

MILL VALLEY MIDDLE SCHOOL
2016-2017 7th / 8th Grade Elective Descriptions

Seventh and eighth grade students are able to choose two different electives in their course schedule. In addition to the Art or Music electives twice a week, we offer Spanish, French, Technology, Global Citizenship, and Drama electives that meet four times per week. Parents and students should read the class descriptions and decide which elective choices would be most appropriate. Students will be enrolled in **ONE** Art or Music elective **and** **ONE** Foreign Language, Technology, Global Citizenship, or Drama elective. Please number your choices 1, 2, and 3 for each section on the Elective Class Placement Form. Space is limited in many electives, and some require pre-requisites or a minimum GPA, please read each description carefully.

CHOOSE ONE FROM THE FOLLOWING ART OR MUSIC OPTIONS:

ART

Art: 7th Grade 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.

Art: 8th Grade 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, painting, drawing, and sculpture.

MUSIC

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 (6th, 7th, and 8th grade). This course includes public performances outside of school hours (calendar to be given at the beginning of the school year).

World Music Ensemble: This elective is taught by Anna Stearns and 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 and participating in the all-choir pieces at MVMS Choral Concerts.

***Intermediate Band:** Intermediate Band is open to all woodwind, brass and percussion students with at least **one year** of instrumental 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.*

***Advanced Band - Wind Ensemble:** Wind Ensemble is open to all woodwind, brass and percussion student with at least **2 years** of playing 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 excellence. There will be several performances during the school year. *Students interested in beginning an instrument should contact Mr. Carnahan directly at*

***Beginning Guitar:** Beginning Guitar is open to all MVMS students interested in 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 only open to students who have successfully completed the Beginning Guitar class. Students will learn to play chords, improvise, read sheet music, read tabs, and the fundamentals of playing guitar. Students need to 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 multiple performances during the school year.

Music Tech 1:

Music Tech 1 is a music appreciation class that teaches both audio recording and composition. For the first project, students will use iMovie to film a movie trailer and then use Garage Band to compose and record music to accompany it. For the second project, students will learn to compose and record a pop/rock song using Garage Band. For the final project, students will film a commercial using iMovie and then use Garage Band to compose and record a jingle to accompany it. No prior musical experience is required. (max 50 students)

Music Tech 2:

This course is a continuation of Music Tech 1 with an emphasis on recording and live sound. For the first project, students will compose and record a pop/rock song using Garage Band. For the second project, students will record a "live" band playing their song and will learn to mix using the app MultiTrack DAW. For the final project, students will have their songs performed in a live concert and will learn how to run a sound check and work a sound board. Prerequisite- Music Tech 1 (max 30 students). This class is open to 7th and 8th grade students who have successfully completed Music Tech 1.

***Orchestra / Beginning Strings** - 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.

***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. Students will be placed according to their skill level. This course includes public performances outside of school hours (calendar to be given at the beginning of the school year).

***All instrument classes require 20 minutes of practice per day (as homework) and the student is responsible for transporting his/her instrument between home and school.**

CHOOSE ONE FROM THE FOLLOWING ELECTIVE OPTIONS:

Spanish and French are two-year programs. Upon successful completion of Spanish 1 or French 1 (7thGrade) *and* Spanish 2 or French 2 (8thGrade), students will skip the first year of high school-level Spanish or French in the Tamalpais High School District. Students who take a language class must have at least a 2.5 GPA overall. A student must earn a C - or better to continue with the second year of Spanish or French in 8th grade.

Spanish 1 or French 1, 7thGrade: This is a full-year communication-based class. It aims to build proficiency in the four skills of language learning: listening, speaking, reading and writing. Homework is assigned up to three days per week and there may be projects to be completed outside of class. Students will explore language and cultures through music, storytelling, reading, puppetry, games and technology.

Spanish 2 or French 2, 8th Grade: This full-year class is a continuation of Spanish 1 or French 1 and each focuses on expanding vocabulary, developing fluency and creating a deeper understanding of language and diverse cultures. Homework is assigned up to three days per week and there may be projects completed outside of class.

TECH 2 – 7th Grade: Tech 2 is an advanced technology course with a STEAM focus (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Mathematics). The course is made of two related but separate parts: Tech 2 Lab and Tech 2 Engineering. Each trimester students rotate between these two sections with an equal amount of time in each.

Tech 2 Lab builds on the Tech portion of the sixth grade Wheel class. Areas of focus include increased mastery of Internet navigation and storage, expansion of skills in applications students already know, and exposure to new applications. Tech 2 Lab also fosters a great deal of independence and problem solving skills. This is a course that broadly covers a range of topics especially those that enhance learning students do in other classes. Examples of applications and topics students will use and explore include, but aren't limited to, word processing, spreadsheets, coding, Google Docs, iMovie, GarageBand, and SketchUp.

Tech 2 Engineering students work collaboratively in teams to design, build, test and refine solutions to a variety of challenges. Students are engaged for much of the year on building and programming robots made with LEGO EV3 software and hardware to develop their understanding of engineering and programming concepts. There is an emphasis on critical thinking and working cooperatively in a team.

TECH 3 – 8th Grade: Tech 3 builds upon the STEAM concepts worked on in Tech 2. Like Tech 2, Tech 3 consists of two sections: Tech 3 Lab and Tech 3 Engineering. On some projects the two sections will combine into one larger group.

Tech 3 Lab students work on digital storytelling, digital art, and visual communication projects. Projects in Tech 3 Lab often use more than one application and often include internet research, note-taking, discussion, and writing. Students will use their digital storytelling skills in off site projects with the Redwoods Retirement Community and the MVSD elementary schools. Students will have opportunities to extend their existing skills and personal interests with self-designed projects using technology. Examples of applications students will use and explore include, but aren't limited to, iMovie, GarageBand, Photoshop, Illustrator.

Tech 3 Engineering students will be making, tinkering and and engineering. They will be given opportunities to design, experiment, build and invent to solve a problem. They will work individually and in collaborative groups to work through the design process and reflect on the process. They will also explore simple machines, basic circuitry and physical

computing by building Rube Goldberg Machines, designing video games and other individually designed projects.

Global Citizenship - 7th & 8th Grade: In this elective, students will have the opportunity to study current events and delve deeper into the important issues that impact our world today. Students will explore the rights, privileges, and responsibilities of global citizenship. Students will research topics that impact people on a local as well as a global level, exposing various viewpoints. Students will learn the art of persuasion, participate in debates, and develop projects to make a positive impact on our world community.

Drama – 7th Grade: The first trimester focuses on creating a supportive, cohesive ensemble. Drama exercises and activities will focus on overcoming fear/nervousness, audience awareness and inclusiveness, building trust in oneself and fellow actors. Voice techniques (speed, projection, diction, enunciation), cooperative group strategies, and line memorization methods are introduced and practiced throughout this trimester. The second trimester includes a more in depth study of improvisation, individual character study, taking stage direction and giving focus. Some abridged works of Shakespeare are included in this trimester, as well as short one-act plays. Different play genres are explored: comedy, rhyming plays, and drama. The third trimester includes all that was covered in the first two trimesters with the final goal of play performance.

Drama – 8th Grade: Through drama exercises and activities, the first trimester will focus on creating a strong, supportive team of performers. With this new cohesive ensemble, you will delve into theater work and technique, including stage picture, stage directions, and stage presence. You will learn how to convey status, use your voice and body to create strong characters, and to push your imagination to think and react on your feet. In this course, you will work closely with your peers to establish goals, choose from a variety of scripts to perform, and design and direct your own skits. Some popular units are pantomiming presentations, character analysis, lip sync battles, improvisation exercises, and mini-productions for all grade levels and your families.

PLEASE NOTE:

- **Students who have an IEP are scheduled for an Academic Support period instead of one of the electives from the second category.**
- **Electives have a limited space available in them as most are offered as a single section. Please select three choices to ensure you are placed in one of your choices.**
- **Students who would like to work as an Office Aide or Teacher's Aide instead of one of the above electives OR Art or Music should mark the box on the registration form and make an appointment to meet with their counselor to determine this elective choice.**