Welcome to Indian Creek Middle School!

The Middle School years are known to be a time of change for students, but at Indian Creek School, these are years of incredible growth where students learn to challenge themselves, stretch boundaries, try new things, build friendships, support each other, and make memories to last a lifetime along the way. Physically, socially, and emotionally, students go through a tremendous amount of development as they progress through these formative years. Our intention is to provide students with a wide variety of opportunities to discover what works for them and find out what doesn’t, what they might love to do, and what they might learn to do, – day after day and year after year until they emerge with a better sense of themselves and where they fit in the world at ICS and beyond.

This collective experience of new classes, new friends, new experiences, new teachers, more responsibility, more events, and ever more change can be daunting for a Middle School student. At Indian Creek we place great focus on creating a safe, inclusive, positive, supportive, and – yes – academically challenging environment where students can grow together and have a great time figuring it all out. When they leave eighth grade to enter high school, our Creekers are ready to thrive because of the experiences they have had in Middle School.

Our program consists of a community built on honesty and trust where the questions “Is it true? Is it kind? Is it necessary?” permeate social interactions. This culture allows students to take positive risks at a time when young people are not necessarily inclined to do so. Perhaps they will try a sport they never would have, join (or start!) a club that sounds interesting, or even sing on stage in a musical. We encourage kids to take healthy risks in a supportive environment where it’s ok to make and learn from mistakes. This is the recipe for having the courage to discover and pursue passions to extraordinary heights. The Indian Creek Middle School culture also encourages relationship-building not only between students, but also between teachers and students. Middle schoolers are inspired to advocate for themselves and others -and to engage with their teachers on a deeper level. Our faculty and staff partner with parents to form a group of caring adults to support each child through these years.

Academically, Middle School at ICS provides opportunities for students to pursue interests and challenge themselves, and to receive the support they need in the ways that they need it. Our teachers know each student. They will challenge them with opportunities in the maths and sciences; explore the world in Spanish or Latin (grade 8); have their thinking challenged through history, and learn to communicate about it in English. They will paint masterpieces and perform on stage. They will learn the value of physical fitness, competition, personal accountability, and the meaning of “team” in PE and sports. The classroom environment is enriched by a focus on outdoor education and experiential learning, which give students valuable opportunities to learn about themselves along the way. All this and more awaits a Creeker in Middle School.

Let’s get started!
Indian Creek Middle School students have dedicated classrooms and teachers for core academic subjects and devoted time to access the state-of-the-art Learning Lab and Academic Resource Center, science/STEAM labs, visual and performing arts facilities, athletic center/turf fields/tennis dome, and more. Middle School students have all the benefits of a specialized middle grades experience with the added benefits and resources of a Pre-K - Grade 12 campus. The Middle School schedule includes 45-minute to 60-minute blocks for year-long classes, X-block courses to explore academic passions as well as time for clubs, meetings, advisory time, and more. All Middle Grades students will take Learning Lab and Human Development classes. Middle School students have access to grade level-specific Learning for Life Global Online Academy courses, and students who are ready for higher level courses can challenge themselves with select courses from the Upper School course catalog.

ICS Middle School students will, by the end of grade 8, be ready for a challenging Upper School academic course-load and experience. The close-knit community of the ICS Middle School fits within the context of a spirited and connected all-school community, making the transition to the Upper School as simple as walking down the hall.
Middle School Course of Study Overview

Academic opportunities in Middle School help students develop a strong academic foundation, discover new concepts and ideas, and find interests and passions. Classes are meaningful and purposeful, with a strong focus on social and emotional learning. All students take an English, math, science, social studies, and world language class each year. Students are able to select fine arts, performing arts, and physical education electives.

### Middle School Course Progression

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<tr>
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<td>English 6</td>
<td>English 7</td>
<td>English 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Math</strong></td>
<td>Math 6</td>
<td>Algebraic Explorations</td>
<td>Pre-Algebra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pre-Algebra</td>
<td>Pre-Algebra</td>
<td>Algebra 1</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Geometry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Science</strong></td>
<td>Science 6 – Physical Science</td>
<td>Science 7 – Earth and Life Science</td>
<td>Science 8 – Environmental Science</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Social Studies</strong></td>
<td>History 6 – World History and Cultures</td>
<td>History 7 – History of Current Events</td>
<td>History 8 – US History</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>World Language</strong></td>
<td>6th Grade Spanish</td>
<td>7th Grade Spanish</td>
<td>8th Grade Spanish (2022-2023)</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Spanish 1</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Latin 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fine Arts</strong></td>
<td>Art 6</td>
<td>Art 7</td>
<td>Art 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Performing Arts</strong></td>
<td>Middle School Band</td>
<td>Middle School Band</td>
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<td><strong>Physical Education</strong></td>
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Fine Arts

Art 6
Through the use of the elements of art (line, form, color, value, texture, space, shape) and the principles of design (balance, movement, pattern, contrast, rhythm, and unity), as well as color theory, art history and artists, and cross-curricular integration, students work to become knowledgeable in how the world affects art expression and art affects the world. Compositions in 2D and creations in 3D artworks encourage students to find expression in a variety of media.

Art 7
Students create art projects that emphasize the elements of line, form, color, value, texture, space, shape and the principles of design - balance, movement, pattern, contrast, rhythm, and unity - to create harmonious compositions. Understanding and appreciation of self and others through artists, art history, culture and cross-curricular integration is emphasized. A wide variety of media and techniques, 2D and 3D work, create an active, unique learning experience for each student.

Art 8
Emphasizing artists and art history as inspirations for art projects, eighth grade students expand on their skills, knowledge of the elements of art and principles of design, to create 2D and 3D artworks and compositions. Students have the opportunity to make affinity choices for the creation of their artwork. The understanding and appreciation of self and others through art is an important aspect of creating personal art.
Performing Arts

Middle School Band

*Note: By audition only. Students provide their chosen instrument.*

This class covers a general historic timeline for various genres of music including contemporary and classical repertoire. Students perform representative pieces of music from many genres. Students work to extend their technical and musical abilities through individual and group instruction. Study of the basic elements of music theory and general musicianship will be the focus of this class through instrumental performance.

6, 7, 8

Middle School Chorus

This course helps to develop young student voices and knowledge of choral music by teaching the basics of vocal pedagogy: breathing, placement, and diction. Rhythmic and ear training are fundamental. Students also study the basic elements of music theory, including tempo, chord progression, and other musical terms. Students are exposed to a varied repertoire of choral literature, including multicultural and classical selections. There will be ample opportunity for group performance and individual vocal growth for beginners and singers who have had previous experience in a choir.

6, 7, 8

String Ensemble

*Note: By audition only. Students provide their chosen instrument.*

This class covers a general historic timeline for various genres of music including contemporary and classical string repertoire. Students perform representative pieces of music from these and other genres. Students extend their technical and musical abilities through individual and group instruction. Study of the basic elements of music theory and general musicianship are the focus of this class through instrumental performance.

6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12
English 6
English 6 provides students with a strong foundation in reading and writing building off the skills acquired in Lower School. Through novel studies, vocabulary work, and writing projects, students develop confidence as readers and writers and gain a strong foundation.

English 7
English 7 explores the fundamental elements of literature in-depth, while reinforcing writing skills. Through close readings and discussions of novels and short stories, students work toward thinking more critically about literature and clearly articulating their ideas. Major writing projects include a fictional story, a speech, and a persuasive essay.

English 8
English 8 reinforces students’ reading skills while also building on their writing skills Students experience higher expectations in terms of students’ independence, their writing’s length, and sophistication. By studying grammar and vocabulary, students learn more about their language to use it more effectively. Major writing projects include a personal narrative and a position paper.
History 6: World History and Cultures
What does it mean to be human? How does one understand and respect different cultures? From the sands of Arabia to the jungles of South America, students learn how ancient civilizations began and explore religions around the world. This course is focused on how different thoughts and perspectives make up our global society and defines what it means to be a global citizen. Through project-based learning, students develop their understanding of historical context, causation, correlation, and analytical skills.

History 7: History of Current Events
Note: Due to the change in history sequence, students in grades 7 and 8 will take this course for the 2021-22 school year.
This course examines domestic and international current events and asks the questions of how and why they occurred. Students explore current events through themes on Immigration, War on Terror, Human Rights, and Natural Disasters. Students learn the major historical events that created the world we live in today and how history continues to shape world relations. Through this exploration, students engage with primary and secondary source material, learn to test claims, and make defensible arguments.
7, 8 (2021-22)

History 8: US History
Note: Due to the change in history sequence, this course will not be offered in the 21-22 school year. Students in Grade 8 will take History of Current Events for the 2021-22 school year.
This course examines what it means to be an active and engaged citizen within the United States. Students journey through a thematic experience of US History from colonization to the present in a quest to understand the importance of citizenship. Through this exploration, students build upon the skills developed in 6th and 7th grade but also learn how to engage with research databases to find credible sources. They complete a culminating research project.
8 (2022-23)
In the Learning Lab, students develop and improve the skills and strategies necessary for effective learning: time management, organization (digital and physical), study techniques, note taking, test/quiz taking, sustaining focus/attention, stress management, and self-care. As a result, ICS students are familiar with how they learn best and are effective in advocating for themselves and managing their own time and academic progress.

**Middle School Learning Skills Class**

Students take a Learning Skills class that meets once every two weeks in which they are provided with direct instruction on learning skills not typically taught in a traditional classroom but are vital to academic success. These skill sets include specific strategies to help develop student’s executive functioning skill sets such as time management, organization, note-taking, digital citizenship, sustained focus, and more. To grow as independent learners, lessons will also cover study and research skills, organization structures, and self-management techniques. The Learning Skills curriculum is closely coordinated with students’ experience in Advisory, Human Development, and in their academic courses.

**Learning Support Program: Personalized Learning Skills Support with a Learning Coach**

ICS students in Grade 6 - 12 have the option to work individually with a Learning Lab coach on a regular basis for learning support and skill/strategy development. Students sign up for Learning Support sessions by semester on a daily, twice weekly, or weekly basis. The Learning Support Program emphasizes the development and/or improvement of general organizational skills, planning, prioritizing, task initiation, and time management. The goal of the Learning Support program is to help students develop the skills and strategies they need to be effective, independent learners. Specific fees apply. Students signing up for the five-day per week Learning Support program take one elective per year instead of two.
Math 6
Sixth grade math focuses on four critical areas: ratios, number systems, statistics, and expressions/equations. Students work to find connections between ratios and rates to whole number multiplication and division. Students continue to explore their operational understanding of fractions and extend the notion of numbers to the system of rational numbers, including negatives. Students expand their abilities to write, interpret, and use algebraic expressions and equations while developing an understanding of statistical thinking.

Algebraic Explorations
Algebraic Explorations introduces some Pre-Algebra topics while reviewing operations with real numbers (fractions, decimals, and integers) to make sure students have a solid foundation in the fundamentals as they approach Pre-Algebra and Algebra. Ratios, proportional reasoning, and percent are also areas of major emphasis along with simplifying algebraic expressions and solving equations and inequalities. Geometry concepts are reviewed and further developed, including area, surface area, and volume.

Pre-Algebra
This class establishes fundamentals necessary for success in Algebra I by allowing time for mastery. Topics include powers, roots, using properties to simplify/evaluate expressions, solving equations and inequalities, solving systems of equations, linear functions, geometric transformations, and volume/surface area.

Algebra 1
Algebra 1 covers the basic skills of algebra, including expressions, equations, and inequalities, as well as exponents, polynomials, and proportions. The focus is on three function families: linear, exponential, and quadratic. Students learn to graph linear equations, solve systems of linear equations, and use graphs, equations, and inequalities to solve problems. Multiplying and factoring polynomials lay the foundation for solving quadratic equations. Students learn to simplify, add, subtract, multiply, and divide radical expressions and solve radical equations.

Geometry
This course uses the context of geometric figures to teach logical reasoning. Similarity, congruence, special line and angle relationships, special segments, trigonometric ratios, coordinate geometry, constructions, plane figures, and 3D figures are analyzed. Five different kinds of proofs are developed throughout the course. Students use geometry software to explore, design, and prove truths about geometric figures and relationships.
Physical Education

The Physical Education program in grades 6-8 provides an environment in which students enjoy actively participating with peers in pursuit of a lifetime of personal fitness. Personal fitness, teamwork, and cooperation are achieved through progressive challenges, teamwork, games, and team activities where the primary emphasis is active participation, not skill and drill. The course emphasizes the development of basic motor skills that allow participation in variety of physical activities. Student learning does not stop in the classroom as there is a blended learning component of physical education. Through CREEKnet, students enhance their learning and understanding of health-related topics and the benefits of activities we offer during class.

6, 7, 8
Science 6: Physical Science
Science 6 provides an overview of topics and concepts in physical science. The goal of Science 6 is to engage students in scientific thinking and reasoning as they expand their understanding of important physical science topics. Through lab experiences and hands-on investigations, students explore topics such as atoms, the Periodic Table of Elements, the laws of motion, states of matter, and energy.

Science 7: Earth and Life Science
Science 7 provides an overview of topics and concepts in earth and life science. The goal of Science 7 is to deepen students understanding of scientific thinking and reasoning through hands-on investigations, lab experiences, and collaborative projects. Students explore topics such as geologic history, living systems, cell biology, and organisms and their environment. Students participate in an in-depth study of the human body and genetics.

Science 8: Environmental Science
This course on environmental science is based on real, current, and relevant content that puts the issues we currently face, such as extinction, urbanization, and global climate change, at the forefront. Students examine units on Ecology and Biodiversity, Humans and their Environment, Earth’s Resources, and Sustainability. Students analyze data from real-world sources that highlight pertinent subjects. This class looks at the impact of human population and technology on ecological systems and the interrelationship of these systems to each other.
World Languages: Latin

Latin 1
Students are introduced to the classical world and acquire the fundamentals of Latin grammar and a basic vocabulary. They learn the cases of nouns and the conjugations and tenses of verbs. Reading and translation are emphasized over the spoken language. A study of Roman culture and history are also included. There is also emphasis on the influence of Latin on the development of the English language where students acquire a solid foundation in the derivation of English words from Latin roots, prefixes, and suffixes. The Text: Cambridge Latin Series, both years I & II are used.

World Languages: Spanish

6th Grade Spanish
Students communicate orally and in writing in a culturally appropriate manner about topics related to daily life. They gain the ability to interpret basic information when listening and reading. Vocabulary and basic grammatical structures are taught within the context of these familiar topics. Hispanic culture is embedded throughout the course. Students communicate in spontaneous spoken conversations on familiar topics using a variety of practiced or memorized words, phrases, simple sentences, and questions. Classes are driven by project-based learning throughout the year.

7th Grade Spanish
This course includes a more in-depth study of grammar concepts and an expanded vocabulary. Students in this class have demonstrated strength in listening, reading comprehension, verbal communication, and writing skills. Students continue to build competency in the four language skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) in order to talk about themselves, their interests, their feelings, and everyday life. By the end of the year, students will have completed 2/3 of Spanish 1. Classes will be driven by project-based learning.

Spanish 1
Enrollment in this course is based on teacher’s recommendation.
Language study at Indian Creek begins with communication. Students actively converse in Spanish on a variety of topics, presenting information, expressing opinions, and sharing ideas. Students in this class have demonstrated strength in listening, reading comprehension, verbal communication, and writing skills. They interpret written materials as well and learn the fundamentals of vocabulary and grammar that allow them to express themselves in writing and interpreting information when listening and reading. Classes are driven
by project-based learning throughout the year. This path is recommended for students who have consistently demonstrated a high level of proficiency an opportunity to participate in fast-paced course.

7, 8

**Spanish 2**

*Prerequisite: Spanish 1*

This course builds on the elements mastered in Spanish to increase students’ ability to communicate in oral and written Spanish. Students review grammar rules and structures and then study the use of the past tenses including the preterit and imperfect. Students use a variety of authentic materials and create and perform their own dialogues. They also learn about the customs and artifacts of Spanish-speaking countries. Classes are driven by project-based learning throughout the year.

8
Academic Advising

Starting in Grade 6, students are paired with an advisor, who knows and supports each of their advisees and families on their ICS Middle School journey. Advisors are the first point of contact for students and families, and the first layer in our student support network. Advisors partner with teachers, the Middle School administrative team, and with parents/guardians at home in supporting their advisees.

Academic Honesty

All students are expected to live up to the highest standards of academic honesty as part of their growth into adults who value integrity. Cheating on a test or quiz or plagiarism in any manner will result in consequences that may include a reduction in grade, a zero on the work, and even suspension or expulsion.

Plagiarism consists of the following behaviors:

- Copying word for word or almost word for word from someone else’s published or unpublished work. This includes everything from downloading material from the Internet and claiming it is your own work to copying someone’s homework.
- Copying someone else’s ideas without giving credit. Accidental plagiarism is still plagiarism. If you have any questions about plagiarism, consult a teacher.

Grading Policies

Indian Creek School uses CREEKnet as the learning management platform to house all student data including contact information, schedules, grades, and transcripts. CREEKnet provides a portal for students and parents to access current grades for students. This portal makes grades accessible to individual students and parents. Middle School will report grades at the conclusion of quarters and semesters for all students.

In general, grades will be recorded in categories that may include:

- Homework (work assigned to be completed outside of class)
- Assignments (shorter work as part of a lesson or unit)
- Projects (individual or group work, presentations)
- Quizzes (formative assessments in various forms)
- Tests (summative assessments in various forms)
- Classwork and Participation* (such as a discussion or lab)
Individual teachers will use the categories appropriate for the class and class work. Teachers use their discretion to decide which of the above categories to use and the discretion to decide the value and weight for assignments.

Students earn grades of A through F, modified by pluses and minuses.

### Grading Scale

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<th>Grade</th>
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<tr>
<td>A+</td>
<td>90-100</td>
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<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>89-88</td>
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<td>B+</td>
<td>87-86</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>85-84</td>
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<td>C+</td>
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<td>C</td>
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<td>D+</td>
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<td>D</td>
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<td>F</td>
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### Homework Policies

At ICS, work is divided into "synchronous" and "asynchronous" activities. Synchronous work is done together with classmates and teachers (direct teacher instruction, class discussion, group work, etc.). Asynchronous work is done by students independently, either during the class period or as homework. In addition to students' work during the 40 to 60-minute class periods, they may be assigned up to 15-20 minutes of asynchronous work to be completed outside of class. Additional work may not be assigned on days when classes drop. This means a maximum of 60-70 minutes of work per day when a class meets.

Adequate notice of assignments and timely feedback on student work is essential to good teaching practice. We expect our students to prepare in advance and complete work on time and understand the importance of our faculty modelling this respect for learning as well. Teachers follow these guidelines regarding assignments:

- **Daily Homework** (ex: nightly math problems, a written paragraph, a few reading questions): Daily homework assignments will be posted no later than 6:00 p.m. the evening they are assigned and returned to students (with grades posted to CREEKnet) within two business days of the due date. Teachers expect students to turn in their assignments by the assigned due date and time.
- **Quizzes, multi-day assignments, smaller assessments** (ex: reading quiz, math quiz, squares of numbers, periodic elements, etc.): These types of assignments must be posted to CREEKnet three days
in advance of the due date and will be graded and returned to students (with grades posted to CREEKnet) within 2 business days of the due date.

- Larger Assessments and Projects (lab reports, multi-page papers, tests/exams): Major assignments should be posted to CREEKnet at least a week in advance of the due date and will be graded and returned to students (with grades posted on CREEKnet) within one week. Note: There are some exceptions to this (much longer papers, lab reports, etc.).

The School recognizes that students are busy and that they must schedule homework time in combination with myriad activities and events. Any work for the weekend follows the same guidelines with teachers posting prior to 6:00 p.m. Friday for any work due Monday. We hope that this allows students to plan their weekends and schedule the necessary “down time” from academic work. For extended vacations such as winter and spring breaks, teachers do not post work once the vacation has begun.

Middle School Schedule

Students can take up to seven classes per semester. In addition to this core set of classes are X-blocks. During these blocks, students meet with their advisories, meet in grade levels, take Human Development, experience the Learning Lab and Learning Skills class, and more.

Class Length and Frequency

Classes in the middle school schedule meet for a full year or for a semester. Classes meet either four, five, or six times in a day, depending on the day of the week. Five-day-per-week classes meet for forty minutes and three and four days-per-week classes meet for sixty minutes.

Each day contains a fifty-five-minute lunch period where middle school students eat and have recess. Play in the middle of the day is important for this age group. The last hour of the day (2:30 to 3:30 p.m.) on Monday and Friday consists of clubs and Learning Support classes. Tuesday through Thursday this hour is used for clubs or team sports. After 3:30 p.m. students are dismissed to either after-care or home.