

# Holland Hall



**MIDDLE SCHOOL  
CURRICULUM GUIDE**

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**2025-26**



# Table of Contents

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Mission Statement	3
Diversity and Inclusion Statement	3
Portrait of a Middle School Learner	4
MBE/CBL/DBI	5
Our Competency-Based Approach	5
Course Offerings Overview	6
Program/Course Descriptions	7
Advisory	8
Houses	8
Chapel and Religious Education	9
English/Language Arts	10
Social Studies	11
Science	12
Mathematics	13
World Languages	15
Fine Arts	16
Library Technology	18
PE/Athletics	19
Wellness and Learning Support at Holland Hall	20
Wellness at Holland Hall	21
Learning Support at Holland Hall	22
Clubs/Recess/Lunch	23



## Mission Statement

Holland Hall provides a challenging, comprehensive educational experience grounded in a rigorous liberal arts, college preparatory curriculum that promotes critical thinking and lifelong learning. A PreK-12 Episcopal school, we seek to foster in each student a strong moral foundation and a deep sense of social responsibility.

## Diversity and Inclusion Statement

A culture of inclusion is essential to the mission of an Episcopal school with the Church's history of passionate advocacy for social justice and human unity. The skills of multiculturalism are essential to the depth of students' learning and their ability to participate in our interconnected world. We employ these skills to drive academic excellence, embolden students to embrace their own identities, and foster appreciation for the differences of others. We welcome and strive to integrate varying family structures, socio-economic backgrounds, genders, ethnicities, sexual identities, religions, races, and physical and cognitive capabilities. In every aspect of school life, Holland Hall commits to teaching and challenging our community to discard stereotypes, embrace inclusion, and practice radical empathy.



# Portrait of a Middle School Learner

The middle school years at Holland Hall support learners who are becoming...

## Effective Communicators

I convey and receive information in a meaningful and effective way to achieve clarity and purpose.



## Resilient

I understand that challenges arise and I come back from them stronger, more confident, and wiser.

## Morally Courageous

I act with compassion, kindness, and integrity, and I respect the dignity of others.



## Community Builders

I demonstrate care for our community and take action to make it better.

## Socially and Personally Responsible

I am responsible for taking care of myself, being dependable, meeting obligations and expectations, as well as being accountable for my words and actions.



## Strategic Learners

I demonstrate understanding of myself as a learner by leveraging personal strengths and implementing effective strategies for lifelong learning.

## Creative Problem Solvers

I use resources, technology, curiosity, and flexibility to take creative risks and generate innovative ideas and solutions.



## Critical Thinkers

I evaluate, interpret, and synthesize information gained from experience, observation, research, and reflection in order to make informed decisions.



## MBE/CBL/DBI

### Empowering Your Middle Schooler: A Commitment to Holistic Growth

At Holland Hall, we're dedicated to providing your child with an exceptional middle school education where they can truly thrive. We're continuously evolving our approach to learning, focusing on creating a dynamic and supportive environment for every student.

We're integrating three key frameworks to support these outcomes:

- » **Mind, Brain, Education (MBE) Science:** We refer to the latest research to better understand how the brain adapts and learns.
- » **Competency-Based Learning (CBL):** We focus on developing essential skills and knowledge, supporting students' effort toward mastery of key concepts.
- » **Diversity, Inclusion, & Belonging (DBI):** We're committed to creating a welcoming and inclusive community where every student feels valued and respected. We celebrate diversity and promote understanding, ensuring all students feel a strong sense of belonging.

### How These Frameworks Work Together

Overall, the relationship between MBE, CBL, and DBI lies in their collective efforts to create a school experience that promotes inclusive instructional practices and recognizes the diverse strengths and needs of students. By understanding the brain's capacity for change and neuroplasticity, we can design a learning environment grounded in meaningful and clearly articulated outcomes that promote the development of the attributes that make up the Portrait of a Middle School Learner.

## Our Competency-Based Approach

Holland Hall's commitment to fostering intellectual curiosity and a life-long learning is reflected in our competency-based approach. This model emphasizes the deep learning of essential skills and knowledge, ensuring students develop a strong foundation for future academic success. By focusing on demonstrable competencies (noted for departmental programs in this guide), students gain a clear understanding of learning targets and engage in rigorous coursework designed to develop critical thinking, problem-solving, and effective communication – transferable skills vital for success in school and beyond. This approach aligns with our mission to cultivate holistic and resourceful individuals, preparing them to thrive in post-secondary education and contribute meaningfully to the world.

# Course Offerings Overview

GRADE 4	GRADE 5	GRADE 6	GRADE 7	GRADE 8
Advisory	Advisory	Advisory	Advisory	Advisory
•	•	•	•	•
Reading	Language Arts	English	English	English
•	•	•	•	•
Regions of the US & Writing	The Americas	World Cultures Past & Present	US Government & Civics	Global Conflicts
•	•	•	•	•
Foundations of Science	Foundations of Science	Foundations of Science	Life Science	Earth Science
•	•	•	•	•
Math	Math	Math or Math Accelerated	Pre Algebra A, Pre Algebra, or Algebra Honors	Pre Algebra B, Algebra, or Geometry Honors
•	•	•	•	•
Exposure to French/Spanish Language & Culture	Exposure to French/Spanish Language & Culture	French A or Spanish A	French B or Spanish B	French C or Spanish C
•	•	•	•	•
Music - Orff Focus	Music - Orff Focus	Band, Orchestra, or Choir	Band, Orchestra, or Choir	Band, Orchestra, or Choir
•	•	•	•	•
Visual Art	Visual Art	C3 Visual Art Drama	Photography Visual Art Drama	3D Art 2D Art Drama
•	•	•	•	•
Physical Education	Physical Education	Physical Education	Physical Education or Athletics	Physical Education or Athletics
•	•	•	•	•
Religious Education	Religious Education	Life Skills	Religious Education	Leadership
•	•	•	•	•
Homeroom Language Arts (HLA)	Homeroom Language Arts (HLA)	Wellness	Wellness	Wellness
•	•	•	•	•
Library Technology, Drama, & Typing Rotations	Library Technology, Drama, & Typing Rotations			

# Program/Course Descriptions





## Advisory

The Advisory program at Holland Hall Middle School is designed to foster meaningful relationships among students and faculty, creating a supportive and joyful start to each day. At its core, Advisory is about building trust, strengthening connections, and helping students develop a sense of personal awareness and belonging. Through intentional activities and shared experiences, students are encouraged to take an active role in shaping a positive, inclusive, and vibrant school community where everyone feels safe to be their authentic selves. By focusing on key foundational values: safety, trust, kindness, care, and a commitment to excellence, Advisory provides a space where students feel empowered to contribute, grow, and thrive.

Throughout the year, Advisory will offer engaging opportunities that reinforce these values and cultivate a sense of school spirit. Students will participate in team-building activities, service projects, and “Family Dinners” that encourage meaningful conversations. A monthly focus on habits from our Portrait of a Middle School Learner will guide personal growth. By embracing these experiences and upholding the principles of kindness and care, students will contribute to a culture of support and encouragement, spreading the spirit of Holland Hall throughout the entire community.

## Houses

Students are placed in Houses throughout their time in Middle School. The houses meet bi-monthly and consist of a mix of 4th-8th grade students and four faculty leaders. The Houses provide an opportunity to foster connections and establish relationships among students and teachers across different grade levels. The 8 Houses are named after visionaries and locations from our school's vibrant history. Each House's namesake played a vital role in the foundation, growth, and support of our school — Alexander, Birmingham, Brown, Flint, Kaboth, Moore, Schureman, and Walter.



# Chapel and Religious Education

The Religious Education program for Middle School is rooted in the Episcopal tradition and guided by the core value of honoring the dignity of every human being. The curriculum supports each student's spiritual journey while fostering empathy, curiosity, and respect for the many faith traditions around the world. Students are encouraged to develop a strong moral compass, take personal responsibility, and reflect on the impact of their actions.

All students attend weekly chapel services together, creating a meaningful rhythm in the life of the Middle School community. These gatherings offer a reflective space for students to pause, connect, and consider what it means to live with purpose and integrity. Chapel services explore major religious traditions, moral and ethical questions, current events, and universal life lessons through storytelling, guest speakers, music, and student participation. Grounded in the Episcopal tradition but inclusive in spirit, chapel invites students of all faith backgrounds, and those still exploring, to engage thoughtfully with big ideas, build empathy, and strengthen their sense of belonging and shared humanity.

In addition, Religious Education classes are part of the curriculum in grades 4, 5, and 7.

## **Grade 4**

Students are introduced to the Old Testament through key stories and themes that help them explore foundational values and reflect on the meaning behind biblical narratives. Lessons encourage students to connect the messages of the text to their own lives while nurturing respect for others and an appreciation of diverse beliefs.

## **Grade 5**

Building on their Grade 4 foundation, students examine the roles and messages of Old Testament prophets. The curriculum emphasizes virtues such as justice, forgiveness, and compassion—values central to the Episcopal tradition and the development of character. Students are encouraged to apply these ideas to their daily choices and relationships.

## **Grade 7**

Students engage with the New Testament, focusing on the life and teachings of Jesus. Themes such as empathy, inclusion, and standing up for what is right help students explore how faith can guide their actions. Rooted in the Episcopal tradition, the course fosters spiritual growth and challenges students to live out their values within their communities.

# English/Language Arts

**The Middle School English/Language Arts program develops four core competencies: Grammar & Vocabulary, Communication, Reading & Literacy, and Research. Across all grade levels, students build a strong foundation in reading, writing, speaking, and listening while engaging with a wide range of texts and expressing ideas through various modes of communication. Instruction is designed to be developmentally appropriate and increasingly rigorous, preparing students to think critically, write clearly, and communicate effectively.**

## GRADE 4

Fourth-grade students explore a variety of literary genres—including graphic novels, nonfiction, realistic fiction, biography, historical fiction, and fantasy—to broaden their understanding of literature and develop as thoughtful readers. Each genre study is anchored by a mentor text and paired with targeted vocabulary instruction, including Greek and Latin roots. Students apply reading strategies such as visualizing, predicting, questioning, making connections, and inferring meaning. Regular independent reading is emphasized, with students expected to read at least 20 minutes five nights a week to build fluency and comprehension.

Select texts include: “Charlie Bumpers vs. The Teacher of the Year” by Bill Harley, “Abigail and the Snowman” by Roger Langridge, “The Map Trap” by Andrew Clements, “Riding Freedom” by Pam Muñoz Ryan, “Trumpet of the Swan” by E.B. White ... and others.

## GRADE 5

Fifth-grade Language Arts integrates Reading and Writing Workshops to build essential literacy skills. Through close reading and analysis of novels and nonfiction texts, students strengthen comprehension, inference, and textual evidence skills. Writing instruction emphasizes structure, clarity, and revision, with attention to grammar, punctuation, and vocabulary. Students explore a range of writing purposes — from informative to narrative to persuasive — and develop awareness of audience and tone. Research skills begin to take shape as students learn to locate, evaluate, and synthesize information. Through ongoing discussion and reflection, students grow as confident communicators and thoughtful thinkers.

Course novels include: “Wonder” by R.J. Palacio, “Esperanza Rising” by Pam Muñoz Ryan, “The City of Ember” by Jeanne DuPrau, “Hatchet” by Gary Paulsen, “The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe” by C.S. Lewis.

Read-alouds may include: “Out of My Mind” by Sharon Draper, “Because of Mr. Terupt” by Rob Buyea, “A Long Walk to Water” by Linda Sue Park, “The Tale of Despereaux” by Kate DiCamillo.

## GRADE 6

Sixth-grade English reinforces reading comprehension, vocabulary development, and writing fluency through engagement with a variety of literary genres: realistic fiction, historical fiction, fantasy, poetry, and nonfiction. Students read closely, cite evidence, and make cross-curricular connections. Writing spans creative, informative, and argumentative styles, with emphasis on planning, drafting, revising, and editing. Grammar and vocabulary instruction are integrated throughout, helping students develop precision

in communication. Speaking and listening are also central, with opportunities for discussion, group work, and formal presentations. Students begin building strong research habits, including evaluating sources and synthesizing information.

Select texts include: “Fish in a Tree” by Lynda Mullaly Hunt, “Thirst” by Varsha Bajaj, Student choice: “Pax” by Sara Pennypacker or “Where the Red Fern Grows” by Wilson Rawls, “Refugee” by Alan Gratz, “The Giver” by Lois Lowry.

Short stories include: “Thank You, Ma’am” by Langston Hughes, “The Party” by Pam Muñoz Ryan, “The Gift of the Magi” by O. Henry, “All Summer in a Day” by Ray Bradbury.

## GRADE 7

Seventh-grade English provides a supportive, discussion-rich environment where students build analytical thinking, expressive writing, and effective communication skills. Students read a range of fiction and nonfiction texts that challenge them to consider diverse perspectives and explore literary elements such as theme, tone, and author’s purpose. Writing instruction focuses on developing strong narratives, analytical essays, and persuasive arguments. Grammar, vocabulary, and the writing process are emphasized throughout the year. Through peer collaboration and reflective feedback, students develop their voice and confidence as writers and speakers, preparing for high school-level coursework.

Select texts include: “The Outsiders” by S.E. Hinton, “Dreamland Burning” by Jennifer Latham, “Legend” by Marie Lu. Additional short stories and texts to support thematic units.

## GRADE 8

Eighth-grade English is a humanities-based course that deepens students’ reading, writing, and critical thinking skills through a parallel curriculum with social studies. Students explore the connections between literature and history, using fiction and nonfiction texts to examine key historical themes and events. Emphasis is placed on analytical reading, narrative and expository writing, and interdisciplinary thinking. Students write across genres, build vocabulary and grammar skills, and apply literary devices in original compositions. Through whole-class discussions, small group work, and one-on-one writing conferences, students refine their voice and develop confidence as communicators.

Select texts include: “Ground Zero” by Alan Gratz, “When the World Was Ours” by Liz Kessler, “Grenade” by Alan Gratz, and a summer reading choice.

# Social Studies

**The Middle School Social Studies program encourages students to become curious, informed, and empathetic citizens who understand their place in a global and historical context. Grounded in five core competencies — Research, Cultural Understanding, Civic Understanding, Geographic Understanding, and Historical Reasoning — the curriculum builds from foundational geography and culture to complex civic and historical inquiry. Through discussions, primary and secondary sources, hands-on projects, and real-world connections, students gain the skills to analyze the past, understand the present, and imagine a better future.**

## **GRADE 4 – UNITED STATES REGIONS**

Fourth-grade social studies introduces students to the geography, economy, history, and culture of the United States through a regional lens. Students examine how geography shapes daily life by exploring landforms, climate, industries, and traditions across the country. They build early research skills by gathering information, taking notes, and organizing findings into writing and presentations. Map work, creative projects, and class discussions help students make meaningful connections between personal experiences and broader social and environmental systems. The year culminates in America Day, a celebration of each student's state research and growing understanding of what makes the U.S. a diverse and dynamic nation.

## **GRADE 5 – OUR NEIGHBORS TO THE NORTH AND SOUTH**

Fifth-grade students broaden their view of the Americas by exploring the geography, history, and cultures of Canada, Mexico, Central America, and South America. Through a blend of research, map analysis, and cultural exploration, students deepen their understanding of how people adapt to and shape their environments, preserve traditions, and organize their societies. They strengthen their civic thinking by examining how governments function in different countries, while continuing to develop critical research and communication skills. This course emphasizes cultural respect and global awareness, fostering the skills and perspectives of thoughtful, informed citizens.

## **GRADE 6 – WORLD CULTURES (PAST AND PRESENT)**

In sixth grade, students explore ancient civilizations and modern global cultures through the course World Cultures: Past and Present. This class encourages students to think historically and globally as they investigate the beliefs, systems, innovations, and geographic settings that shaped major civilizations. Students develop research and critical thinking skills through inquiry-based projects, case studies, and comparisons between ancient and contemporary societies. By tracing connections from the past to present-day cultural practices, students learn to appreciate global diversity and recognize the enduring impact of historical legacies.

## **GRADE 7 – U.S. CIVICS AND GOVERNMENT**

Seventh-grade social studies centers on civic rights and responsibilities within the context of American government. This foundational civics course guides students through the U.S. Constitution, emphasizing the structure and function of the legislative, executive, and judicial branches. Students consider their role as active citizens by examining the responsibilities of individuals, communities, and institutions in shaping democracy. Historical and contemporary case studies — such as an in-depth exploration of Tulsa's Historic Greenwood District — help students analyze issues through multiple lenses, including culture, environment, economy, and belief systems. Throughout the course, students learn to ask critical questions, engage in civil discourse, and reflect on the values of justice, equity, and civic engagement.

## **GRADE 8 – DEMOCRACY ON THE GLOBAL STAGE**

Eighth-grade social studies explores the global impact of democratic ideals through the lens of 20th- and 21st-century conflicts, movements, and systems of government. In this interdisciplinary course, taught in parallel with English, students examine how war, displacement, propaganda, and ideology have shaped — and been shaped by — democratic values across the world. Using primary and secondary sources, students build research and analytical skills, explore historical and geographic contexts, and consider cultural and civic perspectives. Literature, including “War Horse,” “Uprooted,” and “Animal Farm,” provides rich opportunities to connect historical content with personal and societal themes. Through project-based learning, students develop their ability to synthesize information, evaluate multiple viewpoints, and articulate informed positions on complex global issues.

# Science

**The Middle School Science program builds a strong foundation in scientific literacy by developing six core competencies: Scientific Thinking, Observation, Modeling, Form & Function, Systems Thinking, and Design Thinking. Through hands-on experiments, inquiry-based investigations, and real-world applications, students learn to think like scientists — curious, collaborative, and grounded in evidence. The curriculum emphasizes exploration, reflection, and interdisciplinary thinking as students discover the principles that govern the natural world.**

## **GRADE 4 – FOUNDATIONS OF SCIENCE**

Fourth-grade students develop foundational science skills by engaging in inquiry-based learning across life, earth, and physical sciences. The year begins with a study of nutrition and the six essential nutrients, supporting students as they begin to make independent food choices. Students then explore animal classification by researching vertebrates and creating digital books using Book Creator. In Earth science, they conduct hands-on experiments with rocks, minerals, and crystals — building and erupting volcanoes and testing minerals like geologists. A flight unit introduces the forces of flight through paper airplane design and experimentation, culminating in local competitions. In the spring, students revisit the study of birds, incubating and raising chicks while collecting data on weekly bird walks as citizen scientists for the eBird program. The year concludes with an introduction to circuits and basic coding using Ozobots. Each unit fosters curiosity, creativity, and a solid foundation in scientific thinking.

## **GRADE 5 – FOUNDATIONS OF SCIENCE**

Fifth-grade students continue to strengthen their scientific thinking and observation skills through engaging labs and projects. The year opens with training in lab safety, scientific tools, and the metric system. Students then explore plant biology, investigating growth, reproduction, and adaptation. In the physics unit, students examine force, motion, and simple machines, applying their understanding by designing and building entries for the annual Engineering Fair. A chemistry unit introduces the properties of matter, elements, and the periodic table through hands-on experiments. The year ends with a study of microscopes, where students observe and draw microscopic structures, deepening their skills in observation and model-making. Throughout the year, students approach science as both investigators and designers, laying the groundwork for deeper exploration in middle school.

## **GRADE 6 – FOUNDATIONS OF SCIENCE**

Sixth-grade science serves as a dynamic introduction to integrated scientific thinking and exploration. This foundational course emphasizes inquiry, creativity, and real-world application through experiential, project-based learning. Students engage in a wide range of topics — including neuroscience, engineering design, earth systems, and human biology — while developing

scientific habits of mind and research skills that prepare them for future science courses. Units explore big questions such as “What is knowledge?” and “How do we learn?” and encourage students to connect scientific concepts to their own experiences and the world around them. Major projects include a semester-long independent Genius Hour research project, a year-long naturalist field study, and the signature hot-air balloon engineering challenge. Through hands-on investigation and critical thinking, students gain confidence, curiosity, and a deeper understanding of science as a process of discovery.

## **GRADE 7 – LIFE SCIENCE**

Seventh-grade science invites students to explore the inner workings of life — from the systems that sustain the human body to the microscopic organisms that shape our world. Through a hands-on, inquiry-driven approach, students investigate topics such as cell biology, microbiology, and human anatomy. They examine how cells function, how microbes impact health and the environment, and how body systems work together to maintain homeostasis. Grounded in a competency-based learning model, the course emphasizes mastery, critical thinking, and scientific literacy. Students engage in labs, debates, group work, and interactive activities designed to support diverse learning styles and deepen understanding. The course also incorporates insights from brain-based learning research to support student growth and confidence as scientific thinkers.

## **GRADE 8 – EARTH SCIENCE**

Eighth-grade students engage in a STEM-rich, Next Generation Science Standards-aligned Earth Science course that combines real-world relevance with rigorous scientific inquiry. Students investigate topics such as renewable energy, heat transfer, groundwater systems, and geologic cycles, emphasizing environmental systems and sustainability. Labs and design challenges foster critical thinking and collaboration as students develop explanations and models grounded in evidence. Research projects, hands-on investigations, and engineering tasks build independence and innovation. Instruction is enhanced by Mind Brain Education (MBE) strategies to support deep learning and long-term retention. This course prepares students for high school science with a strong foundation in scientific reasoning, systems thinking, and civic awareness.

# Mathematics

The Middle School mathematics program at Holland Hall is grounded in a comprehensive K–8 curriculum with a clearly defined scope, sequence, and learning outcomes. Our approach emphasizes developing six core competencies: Numerical, Proportional, Algebraic, Spatial, Statistical, and Functional Reasoning. Through rich mathematical experiences and a focus on reasoning over rote procedures, students engage in deep learning that promotes lasting skill retention, higher-level thinking, and transferable problem-solving strategies. We help students build confidence by uncovering mathematical relationships and making sense of key ideas, fostering a mindset that supports independence, curiosity, and long-term success in mathematics.

## GRADE 4

The focus of 4th-grade math is to build a strong foundation in essential mathematical concepts and develop problem-solving skills. Through hands-on activities, students deepen their understanding of place value, multi-digit operations, fractions, and geometry.

### Key Concepts

- » **Place Value:** Understanding numbers up to the millions, rounding, and expanded notation
- » **Operations:** Mastery of addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division with multi-digit numbers
- » **Fractions:** Comparing, simplifying, adding, and subtracting fractions; understanding equivalent fractions
- » **Geometry:** Types of angles, lines, shapes, symmetry, perimeter, and area
- » **Application:** Word problems, logic puzzles, real-world problem-solving

## GRADE 5

In 5th grade, students build on their number sense and mathematical reasoning skills, applying them to more complex topics in geometry, measurement, and data analysis. Hands-on activities help connect math to the real world.

### Key Concepts

- » **Number Sense:** Place value, numerical expressions, and operations with decimals and fractions
- » **Geometry:** Coordinate planes, volume, and geometric relationships
- » **Measurement:** Units of measurement and conversions
- » **Data Analysis:** Introduction to statistical concepts and data interpretation
- » **Problem Solving:** Applying reasoning and multiple strategies to solve complex problems

## GRADE 6

6th-grade math focuses on developing a strong foundation in fractions, decimals, percentages, ratios, and introductory algebraic concepts. The course encourages metacognition and the use of problem-solving strategies.

### Key Concepts

- » **Fractions and Decimals:** Operations with fractions, decimals, and percentages
- » **Ratios:** Understanding ratios and proportional relationships
- » **Integers:** Introduction to integer operations and their properties
- » **Algebra:** Introduction to basic algebraic concepts and language

- » **Problem-Solving:** Developing reasoning and strategy awareness in math tasks

## GRADE 6 – ACCELERATED OVERVIEW

This accelerated course moves at a faster pace, including deeper explorations of fractions, decimals, percentages, ratios, and an introduction to solving simple linear equations.

### Key Concepts

- » **Advanced Fractions and Decimals:** Continued study of fractions, decimals, percentages, and ratios
- » **Linear Equations:** Introduction to simple linear equations and their solutions
- » **Integer Operations:** Exploring operations with integers and their real-world applications
- » **Algebraic Thinking:** Building an understanding of algebraic language and expressions

## GRADE 7 – PRE-ALGEBRA A

Pre-Algebra A is the first part of the pre-algebra curriculum, focusing on the foundational concepts necessary for understanding algebra. This course builds students' number sense, introduces rational numbers, and develops problem-solving and logical thinking skills.

### Key Concepts

- » **Factors and Multiples:** Understanding prime numbers, greatest common factors, and least common multiples
- » **Rational Numbers:** Operations with positive and negative fractions and decimals
- » **Expressions and Equations:** Simplifying expressions and solving basic linear equations
- » **Geometry:** Concepts like angles, shapes, perimeter, area, and volume
- » **Problem Solving:** Developing logical thinking and strategies for solving real-world mathematical problems

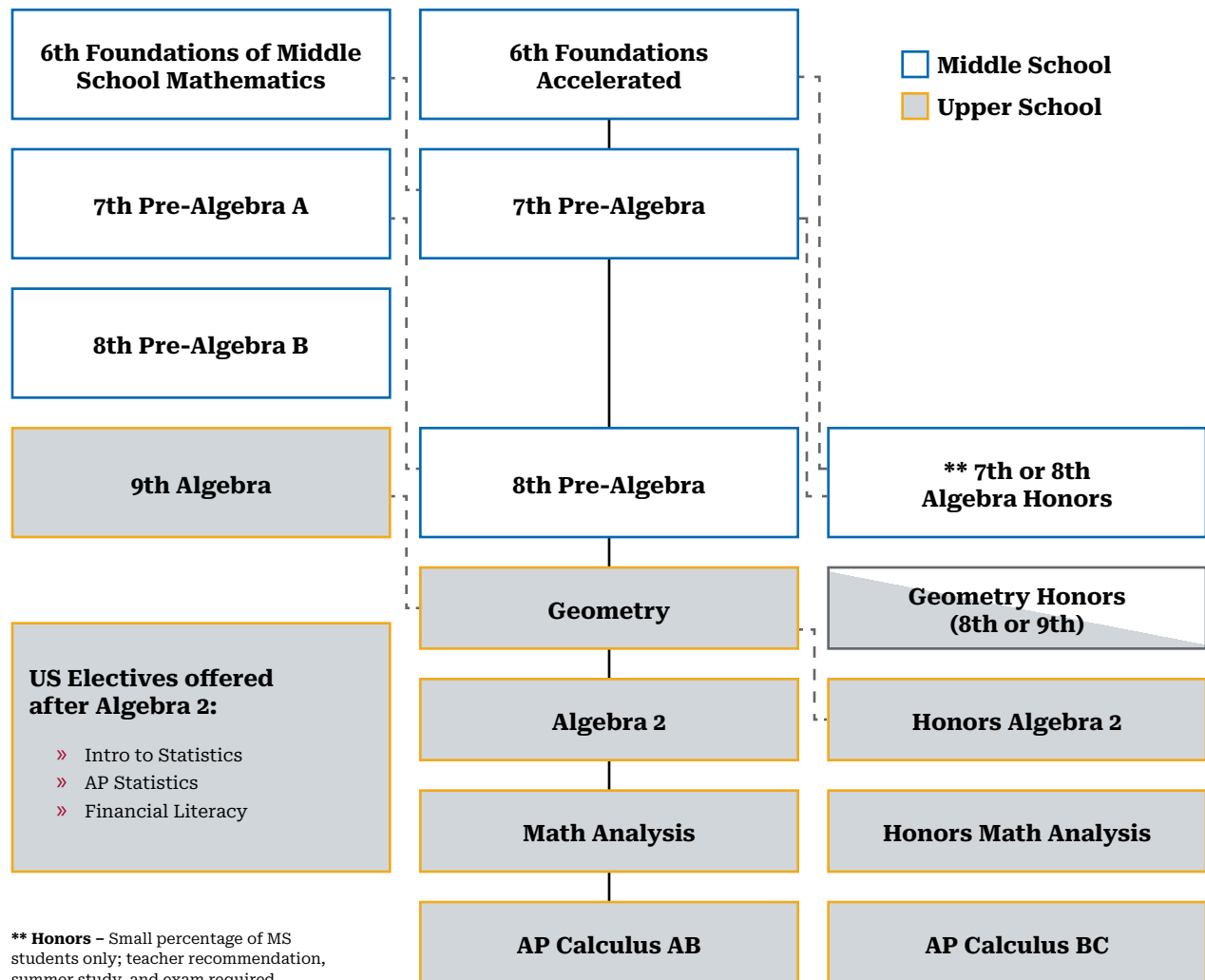
## GRADE 7 – PRE-ALGEBRA (FULL YEAR)

The full-year Pre-Algebra course is designed for students who are ready for a deeper dive into algebraic concepts. This course combines both Pre-Algebra A and B, providing students with a thorough understanding of algebra fundamentals while building essential skills for success in Algebra I.

### Key Concepts

- » **Real Numbers:** Understanding and manipulating real numbers, including rational numbers
- » **Proportional Relationships:** Solving and applying problems involving proportions, ratios, and percentages

## Middle School & US Math Progression



- » **Linear Equations:** Writing, solving, and graphing linear equations
- » **Inequalities:** Solving and graphing inequalities
- » **Functions and Graphing:** Introduction to functions and using graphs to represent linear relationships
- » **Problem Solving:** Applying mathematical concepts to a wide range of real-world problems

### GRADE 8 – PRE-ALGEBRA B

Pre-Algebra B continues the work from earlier pre-algebra courses, focusing on complex algebraic concepts, including systems of equations, ratios, and proportional reasoning. This course prepares students for Algebra I by enhancing their understanding of variables and equations.

#### Key Concepts

- » **Rational Numbers:** Expanding operations with fractions, decimals, and negative numbers
- » **Linear Systems:** Introduction to solving and graphing systems of equations
- » **Slope:** Understanding the concept of slope and its relationship to linear equations

- » **Algebraic Equations:** Solving multi-step equations and inequalities
- » **Geometric Applications:** Applying algebra to geometric problems involving area, volume, and coordinate geometry

### GRADE 8 – ALGEBRA

Algebra is the first formal course in algebraic thinking and symbol manipulation. Students explore equations, inequalities, functions, and graphs in depth while solving a wide range of algebraic problems, preparing them for high school algebra and beyond.

#### Key Concepts

- » **Linear Equations:** Writing, solving, and graphing linear equations and systems of equations
- » **Quadratic Equations:** Solving quadratic equations by factoring and graphing
- » **Functions:** Understanding functions and their representations
- » **Polynomials and Exponents:** Operations with polynomials and exponents
- » **Rational Expressions:** Simplifying and solving rational expressions
- » **Problem Solving:** Applying algebra to real-world problems

# World Languages

**The Middle School World Languages program develops five core competencies: Reading, Writing, Speaking, Listening, and Cultural Awareness. Students are introduced to language learning through engaging, age-appropriate activities and authentic materials, allowing them to communicate in the target language while exploring global cultures. Through diverse cultural perspectives, students develop empathy and curiosity, preparing them with the foundational skills needed for continued language study in high school.**

## **GRADES 4-5 – LANGUAGE EXPOSURE**

The Middle School language program introduces students to Spanish and French, building essential skills in reading, writing, speaking, and listening while exploring the cultures of the Spanish- and French-speaking worlds. Starting in Grades 4 and 5, students are exposed to both languages to spark curiosity and build foundational language awareness, preparing them for more advanced studies in later years.

## **SPANISH & FRENCH – LEVEL A**

Spanish and French A are introductory courses designed for students with little or no prior exposure to the languages. The focus is on learning basic vocabulary and core grammar through real-life communication in simple contexts. Students engage in basic conversations while exploring cultural elements such as traditions, history, art, and geography from the Spanish- and French-speaking worlds. These foundational skills prepare students for more in-depth language study in subsequent years.

## **SPANISH & FRENCH – LEVEL B**

Spanish and French B build upon the skills developed in the introductory level, focusing on expanding vocabulary, refining

grammatical structures, and enhancing communication skills. Students practice using the present tense and begin to explore new tenses — such as the preterit tense in Spanish and the simple future tense in French. Cultural explorations deepen students' understanding of the diverse traditions and customs in Hispanic and Francophone countries. This level helps students strengthen their ability to communicate more effectively in real-life situations while developing reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills.

## **SPANISH & FRENCH – LEVEL C**

Spanish and French C are advanced courses designed for students who have completed Spanish A and B (or an equivalent course). Students focus on refining their communication skills through more complex vocabulary, grammar, and cultural topics. In Spanish, the emphasis is on the present and preterit tenses, with cultural lessons about Spain and Spanish artists. In French, students explore the present, future, and passé composé tenses, while learning about the daily life, holidays, and culture of Francophone countries. By the end of these courses, students will have achieved a level of proficiency equivalent to high school language courses, earning a world language credit upon successful completion.

# Fine Arts

**The Fine Arts program in Middle School nurtures creativity, self-expression, and a lifelong appreciation for the arts. Grounded in four core competencies, Engaging in the Creative Process, Producing/Performing/Presenting, Connecting to Culture and History, and Reflecting/Responding/Analyzing, the curriculum offers students diverse opportunities to explore visual art, music, and performance. Through hands-on experiences and meaningful reflection, students develop artistic confidence, deepen their understanding of cultural contexts, and learn to express ideas with originality and purpose.**

## GRADES 4-5 – MUSIC

Fourth and Fifth-grade music engage students in a wide range of musical experiences that include Orff instruments, body percussion, recorders, drumming, singing, folk dancing, and creative movement. Through themed weekly activities, students build skills in music theory, sight reading, and creative expression. Instruction is designed to activate kinesthetic, auditory, and visual learning, with opportunities for individual, small-group, and full-class participation. The course fosters musical growth, collaboration, and a joyful appreciation of music from around the world.

## GRADES 6-8 – MUSIC: BAND, ORCHESTRA, AND CHOIR

In sixth grade, students choose one of three year-long music classes: Band, Orchestra, or Choir. These ensembles meet during the school day and serve as the foundation for students' musical development throughout Middle School. Each group performs in two formal concerts per semester and may participate in additional campus events. Music teachers visit fifth-grade classrooms to introduce students to each course and help guide their decisions.

- » Band is an instrumental ensemble made up of wind and percussion instruments. Students may choose from flute, clarinet, trumpet, trombone, or percussion.
- » Orchestra features string instruments and offers students the opportunity to study violin, viola, cello, or bass.
- » Choir is a vocal ensemble focused on vocal technique, ensemble singing, and performance.

## ELECTIVES

### Grades 4-5 – Building Creative Foundations

#### Visual Art

Students explore a variety of artistic techniques — drawing, painting, printmaking, and clay work — while learning key artistic concepts such as composition, color theory, and texture. Projects are inspired by famous artists and global art traditions, helping students build technical skills, creative expression, and appreciation for the role of art in society. Collaboration and constructive critique are woven into the experience, supporting artistic growth and confidence.

#### Drama

Drama in 4th and 5th grade lays the groundwork for confident self-expression and communication. Through games, storytelling, and performance, students practice public speaking, develop empathy, and build awareness of self and others. Drama also introduces basic elements of theatre, encouraging students to work collaboratively while having fun.

## Grade 6 – Expanding Skills and Self-Expression

### Visual Art

Sixth-grade art builds on foundational techniques and introduces a wider range of 2D and 3D media, including drawing, painting, printmaking, mixed media, collage, sculpture, and pottery. Students explore both contemporary and historical art perspectives while studying renowned artists. Emphasis is placed on creative expression, technical skills, and the elements of art.

### C3: Code, Connect, Create

This course introduces students to the iPad as a powerful tool for creation and communication. Students engage in hands-on digital projects using a variety of apps while building skills in coding, slide design, research sharing, data analysis, and source evaluation.

### Drama

Drama continues to develop public speaking, creative thinking, and performance skills through improvisation, storytelling, and collaborative games. Students explore theatre and film production elements while building self-confidence, empathy, and communication skills in a supportive environment.

## Grade 7 – Exploring Media and Personal Voice

### Visual Art

Seventh-grade art deepens students' technical and expressive skills through continued exploration of 2D and 3D media. Students study historical and contemporary artists to inform projects in painting, drawing, collage, mixed media, printmaking, sculpture, and pottery. Emphasis is placed on personal expression, evaluation, and craftsmanship.

### Photography

In this introductory photography course, students explore the fundamentals of composition and visual storytelling using point-and-shoot digital cameras. They develop a basic understanding of image-making principles and are provided with all necessary materials for printing and presentation.

### Drama

Drama students continue to refine communication, collaboration, and performance skills. Through daily activities in improvisation, design, and acting, students deepen their understanding of theatre and develop clarity, confidence, and creativity in their expression.



### **Grade 8: Refining Artistic Technique and Voice**

#### **2D Art**

This enrichment course focuses on drawing as a tool for personal expression. Students use pencils, colored pencils, and markers to develop line, shading, and composition skills. Projects are tailored to individual interests and guided with personal feedback, supporting each student's artistic growth in a positive and encouraging environment.

#### **3D Art**

In this ceramics-based course, students explore the art of clay through both hand-building techniques (pinch, coil, slab) and an introduction to wheel throwing. Projects emphasize craftsmanship, creativity, and cultural context. As skills develop, students gain more freedom to design expressive and functional ceramic pieces. Group critique and teacher demonstrations support learning and growth.

#### **Drama**

Eighth-grade Drama synthesizes years of skill-building through continued work in public speaking, improvisation, production, and ensemble collaboration. Students refine their ability to communicate effectively and empathetically, preparing them for future academic and creative pursuits.

# Library Technology

**The Middle School Library program nurtures a love of reading, supports academic inquiry, and equips students with the skills to navigate a complex world of information. Through developmentally appropriate instruction, students grow as readers, researchers, and critical thinkers. Across all grade levels, the library promotes ethical use of information, digital literacy, and an appreciation for diverse perspectives in literature. The library is a central partner in student learning, collaborating with classroom teachers to integrate research skills and resources into subject-based projects.**

## **GRADES 4-5 – BUILDING HABITS OF INQUIRY AND JOY IN READING**

### **4th Grade**

Fourth-grade students are introduced to essential library skills and begin building the foundations for independent research. They learn how to care for books, navigate the library, and locate resources using both print and digital tools. Research experiences are tied to classroom learning, including units in science, social studies, reading, and religion. Students formulate simple questions, gather information from trusted sources, and begin practicing citation basics. They also explore a variety of genres and develop reading identities, participating in reading challenges that encourage personal growth and empathy through literature.

### **5th Grade**

Fifth-grade students continue to build confidence in their ability to ask meaningful questions and conduct research. They learn to evaluate sources for credibility, locate materials using library catalogs and databases, and organize their findings into bibliographies. With increased exposure to fiction and nonfiction texts, students deepen their understanding of how books serve as “mirrors,” “windows,” and “sliding glass doors.” Genre exploration continues, and students are encouraged to reflect on their reading preferences and goals. Research experiences align with content areas such as mythology, Mesoamerican cultures, and the study of prophets.

## **GRADES 6-8 – ADVANCING RESEARCH, LITERACY, AND CRITICAL THINKING**

In grades 6–8, students deepen their research and literacy skills through cross-curricular projects that emphasize inquiry, analysis, and ethical information use. They learn to evaluate digital and print sources for credibility and bias, cite accurately, and synthesize information into thoughtful arguments and presentations. Library instruction supports long-term projects such as argumentative essays, the 40 Book Challenge, Genius Hour, Downtown Studies, Shark Tank, and historical research in social studies. Students grow as independent readers and scholars, preparing for high school-level expectations in research and academic integrity.

# PE/Athletics

**Our program strives to inspire students to find joy in physical activity, build confidence through movement, and discover activities they can enjoy for a lifetime. The physical education and athletic program fosters lifelong fitness habits, teamwork, and personal growth.**

## **GRADES 4-6 – BUILDING FOUNDATIONS FOR MOVEMENT AND TEAMWORK**

The physical education program for grades 4 through 6 focuses on developing foundational movement skills and preparing students for more advanced athletic opportunities in middle school.

- » **4th Grade:** Students begin by mastering basic movement skills, including locomotor movements, dribbling (with feet and hands), catching, throwing, spatial awareness, and striking. Emphasis is placed on developing proper form and coordination.
- » **5th Grade:** Students build on these core skills by applying them in more complex ways. They engage in small-sided gameplay that fosters teamwork, decision-making, and an understanding of game strategy. This stage encourages students to work together and begin thinking tactically during physical activities.
- » **6th Grade:** Students start transitioning to more realistic game scenarios, preparing them for participation in competitive sports and teams in 7th grade. They are also introduced to basic fitness machines in the weight room, establishing safe, age-appropriate strength training habits.

Throughout all three years, students are exposed to a variety of lifetime sports and activities — such as pickleball, Frisbee, and others — that promote enjoyment in movement and overall well-being. These activities are designed to foster a long-term appreciation for physical activity.

## **GRADES 7-8 – ADVANCING ATHLETIC SKILLS AND COMPETITION**

In 7th and 8th grade, the athletic program expands to offer students opportunities for growth through both competitive and non-competitive sports. The school year is divided into three athletic seasons, each allowing students to choose a sport or continue with physical education.

- » **Fall Sports:** Football, Cross Country, Field Hockey, Volleyball
- » **Winter Sports:** Basketball, Wrestling, Dance, Strength & Conditioning (non-competitive)
- » **Spring Sports:** Tennis, Track & Field, Baseball, Soccer, Golf, Dance

At this stage, students deepen their skills and understanding of each sport, while also learning valuable life lessons in commitment, teamwork, and sportsmanship. Coaches focus on building technical skills, game knowledge, and character development, both on and off the field. The goal is to help students grow as well-rounded athletes and teammates, cultivating a lifelong appreciation for physical activity and collaboration.

# Wellness and Learning Support at Holland Hall





## Wellness at Holland Hall

Wellness at Holland Hall follows an intentional, developmentally appropriate path from Preschool 3s through Senior year. Grounded in a whole-child, whole-team approach, the program supports students' physical, social, emotional, ethical, and intellectual well-being. Each year, students deepen their understanding of themselves and others while building the skills and strategies needed to make healthy, informed choices.

While specific "Wellness" lessons are part of the curriculum across divisions, wellness education is not limited to one class or role. Teachers in all areas contribute meaningfully—embedding themes of self-care, self-advocacy, empathy, resilience, and positive peer interaction into classroom experiences, conversations, small-group moments, and experiential learning. At Holland Hall, every teacher plays a part in supporting student wellness because every teacher deeply cares for students' growth and development.

### Wellness Programming (Grades 4–5)

Themes of wellness, self-awareness, empathy, diversity, problem solving, and resilience are thoughtfully integrated into the daily experience of students in Grades 4 and 5—through classroom lessons across all subjects, weekly chapel services, and advisory programming.

Students also meet with the school counselor multiple times throughout the year for dedicated Wellness lessons. Topics explored include self-care, friendship, healthy and unhealthy relationships, empathy, diversity and inclusion, digital citizenship, and how to be an upstander rather than a bystander.

In addition to these structured lessons, teachers reinforce wellness concepts by weaving them into their everyday teaching and through organic individual and small group conversations that support social-emotional growth.

### Wellness Programming (Grades 6–8)

Themes of wellness, self-awareness, empathy, diversity, problem solving, and resilience are intentionally woven throughout the student experience, integrated into classroom lessons across all subjects, weekly chapel services, and advisory programming.

Students in Grades 6-8 meet with the school counselor and/or dean of students multiple times per cycle for wellness-focused lessons.

- » Grade 6 students attend Wellness class twice per cycle and a Life Skills class twice per cycle, each for one quarter of the school year.
- » Grades 7 and 8 attend Wellness class three times per cycle for one quarter of the school year.

These lessons expand on foundational topics introduced in earlier grades, offering deeper exploration and more opportunities for discussion, reflection, and personal growth. In 6th and 7th grades, students begin to explore topics related to drug use and risky behaviors. By 8th grade, students also receive age-appropriate sexual wellness education.

In addition to these structured lessons, teachers reinforce wellness themes in their everyday interactions—through integrated curriculum connections, ongoing skill development, and organic conversations in both individual and small-group settings.



## Learning Support at Holland Hall

Holland Hall is committed to supporting all learners through a research-informed, developmentally appropriate approach. Our Learning Support services are designed to help students with varying strengths and challenges thrive in a college preparatory environment. We believe in partnering with students, families, and teachers to build academic confidence, independence, and success.

In the Middle School, two full-time Learning Support Specialists work closely with classroom teachers to provide a tiered system of support. This includes whole-class instruction, small-group sessions, one-on-one support, and integrated coaching for executive functioning and academic strategies.

For students with documented learning needs, Holland Hall provides Learning Assistance Plans (LAPs) that outline specific classroom accommodations. These plans are developed in collaboration with families and reviewed regularly by advisors, teachers, and the Learning Support team to ensure consistent implementation.

### Tiered Academic Support

We believe that early, proactive academic support is key to helping students succeed. Support may take the following forms:

- » **Teacher Help Sessions:** Students are encouraged to seek extra help directly from their teachers before school (starting at 7:45 a.m.), during lunch or recess, during study hall, or after school. These sessions should be scheduled in advance.
- » **Learning Support Services:** Learning Specialists regularly work in classrooms, collaborate with teaching teams, and provide targeted small-group or one-on-one instruction during class, study halls, or outside the regular school day.
- » **After-School Study Hall:** On designated days, faculty and

Learning Support Specialists supervise a structured study hall. Teachers may recommend this support for students who benefit from guided pacing, task initiation, and organization coaching.

- » **Peer Tutoring:** When appropriate, Upper School peer tutors may be matched with Middle School students for one-on-one or small group support during study halls or outside of school hours.
- » **Outside Tutoring:** If a student requires more intensive, individualized instruction beyond what can be provided at school, the educational team may recommend a professional outside tutor in consultation with the family.

### Executive Function Framework

Supporting students' executive functioning is a central focus of Middle School Learning Support. These skills are introduced and developed progressively across grade levels:

- » **Grades 4-5:** Students are introduced to core executive functioning concepts, including brain science, self-awareness, and basic strategies. These are integrated into the classroom environment through direct instruction and modeling.
- » **Grade 6:** Students review and refine key strategies—such as planning, time management, and self-monitoring—and begin applying them to increasingly complex assignments.
- » **Grades 7-8:** Students build independence by managing multi-step projects, using tools like checklists, graphic organizers, and digital planners. Teachers and Learning Specialists help students reflect on their academic habits and develop personalized systems that work for them.

At every level, the goal of Learning Support is to empower students to understand how they learn, advocate for their needs, and develop the tools necessary for continued success in middle school and beyond.



## Clubs/Recess/Lunch

### COMMUNITY LIFE BEYOND THE CLASSROOM

At Holland Hall, we believe that a rich and balanced school experience extends well beyond academics. Daily routines and co-curricular opportunities such as clubs, recess, and lunch are intentionally designed to support students' growth, connection, and well-being. These moments provide space for exploration, creativity, social development, and rest—helping students build community, develop leadership and interpersonal skills, and return to their academic work recharged and engaged.

### CLUBS

Students are encouraged to explore their interests and get involved by joining clubs. Each year, students have the opportunity to create new clubs with the support of a faculty sponsor, allowing our offerings to evolve based on student passions. However, some clubs remain a staple of our community, including Student Council (with officer positions for 7th and 8th graders), MathCounts, Academic Team, 4th Grade Science Club, and Dutch Run Club. Clubs typically meet before or after school, providing flexible opportunities for participation. More detailed information about club offerings, meeting times, and how to join will be shared in the Dutch Weekly.

### RECESS

All students have dedicated recess time each day, providing them with essential opportunities for physical activity, social interaction, and unstructured play. Recess is a vital part of the school day, supporting students' physical health, cognitive development, and emotional well-being. Through play, students develop critical social skills such as cooperation, problem-solving, and conflict resolution, while also gaining a much-needed mental break that enhances focus and engagement in the classroom. Whether through active games, creative play, or simply enjoying fresh air, recess helps students return to their learning environment re-energized and ready to succeed.

### LUNCH

Students enjoy a dedicated lunch period each day in the Tandy Dining Hall, providing them with time to refuel, connect with peers, and take a break from academic responsibilities. Lunch is more than just a meal for us, it is an important part of the school day that fosters community, social development, and overall well-being. Students have the opportunity to build relationships, practice conversation skills, and engage in meaningful interactions in a relaxed setting. A balanced and unhurried lunch period ensures that students return to class feeling refreshed, focused, and ready to learn. Students may bring their own lunch or purchase lunch.

