

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Middle School (6th – 8th grade)

Increasing Challenge and Complexity

In early adolescence, students are capable of more complex and abstract thinking than they have been before. Academic subjects delve more deeply into content, presenting more real-world complexity and contradiction than before, challenging students to look past the surface evaluate, compare, and project. We emphasize real-world problems and work together to understand them.

Nurturing the Whole Person

Middle school begins a time of deep, sometimes challenging personal growth for many adolescents. Peer relationships become very important, bodies begin to change, and identity becomes a preoccupation. At Chicago Friends School, we nurture the student through these changes in a variety of ways. We use the inclusive and informative *Our Whole Lives* human sexuality curriculum to help students understand the changes they are undergoing physically and socially. We emphasize fair interpersonal relationships and understanding in our socio-emotional curriculum.

To help students locate and nurture a strong positive self-conception, we provide a rich, multifaceted school experience in which students develop a sense of self in ways beyond academics: socially, creatively, athletically, and spiritually.

Preparation for High School

In middle school, we begin to prepare students for the rigors of high school. Grades are introduced for the first time. Importance and frequency of homework assignments are increased, students begin to take tests and have consequential individual assignments to complete. Students are also given more autonomy and more responsibility in the life of the school.



CURRICULUM

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Language Arts instruction engages students in reading literature and writing in a variety of formats and genres. The text becomes more challenging both in the level of language and also in complexity of narrative and emotional content. Students write creatively, persuasively, and factually, with a growing emphasis on the skills needed to produce a polished written product.

Math classes use the *Singapore Math* curriculum to provide a solid preparation for high school math. Pre-algebra and algebra concepts, geometry, and some pre-trigonometry ideas are explored.

Social Studies delves into contemporary society as well as examining key events from our shared history. Students examine topics such as economics, religion, and politics that can be complex and multifaceted. The voices and perspectives of people not in power are explicitly included.

Science uses both inquiry and more traditional approaches to involve students in mastery of fundamental science content and the use of scientific inquiry, evidence, and experimentation to investigate the world and make sound conclusions.

Spanish instruction continues to develop students' vocabulary and ability to have short conversations in Spanish and to read and write simple Spanish phrases.

Service Learning engages middle school students in designing and developing school-wide and individual service projects that have consequence in the world.

Music classes engage students in collaboration to create music, composition, and performance.

Visual Arts instruction emphasizes both self-expression and the development of technique. Students examine the work of classical and contemporary artists for inspiration and cultural understanding.

Movement and Mindfulness Gym classes provide a grounding in sports and sportsmanship. Middle school students have recess and time to play, run, and develop their bodies. Yoga engages students in mindfulness, gentle movement, and positive stillness.

