



# Middlesex Middle School

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Dear Fifth Grade Families:

I hope this communication finds you well, having enjoyed a healthy and joyful holiday season and new year celebration. As 2025 begins, so begins the calendar year we will get to welcome your fifth grader to Middlesex Middle School! The transition to sixth grade is an exciting one, and we hope you will join us for a **Parent Orientation & MMS Curriculum Night on Wednesday, February, 12 at 6:00 pm** in the Middlesex Auditorium. At this time, we will share information about the sixth grade experience, including the team model, courses, and the transition process. You will get to meet Dr. Caitlin O'Keefe, Assistant Principal, and School Counselors Dani Jenkins and Casey Westcott, who will work with the incoming grade for their three years at MMS. After hearing from our Department Chairpersons and Coordinators about the sixth grade programming, we will overview the scheduling process.

A typical sixth grade program includes Reading, Writing, Math, Social Studies, Science, as well as a World Language course, Music course, and PE. As you can imagine, the scheduling process is complex, so we do not honor requests for teachers or teams. For Math, Math Department Chairperson Roni Rodier will provide an overview of the courses, placement process, and waiver process during our February 12 curriculum presentation. Communication about your child's recommended math course come via Aspen in March. A detailed explanation about the math transition for grade 5 to 6 can be [found here](#). Following this letter, you will find information about the World Language and Music choices for sixth grade students at MMS. Your child(ren) will also learn about these choices WHEN; please review this information with your child(ren) and submit your child(ren)'s selections to [Course Selection GoogleForm](#) by March 1.

We are in the process of coordinating a spring orientation for our incoming students. Current DPS fifth graders will have the opportunity to visit MMS, tour the building, meet some of our important school faculty, and hear from current students. Each elementary school will visit MMS the week of April 7, as follows:

- Monday, April 7: Hindley
- Tuesday, April 8: Royle
- Wednesday, April 9: Tokeneke
- Thursday, April 10: Holmes
- Friday, April 11: Ox Ridge

The developmental transformation that middle schoolers experience as they journey from childhood to adolescence is complex and beautiful. Fostering a strong school culture and community relationships is critical to nurturing our students through that journey. We have exciting work ahead, and I am looking forward to partnering with each of you to support a positive and impactful middle school experience for your child(ren). I hope to see you on February 12!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kate Dimoulas". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Kate Dimoulas (she/her/hers)

Middlesex Middle School Principal

## 2025-2026 6th Grade Music & World Language Course Offerings

### *Grade 6 Music Course Descriptions*

Students in 6th grade have the opportunity to choose between several options to continue their music education:

**6th Grade Band** is a continuation of the 4th and 5th grade instrumental program. Students who started playing a wind or percussion instrument in elementary school through the school instrumental program are encouraged to sign up for band in 6th grade. Students who did not play a band instrument in elementary school but wish to start playing may sign up for 6th grade band.

**6th Grade Orchestra** is a continuation of the 3rd thru 5th grade string program. Students who started playing a string instrument in elementary school through the school string program are encouraged to sign up for orchestra in 6th grade. Students who did not play a string instrument in elementary school but wish to start playing should contact Colleen Thompson, Director of Visual Art and Music, to discuss enrolling.

**6th Grade Chorus** is a continuation of the elementary general music and chorus program. There is no prior singing experience necessary to join the 6th grade chorus. Students of all ability levels who are interested in group singing are encouraged to sign up for chorus in 6th grade.

**6th Grade Music Explorations** is a continuation of the elementary general music program. Units of study include music literacy and creation through music composition and introduction to basic music production, performance practice using guitars and keyboards, and connecting with music through the student of composers and musical innovations throughout history, and responding to music through listening journals.

Students in grade 6 will indicate their first and second choices for music class; students will have the opportunity to change their music selection in 7th grade if they are not scheduled for their first choice in grade 6.

In addition to the school day music classes listed above, there are extracurricular opportunities: Viva Voce, Rockestra, and Jazz Band are audition-based ensembles for students who wish to participate in an additional ensemble, who wish to participate in both vocal music and instrumental music, or play two instruments. More information about auditions will be provided in the new school year. For more information about the transition between elementary and middle school music, please see the [Music 5-6 FAQs site here](#).

## *Grade 6 World Language Course Descriptions*

World Language classes at MMS meet as a daily academic class. It is expected that students will remain in their chosen world language for their middle school tenure. Questions about the world language program should be directed to K-12 Curriculum Coordinator Scott Webster at [swebster@darienps.org](mailto:swebster@darienps.org)

**Spanish 1** is designed for students that have studied Spanish in elementary school and who wish to further develop their proficiency; students and their teacher speak Spanish 90% of the time in class. Students in Spanish 6 will further their speaking, writing, listening, and reading skills through the themes of education and school, families and communities, gastronomy, and contemporary life. Students who successfully complete the three year Spanish sequence at MMS are generally prepared to enter Spanish 3 or Spanish 3 Honors at Darien High School.

**French 1A** is designed for students that want to begin their study of French at the secondary level; therefore, no prior language learning experience is necessary. Students will begin to communicate in French with their teachers and peers, developing their speaking, writing, listening, and reading skills through the themes of education and school, families and communities, gastronomy, and contemporary life. Students who successfully complete the three year French sequence at MMS are generally prepared to enter French 2 or French 2 Accelerated at Darien High School.

**Mandarin 1A** is designed for students who want to begin their study of Mandarin Chinese at the secondary level; therefore, no prior language experience is necessary. This first year course covers making introductions; students will be able to describe themselves, their family members, the town where they live, and their school community. They will be able to communicate personal interests and extracurricular activities, and identify the days of the week and times at which these activities occur. Students will begin to make connections between the daily life of a middle school student in China and the United States. They will identify tones, develop proper pronunciation, begin character writing, and be introduced to pinyin (the Romanization of Chinese characters). Students who successfully complete the three year Mandarin sequence at MMS are generally prepared to enter Mandarin 2 or Mandarin 2 Honors at Darien High School.

Questions about the World Language program should be directed to K-12 Curriculum Coordinator Scott Webster at [swebster@darienps.org](mailto:swebster@darienps.org)

**Complete the [Course Selection GoogleForm](#) by March 1**