

**MILL VALLEY MIDDLE SCHOOL**  
**2012 - 2013 Elective Descriptions**

In addition to the Art or Music elective twice a week, we offer Spanish, French, or Technology classes as course electives at the middle school. Parents and students should read the class descriptions and make choices that they feel would be most appropriate for their child. Students will be enrolled in **ONE** Foreign Language, Technology, **or** Student Aide elective, **and ONE** Art **or** Music elective. Please number your choices #1 and #2 on the Elective Class Placement Form for each section.

**CHOOSE ONE:**

**Spanish and French 1 and 2** - These classes are communication-based and aimed at the development of the four skills of language learning: listening, speaking, reading and writing. Frequent oral work in pairs and small groups will be used to reinforce acquisition of the new language. Homework is assigned most days and there will be projects that will be completed outside of class. Students who successfully complete Spanish 1/French 1 in 7<sup>th</sup> grade will proceed to Spanish 2/French 2 in 8<sup>th</sup> grade. This program is designed so that students who successfully complete the 2-year course of study here are eligible to enter the second year of Spanish or French as high school freshmen.

**Mandarin I** - The World Languages Department of MVMS is exploring the possibility of offering a first year Mandarin course at MVMS next year. This will be a beginning level course that introduces Mandarin language use along with aspects of Chinese culture. Students will develop beginning skills in listening, speaking, reading, and writing. This class will be open to 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders who are interested in learning Mandarin. Our ability to offer this class will be dependent on student interest. We will need a minimum of 26-28 students to be able to offer this course.

**Technology I** - Technology I is for 7<sup>th</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup> grade students who have not taken the introductory Technology Skills class offered through our sixth grade Wheel program. This is a hands-on, project-base curriculum that includes word processing, digital story telling, keyboarding, photography, and digital illustration. Students will also become effective users of applications such as Keystone, iMovie, Photoshop and others.

**Technology II and III** - Technology II or III is for students who are interested in expanding the technology skills introduced in the sixth grade technology Wheel elective, in a project-based learning environment. Students will work with desktop publishing, digital image editing and manipulation, animation, video production and web design. Students who take Technology II must have taken the Technology I in the sixth grade Wheel elective as a prerequisite. Students who take Technology III must have taken Technology II as a pre-requisite. Space is limited in these electives.

**Student Aide** - This elective is for students who are interested in assisting in the office, the library, or in a classroom. Duties may include answering phones, delivering messages, shelving books, assisting a teacher in a classroom or helping other students; specific duties will be determined based on placement. Counselors will meet with interested students to determine the best placement for each student. There may be some study time available during this elective.

**CHOOSE ONE:**

**Art -**

**Seventh grade art** concentrates on the creative exploration of the elements of art: color, form, line, value, shape, space and texture. Students also learn the principles of design: balance, contrast, rhythm, unity, emphasis, pattern and movement. Students apply the elements and principles as they further explore a variety of media and techniques and expand upon knowledge gained from the K-6 art program.

**Eighth grade art** is based on in-depth studio based art projects. Students use their knowledge of art principles to create, invent, experiment, take risks and solve artistic problems. Students study art history and aesthetics while expressing themselves in ceramics, printmaking with the printing press, painting, drawing, sculpture and photography.

**Chorus** - Choral music students will develop sight-reading and ear training skills, proper vocal technique, and basic musical elements such as phrasing, dynamics, diction, and artistic expression. A variety of literature in multiple languages, styles, and eras will be chosen at the teacher's discretion. Repertoire will be challenging, but appropriate to the group's ability level. Although this is a one-year course, it is most successful for students (and the program) with a multi-year commitment (6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 8<sup>th</sup> grade). This course includes public performances outside of school hours (calendar to be given at the beginning of the school year). Space is limited for this elective.

**\*Intermediate Band/ Advanced Band** - Intermediate and Advanced Band are open to any student who has at least 1 year of playing experience. Both bands will play a variety of music including Jazz, Latin, Rock and Classical. You will also study music theory, history, and the fundamentals of playing an instrument. Each band will consist of various wind instruments, three percussionists, one bass player, one guitarist, and one pianist. The ability of the student and instrumentation of each ensemble will determine where a student is placed. There will be several performances during the school year. *(Students interested in beginning an instrument may join the Beginning Band)*

**\*Beginning Band** - *Students interested in beginning a band instrument for the first time will need to take Beginning Band (open to all 5<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> graders). This is a non-graded class for first year music students interested in playing a wind or percussion instrument. The rehearsals are on Wednesday's 2:15-3:10 and before school once a week from 7:30- 8:10 a.m. (sax- Monday; brass- Tuesday; flute- Wednesday; clarinet- Thursday; percussion- Friday). **Because the Beginning Band does not rehearse during regular school hours, it will not fulfill the elective requirement for middle school students. It is suggested that students sign up for Art as their elective during the school day. Please contact Mr. Carnahan at the start of the school year for more information on how to sign-up for this class.** There will be two performances during the school year.*

**\*Advanced Percussion Ensemble** - Percussion Ensemble is open to all percussion students with at least 1 year of playing experience. Students will learn to read sheet music and play a variety of percussion instruments, including the piano. While there will be some instruction time spent on the drum set, it will not be a focus of the class. There will be several performances during the school year. *(First year music students interested in learning to play the drums may sign up for the Beginning Band.)*

**\*Beginning Guitar** - Beginning Guitar is open to all MVMS students with little to no experience playing the guitar. Students will learn to play chords, read sheet music (no tabs), and the fundamentals of playing guitar. Students must provide their own six-string acoustic guitar for class (no electric guitars will be used in class, although they may be used at home). This class also covers the history of Rock and Roll and lineage of influential guitarists. There will be two performances during the school year. Space is limited for this elective.

**\*Advanced Guitar** - Advanced Guitar is open to all advanced/experienced guitar students comfortable with reading standard notation and rhythms. Students will learn to play chords, improvise, read sheet music (no tabs), and the fundamentals of playing guitar. Students must provide their own six-string acoustic guitar for class (no electric guitars will be used in class, although they may be used at home). There will be two performances during the school year. Space is limited in this elective. If you have any question about whether you are the Advanced Guitar level or not, please contact Mr. Carnahan.

**\*Orchestra** - Orchestra is open to all students with at least one year of previous instruction on violin, viola, cello or bass. In this class students learn and perform a variety of music, explore music theory, history, cover concepts of musicality and string sound, develop sight reading, and learn how to work

together and rehearse as a string orchestra. This course includes public performances outside of school hours (calendar to be given at the beginning of the school year).

**\*All instrument classes require 30 minutes of practice per day (as homework) and the student is responsible for transporting his/her instrument between home and school.**