

**MILL VALLEY MIDDLE SCHOOL**  
**2015-2016 SIXTH GRADE ELECTIVE DESCRIPTIONS**

*Students choose **ONE** of the following courses as their sixth grade elective that will share a period with PE at middle school. Each of the elective courses below meets twice a week, alternating with their PE class that also meets twice a week. All other courses at the middle school meet four times per week (because of our rolling schedule).*

**Art:** Sixth grade art is a studio centered visual arts course giving students a wide breadth of experiences. Art making and creative self-expression are core to 6<sup>th</sup> grade curriculum. Aesthetics, art history, and art criticism are integrated into their creative process. Students have opportunities to work with a variety of materials and media in both two and three-dimensional formats. Students will have the opportunity to experience ceramics, printmaking, drawing, and painting, among other mediums.

**Chorus:** Chorus is open to 6<sup>th</sup> graders who like to sing and are willing to commit to a group performance effort. Participation in elementary school chorus is helpful, but not required to join the MVMS Choral Program. Students will learn choral music skills including diction, phrasing, dynamics, and producing a beautiful tone. Part-singing and sight-reading are also emphasized. A variety of music in multiple languages and styles will be chosen at the conductor's discretion. Music will be challenging, but appropriate to the group's ability level. 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.

**World Music Ensemble:** This elective is open to students who want to explore music from many cultures through percussion and voice. While a major component of this class will focus on the continued study of West African drums, students will also branch out into the traditions of percussion from other indigenous cultures around the world, as well as collaborating with the choral program vocally, participating in the all-choir pieces at MVMS Choral Concerts.

**\*Orchestra:** Orchestra is open to all 6<sup>th</sup> graders with at least one year of previous instruction on violin, viola, cello, or bass. In this class we 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). At the end of the 6<sup>th</sup> grade year, students who continue with orchestra will be placed in the Advanced 7<sup>th</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> grade orchestra class.

**\*Beginning Strings (Orchestra)** - Students with no prior instrumental experience on a stringed instrument can learn the rudiments of playing the violin, viola or cello. Note reading and instrument technique are learned side by side. There is a string method book that accompanies the course as well as supplementary materials from the teacher. There will be two informal performances in the winter and spring semester. Students will perform music of various styles such as folk, classical and pop. Students at the end of a year of study may be eligible to perform with the middle school orchestras if enough skill is developed. This course may be repeated. Daily practice is required.

**\*Band:** Band is open to any student who has had at least one year of instrument experience. This class is designed to develop the musical skills of the student, foster an appreciation for music, promote teamwork, and encourage all students to strive for musical excellence. There will be several performances during the school year. *Students interested in beginning an instrument should contact Mr. Carnahan directly at [ccarnahan@mvschools.org](mailto:ccarnahan@mvschools.org).*

**Music Technology 1:** This course is designed to introduce students to the world of digital audio recording. By using the tools of digital recording, the students will be able to create their own music compositions and arrangements to produce audio recordings. The course will explore audio recording, composition, music production and sound engineering using programs such as Garage Band, iMovie and iTrack. (max 50 students)

**\*Percussion Ensemble:** Percussion Ensemble is open to all percussion students with at least one year of instrument/percussion 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 the focus of the class. There will be several performances during the school year.

**\*Beginning Guitar:** 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 in this elective.

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