaking and listening.

Languages: Chinese, French, Spanish or English as an Additional Language (EAL) – Most students will study a language other than English with the exception of those who are placed in EAL.

Humanities – Humanities includes topical units in Geography, History and current affairs to help foster students’ critical thinking and analytical skills.

Mathematics – In Mathematics students develop the quantitative, statistical and conceptual mathematical skills they will need for high school and beyond.

Science – The Science programme includes units from the primary scientific disciplines of Biology, Chemistry and Physics.

Design and Technology – In this subject, students are given the opportunity to carry out design thinking in a variety of practical environments. Students experience the design process from conception to realisation to evaluation and learn the required skills to prototype their ideas through a range of new and traditional technologies.

Physical Education (PE) – The PE course fosters a positive disposition toward physical activities and supports the development of physical skills as well as physical and social development.

Arts: Drama, Music and Visual Arts – Students are exposed to a variety of experiences in the Arts while developing fundamental skills in each subject.

Life Skills – Life Skills is an integral component of the Personal and Social Education element of our learning programme. The purpose of this course is to help our students develop into healthy, independent, confident, aware and assertive young people.

Study Skills – This course offers students extended support for their learning; students need to be recommended for the course by their teacher, Head of Grade or Admissions.

Our Middle School academic curriculum is constantly evolving and improving, and this guide provides a snapshot at the time of printing. Curriculum updates are posted online with up-to-date news of the curriculum and events, and parents are informed when they are available.

Academic Learning Programme structure

Middle School timetable

8.10–8.45am	Period 1a
8.45–9.25am	Period 1b
9.25–9.50am	Morning break
9.50–10.15am	Advisory group/assembly
10.15–10.50am	Period 2a
10.50–11.30am	Period 2b
11.30am–12.20pm	Lunch
12.20–12.55pm	Period 3a
12.55–1.35pm	Period 3b
1.35–1.45pm	Afternoon break
1.45–2.20pm	Period 4a
2.20–3.00pm	Period 4b
3.00pm	Dismissed, head to buses or activity
3.05–4.30pm	Activity
4.35pm	Activity buses depart

Grade 6 curriculum

Grade 6 students follow a 40-period week, with subject time allocated as follows:

Subject	Number of periods
English and Humanities	10
Language Other Than English (LOTE)*	5
Mathematics	5
Science	5
Physical Education	4
Design and Technology	4
Visual Art	2
Drama	2
Music	2
Life Skills	1

Grade 6 students are taught as an advisory group except for LOTE lessons.

Grade 7 curriculum

Grade 7 students follow a 40-period week, with subject time allocated as follows:

Subject	Number of periods
English or English as an Additional Language (EAL)	6
Language Other Than English (LOTE)*	5
Mathematics	5
Humanities	5
Science	5
Physical Education	4
Design and Technology	3
Visual Art	2
Drama	2
Music	2
Life Skills	1

Grade 7 students are taught as an advisory group except for Mathematics, LOTE and Physical Education lessons.

Grade 8 curriculum

Students follow a 40-period week, with subject time allocated as follows:

Subject	Number of periods
English or English as an Additional Language (EAL)	6
Language Other Than English (LOTE)*	5
Mathematics	5
Humanities	5
Science	5
Physical Education	4
Design and Technology	3
Visual Art	2
Drama	2
Music	2
Life Skills	1

Grade 8 students are taught as an advisory group except for Mathematics, LOTE and Physical Education lessons.

** For some students whose native language is not English and who need extra support in English, an alternative to a LOTE course may be taken. In these cases, students have five periods of Additional English during this time. This will be discussed with the Head of Grade.*

Please note:

- regular and punctual attendance is vital
- regular absences result in the loss of important learning opportunities

English

The English curriculum is designed to be a challenging and inspiring course, aligned with UWCSEA's core values. Over the course of three years, students read a wide variety of literature, gaining an understanding of ways in which thoughts and ideas may be conveyed through writing. We aim to foster vital critical-thinking skills and to encourage students to appreciate the aesthetic value of literature as an art form. We place great emphasis on helping students to develop volume, stamina and fluency in their independent reading lives.

Such in-depth analysis of others' writing duly enhances students' own written work. In Middle School we aim to develop students' creativity and individual voice as writers, while reinforcing their understanding and use of all parts of the writing process. It is our aim that Middle School students leave Grade 8 as confident writers, lifelong readers and fully prepared for the transition to Grade 9.

What is our approach to reading?

Students are encouraged to read widely and with enthusiasm. Time for independent reading is built into every lesson. All students keep a record of their reading so that they may reflect meaningfully on their reading lives and grow in their tastes and habits over the course of the year. One important aspect of our reading instruction focuses on supporting students in knowing themselves as readers and being able to identify the texts that are 'just right' for them. For this reason, we do not have a prescribed list of independent reading texts, but use posters, peer recommendation and book talks to help students find books they will love. Our independent reading work is supported through classroom libraries and unit-specific book boxes. These book collections have been developed with a focus on the needs and interests of international Middle School readers.

Students are expected to supplement their reading in school with 30 minutes per day of reading at home.

What is our approach to writing?

Students write in a variety of forms during their time in Middle School, but whatever the writing type, our aim is to cultivate good practice in the writing process (growing ideas, developing ideas, drafting, revising and editing). We place particular emphasis on the importance of revision and encourage students to see quality writing as something to be worked for over time. We use the editing stage of the writing process to reinforce their understanding of the way language conventions (grammar, punctuation and spelling) allow for shared meaning. Our aim is to teach transferable concepts and skills around the way writers use structure and language to convey meaning.

How is our learning structured?

Each of our units begins with a pre-assessment, designed to inform the teacher as to the extent of a student's understanding of the concepts and skills that will be taught in the unit. These assessments are not graded, but are used as diagnostic tools to assist teachers in planning the rest of the unit. The unit is then taught as a series of mini-lessons, each aligned to one of the unit's learning intentions. Throughout the unit, teachers use work done in class and at home to assess each student's understanding of the learning intention and to provide timely feedback. Our approach is designed to be focused on learning outcomes rather than grades and to make learning intentions as transparent as possible for students.

Course content

Grade 6 units of learning

In Grade 6, English is taught as an integrated course along with Humanities (History and Geography) for 10 periods a week.

- reading: turning every child into a reader
- writing: personal narrative
- reading: analysing character and theme through the genre of realistic fiction
- writing: literary essay (focusing on structure)

- writing: research writing
- writing: realistic fiction

Grade 7 units of learning

- reading: habits and behaviours of strong readers
- writing: memoir
- reading: analysing elements of literature through the genre of fantasy fiction
- writing: literary essay (focusing on theme)
- reading: analysing poetry
- reading: analysing the media (focus on social media)

Grade 8 units of learning

- reading: habits and behaviors of life-long readers
- writing: personal essay
- reading: analysing elements of literature through challenging short stories
- writing: literary essay (focusing on theme and literary devices)
- reading: analysing the media (focus on bias in the news)

English as an Additional Language

EAL courses provide language support for students who will benefit from specialist English language instruction to use English more fluently and accurately for communication and study purposes.

Currently, two courses are provided with flexible content according to the students' needs:

- **English as an Additional Language (EAL)** in place of English in Grades 7 and 8.
- **Additional English (AENG)**, in place of a language other than English (LOTE) in Grades 6, 7 and 8.

English as an Additional Language (EAL)

In EAL, selected students study language and literature in small classes.

The study of literature includes guided reading to develop multiple reading skills and an awareness of literature. Texts are selected according to students' vocabulary and language level as well as their age and level of interest. Students complete an academic writing task, such as an essay.

Language lessons focus on non-fiction texts, providing students with a range of academic reading skills such as scanning, close reading for detailed comprehension, understanding inferences, identifying main idea and supporting points, and recognising common text types. Oral language is also developed, moving from basic communication towards academic language proficiency, and students may be required to prepare and deliver an oral presentation.

In addition, regular extensive reading in EAL classes encourages students to develop a personal reading habit. Research indicates that, over time, this significantly improves students' reading skills, expands their vocabulary, and improves their writing. We strongly encourage students to read at home daily to support this.

Additional English (AENG)

Additional English is offered (as well as EAL) to selected students as an alternative to a language other than English (LOTE) in order to improve their English proficiency and language skills to meet the demands of studying all subjects in English.

Language lessons focus on the development of listening, speaking, reading, and writing and include vocabulary and grammar. With regard to grammar, our goal is practical application of grammar in speaking and writing.

Please note that in either class, support is sometimes given for the specific language demands of other subjects. In these lessons, students engage with their content area topics with the guidance and support of their EAL teacher according to their needs.

Language Other Than English (LOTE)

There are two types of LOTE courses:

1. LOTE second language (taught foreign language)
2. LOTE first language (native speakers)

LOTE second language (taught foreign language) courses

The teaching of LOTE is a core element of the curriculum. The ideas of the improvement of communication skills and the propagation of greater understanding of other cultures are central to the aims of the UWC movement.

Language teaching has moved on from the traditional ideas of teaching grammar in isolation, now focusing on realistic language functions such as asking for tickets at a station or ordering a drink in a café. The grammatical notions of the language are presented in a meaningful context. The four skills of language (listening, speaking, reading and writing) are taught in an integrated way, so that grammatical concepts act as a reinforcement of vocabulary learnt. Cultural aspects are also taught so that students gain more understanding of the people who live where the languages are spoken.

Students' competency in second languages is assessed through a variety of formative and summative assessments, including classroom observations, performance tasks, self-evaluations and peer assessments. At the end of each unit, students are assessed on the four language competencies: reading, writing, listening and speaking. The format for these assessments can be audio, audio-visual or written.

Some topic areas that are covered in Middle School include:

- **Beginners courses:** introductions, family life, school, daily routine, descriptions, hobbies and clothes
- **Foreign language courses:** education, getting around, leisure, celebrations, health and communications using technology

A more detailed list of the topics, vocabulary and grammatical notions (and Chinese characters) covered in each grade is available from the Head of Department and the website.

Second languages available in Grade 6

- beginners, foreign language and second language Chinese (see below)
- beginners and foreign language French
- foreign language Spanish

Second languages available in Grade 7

- foreign language and second language Chinese (see below)
- foreign language French
- beginners and foreign language Spanish

Second languages available in Grade 8

- foreign language and second language Chinese (see below)
- foreign language Spanish
- beginners and foreign language French

For the foreign language continuation courses, students are expected to have basic knowledge of the language; this usually means at least one year's previous study of the language is required.

Chinese as a second language and Mandarin as a foreign language

The Chinese as a Second Language course is a course in-between foreign language Chinese (Mandarin) and first language Chinese which suits students with a Chinese heritage but who might not necessarily speak it as the main language at home, or students who have extensive experience of Chinese but are not mother tongue speakers. This offers more challenge and depth in studying Chinese than foreign language Chinese and students need to have a high level of language ability in all four skills (speaking, listening, reading and writing) especially in speaking and listening as the lesson will be conducted fully in Chinese.

LOTE first languages (native speakers) courses

LOTE first languages courses are for those whose proficiency in the language is of native or near native speaker level.

The aim is to develop sensitivity and effectiveness of speaking and listening through various themes, tasks and activities using literary and non-literary texts. Students develop their reading and writing skills, and their awareness in analytical, critical and original thinking using a variety of texts. The appreciation of culture is an important part of the courses. Students study literature texts through various media.

First language available in Grade 6

- Chinese

First languages available in Grade 7

- Chinese
- Dutch (see below)
- German (see below)

First languages available in Grade 8

- Chinese
- Dutch (see below)
- German (see below)

For all grades there are further options in our Home Language Programme (see below).

Dutch

In addition to the other languages, Dutch lessons are available from Grade 7–12 for native speakers of Dutch. For students in Grade 7 and 8, these lessons take place after school, twice a week from 3–4.30pm.

The policy of Dutch language provision is as follows:

- UWCSEA, together with the Dutch speaking community in Singapore, operates a joint scheme to employ a fully qualified teacher of Dutch. This teacher provides Dutch tuition both within and outside the normal timetable for native speakers of Dutch. The teacher is a full-time employee of the College, but the Dutch speaking community contributes to the total cost of employing the teacher.
- The College is thus not obliged to provide Dutch tuition but does so to accommodate the wishes of the Dutch and Flemish community. For this reason, there is an extra charge levied by the Dutch community for any Dutch tuition. The cost depends on the number of students taking Dutch lessons. More information is available from Hans Schellekens (hsc@uwcsea.edu.sg).

German

In Grade 7 and 8, German is taught as a first language for native speakers according to the Swiss curriculum. This is a provision for Swiss students joining us in Grade 7 from the Swiss School. Other German native speakers may join this class, but will have to sit a test that assesses if their level of German is sufficient to keep up with the specific curriculum requirements. More information is available from Wolfgang Oesch (woe@uwcsea.edu.sg).

Home Languages Programme (HLP)

The HLP is a programme for students who want to maintain a language spoken at home but who do not study this language as part of the academic curriculum during the school day. In other words, it enables students to study their mother tongue languages outside of the regular curriculum so they do not 'lose' their mother tongue if this language is not offered within the taught curriculum. It is a programme of paid, weekly, after school classes (\$41.80 per lesson, GST and Admin fees included). Classes are taught in very small groups (3–6 students) by qualified, native speaker teachers hired by the school. The focus is on building students' skills in reading and writing. The languages on offer may vary year to year subject to demand. In 2018/2019 we ran classes for Bahasa Indonesia, Dutch, French, German, Hindi, Japanese, Spanish, Portuguese, Hebrew, Italian and Danish. For further information, please contact the Head of Home Languages: Pilar Jimenez - doverhomelanguages@uwcsea.edu.sg

Humanities

Grade 6 —English and Humanities

Humanities (Geography and History) is taught with English by one teacher for 10 periods per week.

Grade 7 and 8 —Humanities

Humanities (Geography and History) is taught by one teacher for five periods per week. Topics from the two disciplines are studied on a rotational basis.

Middle School Humanities standards

All learning is focused around nine standards which are then broken down for the students to understand. The standards are:

1. The interrelated, interdependent and dynamic nature of natural and human systems shapes the environment.
2. Sustainable development requires people to participate in decision-making and take informed action.
3. Significant factors interacting in time and place lead to continuity and change.
4. Place, space and time create conditions that significantly shape the human experience.
5. Systems for resource allocation lead to short and long term consequences for individuals and societies.
6. Culture develops in groups over time and is transmitted to inform individual identity.
7. Individual and group values form norms that define standards of behaviour and how people interpret the world.
8. Humans make sense of themselves and the world through processes of critical and creative thinking.
9. Humans communicate to construct and share meaning.

Course content

Grade 6 units of learning

Please also refer to the information earlier on Grade 6 English

- Explorers and Time Travellers - What shapes a place?
- Dynamic Earth: Natural Hazards - How do humans adapt to a dynamic earth?
- Our Developing World - Why do some have more while others have less?
- ancient societies

Grade 7 units of learning

- The Middle Ages - Does change always mean progress?
- Sustainable Development and Systems Thinking - How do we decide which resources we value?
- Singapore in World War II - Are wars worth remembering?
- Weather and Climate Change - Why does place matter?

Grade 8 units of learning

- Future Cities - How should cities prepare for the future?
- Industrialisation - Who are the winners and losers?
- Food on the Move - What happens when our food travels from field to fork?
- Legacies: Cambodia - Why does history matter?

To enrich understanding for the learning in Grade 8, students are offered the opportunity to participate in an optional house building trip to Cambodia in conjunction with Tabitha Global Concern.

Skills development

A key element of the learning in Humanities is skills development. In particular we focus on the student-led inquiry process where students craft and investigate research questions which are of relevance and interest to them. Through this students develop their research, communication, and data handling skills.

Mathematics

Mathematics equips students with a powerful set of tools, including logical reasoning, problem-solving skills and the ability to think in abstract ways. Different cultures have contributed to the development and application of mathematics. Today, the subject transcends cultural boundaries, and its importance is universally recognised. Mathematics is a creative discipline, and can produce moments of excitement and wonder when a student solves a problem, discovers a more elegant solution or suddenly sees hidden connections.

The Mathematics Programme aims to challenge our students and to prepare them with problem solving, logical reasoning and coherent communication skills. Students should develop positive attitudes towards the subject and increasingly make connections between different aspects of mathematics and other curriculum areas. Mathematics plays a significant role in nurturing critical thinkers of the future.

Students entering Grades 6, 7 and 8 bring with them a variety of experience and ability in mathematics. All grades are taught in a blended model, and opportunities for extension and support are made readily available to every student. Technology is woven throughout the curriculum, and we encourage its use to the extent that it furthers the learning. Assessment is done through a variety of methods including common tests, tasks, classwork, homework and investigational problems. Students reflect on their own progress at the end of each unit.

Course content

Grade 6

- Number sense and problem solving: using different strategies and investigational skills, along with a focus on types of numbers and numerical fluency
- Data: representing and interpreting data using spreadsheets, calculating measures of central tendency
- Fractions: using the four operations with fractions and solving problems
- Directed numbers: using the four operations with positive and negative numbers
- Shape: perimeter and area of two-dimensional shapes
- Ratio: writing equivalent ratios and rates, solving problems involving proportional reasoning
- Algebra: vocabulary and notation, substitution, simplifying expressions and number patterns
- Geometry: shapes, angles and designs, angle rules, geometrical constructions

Grade 7

- Percentages: increase/decrease, profit/loss, reverse percentages
- Algebra I: introduction to solve algebraic equations
- Probability: theoretical and experimental, tree diagrams, collecting and analysing data
- Algebra II: simplifying algebraic expressions, substitution in formulae, solving more advanced equations and solving inequalities
- Ratio: ratio, rates and scale drawing
- Algebra III: patterns, sequences and formulae
- Shape: area of two-dimensional shapes, surface area and volume of three-dimensional shapes

Grade 8

- Algebra I: simplifying expressions, solving equations, factorisation, algebraic applications
- Roots and Pythagoras: investigating and applying Pythagorean Theorem, with a focus on simplifying square and cube roots

- Geometry: similarity, congruence, symmetry, sum of interior and exterior angles of polygons, transformations - including rotations, reflections, translations and enlargements
- Algebra II: linear functions and graphs
- Data: univariate v. bivariate data, box-and-whisker plots, stem-and-leaf plots, scatter diagrams, correlation and causation
- Algebra III: simultaneous equations
- Algebra IV: quadratic equations and graphs

Science

Middle School Science is an integrated course of Biology, Chemistry and Physics, united through a common theme of investigative design and explanation. The curriculum has been constructed to help students form an understanding of themes that run through the scientific world. Our aim is not only to teach knowledge, but for students to be able to apply their understanding within contexts that relate to the real world; be this an aspect of industry or the inner workings of a living organism.

An essential part of scientific learning is investigative skills. Science lessons are designed to have an experimental focus where possible; this may be a teacher demonstration, a class experiment or a full investigation. This is always used in conjunction with relevant content to facilitate the development of a deep understanding of scientific concepts. It is important to us that young scientists are able to record, process and interpret raw data, skills we continuously work on throughout the Middle School curriculum.

Our focus is to help students develop a curiosity that challenges them to think about Science creatively. Our assessments are varied and involve group projects, investigation reports, creative tasks as well as unit tests. These assessments aim to be challenging and rigorous while giving students the opportunity to demonstrate their understanding. Students receive regular feedback from both peers and teachers and are helped to reflect on their learning throughout each unit.

The curriculum is supported through a variety of student and teacher resources. Units are aligned with the K–12 UWCSEA Science standards and benchmarks.

Course content

Grade 6

The programme in Grade 6 is designed to help students gain confidence in working and thinking like scientists. There is a strong focus on experimental design and developing the skills needed to explain scientific concepts. This is all embedded in a curriculum that lays the foundations of modern Science. The Grade 6 units of study are as follows:

- working scientifically
- physical and chemical changes
- building blocks (a unit about cells and reproduction)
- the particle model
- energy
- making things move (a unit about forces and motion)

Grade 7

The Grade 7 curriculum further builds on scientific concepts and is made relevant to the students lives where possible. Investigations continue to be a large focus throughout the curriculum, along with an increase in emphasis on teaching independent study skills and facilitating student led projects.

- elements, mixtures and compounds
- energy in living things
- heat transfer
- electricity
- microbes and disease

Grade 8

The programme in Grade 8 is designed to push students to become critical thinkers who make links between the Science topics studied throughout middle school. There is a strong focus on communication of deep conceptual understanding which both cements learning from previous years while actively preparing students for the high school curriculum. Investigations continue to be used where beneficial.

- sound
- light
- variation and genetics
- chemical reactions
- Newton's laws
- human impact on the environment

Design and Technology

The Design and Technology course intends to challenge all students to apply practical and creative thinking skills to solve problems in technology and to raise students' awareness of their responsibilities as world citizens when making decisions and taking action on technology issues.

The subject uses the design process as the model of thinking and this strategy helps students investigate problems and design, plan, manufacture and evaluate the products and systems that they generate. Combining practical skills with an understanding of function, aesthetics, social and sustainability issues, the course also develops creative and critical thinking strategies.

Students must look for needs, wants and opportunities and respond to them by designing and developing a range of ideas. Students then go on to manufacture fully functioning products and systems from a wide range of materials. In order to develop an understanding of designing and making, students investigate products and find out about the work of professional designers and design movements. As they do so, they reflect on and evaluate present and past design and technology, its uses and effects. New graphical skills will allow them to clearly record and communicate ideas and information. Students use computers, including computer-aided design and manufacture (CAD/CAM) and control software, as an integral part of the design process. The basics of human nutrition and the wise selection of foods are also covered helping students understand the need for a balanced and healthy diet.

Design and Technology is a very broad subject covering both technical and aesthetic disciplines. The separate strands of the subject covered over the three years of Middle School include:

- product design
- food technology
- textile technology
- electronics, communications and technology (ECT)
- engineering

Course content

Grade 6

- problem solving, brainstorming and developing solutions through collaboration
- communicating, designing and developing design ideas using graphical techniques and Computer Aided Design
- research and analysis
- design strategies to aid creative ideas
- testing and evaluation of products
- how to work safely in a kitchen and workshop
- manufacturing and cooking by selecting tools and equipment to form and join
- Bauhaus design movement and designers
- classification of different materials by their properties
- use nutritional tools to understand and achieve a balanced diet.
- sustainable issues related to the 6 R's
- computational thinking to create a software programme for a game

Grade 7

- problem-solving, brainstorming and developing solutions through collaboration
- generation of design ideas using freehand sketching and development using models and prototypes
- design strategies to aid creative ideas
- development of skills in using computer-aided design

- using mood boards as a source of inspiration
- testing and evaluation of products
- how to work safely in a kitchen and workshop
- manufacturing and cooking by selecting tools and equipment to form and join
- understand how to use a 3D printer for rapid prototyping
- understand different scales of production
- understand the working characteristics, properties and uses of different materials
- decorative methods to embellish and alter the appearance of fabrics including screen printing
- select and modify a recipe to ensure improved nutritional value and suitability for a specific target group
- computational thinking to create a programme for robot to complete an open-ended challenge
- sustainability issues through investigation into the environmental and social issues related to the fast fashion

Grade 8

- develop problem solving, teamwork, communication and collaboration skills
- generation of design ideas through modelling and development through scaled prototypes to test comfort
- minimalist design and designers
- rendering techniques to communicate design concepts effectively and clearly
- testing and evaluation of products
- manufacturing and selecting tools and equipment to form and join accurately
- ergonomics and the factors that make a product comfortable to use
- identify causes, health risks and preventive measures associated with poor food choice and eating habits
- structures and forces through building and testing of different structures
- mechanisms and how they can be used to transfer motion
- electronic components and how they are used as the building blocks of the technology
- computational thinking to create a software programme to control a microcontroller connected to different digital devices

Physical Education

Physical Education encourages a positive disposition towards physical activity and aims to develop lifelong learners and participants. Students are encouraged and taught to work together both cooperatively and competitively to apply the skills of a sport, learnt in previous years, to the broader game setting. These concepts, skills and strategies are developed throughout the Middle School Physical Education programme and students are encouraged to transfer these from activity to activity.

We emphasise that the attainment and maintenance of a good level of fitness is connected to healthy living and that this is the personal responsibility of the individual. We place significant value on the continued development of socially acceptable behaviour relevant to the sporting environment and seek to develop the student's ability to work with a partner or as part of a team.

The curriculum and teaching philosophy aims to ensure maximum activity time. To achieve this, the games are modified in terms of numbers and equipment, and rules and strategies are introduced appropriate to each grade. We also encourage depth of skill, knowledge and experience.

Students are taught and assessed constantly in lessons and will be reported on their abilities in four areas- active living, physical skills, strategies and tactics and personal and social interaction.

Students in Grade 6 are taught in their advisory groups, while in Grades 7 and 8 marked maturational differences are evident between individuals, so classes are divided into single gender mixed ability learning groups.

Our diverse curriculum provides opportunities to experience a range of activities. All students take two 75-minute periods of Physical Education per week, covering seven different activities during the year. After each unit student will be assessed.

A typical programme includes the following activities taken from the seven physical domains.

1. Court based

- Basketball
- Netball (girls)

2. Field

- Touch
- Contact Rugby
- Football

3. Aquatic activities

- Swimming
- Water Polo
- Kayaking
- Water Survival Skills

4. Gymnastics and movement/parkour

5. Athletics and health-related fitness

6. 'Over the net'

- Tennis
- Badminton
- Volleyball

7. Striking games

- Softball

Middle School students also take part in three different 'Days of Sport': swimming, games and athletics. These fun-filled days are driven by the advisory group and houses systems. Students are allocated to one of the six houses for the swimming and athletics days and compete against other houses.

Arts

Drama

The principle aim of Drama in Middle School is to help students develop into confident and sensitive communicators. It is not an 'acting' course; the various skills learnt can be applied across many other disciplines and contexts. During the three year course, students work in a secure environment where they are guided to experiment, explore and respond creatively; using drama processes and practices. This means building group trust and cooperation; and thus a greater awareness of the value of meaningful, personal interaction

Skills for the effective and confident communication of ideas are developed and nurtured; in particular creative spontaneity, an expressive command of voice and movement, and an understanding of forms of communication beyond the spoken word. In addition, students investigate a range of performance forms both traditional and modern, involving a range of cultures.

The course is beneficial for students who intend to study Drama at GCSE level, Theatre at IB level and beyond. However, it is also designed to be a self-contained curriculum benefiting all participants by enhancing their communication skills, confidence and creative expression.

Students are also expected to maintain a reflective journal and complete task-specific written work. All written work is directly related to the practical work. Practical work involves the students in performing in both informal and formal ways to their peers consistently throughout the course.

In each successive year, the curriculum builds on basic techniques introduced at the Grade 6 level. These underpin practical work in classroom drama and are essential for the development and attainment of drama skills. Creativity, concentration, cooperation and control are an integral part of the course as students progress through the grades. Students are taught the process of creating, developing and rehearsing drama as well as the skills required for effective and confident performance. The course follows a thematic approach and is taught through a series of units. A core set of skills are introduced and developed through the Middle School years. As the students' understanding of drama, and the confidence required to use drama techniques, increases they progress from exploration and investigation of the elements of Drama, to research, evaluation and selective use of dramatic elements and technologies. The three year course includes the following core skills:

- cooperation and concentration exercises
- movement and use of space and levels
- still image
- gesture and facial expression
- characterisation and role-play—creating and sustaining a character
- exploring and researching character through analysis processes such as 'hot seating' or 'thought tracking'
- spontaneous and devised improvisation
- response to a variety of stimuli including text, poetry, images and sound
- use of theatre technology, including lighting, sound and multimedia
- development of focus, control and confidence when performing in front of an audience
- communication through effective use of voice and body language
- negotiation and collaboration with others
- evaluation of their own work and that of others
- a combination of journal work and submitted written assignments; including in-role writing, posters, designs, reflections and self assessments, creative script writing and research

Course content

Grade 6

An introduction to:

- drama skills through group collaboration and individual work
- movement and spatial awareness
- mime techniques
- responding to text through still image
- shaping and structuring original ideas into dramatic form
- stories and storytelling
- role-play, character and monologues
- using drama specific vocabulary to reflect on their own work and respond to others

Grade 7

Continued development of Grade 6 skills plus an introduction to:

- ensemble devising
- physical theatre
- investigation of culturally-specific ceremony and celebration through drama
- non-naturalistic and epic theatre techniques
- narrative techniques in play-making
- traditional shadow puppetry techniques and adaptation of stories for performance
- devised response to contemporary issues
- realistic acting through duologues
- drama response to poetry stimulus
- additional technical drama vocabulary
- continued self and peer evaluation

Grade 8

This year students consolidate their learning and begin to select and refine techniques including:

- further verbal and non-verbal drama techniques
- spontaneous improvisation skills
- using explorative strategies to explore social and historical events
- interpreting text ('page to stage')—multi role playing and direct audience address
- the history of melodrama and performance techniques used in the genre
- ritual in theatre
- staging Shakespeare
- further devised responses to contemporary issues
- creating and sustaining dramatic tension, focus and control
- technical theatre and theatre conventions
- responding to constructive, critical feedback to enhance performance
- Collaborative Devising Project

The process of creating drama is what is assessed in class, as well as the reflection and feedback. The final product students create is never assessed.

Theatre productions

Middle School theatre productions, run after school as part of the extensive Activities programme, provide further opportunities for students with particular talent to further develop and practice the skills, techniques and knowledge they are acquiring in the course, as well as developing their awareness of the power of Drama as a performance art in a wider community and global context. These involve students in a professional process model, and roles are cast through an audition process. They require a high degree of commitment for the rehearsal period.

Music

Music provides a continuation of the skills developed in the Primary School and helps prepare students for GCSE Music.

The key skills of Listening (Exploring Music in Context), Composing (Creating) and Performing (Interpreting and sharing Music) provide the foundation of the Middle School Music curriculum.

Music Ensembles

Middle School students have many opportunities to be part of music ensembles. Six string groups are available for all abilities along with Woodwind, Brass and Percussion ensembles, Arioso (Middle School choir) and the Intermediate Jazz Band. Concerts take place each term on and off campus. There are also opportunities for solo performing in a chamber music concert setting. Sign up and auditions where necessary are done through the College's ECA platform.

Course content

Grade 6

Each unit involves structured listening and appreciation with a focus on developing music terminology and understanding the 'elements' of music. Performance can include voice, keyboards, percussion, ukulele, guitar and mallet percussion along with an opportunity for the students to perform on any instrument they play. We also provide an introductory course on our Javanese gamelan orchestra. Creating (composing) involves group work in developing 'sound collages' and individual creating using GarageBand explores programmatic 'textures' along with recording and manipulating sounds.

Topics include:

- the elements of music
- programme music
- Musique concrete
- music of Java/performing on the Javanese gamelan
- exploring scales and chords – Eleanor Rigby
- musical journeys (world music scales)

Grade 7

The Music curriculum in Grade 7 offers the student a wide range of experiences in the key skills of exploring and listening, creating and performing. Students get involved with group and individual compositional work and use a range of instruments and more involved approaches (samples, loops, effects, mixing, composing to video) using music technology, creating an EDM piece. The Grade 7 curriculum presents the students with extensive listening, appreciation and performance including World Music, Western Classical, Pop and Blues.

Topics include:

- Ostinato (repeating patterns)
- Blues
- Indian music
- Expressionism: 'Disasters' – 20th century composition techniques
- Rock 'n' roll

Grade 8

Students experience music in Grade 8 through projects designed to further develop the core skills of exploring and listening, creating and performing in preparation for continuation to GCSE Music. Practical work is designed to enable students to advance their skills in performance and individual composition figures more prominently (option of either a ground bass piece or pop song) supported with more in-depth research and exploration into context and listening.

Those who learn a musical instrument are encouraged to utilise it in music class to experience performing in a wide range of

styles. Students further develop skills using GarageBand via the extended use of samples, loops, audio editing, effects and mixing in composition and performance.

Topics include:

- Ground bass
- Hip-hop and Rap
- Britpop and Wonderwall
- Samba
- Reggae

Visual Art

Students receive one double period of Art each week. They are also encouraged to participate in artistic extracurricular activities to enable them to enhance and build upon the skills acquired during lesson time. Open Studio is available after school three days a week to complete or continue classwork and art based homework. Student work is showcased in the Art Department Gallery as well as in the Middle School Art Exhibition at the end of the academic year.

The curriculum provides a 'foundation course' in which students cover ideas, concepts, process and practical skills in art and design. The three main components are:

1. **Context:** The exploration of context sets the conditions for personal meaning and intent in artworks.
2. **Creating:** A creative process provides opportunities for the conception, nurturing and development of artistic ideas.
3. **Interpreting and Analysing:** Art conveys meaning and provokes a personal response which deepens an understanding of self and others.

Through the study of a variety of artists, movements and concepts, both traditional and contemporary, students have the opportunity to develop their skills in the following main areas: drawing, painting, sculpture, printmaking, digital media and photography, contextual and critical thinking.

Themes, contexts and artists have been chosen to:

- provide stimulating starting points for practical work
- follow a progression of complexity which allows the pupils to develop and strengthen different skills during the year
- showcase a mix of male/female and past, present and emerging artists
- cover a mix of genres, eras and cultures

Course content

Grade 6

Students are encouraged to regard the acquisition of skills and concepts as a progressive experience, building on work in Grade 5. The focus of the natural and man-made environment feeds on their outdoor educational experience in Pulau Tioman and students look at ephemeral art, the decorative arts, colour and composition. Students are involved with personal and contextual research including analysis and responding to works of art. They also develop personal ideas, go through a creative process and perform personal reflections.

Drawing

Drawing is a fundamental aspect of students' art experience and features throughout the year as an essential, skill-building area. Students develop their use of mark-making techniques, tonal contrast and hand-eye coordination.

Painting

Students build on skills acquired in tempera paint and applying colour theory. The focus is on developing fine motor skills and brush control through abstract painting.

Sculpture

Students continue and consolidate their skills in ceramics where the focus is on surface decoration and possibly installation art.

Printmaking

Students are introduced to the reverse nature of printing through monoprinting, layering, colour blending of inks and the use of different printing surfaces.

Photography and digital media

Revision of digital camera techniques and photography theory continue across the year, with framing, editing and composition being the focus. Visual literacy is introduced as well as some basic layout skills.

Grade 7

The course covers concepts and practical skills of art and design, building upon students' learning from Grade 6. Contexts and themes studied include design, portraiture, sculptural forms and expressive painting. Students continue to be involved with personal and contextual research including analysis and responding to works of art. They also develop personal ideas, go through a creative process and perform personal reflections.

Drawing

Students further develop their use of line, tone, gradation and proportion. Time permitting, they may possibly explore soft media such as chalk, charcoal or pastel.

Painting

Students explore the use of tempera medium through a variety of techniques and processes and understand the creation and use of colours, expressive brush strokes and emphasis.

Sculpture

Students are introduced to, experiment and manipulate alternative sculptural media to create conceptual or representational art forms.

Photography and digital media

Students expand basic photography skills with emphasis on framing. Students may also develop layers and transformation in Photoshop and continue to revise visual literacy.

Grade 8

Grade 8 Art serves as a foundation for GCSE. Students are guided through units of study with emphasis placed upon a more developmental and personal approach to solving problems. Themes and contexts studied include still life and appropriation. Students are involved with personal and contextual research including analysis and responding to works of art. They also develop personal ideas, go through a creative process and perform personal reflections.

Drawing

Students continue to develop their observation skills, creating form with a view to conveying 3D qualities. The focus of drawing in Grade 8 is utilised to record ideas and for rendering more complex work.

Painting

Students further their knowledge of the vocabulary of colour, brushwork, subject matter and composition. Students select a personal painting style to explore.

Printmaking

The focus for students is on reductive printmaking, exploring of a variety of ways to develop a composition and how to manipulate the surface. Students also explore stencils and image transfers. These techniques are experimented with, should they decide to pursue it in a final project.

Photography and digital media

Students use photography and digital tools as a way to test and experiment with ideas for their painting composition. They are encouraged to explore arrangement, lighting, angle and proximity. Students may also wish to explore video mash-ups should they decide to.

Life Skills

Our unique Life Skills programme draws on the key components of Positive Education addressing the social and emotional development of students. Positive Education combines best practice teaching with the science of Positive Psychology. Our programme focuses on specific skills that assist students to strengthen their relationships, build positive emotions, enhance personal resilience, identify their strengths, evaluate their values, promote mindfulness and encourage a healthy lifestyle. Our Life Skills lessons provide systematic classroom instruction that enhances children's capacities to recognise and manage their emotions, understand and appreciate the perspectives of others, establish and attain goals, identify and solve problems, and use a variety of interpersonal skills.

Digital Citizenship is explicitly taught across all three year levels during Life Skills with Grade 6 and 7 completing their Digital Licences and Grade 8 undertaking the Project RockIT programme. Annually students will also complete a Well-being survey, the feedback from this survey assists us with developing our content for the following year.

Students in each grade level have one single period of Life Skills weekly. Lessons employ varied teaching methods including role-play, simulations, circle-time, group discussions, oral presentations and research. Topics are introduced at developmentally appropriate points and key areas such as digital citizenship, study skills and relationships are revisited to allow for deeper understanding with age-appropriate issues.

The Life Skills programme aims to facilitate maximum personal, social and emotional development of UWCSEA students during the Middle School years. The Life Skills curriculum is currently delivered by the Principal, Vice Principals, Heads of Grade and specialist teachers.

Study Skills

The Learning Support programme is designed to help students develop an active approach to their learning. Specific help is provided with concepts related to core academic subjects such as English and Humanities.

The Study Skills (Learning Support) curriculum includes:

- reading comprehension strategies
- spelling exercises
- development of note-taking skills
- fiction and nonfiction writing techniques
- cross-curricular vocabulary development
- memory strategies
- active listening skills
- reasoning and critical thinking
- revision skills

Organisation and self-help skills are also included in the programme:

- effective completion of homework
- time management
- setting realistic targets
- organising materials and equipment

Learning Support staff liaise with parents and subject teachers to build a clear picture of a student's learning needs. They are also qualified and trained to use a range of internationally standardised assessment materials, when additional information about a student's learning profile is needed. Learning support staff and parents then plan how best to support the student: this may take the form of specialist teaching, guidance or in-class support. At each stage, parents are consulted and involved. There are regular reviews and meetings to discuss progress and agree on targets. In order to reach their academic potential some students require short-term support whilst others may need longer term support.

Outdoor Education

The College offers a wealth of outdoor educational experiences and the Middle School students undertake many school trips as part of their education. Education in the outdoors is central to our College's philosophy.

We operate a policy of 'challenge of choice,' the principle referring to the participant's responsibility to choose the level of challenge in the learning experience. It is based on the belief that significant learning occurs when one pushes oneself out of a known 'comfort zone,' while at the same time recognising that each person's experience will be different. Students often gain a huge sense of personal satisfaction and achievement during these trips. They learn to rise to the challenge and work well with their peers.

Outdoor Education day

All students have an Outdoor Education day during the year, spending the majority of this day on the High Ropes course on campus where they develop practical rope work skills and focus on many different personal and group challenges.

Expeditions

Grade 6 students go on an expedition to Pulau Tioman in Malaysia, Grade 7 undertake a 1 star kayak training before their kayak expedition on Sibu Island in Malaysia while Grade 8 students spend 10 days in Chiang Mai, Thailand.

These challenging and fun expeditions provide invaluable learning experiences, and elements from these trips are drawn into the classroom across the academic curriculum. There are additional charges for these trips, outlined in the Information about fees. The trips are billed at the time the expedition runs.

School trips

There are opportunities to participate in optional expeditions during school holidays. Recent trips have included an adventure week in New Zealand, skiing and snowboarding in Verbier, Switzerland, a Humanities/Service trip to Vietnam, cultural trips to China and Spain, a History and Service (house building) trip to Cambodia and a trip to South Africa and Waterford Kamhlaba UWC of Southern Africa in Swaziland.

Additional curriculum information

Lockers

Lockers are available for Middle School students to store their books and sports equipment. Advisors distribute locks to students at the start of the school year.

Homework

Homework becomes an increasingly important and time-consuming part of student life in Middle School. The amount of time that any individual may take to complete a task will vary for many reasons, and all students are expected to complete their tasks to the best of their ability even if it takes a bit longer than anticipated. However, if your child is regularly spending considerably more or less time than necessary on homework, please intervene and contact the subject teacher by using the homework diary, or if it proves necessary, the Head of Grade, to attempt to determine the reasons for this.

The maximum amount of homework per week in Grade 6 is around five hours, though it is rarely that much. We expect a Grade 7 student to have about six hours a week and a Grade 8 student to have about seven hours each week. Students are also expected to read regularly.

Parents should try to ensure that each child has somewhere quiet and comfortable to do homework without distraction. Space to store books and files will be increasingly important. A student's home working environment can help develop good organisational practices and contribute to successful study.

Reports and assessments

Middle School students receive three sets of reports with grades per year, one of which contains teacher comments.

All reports and assessments are available to parents online in PDF printable format via the parent's online portal. Please visit the website and then log on to the Student Record System to view full details of a student's profile online, including attendance records and reports and assessments. There is one parent-teacher conference per grade each year.

Middle School academic structure (2018/2019*)

Principal.....	Peter Coombs
Vice Principal–Curriculum.....	Paul Brogden
Vice Principal–Pastoral.....	Ardene Mandziy

The Middle School is divided into departments with each department having a Head of Department (HoD) or teacher-in-charge.

Subject	Head of Department
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Languages

English.....	Angela Erickson
Chinese.....	Li Fang
Dutch.....	Hans Schellekens
French.....	Michele Pirson
Spanish.....	Velia Goberna
German.....	Wolfgang Oesch
EAL and AE.....	Yvonne Johnson
Humanities.....	Jo Wallace
Science.....	Elaine Chew
Design and Technology.....	Carl Waugh
Mathematics.....	Michael Jobe
Physical Education.....	Mike Little
Drama.....	Jonathan Mayhew
Music.....	Miles Tranter
Visual Arts.....	Frank Curkovic
Life Skills.....	Ardene Mandziy
Learning Support/Study Skills.....	Dan Forster
Outdoor Education.....	Oliver Sampson

**At the time of publication in April 2019, Heads of Department for the 2019/2020 school year have not been confirmed. Should you have any questions regarding a subject prior to August 2019, please contact the staff member listed here.*

Contact information for all staff can be found in the Staff Directory on the College website.