



2026-27  
Middle School  
*Course of Study*





## Mission Statement

Guided by Quaker principles, Friends Academy educates our students to discover and develop the best of who they are and who they can become.

## Belief Statement

At Friends Academy, we achieve educational excellence by committing to the highest standards of learning and living.

Our diverse and welcoming community is strengthened by our Quaker values, which empower our students to inquire, reflect, and engage in their classrooms, their neighborhoods, and in the world.

Because when we inspire students to learn and live with purpose, they can achieve greatness without sacrificing goodness.

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# Friends Academy Middle School

## Course of Study 2026-2027

Welcome to the 2026-2027 Friends Academy Middle School Course of Study. The course book serves as a guide for your child's four years of Middle School at Friends Academy.

Education at Friends Academy is a process of seeking truth and deepening our awareness, which demands ongoing reflection within a community of diverse thought and perspective. We believe in the innate goodness of each member of our community. We value every perspective and experience, and encourage their discovery and exploration by both the individual and the community to achieve greater understanding.

As a student-centered Quaker school, we support students through the process of becoming more active questioners who are increasingly responsible for their learning and for their world. We seek to inspire deep inquiry that fosters discernment, good judgment, and ethical action. As learning happens when students actively construct ideas and test approaches, "meeting" in the classroom promotes a culture that honors "meaning-making," individual and shared. The Quaker adage "Let your Life Speak" spurs our Upper School graduates to lead purposeful lives of integrity and service.

Friends Academy is committed to developing a diverse community whose members are respectful, responsible, reflective, open-minded, and creative in the pursuit of excellence. Students are challenged to think analytically and independently and to strive for spiritual awareness, emotional well-being, and physical health. As a community, we are committed to understanding and honoring Quaker testimonies of integrity, simplicity, patience, moderation, peaceful resolution of conflict, and service within and beyond the school community.

# Academic Requirements

We expect students to fully engage in their studies and complete all course work successfully. Failure to do so may lead to required academic support, summer work, or dismissal from Friends Academy. *We do not rank in class, nor do we compute grade point averages.*

## Quantitative and Qualitative Definition of Grades

|                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|----------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>A+ (97-100%)</b>  | Performance demonstrating excellent understanding                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| <b>A (93-96%)</b>    | and application of concepts, and high skill level,                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| <b>A- (90-92%)</b>   | thorough assimilation of detail, originality of thought, and keen insight into the subject.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| <b>B+ (87-89%)</b>   | Performance demonstrating good understanding                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| <b>B (83-86%)</b>    | and application of concepts, good acquisition of skills,                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| <b>B- (80-82%)</b>   | accurate application of details, and some original insight into the subject.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| <b>C+ (77-79%)</b>   | Performance demonstrating basic understanding                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| <b>C (73-76%)</b>    | of the fundamental concepts of the subject and a                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| <b>C- (70-72%)</b>   | consistent attempt to apply the details and skills taught. In spite of occasional conceptual misunderstanding, or flawed or incomplete knowledge, the performance indicates satisfactory preparation to advance to the next level.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| <b>D (65-69%)</b>    | Performance demonstrating minimal understanding of the fundamental concepts and a partial acquisition of the details and skills taught.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| <b>F (below 65%)</b> | Performance that fails to demonstrate understanding of the fundamental concepts of the subject and/or performance that indicates a pronounced lack of knowledge or skill. Achievement is inadequate to allow the student to advance to the next level. Students who earn an F must complete a course again in some acceptable form.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| <b>INC</b>           | A grade of INC (incomplete) is applied when graded work has not been turned in by a student by the end of a given marking period. The teacher and student, in consultation with the Middle School Principal, will determine a revised deadline for completing the work. An incomplete will remain on the transcript until the work is turned in. Once the work is turned in, the teacher will calculate the grade for the course, and the incomplete will be changed. If a student does not complete the work within the expected time, a failing grade will be assigned to the missing work. |
| <b>PAS</b>           | Indicates a “passing” or “having participated” grade.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |

# Course Descriptions

## English

The English Department's primary goals include developing in our students a love of reading and writing and the ability to think critically, read thoughtfully, listen intelligently, and communicate effectively. In Middle School, purposeful and meaningful connections are made with the ultimate goal of real-world transference.

### English 5

English 5 interconnects several components: reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Annotation, grammar, and word study are woven into all aspects of the curriculum. Through guided reading, students are taught and encouraged to use strategies that lead to improved comprehension and a deeper connection with the text. Ample time is provided for students to practice these strategies and to have meaningful discussions with their peers. Literature selections vary in genre, and writing assignments are designed to mirror the social development and emotional understanding of fifth-grade students. Most literary themes focus on the student as an individual with community connections – especially family and friends – and the importance of place and time in our lives. Writing includes memoir, personal narrative, imaginative storytelling, and literary response. Students write frequently in their writing journals, and often, these entries become the inspiration for longer pieces involving all phases of the writing process.

### English 6

English 6 builds upon the reading, writing, listening, and speaking foundations established in English 5. Literature selections and writing assignments are closely connected and often dovetail with topics found in other core courses, most notably social studies. Writing expands from narrative to persuasive to analytical. Students learn about the qualities inherent in all good writing – ideas, organization, voice, word choice, sentence fluency, conventions, and presentation – and how to incorporate these qualities into their writing. Students connect their research, outline, and writing skills through cross-curricular work. Literature themes include the transition from childhood to adolescence, our connection to nature, and using inquiry and inference to study human decision-making, supported by our Quaker values as a school and the sixth-grade social studies focus on ancient civilizations and foundations of government.

### English 7

By seventh grade, students have learned about the qualities inherent in all high-quality writing – clear ideas, organization, voice, word choice, sentence fluency, conventions, and presentation – and

they continue to incorporate these qualities into their writing. Students use rubrics extensively so that they learn to evaluate their writing. All stages in the writing process are thoroughly addressed, often requiring multiple revisions of a single piece of writing. A variety of writing modes are taught – narrative, expository, descriptive, persuasive, creative, and literary response. In addition to written expression, public speaking is developed through class discussions, Socratic seminars, literary conversations, oral reports, presentations, and book talks.

The English 7 curriculum connects deeply to History 7, which focuses on early American history. Self-discovery, coming of age, and overcoming adversity are just some themes in the seventh-grade reading selections. Repertoire includes age-appropriate novels, short stories, and poems from classical canon and contemporary selections. Classes emphasize discussion and the study of the basic components of short stories and novels, including characterization, theme, point of view, symbol, irony, etc. Students are encouraged to read actively, to form their own opinions about what they read, and to articulate their views in discussions and writing assignments. The core tenets of reading comprehension are modeled, practiced, and applied for student work and provided curriculum.

## **English 8**

English 8 has two main objectives: to enhance students' ability to communicate effectively, both verbally and in writing, and to deepen their appreciation for the impact of storytelling and literature in the world beyond our campus.

As part of their growth, students develop stronger skills in crafting analytical essays, building a deeper understanding of literature, and refining their writing techniques. Other writing styles explored include descriptive, expository, narrative, and persuasive formats. Special emphasis is placed on evidence-supported analytical writing, a format widely used in our Upper School.

Through immersive vocabulary studies, students build their lexicon and deepen their ability to convey their thoughts. This fosters their analytical reading of texts, sharpening their ability to dissect and interpret complex material with precision.

Through a combination of texts from the literary canon and works by diverse authors sharing their unique experiences, 8th graders learn that everyone has a story to tell. What makes each story universally impactful is the author's craft and structure. Texts are thoughtfully chosen, and the curriculum is continuously revised and expanded each year to make room for new voices and ideas. The eighth-grade English classroom is student-driven, fostering independent thinking, group work, and feedback as key forces within a creative and supportive environment. Students take the lead in their learning, actively shaping their educational experience while developing critical skills in analysis, communication, and collaboration.

# History and Social Studies

Friends Academy aims to broaden our students' understanding of the historical processes that have produced our world, encourage them to think critically while interpreting past events and finding potential solutions to contemporary problems and prepare them for enlightened, empathetic, and active citizenship in a diverse society. In Middle School, purposeful connections are made between English and social studies, with literature choices and writing assignments often spanning both courses.

## **Social Studies 5**

Social Studies 5 poses questions and offers frameworks to understand how cultures, governments, and civilizations are formed. Students start the year learning about the roles of historians and archaeologists. They then focus on the development of early humans and the ancient civilizations of Mesopotamia and Egypt. These topics set up the further study of ancient civilizations in 6th-grade social studies.

Fifth graders are introduced to topics of geography, economics, agriculture, and culture. Students learn through reading, research, simulations, experiential group projects, and public presentations. Cross-curricular connections abound with English class activities.

## **Social Studies 6: Foundations of Early Civilizations**

Social Studies 6 poses questions and offers frameworks to understand the development and growth of ancient civilizations and to develop the skills necessary to study any society. Study skills (annotation, note taking, project, time management, and organization), mapping, writing, and research are all focus areas.

Course topics include the ancient civilizations of Greece, Rome, India, and China, as well as the Mayan, Incan, and Aztec cultures. Students also spend a unit looking at the development and practice of some of the world's major religions, focusing on Quakerism. Sixth graders are reintroduced to the six human institutions – geography, history, economics, religion, family structure, and culture- offering inroads to understanding any civilization. Students learn through reading, independent research, simulations, experiential group projects, and public presentations. Cross-curricular connections abound with English class activities.

## **Social Studies 7: American History I**

Seventh-grade history considers the Discovery of the 'New World', the American Revolution, the Constitution and structure of the United States government, westward expansion, and tensions that

inevitably led to the Civil War. These topics and themes will be analyzed through the lenses of civics, geography, politics, and community.

Research blocks throughout the year allow students the opportunity to pose and explore a question of interest that connects a topic from class discussions to another period or the present, craft a well-supported and thoroughly researched argument in writing, and transform their findings into a short presentation for their peers and the wider community. Other assessment forms include reading check-ins, tests, public speaking presentations, and in-class experiences such as debates and town hall meetings.

## **Social Studies 8: American History II**

The eighth-grade history course expands students' skills of working with, analyzing, and critically evaluating historical information while engaging in inquiry designed to probe questions about the past. Students develop further and practice the academic skills necessary for success in Upper School humanities courses. American History aims to ask students to draw their attention to similarities and differences over time in the United States concerning practices of governance and policy, economic production and consumption, and social arrangements and behavior. Units include 1 – Nation in Crisis, 2 – Reconstruction, 3 – Growth and Equality, 4 – The World Wars, 5 – Becoming a Superpower, and 6 – The Modern World.

Two research blocks at different points in the year allow students the opportunity to pose a research question of interest that connects a topic from class discussions to another period or the present, craft a well-supported and thoroughly researched argument in writing, and transform their findings into a short presentation for their peers and the wider community. Other assessment forms include reading check-ins, tests, and in-class experiences such as debates and simulations.

# Mathematics

At Friends Academy, the study of mathematics is much more than arithmetic. By instituting a Problem-Solving Approach to Mathematics, sometimes referred to as the CPA Approach (concrete, pictorial, abstract), children learn to construct their own meaning and develop personalized strategies to solve problems. For any problem, even in math, there are multiple pathways that lead to solutions. For some, math is about learning and memorizing the steps to create a particular outcome. This approach can lead to premature acceleration. At Friends Academy, math is viewed as an investigative, descriptive, evaluative, and creative language. Students work individually and collaboratively to learn that multiple strategies often lead to a solution. The role of the teacher is to assist students in reaching a conclusion; it is not to offer a singular strategy but rather to guide and stretch students as they develop their strategies. As a result, our students at Friends Academy deeply understand mathematics beyond the surface level and feel prepared and empowered to take on rich challenges and problems in math and other disciplines.

## Math 5

Math 5 builds upon concepts and skills ingrained in our Lower School curriculum while preparing students for pre-algebraic, algebraic, and geometric concepts studied in sixth, seventh, and eighth grades. In all Middle School grades, as developmental readiness occurs, a variety of math challenges are offered to students. These include our “Daily Word Problems,” which consist of weekly assignments that allow for spiraling practice and encourage the development of non-routine problem-solving strategies. Various levels are offered to encourage students to take charge of their learning. In addition, there are in-class extensions, which provide additional opportunities for challenge within the daily lesson. Enrichment opportunities include the Noetic Learning Contest, which challenges our students and prepares them for the MathCounts contest, and the AMC 8 challenge offered in the upper Middle School grades.

## Grade 6 Mathematics

### Math 6

Math 6 solidifies the basic skills needed for the seventh-grade pre-algebra curriculum. The course is designed to be interactive, reflecting the concrete, pictorial, abstract (CPA) approach to problem-solving. Connecting mathematics to the real world helps students pose questions, consider information, and apply multiple solutions. The students will learn through various means, including cooperative learning, small group instruction, peer teaching, and multimedia applications. Units include problem-solving, decimals, measurement, number theory, fractions, integers, geometry, ratio and proportions, probability, and pre-algebra. Enrichment opportunities include Weekly Math Challenges (WMCs) designed to encourage students to persevere and use a multi-strategy approach to problem-solving. They also have the opportunity to participate in the Noetic Learning Contest, which

challenges our students and prepares them for the MathCounts contest and the AMC 8 challenge offered in the upper Middle School grades.

### Math 6 Plus+

6th Grade Math Plus+ is an accelerated, fast-paced course designed for students who demonstrate high mathematical capabilities and readiness to master two grade-level curricula in a single year. Utilizing a blended curriculum based on Singapore Math (6 and 7), this course compresses foundational standards into unified, domain-based units. Students transition rapidly from non-negative rational arithmetic to full operations with real signed numbers, while building a strong foundation in proportional reasoning and early algebraic thinking. Units of study include:

- The Real Number System: Factors, multiples, prime factorization, and standard operations across integers, signed fractions, and decimals.
- Ratios, Rates & Proportionality: Unit rates, average speed, map scales, and practical applications of percentages (tax, interest, discount).
- Expressions, Equations & Inequalities: Writing, expanding, and factoring algebraic expressions; solving multi-step linear equations and inequalities.
- Coordinate Geometry & Linear Functions: Graphing in four quadrants, identifying slope, and modeling linear relationships.
- Geometry & Measurement: Perimeter, area, circumference, surface area, and volume of 2D plane figures, composite shapes, and 3D solids.
- Data Analysis & Probability: Statistical distributions, measures of central tendency, stem-and-leaf plots, and probability.

## **Grade 7 Mathematics**

### Pre-Algebra 7

Math 7 builds on the structure and methods developed in previous years. Fundamental concepts and processes are reinforced. Greater emphasis is placed on inquiry, higher-level thinking skills, and problem-solving. This course includes the vision that students will learn to value and become confident in their mathematical ability. Ideally, students master all basic computation skills while continuing to deepen their mathematical reasoning and processing. Mathematical communication and real-world applied problem-solving constitute the core of the course. Topics of study include integers, expressions, and algebraic equations; solving algebraic word problems, geometry; statistics; operations with decimals; number theory; operations with rational numbers, ratio, proportion, and percent; and graphing on the Cartesian plane. Enrichment opportunities include the Noetic Learning Contest, entry for the AMC8s, and often the MathCounts contest.

### Math 7 Plus+

7th Grade Math Plus+ is an advanced Pre-Algebra course designed for students who have proven a passion for mathematics and demonstrated the ability to confidently apply concepts in both concrete

and abstract problem-solving environments. Moving at an accelerated pace, this course solidifies core pre-algebraic computation while actively integrating key high school Algebra 1 topics, such as advanced coordinate graphing and polynomial operations, throughout the year. The curriculum emphasizes mathematical reasoning, problem-solving habits, and structural precision to prepare students for high-school-level math courses. Units of study include:

- **Real Numbers & Signed Operations:** Fluency with rational and irrational numbers, absolute value, exponents, and order of operations.
- **Algebraic Manipulation & Polynomials:** Expanding, factoring, simplifying linear expressions, and introductory operations with polynomials.
- **Equations & Inequalities:** Solving multi-step linear equations and linear inequalities with negative coefficients.
- **Proportional Reasoning & Advanced Applications:** Rates, speed, ratio applications, percent change, markup, discount, and scale drawings.
- **Coordinate Plane & Linear Graphing:** Plotting linear equations, finding positive/negative slope, and interpreting graphical models.
- **Geometric Properties & Measurement:** Angle relationships, polygon characteristics, circle properties, and composite 2D/3D geometry.
- **Probability & Data Handling:** Simple and combined event probabilities, set notation, stem-and-leaf plots, and central tendency measures.

## Grade 8 Mathematics

In the eighth grade, we offer three levels of algebra: Introduction to Algebra, Algebra I, and Algebra Plus+. Students are placed in the appropriate level according to teacher recommendations, performance on diagnostic assessments, performance in Math 6 and 7, and, when available, results of standardized testing.

### Grade 8: Introduction to Algebra

Introduction to Algebra offers students basic algebra instruction. Topics of study include number theory and operations with rational and real numbers; real numbers and the Pythagorean theorem; patterns, relationships, and algebraic thinking; proportions and similarity; percent; geometry and measurement; spatial reasoning, area, and volume; algebraic thinking – linear and nonlinear functions, equations, and inequalities; and statistics, data analysis, and probability. Students who consistently master the Intro to Algebra course will be ideally positioned to take Algebra I in ninth grade. Students who do exceptionally well in Intro to Algebra may be encouraged to work over the summer and then take a placement test at the end of summer to place into Geometry as a freshman.

## Grade 8: Algebra 1

The Algebra I course is a high school-level math course. Students who complete it will receive one academic credit toward the Upper School math graduation requirement. Topics of study include numerical expressions; ratio, percents, and applications; solving linear equations; introduction to functions and graphing linear equations; systems of linear equations; working with inequalities; polynomials and factoring; operations with radicals; and solving, applying, and graphing quadratics. Students who earn an A+ in this course can take Honors Geometry as a freshman.

## Grade 8: Algebra Plus+

8th Grade Algebra Plus+ is a rigorous, high-school-level course designed for students who thrive on fast-paced, abstract mathematical thinking. Grounded in standard high school Algebra 1 concepts, this course challenges students to use numerical operations, variable expressions, and graphs to analyze and solve complex real-world and theoretical problems. Key units of study include applying logic to algebraic proofs, graphing both linear and nonlinear functions on the coordinate plane, and using factoring techniques and operations with radicals to simplify rational expressions. To broaden reasoning skills, enrichment concepts from high school Geometry are also incorporated throughout the 8th-grade year, allowing students to see how the courses are integrated and build the critical problem-solving and proof-oriented mindset needed for advanced math and science pursuits in high school. Students who earn an A- in this course can take Honors Geometry as a freshman.

***In keeping with Friends Academy's commitment to meeting the needs of every student, the Mathematics Department offers a robust enrichment program for all math students. The purpose of this enrichment is to provide students with opportunities to tackle non-routine problems, participate in competitions, and complete independent research in STEM fields. While all students are encouraged to participate in enrichment, it is highly recommended for students who seek extra challenge or are interested in entering the Honors Math track in Upper School.***

# Science

Our integrated middle school science curriculum is designed to spark curiosity and foster a deep understanding of the natural world. Students will develop a deep scientific skill set and a solid understanding of basic scientific principles by engaging in real-world problem-solving. In Middle School, studies explore the intersections of earth science and environmental studies, biology, physical sciences, and chemistry. These studies aim to develop an understanding of a diversity of living organisms, to instill mindfulness of and explore the complexities of preservation and conservation of the world's resources, and to develop an awareness of ethical issues regarding the use of science and technology. Students practice hypothesis development, experimental observation, data collection, and empirical analysis. Open-ended questioning, reflective writing, research notebooks, and lab reports are among the many skills practiced across the curriculum.

## Science 5

In fifth-grade science, we are focused on the scientific fundamentals. From cells to systems, students will explore the levels of biological organization, discussing how cells form tissues, tissues form organs, and organs work together in systems to support life. Scientific literacy is woven carefully into each unit to help students understand the world around them and think critically about the information they are presented with. The curriculum in fifth-grade science fosters curiosity while ensuring students have a solid foundation to build upon throughout their middle school years and beyond.

## Science 6

Students will explore the natural world through the lens of systems and interactions. The curriculum is designed to help students understand how different components of the Earth, such as living things, geological processes, oceans, atmosphere, and climate, are interconnected and how changes in one part of a system can impact the whole. Throughout the year, students will investigate key scientific concepts in the context of ecosystems, geology, and climate. They will learn about how populations of organisms interact within ecosystems and how these relationships affect biodiversity and environmental stability. Students continue to build upon their scientific literacy skills by reading about current events in science and engaging in real-world problem-solving. By the end of this course, students will be able to recognize the interconnectedness of Earth's systems and how human activity impacts these processes.

## Science 7

Science 7 builds on the theme of interactions within natural systems, by investigating how changes in a single component can lead to widespread changes throughout a system. During the course of the year, students have many opportunities to complete hands-on science and problem-solving activities, laboratory investigations, and creative projects, both individually and in cooperative groups. Classes

are largely discussion-based, allowing for frequent communication between students; however, a strong emphasis is placed on writing and modeling.

## **Science 8**

Science 8 focuses on energy within systems. Students are encouraged to look for real-world connections within the material, to consider a variety of possible answers to a problem, to evaluate the precision of their data and methods, and to pay close attention to the wording of their responses in order to communicate ideas clearly. Formal scientific principles are taught through discussion of everyday experiences and observations made during classroom activities. Concepts are investigated through laboratory experiences that develop confidence and initiative in manipulating apparatus, organizing procedures, and recording data.

# Technology

The Middle School is committed to providing a dynamic program that utilizes technology to enhance the curriculum and foster the skills necessary for success in the contemporary world. The Middle School building is well-equipped with Smart Technology, projection capabilities, and a Makerspace robotics studio with multiple 3D printers and a VEX competition court. All Middle School students are issued Chromebooks for school use and have dedicated training on programs such as Google Docs, Sheets, Slides, and Schoology.

## Robotics 5

Students learn the basics of coding, including an introduction to VEX Robotics, basic driving, and programming.

## Computer Science 6

Students delve deeper into computer science and using Google products (docs, sheets, slides, and drive). Students also learn about 3D modeling, block coding, and Tinkercad. Students build a game in Scratch.

## Computer Science 7

Students use the Design Thinking process to create a prototype for colleagues on campus and pitch their idea to a group of administrators via Shark-Tank style presentation.

## Computer Science 8

Students engage in more advanced coding, engineering and programming text-based coding using CodeHS. The students' final project is an interactive drawing where the user will input dimensions and colors and shapes for their drawing.

## VEX Robotics (Extracurricular)

Any interested fifth, sixth, seventh, or eighth grade student may participate in competitive VEX Robotics. Practices occur after school. Friends Academy teams have consistently won regional and state competition awards and were honored to advance to the 2022 and 2023 World Competitions.

# World Languages and Cultures

Departmental goals include helping students build proficiency in the oral and written use of a second language and gaining a fundamental knowledge of the literature, culture, and traditions associated with the nations where it is spoken.

## World Languages Sampler: Grade 5

In fifth grade, students spend an academic quarter studying each of our world languages: French, Mandarin Chinese, and Spanish. This trimester rotation allows students to sample each language before making an informed decision about which language they would like to study in depth. Each sampler rotation focuses on oral communication, written expression, and culture. Language selection for sixth grade takes place at the end of the first academic quarter in fifth grade.

## Formal World Languages Study: Grades 5-8

Middle School students begin their formal study of language in the second quarter of fifth grade. Students may select Spanish, French, or Mandarin Chinese. The language programs stress the four basic language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Through mastery of these skills, students are required to cope, question, organize, and communicate in the target language individually and in a group. The study of a language requires patience, discipline, and organizational skills. Factual knowledge and memorization are essential in this study. The application of this knowledge to their oral and written work encourages students to understand, appreciate, and sympathize with human beings of other cultures and thereby see their own lives and culture in perspective.

The Middle School World Languages & Cultures Program cultivates increasing proficiency in speaking, writing, reading, and listening skills. Vocabulary building and basic grammatical concepts are core to the instruction and expected student outcomes. As the student progresses, emphasis is put on more advanced oral communication, including more challenging grammar concepts and vocabulary acquisition.

## Middle School French: Grades 5-8

The three-year sequence in French is equivalent to completing Level 1 in Upper School. Students develop speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills in French while becoming familiar with the cultures of French-speaking countries. Successful completion earns the student one Upper School credit. The student will continue to French 2 or French 2 Honors in the Upper School in the ninth grade. Students wishing to be placed in the French Level 2 Honors course in the Upper School will

take the National French Exam in March and must score at a level determined by the Upper School World Languages Department.

### **Middle School Mandarin Chinese: Grades 5-8**

The course sequence in Mandarin Chinese is equivalent to completing Level 1 in Upper School. The goal of this course is to develop speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills in Mandarin Chinese while becoming familiar with the culture of China and the Chinese people. Written communication includes both Pinyin and an introduction to Chinese characters. Successful completion earns the student one Upper School credit. The student will continue to Chinese 2 in the Upper School in the ninth grade. Students wishing to be placed in the Chinese 2 course in the Upper School will take the National Chinese Exam and must score at a level determined by the Upper School World Languages Department. All students taking Chinese are in an advanced class that leads to the AP in their senior year.

### **Middle School Spanish: Grades 5-8**

The three-year sequence in Spanish is equivalent to completing Level 1 in Upper School. Students develop speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills in Spanish while becoming familiar with the cultures of Spanish-speaking countries. Successful completion earns the student one Upper School credit. The student will continue to Spanish 2, Advanced Spanish 2, or Spanish 2 Honors in the Upper School in the ninth grade. Students wishing to be placed in the Spanish Level 2 Honors course in the Upper School will take the National Spanish Exam in March and must score at a level determined by the Upper School World Languages Department.

## Visual and Performing Arts

Middle School is a powerful time for students to attain new knowledge and begin blending that knowledge with a greater understanding of oneself and how to function in the larger world. This intense growth and development is supported and enhanced by a strong education in the arts. At Friends Academy, we commit seriously to arts education as a core piece of our Middle School curriculum. Students receive ongoing music, visual and digital arts, theater, and dance education. This arts education curriculum is designed to support our students' cognitive, physical, and character development, as well as teach specific knowledge and techniques in each artistic discipline.

### **Students participate in the classes listed below:**

- Grade 5:**   Vocal Music (Chorus)  
              Instrumental Music (Band and Orchestra)  
              Integrated Arts (Visual Arts, Theater, Dance)
- Grade 6:**   Vocal Music (Chorus)  
              Instrumental Music (Band and Orchestra)  
              Integrated Arts (Visual Arts, Theater, Dance)
- Grade 7:**   Instrumental and Vocal Music (Orchestra, Band, Chorus)  
              Quakerism & Arts
- Grade 8:**   Instrumental and Vocal Music (Orchestra, Band, Chorus)  
              Interdisciplinary Arts (Visual Arts, Theater)

## Overnight Experiences

### **Overnight Experiential Trips**

Traditionally, each grade participates in a two-day overnight experiential trip. Travel experiences align with curricular study in math, English, science, and history and offer opportunities to connect with museums, historical spaces, outdoor education, and other Quaker Meetings and Quaker schools. Recent trips have included the Pocono Environmental Education Center (Grade 6), Boston (Grade 7), and Philadelphia (Grade 8).

## Quaker Life: Principles and Practices

Friends Academy aims to nurture spiritual development, teach about Quakerism, and provide opportunities to experience Quaker faith and practice in community. Through Teachers and Students for Quaker Education (TASQUE) and weekly Meetings for Worship, we seek to create a sanctuary where individuals feel safe being reflective, open spiritual beings who “let their lives speak.”

# Community Service and Service-Learning Program

We seek to foster in our students an awareness of issues and challenges confronting the many communities of which we are a part and a commitment to using their talents and skills for the benefit of others by engaging them in concrete service projects in these communities. The We Are The Community Helpers (WATCH) and Teachers and Students for Quaker Education (TASQUE) committees help to facilitate service learning opportunities in Middle School.

## Physical Education and Interscholastic Athletics

### Introductory Interscholastic Athletics: Grades 5-6

In fifth and sixth grades, students engage in an introductory interscholastic athletics program designed to prepare them for participation in seventh and eighth grades. This program entails four-week units covering various sports offered in the higher grades, each culminating in a match or game. By experiencing these sports firsthand and honing their skills through active participation, students not only prepare for the challenges of interscholastic athletics but also foster a deeper appreciation for teamwork, sportsmanship, and physical well-being.

### Sports by Season: Grades 7-8

All students in seventh and eighth grades participate in a seasonal interscholastic athletics program.

| <u>Fall</u>   | <u>Winter I and II</u> | <u>Spring</u>     |
|---------------|------------------------|-------------------|
| Cross-Country | Basketball             | Baseball/Softball |
| Field Hockey  | Cardio-Fitness         | Lacrosse          |
| Football      | Squash                 | Track/Field       |
| Soccer        | Track                  |                   |
|               | Volleyball             |                   |
|               | Weight Training        |                   |
|               | Yoga                   |                   |

# Health and Wellness

The Middle School Health Education curriculum is part of the comprehensive Middle School Health and Physical Education program. This interactive, student-centered curriculum is designed to help students learn about contemporary and critical health issues while asking them to explore their personal health habits and goals.

## Health 5 & Health 6

Fifth and sixth-grade students participate in a quarter or trimester of grade-level-specific health education. Topics include friendships, relationship management, conflict resolution, bullying, personal safety (including online safety), drug use and abuse, puberty, nutrition, exercise, stress, and life management skills.

## Health 7 & 8

Seventh-grade students participate in a quarter-long, grade-level-specific health education course. Students practice cooperative skills, realize risk-taking behaviors, and apply positive decision-making abilities. Topics examined include self-esteem, nutrition, reproductive systems, stress management, relationship management, alcohol, tobacco, and other substance abuse, consent, and boundaries.

## Notes

