

### Overview

### THE ARTS

DCD fosters the belief that the arts are an essential part of educating the whole child. The school has a long and rich tradition in the arts and believes that effective self-expression comes from commitment, hard work, and exploration. The solid foundation, established in early grades, gives children an opportunity to develop the confidence, creativity, and appreciation of the artistic process that flowers in the middle school program. To ensure a balanced experience in the arts, students are engaged throughout the year in four disciplines: music, drama, woodworking, and visual arts.

In middle school, students are required to take three arts courses per term (for a total of nine courses per year), including at least one course from each discipline (music, visual art, woodworking, drama/technology) during the course of the year. In addition, sixth graders are required to take World Music; seventh-graders are required to take Art History, and eighth-graders are required to take *Smooth Talk*. *Smooth Talk* is a course dedicated to public speaking, introspective thinking and writing, and interview skill building to prepare students for the secondary school application process and transition to high school. For their remaining electives, students select from the courses detailed below.

All arts courses meet two days out of six per term (unless otherwise specified). With the exception of the grade-specific requirements named above and each grade's class play, arts classes are cross-grade offerings, resulting in classroom environments of mixed ages and developmental levels. Class enrollments are kept small to allow teachers to provide meaningful, individualized attention and instruction.

### COURSE OFFERINGS

*(Please note, this is not a complete list as classes change from year to year)*

#### DRAMA

##### Smooth Talk

This course will give Eighth Grade students the opportunity to take an advanced public speaking course that is specifically geared towards the leaders of our school. Students will write and perform a speech, learn interview skills, and gain confidence whether speaking in class or in formal group presentations. The course will help students gain confidence for their final year at DCD, and for their life outside our school. This course is required for all Eighth Graders

### **Class Play**

Students in Sixth, Seventh and Eighth Grades who have chosen to act in their class play will have the exciting opportunity to learn speaking roles, develop acting skills, and put on a full production of a play. This is an exciting opportunity for students to be leaders of the middle school drama program.

### **WOODWORKING**

#### **Milk Stool**

This course will offer an opportunity to build a traditional wooden ‘milk stool.’ These stools have been made in Europe and America for centuries, and were often handmade by New England farmers as a winter project during the era of family-run dairies. Milking stools came in many shapes and sizes, each unique to their maker. They could have three legs or four, extensions to rest a bucket on, be collapsible (to be carried out into the field), have interesting seat shapes, or varying combinations of wood or joinery techniques. Students will have a chance to learn more about this fascinating history, design their own stool, and use it at home for years to come.

#### **Box Creation**

Students will take a deeper dive into the world of joinery in this course, learning how to make finger (or “box”) joints. We start by practicing on plywood and exploring the many aspects of joinery—from using a combination square and ruler to create a layout to using a Gents saw, Japanese Hand Saw, and/or coping saw to cut out the waste. After making 1-2 practice joints, students pick from a variety of exotic hardwoods and begin to make their layout on their final wood. Students create their own dimensions and think carefully about grain orientation in their layout. Tops and bottoms are glued in, with the design of the top being a unique opportunity for each student to customize their box.

#### **Hand-Carved Bowl**

This course will focus on the making of small hand carved bowls and the design aspects that make them pleasing to the eye. Design considerations such as scale and dimension will be examined and discussed. Students will have a wide array of woods to work in. Types of wood will include green and seasoned, wormy wood, some figured woods and finally, some bowl stock wood will be sourced from the DCD campus! A large number of gouges will be used in the carving out of the bowls and both paint and oil finishes will be discussed and presented for possible use.

### **VISUAL ART**

#### **Ceramics**

Students will use hand-building techniques to construct ceramic pieces of varying sizes. Students will start small to become adept with the skills necessary to produce a successful piece and then progress to larger forms. Students will also have the opportunity to work on the potter's wheel to create simple, functional pottery. A variety of methods will be used to finish the fired pots.

#### **Fibers**

Students will learn different ways of working with fibers. They will practice flat and circular weaving and will learn how to coil baskets. Students can choose to work with natural materials, as well. After learning the basics, students will be able to focus and expand on one method for a final project.

#### **Printmaking**

In this class, there will be a heavy emphasis on the design process. Safe cutting techniques will be stressed. Students will be able to focus on building their print portfolios using imaginative approaches to printmaking.

#### **Calligraphy**

This course is an introduction to Italic Cursive calligraphy. We will practice letter formation and learn about spacing and page layout. Present a hand lettered motivational quote, poem or an excerpt from a favorite book, as your final project.

### **MUSIC**

#### **Sound Sculpture**

Using primarily acoustic instruments and sound sources (both traditional and spontaneous), students will learn to create composed and improvised works. Emphasis will be placed on using mood and texture to create expressive and evocative pieces. Students will listen and respond to a variety of contemporary musical examples. Using recording software on their laptops, students will record and edit their work. No instrumental proficiency or experience is required to participate.

### **DCD Band**

Band offers dedicated and experienced instrumentalists an ensemble experience where they can expand and hone their musical skills. Drawing on repertoire from blues, jazz, and pop/rock literatures, this course will allow students to learn and perform music in a range of styles while developing reading, listening, and ensemble/performance skills. The repertoire will be accessible yet challenging. Students are expected to devote regular outside-of-class practice time to preparing for rehearsals and performances. The band will perform in various holiday and performing arts programs throughout the year.

*Please note: Students are expected to participate in all three terms.*

### **World Music**

Like people, music comes in all shapes, sizes, colors, and textures. In this course, students will listen to music from a wide variety of styles and cultures; learn how music functions in different cultures, societies, and settings; and determine how music from other cultures has influenced the music we listen to today. Students will discover that music has a powerful influence on people and is an important part of every culture on earth.

*Please note: This course is required for all Sixth Graders*

### **Percussion Ensemble**

Boom-ba-da-bing! Percussion Ensemble allows you to try your hand at a range of percussion instruments. We will use mallets, latin percussion, hand drums, and traditional concert percussion to create a colorful blend of rhythm. Prior experience is not necessary but may be helpful.

### **Introduction to Acoustic Guitar**

Students will be introduced to basic chord progressions, note reading, and the music theory behind learning to play guitar. Knowledge of reading music is not required. Each student will be given a variety of songs to practice, sing, and play. School-owned acoustic guitars will be loaned to each student for the term. Practicing is considered homework and is a requirement of the course.

### **Introduction to Ukulele**

Students will be introduced to basic chord progressions, note reading, and the music theory behind learning to play ukulele. Knowledge of reading music is not required. Each student will

be given a variety of songs to practice, sing, and play. School-owned ukuleles will be loaned to each student for the term. Practicing is considered homework and is a requirement of the course.

### **Popular Music**

Musicians are inspired by other musicians. Over time, genres are influenced and changed, eventually resulting in new genres. In this course, students will explore the evolution of popular music over the past century, from blues, to jazz, to rock and roll, and hip hop. Additionally, we will learn how music is influenced by social forces. Students will develop skills in music analysis, interpretation, and production as they investigate the modernisation of popular music.

### **Chorus**

The Chorus is a performing group that meets for three consecutive terms. Students choosing to participate must do so for all three terms. This group is a Middle School elective for students wishing to learn more about singing and performing. Singers of all abilities are welcome to join. The overall objective is for students to learn and work together while creating music. Suitable vocal repertoire will be introduced, which will incorporate multiple themes, genres, and traditions. Students who choose to sing in the chorus are expected to participate in all three performances.

Performances for each term:

Fall: Thanksgiving Assembly

Winter: Holiday Assembly

Spring: Visual and Performing Arts Assembly

*Please note: Concert dress is a requirement for all performances, unless otherwise noted.*

## **TECHNOLOGY**

### **Filmmaking**

Students will work together to create a cohesive film on a subject of the groups' choosing. Students will create storyboards and look at cinematic examples for inspiration. Working in production "teams" to complete individual story chapters, we'll utilize film techniques as the "rule of thirds," effective microphone placement, and perspective to create a cohesive finished piece. Students will then showcase their short films to the class.

### **Photoshop**

This course teaches students to manipulate digital images using Photoshop, a powerful graphic

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tool that can be used to enhance desktop publishing, hypermedia, or Web sites. Students will learn the tools of Photoshop to edit and create images.