

A PARENT'S GUIDE TO THE ACADEMIC PROGRAM

SACRED HEART SCHOOLS
CURRICULUM OVERVIEW 2017-2018

THE PRIMARY SCHOOL

- Kindergarten
- First Grade
- Second Grade

THE LOWER SCHOOL

- Third Grade
- Fourth Grade
- Fifth Grade

THE MIDDLE SCHOOL

- Sixth Grade
- Seventh Grade
- Eighth Grade

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THE MISSION



THE *FIVE GOALS*

Sacred Heart Schools are Catholic, independent single-sex elementary schools that warmly welcome children of all faiths. We are committed to providing academic excellence within the context of a Christian, faith-based community.

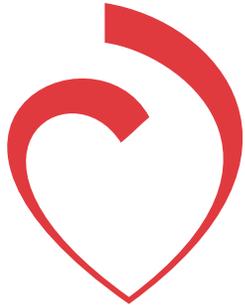
Our educational mission is deeply rooted in the more than 200-year tradition of the Society of Sacred Heart and shared with the Network of Sacred Heart Schools located in 30 countries, including 24 schools in the United States and Canada.

The essence of this tradition is the total development of each child – spiritual, intellectual, social, emotional, and physical – and is based on the following five goals:

- A personal and active faith in God
- A deep respect for intellectual values
- A social awareness which impels to action
- The building of community as a Christian value
- Personal growth in an atmosphere of wise freedom

These five *Goals and Criteria* form the framework of a Sacred Heart education.

A SACRED HEART EDUCATION



LETTER FROM THE HEAD OF SCHOOLS

In 1804, when the Religious of the Sacred Heart first wrote the Plan of Studies, they formulated a program of education that would give life to the vision of their foundress, St. Madeleine Sophie Barat. St. Madeleine Sophie's passion was to provide each child an opportunity to learn and grow in every dimension of what it means to be a human being. On June 23, 1876, that tradition found roots here in Chicago in what would eventually become Sacred Heart Schools on Sheridan Road. Since then, our educational experience has had at its core a belief that children prosper when they are nurtured and educated in a supportive community that models the values of faith and life-long learning.

Today, Sacred Heart Schools is proud to be part of a Network of more than 200 Sacred Heart educational institutions around the world. While each local learning community gives unique character to the mission of Sacred Heart, the Network of 24 schools in the United States and Canada articulates our common mission through the five *Goals and Criteria* of Sacred Heart education. Each of these Goals expresses values we feel are essential to what it means to profit from a Sacred Heart education: faith, intellect, service, community, and personal growth. The Goals are integral to our life here—informing our choices and guiding our decision-making.

With this rich heritage as our pedigree, we have developed a curriculum that is both challenging and supportive of our diverse learners. Within each academic division of the Schools, developmentally appropriate methods are used to address the needs of students. After kindergarten, students move into

single-gender classrooms, which encourages student engagement, discourages stereotypes and builds confidence on a daily basis. An enrichment program, learning assistance program, and a wide variety of extracurricular opportunities complement the core curriculum that includes instruction in French, Spanish, technology, art, music, physical education, and religious education at every grade level.

As you review the information on the academic program here at Sacred Heart Schools in Chicago, I invite you to consider the words of Janet Erskine Stuart, RSCJ, a Sacred Heart educator of the late 19th century: “We bring up children for the future, not the present... Our education is not meant to turn out the children small and finished, but seriously begun on a wide basis.”

Thank you for taking the time to explore our more than 200-year-old mission of educating the head and the heart flourishing here on Sheridan Road in a forward-thinking, dynamic learning community.

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

Nat Wilburn
Head of Schools



ACADEMIC PROGRAM SUBJECT AREA OVERVIEWS

THE FOLLOWING PRICIPLES GUIDE
OUR DEVELOPMENT OF CURRICULUM
IN EACH SUBJECT AREA.

LANGUAGE ARTS

The language arts—reading, writing, speaking, and listening—are central to all learning. They are the abilities that enable one to think logically and creatively; express ideas; and search for, organize, evaluate, and apply information. The Sacred Heart Schools language arts curriculum enables students to become literate individuals who use language successfully for learning and communication in personal and public contexts.

Reading provides students with a means of accessing the ideas and experience of others. At Sacred Heart, students become familiar with exemplary authors and literary works through a sustained study of literature, both classical and contemporary. Students develop effective reading strategies focusing on both comprehension (understanding) and analysis (interpretation) of a wide variety of literary styles. Students come to recognize that reading is not only a means of acquiring knowledge, but also a pleasurable activity that enhances their daily lives.

Writing enables students to explore, shape, and clarify their thoughts and communicate them to others. Frequent writing practice across a variety of situations enables students to expand both their knowledge base and their critical thinking skills. Through our Sacred Heart Writing Program, students in grades K-8 develop and produce work in the areas of narrative, opinion and persuasive writing. Teachers and students share a common vocabulary to compose, revise and assess written work. Writing is an integrated aspect of all subject area curricula.

Through **listening and speaking**, students communicate and receive experiences, information, and opinions, and learn to understand themselves and others. Oral language is the foundation of literacy, and many of the skills used in reading and writing are first learned and practiced through oral language. Opportunities are provided across the curriculum for students to develop confidence in their oral language and active listening abilities. In nurturing the skills of careful listening and thoughtful response, Sacred

Heart strives to create a school community that models attitudes of respect and civility.

Throughout the language arts curriculum, as students describe, construct, modify, and integrate ideas, they develop a lifelong love of learning through reading, writing and discourse and recognize that language—both oral and written—is a tool of access to the world at large. This is accomplished within classroom environments that encourage children to open themselves to others' viewpoints, to be creative, and to persevere. Setting high and challenging literacy expectations is one step toward assuring that all students will have the language skills needed to live productive and successful lives.

MATHEMATICS

The Sacred Heart mathematics program strives to prepare students who are mathematically literate and confident, who value mathematics and appreciate its role in society. The program proceeds from the understanding that students are curious, active learners who learn best when they are engaged in solving meaningful programs rooted in real life. The program is formed around an inquiry-based approach that develops students' skills, helps them synthesize and apply those skills, and work towards a deep understanding of mathematical concepts as they progress from the concrete to the more abstract.

Our outcomes for students are centered around the thought process standards from the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, which seeks to develop mathematically proficient students who are able to:

1. Make sense of problems and persevere in solving them.
2. Reason abstractly and quantitatively, while developing accuracy and flexibility.
3. Construct viable arguments and evaluate the reasoning of others.
4. Apply the mathematics they know to solve problems in other disciplines and in the world around them.
5. Strategically use tools, both physical (models, spreadsheets, calculators) and intangible

(estimation, other mathematical knowledge) to solve problems.

6. Use the language of mathematics to communicate effectively in reasoning and in discussion with others.
7. Look for and make use of patterns and structure to relate concepts and procedures from different topics in mathematics to one another.
8. Notice if calculations are repeated, and look both for general methods and for shortcuts to support the problem-solving process.

The program operates from a perspective that all children can learn mathematics and provides accommodations inside and outside of the classroom that are designed to address the different styles and abilities of the students.

SCIENCE

Science at Sacred Heart proceeds from the belief that children have an innate curiosity about their surroundings—a desire to explore, figure out how things work, and find answers to their questions. The curriculum nurtures this curiosity by giving students opportunities to investigate phenomena, predict outcomes, and construct explanations in real-world contexts. Science learning combines both intellectual study and hands-on problem-solving in order to build a foundation of experience and understanding upon which later learning can be based. Lab work and experimentation are woven throughout the kindergarten through eighth-grade program. The aim of the science program is to develop students who:

- Are confident and curious;
- Engage the process of scientific inquiry with understanding and enjoyment;
- Frame meaningful questions, gather and interpret data and, through persistence, arrive at answers supported by evidence;
- Are scientifically literate, can knowledgeably discuss matters of scientific concern, and can appreciate ethical and social dimensions of scientific applications.

SOCIAL STUDIES

Social studies is the study of human behavior within social and environmental context. As such, it encompasses elements of several disciplines, among them history, geography, government and civics. In social studies, students confront big questions. What defines a culture or a nation? How are values and traditions constructed and transmitted? What responsibilities do people have to themselves and to society at large? What is humankind's place in the world? Social studies helps students understand their roots, recognize the commonality of people across time, appreciate the delicate balance of rights and responsibilities in society, and develop habits of thoughtful analysis.

The social studies program at Sacred Heart assists students in establishing habits of careful inquiry, supported by a sound knowledge base and a firm commitment to personal responsibility through good citizenship. Students grow in their appreciation of the diversity of human experience, culture, and values.

RELIGION

Sacred Heart's philosophy of religious instruction acknowledges that creation springs from God. We believe that each child is a unique and very special creation. The program, rooted in faith, calls each child to a clear sense of self-worth and to develop respect for the larger community. As children of a loving God, students are encouraged to explore and celebrate God's presence among us. This process involves time for both reflection on experiences and opportunities for sharing in celebrations with the liturgical community.

Prayerful lessons and experiences are provided for students at every grade level in order to introduce each child to many different types of prayer. Basic theological content is infused into each lesson and liturgy in the hope of providing a sense of awe of the kingdom of God, respect for other faiths, and an appreciation for the religious diversity of Sacred Heart Schools. All children learn about the

liturgical year, the Five Goals, and the traditions and saints associated with Sacred Heart. Each child is encouraged to be a leader in our faith-sharing opportunities. All of these moments return the focus to assisting children to identify ways that they can live their faith with integrity and authenticity in the world.

WORLD LANGUAGES

The study of world languages is a logical extension of the global vision that has been part of Sacred Heart education from its earliest days. The study of a language other than one's own enables students to interact and communicate with others while gaining a greater understanding of the perspectives, practices, and products of different cultures. World language study sharpens students' intellectual abilities and has a positive impact on student performance across the curriculum.

At Sacred Heart, the world language program begins in Kindergarten with the study of both French and Spanish and is offered through fifth grade. At the Middle School level, students are given the option of continuing in French or Spanish. Whichever language is chosen, course work continues through eighth grade. A solid foundation in reading, speaking, listening, and writing prepares students for the more rigorous study they will encounter in high school. The program integrates the study of language with the study of culture: daily life, history, literature, and art.

FINE AND PERFORMING ARTS

The visual arts program provides children with opportunities for self-expression through creative problem-solving and imaginative thinking. Students are exposed to art history and to the elements of art and principles of design. The art program encourages each child to use their imagination freely, employing a variety of media and tools. It is the art department's philosophy that the working process holds greater importance than the final product.

The music program nurtures the natural creative impulse in each child through a wide range of vocal and instrumental activities. The program consists of three primary activities: singing, instrument playing, and musical academics. Singing is taught as a form of personal expression, for enjoyment, and as a form of prayer. Instrument playing accompanies singing and is used as a practical expression of other music skills, such as keeping time and music reading. In the academic portion of class, students explore the history of music. Children learn to enjoy music and to participate with confidence. Children at all grade levels participate in performances.

TECHNOLOGY

The technology program shapes students into proficient and responsible users of technological resources. Students are encouraged to become efficient problem-solvers, innovative thinkers and creators, and to develop a knowledge base so they can comfortably adapt to new learning opportunities in this ever-changing environment. Technology is integrated throughout the curriculum with access to multiple devices at all levels. Technology Integration Specialists work closely with content area teachers to enhance and transform education, and to help students become lifelong digital learners and citizens.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND HEALTH

The intent of physical education is to motivate students to create, improve, and maintain their personal health and fitness, while they develop the social skills that are essential for success in school. Physical education at Sacred Heart offers activities that allow students to make developmental transitions from childhood to adolescence. Students are encouraged to develop a positive outlook to personal fitness and relate to others in encouraging ways. The program helps students develop an age-appropriate level of fitness, a broad spectrum of physical skills, and the enjoyment, understanding, and self-confidence needed to motivate a lifetime of active participation.

ACCREDITATIONS, MEMBERSHIPS AND AFFILIATIONS:

- The Network of Sacred Heart Schools
- National Association of Independent Schools
- Independent Schools Association of the Central States (accreditation)
- The State of Illinois (accreditation)
- Lake Michigan Association of Independent Schools
- The National Catholic Educational Association

THE PRIMARY SCHOOL: KINDERGARTEN QUICK FACTS

CLASS SIZE AND STRUCTURE

The Kindergarten is comprised of five coeducational classrooms with approximately 15-16 children in each section. Classrooms are homeroom-centered for the core subjects of language arts, social studies, math, and science. Children move out of their self-contained classrooms to special facilities for music, art, library, physical education, movement and religion. World languages are taught by specialists in the classroom.

FACULTY

One lead teacher and one teaching assistant head each of the five Kindergarten classrooms. These ten teachers form a collaborative team that meets weekly to plan activities, develop curriculum, and ensure a consistent experience for all Kindergarten students.

At the Kindergarten level, the children have specialist faculty for French, Spanish, music, art, physical education, movement, religion, and library skills. Kindergarten students also benefit from services provided by the Head of Student Life, the Campus Minister, and the Coordinator of Service Learning and Community Partnerships.

The Learning Center provides comprehensive strategies for meeting the individual learning needs of students. The **enrichment coordinator** works closely with classroom teachers to supplement the curriculum for children who are working at an accelerated pace and who will benefit from further academic challenges. A **reading specialist** in the Primary School supports students in the classroom environment with teaching modifications and special pullout groups when appropriate. We are sensitive to the fact that during their time with us some students may experience significant life changes, like

death, divorce, or illness of family members, and will benefit from the guidance of the **Primary School counselor**. The **school nurse** helps to identify specific health issues like hearing or vision problems and recommends appropriate intervention.

SCHOOL DAY

In the Kindergarten, the school day begins at 8:30 am. Dismissal is at 3:15 pm, Monday-Thursday; 2:30 pm on Friday. There is one 30-minute lunch period, two 30-minute recess periods, and one 20- to 30-minute rest period daily. Children may nap during the rest period or select a quiet activity such as reading or drawing.

SIX-DAY SCHEDULE

The Primary School uses a six-day continuous cycle for instructional scheduling. The one-through-six-day schedule rotates through the school calendar, taking into account in-service days, holidays, and unexpected school closings. It ensures that classes that tend to fall on Monday/Friday holidays are not shortchanged, as they often are in more traditional schedules. In addition, it allows for equal scheduling of the special subjects (art, French, Spanish, library, music, physical education, and religion) and increases instructional time for the core subjects (language arts, math, social studies and science).

HOMEWORK

Parents are asked to read with their children nightly. Teachers occasionally assign simple projects or activities to be completed at home.

REPORT CARDS AND CONFERENCES

The academic year in the Primary School is organized by semesters. Each semester, the reporting sequence moves from an initial progress report, to a parent-teacher conference, and concludes with a report card.

Kindergarten report cards are skills-based. Teachers are happy to speak with parents between conferences and can be reached via email.

THE PRIMARY SCHOOL: KINDERGARTEN CURRICULUM

LANGUAGE ARTS

The Kindergarten provides developmentally appropriate experiences in reading, writing, and oral language skills. The print-rich environment of each classroom works to foster both competency and enjoyment in our youngest students' emerging relationship with language. Children are read to daily and begin to explore basic literary elements of shared stories. The phonics program provides a thorough understanding of the letters of the alphabet and their sounds. Self-selected reading, differentiated learning groups, literacy centers, and book reports for home reading enhance the program. Our writing segment introduces, in age appropriate form, the Traits of Good Writing: organization, ideas, word choice, voice, sentence fluency, conventions, and presentation. Through daily journaling and writing workshop activities, the children learn to transform their writing from pictures and symbols to letters, words, and sentences. Handwriting (printing) skills are introduced in Kindergarten. Students visit the library once in each six-day rotation for a read-aloud and to check out books for home reading.

MATH

The Kindergarten uses an active, hands-on approach to mathematics. The program develops problem-solving skills and extends the children's understanding and enjoyment of numbers. Special emphasis is placed on counting, sorting and classifying; relating numbers to quantity; time and money; forms of measurement; the language of math; and basic concepts of addition and subtraction.

Texts and Instructional Programs: *Everyday Mathematics* developed by the University of Chicago School Mathematics Project

SCIENCE

Based on the philosophy that students best learn science by doing science, the program encourages a hands-on, inquiry-based approach to learning. Students explore units in the natural world, as well as STEAM projects, developing an understanding through their own inquiries, investigations and analyses. Science is scheduled regularly in each six-day rotation. In addition, science-related activities are integrated into the language arts and math programs, increasing students' exposure to the subject.

Texts and Instructional Programs:

Full Option Science System, University of California at Berkeley and Delta Education.

SOCIAL STUDIES

Thematic units provide the impetus for learning in all areas of the Kindergarten curriculum. Children are called to a fuller awareness of the world around them and the variety of communities in which they share. Units include "I Am Special," "Our School," and "Transportation." In addition, children explore seasons and holidays. The program incorporates art, music, and appropriate children's literature. Social studies is scheduled regularly in each six-day rotation.

WORLD LANGUAGES

Students begin their study of French and Spanish in Kindergarten. The programs emphasize conversational skills through the development of correct pronunciation, vocabulary, aural comprehension, and cultural awareness. Games, songs, and dialogues encourage the students to take risks with language while having fun. French and Spanish are scheduled twice each in every six-day rotation.

VISUAL ARTS

The art program provides children with experiences in both self-expression and cooperative learning, while also offering practice in basic visual and motor skills through the use of drawing media, brushes, and other art tools. Experimentation and creative thinking are fostered as children learn to explore their imaginations in an encouraging and supportive atmosphere. Art is scheduled one-and-a-half times in each six-day rotation.

TECHNOLOGY

Students in the Primary School work with the classroom teacher and tech integration specialist on in-class projects, integrating technology with daily activities as needed. Students become familiar with digital tools and use them to create, write, illustrate, and publish stories and other projects. A variety of age-appropriate software, websites and apps are available to help students strengthen math and language arts skills.

MUSIC

In Primary School, students are introduced to the basics of music. Singing is an integral part of every class. The students are introduced to pitch matching and proper breathing. Students also manage and perform on-pitched and unpitched percussion instruments using simple rhythm patterns and learn to internalize steady beat using structured and improvisatory movement activities. Active listening to music is practiced regularly. Music is scheduled once in each six-day rotation.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND MOVEMENT

Kindergarten P.E. emphasizes the development of motor skills and movement patterns through a

THE PRIMARY SCHOOL: KINDERGARTEN CURRICULUM

variety of skill-based games and activities. Students work toward a greater understanding of space and body awareness, team-building and sportsmanship skills as well as introduction to various hand-eye and foot-eye coordination skills. In addition, a movement class, taught by the music teacher, brings a creative dimension to the students' activities. Both movement and P.E. are scheduled twice in a six-day rotation. In both classes, developing a habit of lifelong fitness, self-confidence, positive self-image, and peer group acceptance are carefully nurtured.

RELIGION

The Kindergarten religion program is designed to help each child develop a personal experience of faith and a relationship with God and the community. Because children learn best through hands-on experience, lessons are presented utilizing Bible stories, songs, children's literature, and art projects. Instruction utilizes the framework of the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd. Children participate in weekly Chapel with their Division, as well as monthly Masses with the entire school, enabling them to celebrate faith as it is lived in the liturgical year, its seasons, and holy days. Religion is scheduled twice in each six-day rotation.

COMMUNITY SERVICE

Primary School students are introduced to the concept of working together to help others as they learn about the variety of people living in their world — at school, in their neighborhoods, and around the globe. Students are encouraged to respect themselves through making good choices and to develop helpful and supportive attitudes toward their peers, their teachers, and all others they encounter. Kindergarten students participate in several service projects throughout the year.

THE PRIMARY SCHOOL: FIRST AND SECOND GRADE QUICK FACTS

CLASS SIZE AND STRUCTURE

There are four single-sex, self-contained classrooms at each grade level: two designated sections for boys and two sections for girls. Approximately 18-20 students are in each section. (Exact numbers vary from year to year, depending on the way in which attrition is balanced by the addition of new students.)

Boys and girls share coed recess and lunch periods. Field trips are coeducational, and a coed academic period is scheduled once during each six-day rotation, giving boys and girls the opportunity to work together cooperatively in an academic setting.

FACULTY

One lead teacher and one teaching assistant head each of the four classrooms at grade level. These eight teachers form a collaborative team that meets weekly to plan activities, develop curriculum, and ensure a consistent experience for all students in the grade. Teaching assistants support the work of the lead teachers by facilitating small group, large group, and individual student instruction.

As in Kindergarten, children have specialist faculty for French, Spanish, art, music, physical education, religion, and library skills. Students also benefit from services provided by the Head of Student Life, the Campus Minister, and the Coordinator of Service Learning and Community Partnerships.

The Learning Center provides comprehensive strategies for meeting the individual learning needs of students. The **enrichment coordinator** works closely with classroom teachers to supplement the curriculum for children who are working at an accelerated pace and who would benefit from further academic challenges. A **reading specialist** in the

Primary School supports students in the classroom environment with teaching modifications and special pullout groups when appropriate. We are sensitive to the fact during their time with us some students may experience significant life changes, like death, divorce, or illness of family members, and will benefit from the guidance of the **Primary School counselor**. The **school nurse** helps to identify specific health issues like hearing or vision problems and recommends appropriate intervention. The Student Services Team serves as a significant resource for teachers as they seek effective strategies to maximize learning opportunities for each child.

SCHOOL DAY

The school day begins at 8:30 am. Dismissal is at 3:15 pm, Monday-Thursday. There is an early dismissal at 2:30 pm on Friday. There is one 30-minute lunch period and one 30-minute recess period daily.

SIX-DAY SCHEDULE

The Primary School uses a six-day continuous cycle for instructional scheduling. The one-through-six-day schedule rotates through the school calendar, taking into account in-service days, holidays, and unexpected school closings. It ensures that classes that tend to fall on Monday/Friday holidays are not shortchanged, as they often are in more traditional schedules. In addition, it allows for more equal scheduling of the special subjects (art, technology, world language, library, music, physical education, and religion) and increases instructional time for the core subjects (language arts, math, social studies and science).

HOMEWORK

In first grade, parents are asked to read with their children at least 15 minutes each day. Teachers assign

homework occasionally and assign simple projects to be completed at home periodically. In second grade, students are expected to complete approximately 20 minutes of homework each night, in addition to 20 minutes of independent reading. A few long-term projects are also assigned.

REPORT CARDS AND CONFERENCES

The academic year in the Primary School is organized by semesters. Each semester, the reporting sequence moves from an initial progress report, to a parent-teacher conference, and concludes with a report card. Students in first and second grade receive a skills-based report card with a narrative from the teacher addressing academic, social, and emotional progress during the semester. Teachers are happy to speak with parents between conferences and can be reached by email.

THE PRIMARY SCHOOL: FIRST AND SECOND GRADE CURRICULUM

LANGUAGE ARTS

The curriculum is based on the philosophy that reading, writing, listening, and speaking are most effectively taught to Primary School students when integrated with the study of phonics and the writing process.

Literature and reading play crucial roles in our first and second grade classrooms. Children are read to daily and have opportunities for both teacher-guided and self-selected reading. Students are introduced to engaging children's literature that accommodates the varying levels of literacy common among young readers. The use of phonics, as well as multi-sensory techniques, assist children in developing strong decoding, comprehension, and reading fluency skills. Whole group, small group, and individual work are all utilized in the classroom. The Daily Five method of reading and writing instruction provides necessary skills and practice for children to become fluent, independent learners. Students visit the library once in each six-day rotation for a read-aloud and to check out books for home reading. Simple library and research skills are introduced. Each classroom hosts its own level reading library, and also provides access to online books via iPads.

Writing is taught as a process. Children come to understand that ideas, organization, voice, word choice, sentence fluency, conventions (grammar and mechanics), and presentation are all important aspects of good writing. Through daily journaling, Writer's Workshop, and Literacy Centers, children gain confidence in their writing, from composing simple, clear sentences to more detailed paragraphs. They express themselves through short stories, poems, personal narratives, persuasive and informative pieces, and research reports. The writing program is supported by instruction in spelling, grammar,

punctuation, and handwriting. Cursive is introduced in second grade.

MATH

The Primary School curriculum is designed to actively engage younger children in doing mathematics. The classroom environment encourages students to explore, develop, test, discuss, and apply ideas. The framework of the curriculum is organized around concepts of: counting and cardinality; operations and algebraic thinking; numbers and operations in base 10; measurement and data, and geometry. Students use related workbooks, reference texts, "study links," and other materials which connect activities at school and home. Throughout the year, supplementary materials, manipulatives, and games are used to ensure mastery of concepts and practice of basic skills. Whole group, small group, and individual work are all utilized in the classroom.

Texts: *Everyday Mathematics* developed by the University of Chicago School Mathematics Project.

SCIENCE

Sacred Heart encourages a hands-on inquiry-based approach to learning. Students explore units in life science, earth science, and physical science, developing an understanding of the natural world through their own inquiries, investigations, and analyses. Science is scheduled regularly in each six-day rotation. In addition, science-related activities are integrated into the language arts and math programs.

Instructional Program: *Full Option Science System*, University of California at Berkeley and Delta Education.

SOCIAL STUDIES

Thematic units provide the impetus for learning

in all areas of the curriculum. In first grade, social studies centers on the city of Chicago, the state of Illinois, and the similarities and differences between rural and urban communities. Students develop an understanding of the concept of interdependence and an appreciation of the many people who affect their lives. In second grade, students engage in a study of world geography. As students "travel around the world," they study a country on each continent and gain a greater understanding of world neighbors and their cultures. Students at both grade levels focus on the acquisition of map skills and simple research techniques. Social studies is scheduled regularly in each six-day rotation.

WORLD LANGUAGES

Students continue their study of French and Spanish from Kindergarten. The program emphasizes conversational skills through the development of correct pronunciation, vocabulary, aural comprehension, and cultural awareness. Games, songs, and dialogues encourage the students to take risks with language while having fun. French and Spanish are scheduled twice each in every six-day rotation and are integrated into class project-based learning opportunities.

VISUAL ARTS

The art program provides children with the opportunity for self-expression through visual communication. Students explore concepts through hands-on art activities that help develop the capacity for independent thought and action. Activities include: drawing skills; basic color theory; pastels and watercolor; artwork of historic cultures; and study of significant artists. Students assemble and use a sketchbook for their Primary School years. Art is scheduled twice in each six-day rotation.

THE PRIMARY SCHOOL: FIRST AND SECOND GRADE CURRICULUM

MUSIC

In Primary School, students are introduced to the basics of music. Singing is an integral part of every class. The students are introduced to pitch matching and proper breathing. Students also manage and perform on-pitched and unpitched percussion instruments using simple rhythm patterns and learn to internalize steady beat using structured and improvisatory movement activities. Active listening to music is practiced regularly. Students are acquainted with age-appropriate classical music and take part musically in school liturgies and special performances throughout the year. Music is scheduled twice in each six-day rotation.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Physical Education provides every child with a safe and accepting environment in which to develop motor skills and movement patterns through a variety of skill-based games and activities. Students are given the opportunity to further develop a wide range of hand-eye and foot-eye coordination skills through activities focusing on foundational skills rather than specific sports. Students continue to work on space, body awareness, team-building, and sportsmanship skills. Physical education is scheduled twice in each six-day rotation.

TECHNOLOGY

Students in the primary school work with the classroom teacher and tech integration specialist on in-class projects, integrating technology with daily activities as needed. Students become familiar with digital tools and use them to create, write, illustrate, and publish stories and other projects. A variety of age-appropriate software, websites and apps are available to help students strengthen math and language arts skills. Students in Primary School have access to the computer lab and classroom iPads.

RELIGION

The children continue their exploration of faith and spirituality as they learn about God as a loving Creator and the giver of gifts, including God's gift of Jesus to the world. Bible stories and appropriate literature from a wide variety of sources are used to support classroom themes. Instruction utilizes the framework of the *Catechesis of the Good Shepherd*. The children learn more about the spirituality and traditions of the Religious of the Sacred Heart. Throughout the year, children have opportunities for self-expression through prayer, worship, art, and music activities. Children also participate in weekly Chapel with their Division and monthly Masses with the entire school.

In second grade, students are encouraged to learn about his or her family's faith tradition. Classroom teachers, as well as the Primary School religion teacher, work together to provide a substantive experience for all of the children. In this year, the religion program provides preparation for Roman Catholic students to celebrate the Sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist (First Confession and First Holy Communion). While only those students who have been baptized into the Roman Catholic faith may receive the Sacraments, every effort is made to include non-Roman Catholic students in the preparation process in appropriate ways. Religion is scheduled twice in each six-day rotation.

COMMUNITY SERVICE

Primary School students are introduced to the concept of working together to help others as they learn about the variety of people living in their world — at school, in their neighborhoods, and around the globe. Social justice issues are explained to the children at their level of understanding. Students are encouraged not only to respect themselves through making good choices, but also to develop helpful and

supportive attitudes toward their peers, their teachers, and all others they encounter. First and second grade students participate in service projects throughout the year.

THE LOWER SCHOOL: QUICK FACTS

CLASS SIZE AND STRUCTURE

There are four single-sex, self-contained classrooms at each grade level, two designated sections for boys and two sections for girls. Approximately 18 – 20 students are in each section. (Exact numbers may vary slightly from year to year, depending on the way in which attrition is balanced by the addition of new students.)

As in first and second grades, boys and girls share coed recess and lunch periods. Field trips are frequently coeducational, and a coed academic period is scheduled once each week, giving boys and girls the opportunity to work together cooperatively in small groups.

FACULTY

One lead teacher heads each of the four classrooms at grade level. Each grade level has one teaching assistant. These educators form a collaborative team that meets weekly to plan activities, develop curriculum, and ensure a consistent experience for all students in the grade.

Children in the Lower School have specialist faculty for visual arts, music, world language, physical education, religion, and library skills. Lower School students also benefit from services provided by the Head of Student Life, the Campus Minister, the Coordinator of Service Learning and Community Partnerships and the Athletic Director.

The Learning Center provides comprehensive strategies for meeting the individual learning needs of students. The **enrichment coordinator** works closely with classroom teachers to supplement the curriculum for children who are working at an accelerated pace and who would benefit from further academic challenges. A reading specialist and two **learning specialists** in the Lower School support students in the classroom environment with teaching modifications and special pull-out

groups when appropriate. We are sensitive to the fact during their time with us some students may experience significant life changes, like death, divorce, or illness of family members, and will benefit from the guidance of the **Lower School counselor**. The **school nurse** helps to identify specific health issues like hearing or vision problems and recommends appropriate intervention.

SCHOOL DAY

The school day begins at 8:30 am. Dismissal is at 3:15 pm, Monday-Thursday. On Friday, there is early dismissal at 2:30 pm. There is one 30-minute lunch period and one 30-minute recess period daily.

SIX-DAY SCHEDULE

The Lower School uses a six-day continuous cycle for instructional scheduling. The one-through-six-day schedule rotates through the school calendar, taking into account in-service days, holidays, and unexpected school closings. It allows for more equal scheduling of the special subjects (art, technology, world language, library, music, physical education, and religion) and instructional time for the core subjects (language arts, math, social studies and science).

HOMEWORK

In Lower School, homework provides an opportunity for students to review skills learned, practice concepts, develop their organizational skills and read independently. Time spent will vary from day to day and student to student. In third grade, students normally are assigned 30 minutes of homework each night, which includes independent reading and practice of math facts. In fourth grade, nightly homework ranges from 40-45 minutes. In fifth grade, 60 minutes of homework is assigned nightly, including minimal homework in special area subjects.

REPORT CARDS AND CONFERENCES

The academic year in the Lower School is organized by semesters. Each semester, the reporting sequence moves from an initial progress report, to a parent-teacher conference, and concludes with a report card. Students in third and fourth grades receive a non-graded checklist report card with a narrative from the teacher addressing academic, social, and emotional progress during the semester. Students in fifth grade receive traditional letter grades with an accompanying teacher narrative. Teachers are happy to speak with parents between conferences and can be reached by email.

TESTING

The Northwest Evaluation Association's Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) growth assessment is administered three times per year for grades 3, 4 and 5.

THE LOWER SCHOOL: CURRICULUM

LANGUAGE ARTS

The development of reading, writing, and analytical thinking skills are the principal goals of the Lower School language arts program.

Literature plays a crucial role in each classroom, and students are exposed to an ever-widening circle of authors and literary genres. The specific selection of literature varies somewhat from year to year, and has included the Junior Great Books program and authors such as Roald Dahl, Beverly Cleary, Lois Lowry, and C.S. Lewis. Students learn to evaluate literature through the exploration of standard literary elements such as plot, setting, point of view, character, conflict, and theme. Basic comprehension skills covered include recognizing main ideas, supporting details, understanding cause and effect relationships, making inferences, predicting outcomes, and drawing conclusions. Students visit the library once in each six-day rotation for a read-aloud and to check out books for home reading. Library and research skills are taught.

In **writing**, students continue to use: ideas, organization, voice, word choice, sentence fluency and conventions in their writing. Students begin to write with an awareness of their intended audience, for a variety of purposes, and in a range of styles – descriptive, expressive, narrative, persuasive, expository, and informational. Students utilize a writing process that includes pre-writing, drafting, sharing, revising, editing, and publishing. Note-taking and outlining are introduced to assist in research. Correct use of spelling, grammar, and punctuation is emphasized for effective writing.

MATH

The Lower School mathematics curriculum develops students' self-confidence, as well as their disposition to seek, evaluate, and use quantitative and spatial information in solving problems and making decisions. The program's objectives are three-

fold: understanding concepts and the relationship of numbers; skillful computation; and facility in problem-solving. The use of manipulatives deepens understanding through a hands-on approach. Whole group, small group, and individual work are all utilized in the classroom. Mathematics is scheduled daily.

Texts: *Everyday Mathematics*, developed by the University of Chicago School Mathematics Project (grades 3, 4 and 5)

SCIENCE

Third grade areas of study include classification of living things, plants, water and its different states, and the physics of sound.

Fourth grade units include animals (characteristics and adaptations) weather and climate, electricity and magnetism, and the human body's systems.

Fifth graders study cells (plant and animal cells, microorganisms) and matter (measurement and states of matter).

Texts and Instructional Programs: *Full Option Science System*, University of California at Berkeley and Delta Education (grades 3 and 4); *Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Science* (grades 3, 4 and 5)

SOCIAL STUDIES

The **third grade** social studies curriculum focuses on the history of the United States from the first Native Americans through the Colonial Period. Among the topics studied are the customs and cultures of Native American tribes, European explorations and conquests of the New World, the foundation and growth of the North American colonies, and the creation of the American nation.

The **fourth grade** curriculum is centered on the study of Illinois from early Native American settlements to the present. Students examine the state's topography, climate, and people. Topics include the difficulties of life on the frontier; railroads and early Illinois industry; Illinois in the Civil War, World War I and World War II; immigration; and the state's role in the Civil Rights Movement.

The **fifth grade** studies world cultures and geography through the lens of human rights. The theme of democracy in our world is the focus as the concepts of equality, justice, and freedom are looked at globally to give a broader perspective of past and current events. History, geography, civics, and economics are the cornerstones of the program and students learn to engage in "historical thinking" as they look at multiple perspectives to better understand the complex issues facing our world today.

At all grade levels, students continue to develop map skills, expand their understanding of geographic terms, and learn the proper use of almanacs, atlases, and the Internet as reference sources. Hands-on projects, group simulations, and the integration of art and music make learning more accessible. Field trips to Chicago's many museums and landmarks enrich the students' historical knowledge. Social studies is scheduled two to three times in each six-day rotation.

WORLD LANGUAGES

The Lower School students study both French and Spanish using a communicative approach to learning. The foundation of this program is a progression of partner conversations, which allows students to have a meaningful exchanges in French and Spanish. The interactive activities require students to exchange information in the target language. Students find it rewarding and fun to be able to use authentic language. French and Spanish are scheduled two times in each six-day rotation.

THE LOWER SCHOOL: CURRICULUM

VISUAL ARTS

The visual arts program provides children with an environment for creative self-expression. Students use a variety of art media to explore two- and three-dimensional art forms. They develop an awareness of and appreciation for a wide range of artistic styles, the work of local and international artists, and the arts of diverse global cultures. The children learn to create works of art that express individuality, openness, and tolerance. Art is scheduled twice in each six-day rotation.

MUSIC

In the Lower School, daily singing creates opportunities to advance each student's ability to match pitch, sing with good vowel formation, and to sing in parts. Students' repertoire will grow to include liturgical songs, folk songs, and popular music. Additionally, the students will be introduced to instrumental music through instruction on handbells and recorders. Lower School students perform in at least one concert each year. Music is scheduled two to three times during each six-day rotation.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Physical education provides children with a safe and accepting environment in which to develop fitness, sportsmanship, and game-playing skills. Students develop self-confidence and participate in activities that promote a healthy lifestyle. They are introduced to cooperative aerobic games and a variety of team sports, including field hockey, baseball, basketball, football, lacrosse, and volleyball. Free weights, aerobic conditioning, yoga, and stretching exercises are also part of the curriculum. The students learn to make informed decisions regarding their personal well-being and to practice healthy behaviors. Physical education is scheduled two times in each six-day rotation.

TECHNOLOGY

Lower School students use computers, Chromebooks, and iPads in the classroom and the computer lab. The focus of the program is to use technology to enhance learning in the core subject areas and prepare the students for the digital tools they will encounter in Middle School. Students refine keyboarding skills, display and analyze data, design multimedia presentations, and create and publish their work in a variety of subjects. Students continue to learn about digital citizenship, safety and responsibility.

RELIGION

Lower School students are provided with opportunities to experience God in meaningful ways as they explore, question, and grow in an atmosphere of acceptance and friendship. This process involves time for reflection and opportunities for sharing in celebrations of the Christian community. Students become familiar with the themes of Jesus' teachings and the Holy Spirit as gift and guidance.

The spirituality and traditions of the Society of the Sacred Heart continue to play an important role in the developing faith of each child. Children participate in weekly Chapel with their Division as well as monthly Masses with the entire school. Religion is scheduled two to three times in each rotation.

COMMUNITY SERVICE

Lower School students continue to work together to help others as they learn about the diversity of people living in their world—at school, in their neighborhoods, and around the globe. Social justice issues are explained to the children at their level of understanding. Students are encouraged not only to respect themselves through making good choices, but also to develop helpful and supportive attitudes toward their peers, their teachers, and all others they

encounter. Lower School students participate in several service projects throughout the year.

THE MIDDLE SCHOOL: QUICK FACTS

CLASSROOM STRUCTURE

In the Middle School, students move out of the self-contained classrooms of the Primary and Lower Schools into a departmentalized classroom structure that features academic specialists for each subject area.

There are four sections of students at each grade level: two sections of girls and two of boys. Each section comprises approximately 18-20 students. (Exact numbers may vary slightly from year to year, depending on the way in which attrition is balanced by the addition of new students.)

Students share coed recess and lunch periods. Field trips and community service activities are frequently coeducational as are many extracurricular activities, giving boys and girls opportunities to work and socialize together on a regular basis.

FACULTY

Students have specialist teachers for each academic area, ranging from the core subjects of humanities (blended language arts and social studies), math, and science to the special curriculum areas of visual arts, music, French or Spanish, physical education and religion.

Selected faculty members at each grade level serve as **advisors** to small, single-gender groups, meeting with them daily to explore topics of special interest to Middle School students. Frequently, the grade-level advisors meet together as a team to plan activities, share their insights, and ensure a consistent, thoughtful experience for all students at each grade level.

Middle School students also benefit from services provided by the Head of Student Life, the Coordinator of Service Learning and Community Partnerships, the Campus Minister and the Athletic Director.

The Learning Center provides comprehensive strategies for meeting the individual learning needs of students. The **enrichment coordinator** works closely with classroom teachers to supplement the curriculum for students who are working at an accelerated pace and who would benefit from further academic challenges. Two **learning specialists** in Middle School support students in the classroom environment with push-in teaching and observation, teaching modifications and special pull-out groups when appropriate. We are sensitive to the fact that during their time with us some students may experience significant life changes like death, divorce, or illness of family members, and will benefit from the guidance of the **Middle School counselor**. The **school nurse** helps to identify specific health issues like hearing or vision problems and recommends appropriate intervention.

SCHOOL DAY

The school day begins at 8:30 am. Dismissal is at 3:30 pm, Monday–Thursday. On Friday, there is an early dismissal at 2:45 pm. There is one 30-minute lunch period, and two brief recess periods daily.

SIX-DAY SCHEDULE

The Middle School uses a six-day continuous cycle for instructional scheduling. The one-through-six-day schedule rotates through the school calendar, taking into account in-service days, holidays, and unexpected school closings. It allows for more equal scheduling of the special subjects (art, technology, world language, library, music, physical education, and religion) and instructional time for the core subjects (language arts, math, social studies, and science).

HOMEWORK

Middle School students can expect approximately one-and-a-half to two hours of homework each night.

REPORT CARDS AND CONFERENCES

The academic year in the Middle School is organized on a semester basis. Each semester, the reporting sequence moves from an initial narrative progress report, to a student/parent/advisor conference, and concludes with a report card. Students in Middle School receive traditional letter grades with accompanying teacher narratives. If requested, teachers are always happy to meet with parents between conferences.

TESTING

The standardized Iowa Test of Basic Skills is administered in the spring to students in sixth and seventh grades.

The Northwest Evaluation Association's Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) growth assessment is administered three times per year for grades 6 and 7.

THE MIDDLE SCHOOL: CURRICULUM

LANGUAGE ARTS

The **sixth grade** language arts curriculum focuses on building specific reading, writing, speaking and listening skills in a workshop format. Students will read approximately one novel per month and will be assessed on their reading and writing skills. Specifically, students will write a variety of papers (narrative, persuasive, informational), as well as create original projects to demonstrate their knowledge and academic growth throughout the year. Students will study several genres of literature through the course texts, as well as explore character, theme, and setting in each of these readings.

SOCIAL STUDIES

World history, geography, and current events are the integral parts of the **sixth grade** social studies curriculum. Emphasis is placed upon gaining an understanding of the development of civilizations and cultures and their contributions to world history. The course focuses on the influence of geography on history, as well as the impact of that history on current events. In addition, the course continues the development of study skills, map skills, and critical thinking skills.

SEVENTH AND EIGHTH GRADE HUMANITIES

The language arts processes of reading, writing, listening, and speaking are taught in an integrated and interrelated manner alongside the social studies curriculum. Course components include the study of rich and varied literature including expository texts; writing in narrative, persuasive, and informational genres; responses to literature and summaries of reading materials; direct instruction in language arts skills and strategies; a balance of oral and written language activities; and ongoing diagnosis and assessment. Many novels will correlate with the social studies curriculum, where students undertake a two-year study of U.S. history using both a chronological

and thematic approach, from the beginnings of our country through the Vietnam War.

MATHEMATICS

Middle School math offers smaller class sizes, which allows teachers to better differentiate instruction for the students.

Sixth grade students focus on mathematical proficiency and precision in preparation for moving into algebra. The topics covered in this course are operations with and uses of fractions, decimals, integers, rates, ratios, and proportions. In addition, students strengthen geometric concepts and are introduced to solving equations.

In the **seventh grade**, as mathematical concepts become more abstract, the focus is for the students to develop a greater level of perseverance in their work. The course extends student understanding of ratios and percents, linear relationships, equation-solving, three-dimensional geometry, probability and data analysis, and other foundational algebraic concepts. Math at the seventh grade level is grouped by student learning style, to assist in addressing students' individual needs.

The focus of the **eighth grade** year is to develop students' independence in preparation for high school. Students are exposed to a traditional Algebra 1 content in an inquiry-based, experiential classroom environment. Topics covered include solving linear and quadratic equations; applications of linear, quadratic, and exponential functions; and number theory. Students are given the opportunity to enhance their problem-solving skills and gain a greater level of independence through exposure to math-oriented games, logic puzzles, and real-world applications. Math at the eighth grade level is grouped by student learning style, to assist in addressing students' individual needs.

Texts: *Math Innovations* published by Kendall-Hunt (grades 6 and 7); *CME Algebra 1* (grade 8)

SCIENCE

Sixth grade introduces the beginning units of the spiralled Middle School science curriculum. Students use inquiry and hands-on activities to aid in their understanding of science and the scientific method. Topics include: the atmosphere, ecology, cell theory, physiology and anatomy.

Seventh grade continues the spiralling curriculum by delving deeper into topics via problem-based labs and inquiry activities. Units of study include measurement, force and motion, the changing earth, interactions between molecules and atoms, water and alternate energy sources, and growth and development. Cross-curricular themes are explored with other departments to enhance students' connection to science and the world around them.

In **eighth grade** students solidify their understanding of the scientific method through experimental design, inquiry labs, and hands-on experiments. Topics include: the chemistry of life; light, optics, and electricity; the planet earth; and growth/development including key body systems and disease.

Texts: *National Science Teachers Association Enhanced E-Books*

RELIGION

As children grow and their knowledge base expands, they begin to question many things, among them the authenticity of their faith. At this age, a mature, believing, personal faith will begin to evolve and may replace or enhance the simple beliefs of childhood. As students mature and explore questions that are meaningful to them in their relationship with God, parents and religious educators can help them by combining an atmosphere of acceptance with new

THE MIDDLE SCHOOL: CURRICULUM

opportunities for the discovery of their ever-expanding faith journey.

In the **sixth grade**, students explore the scriptures and lessons of the Hebrew Scriptures and selected Christian Scriptures. The students will learn to read and understand scripture so that the messages of the Bible might become more relevant to their lives. Throughout the liturgical year, classes will participate in the Church seasons and prepare for and observe each holiday.

Seventh grade students explore world religions. The course informs students of the development of various religious traditions; it familiarizes students with the people, dimensions, and religious principles of the world's major religions such as primal religions, Eastern religions, Western religions, and religions in the modern world. Students will explore foundational principles and topics in relationship to Catholic religious perspectives.

The seventh grade religion curriculum also includes preparation for the sacrament of Confirmation. While a portion of the preparation for this Sacrament takes place within the school day (religion class), Sunday morning liturgies at school and other opportunities for dialogue are integral parts of the process. The important role of parents is similarly encouraged.

Students from other faiths or denominations are educated about the Sacraments at the same time as Catholic students and are invited to witness and participate in their classmates' celebration of the Sacraments.

Eighth grade students explore morality from the perspective of the Roman Catholic ethical tradition. Students begin to develop the critical skills necessary to develop a moral decision-making process for making ethical choices. Students identify various

factors involved in the formation of conscience and living a values-centered life. They wrestle with the Gospel message of Jesus in the areas of justice, personal integrity, and life issues.

Middle Schools students participate in weekly chapel with their division, as well as monthly Masses with the entire school.

WORLD LANGUAGES: FRENCH OR SPANISH

The primary aims of the program are promotion of cultural understanding, mastery of basic language skills, and development of competence in comprehending and communicating in a world language.

In **sixth grade**, students elect to either continue their study of French or Spanish, with the goal of preparing for the more advanced coursework to be encountered in high school. Students continue in their chosen language throughout their three years in the Middle School. Both the French and Spanish programs strive to develop oral fluency and aural comprehension. Particular emphasis is placed on grammar, spelling, and written expression during the Middle School years. Study of French and Spanish history and culture is promoted through special projects each year.

French texts: *T'es branché?* published by EMC (All grades)

Spanish texts: *Realidades 1a & 1b* published by Pearson Prentice Hall (All grades)

VISUAL ARTS

The art program provides children with the opportunity for self-expression through visual communication. Students explore concepts through hands-on art activities that help develop the capacity for independent thought and action. Students work

with paint and collage, clay, printmaking, icon painting and more.

MUSIC

Students in the Middle School build upon their prior exposure by continuing to study the basics of music in an effort to create interest and develop a life-long appreciation. This includes performance, theory, composition, improvisation, history, and cultural relevance. Through the creation and practice of music, students learn about music theory, history and cultural context, as well as improvisation and composition. They learn the music of specific cultures and historical periods and explore when and where music and culture intersect. Students perform in concerts throughout the school year.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND HEALTH

Students participate in and learn about cardiovascular endurance, strength training, balance training, body systems, first aid, and team building. In addition, they learn the fundamentals of various team sports.

TECHNOLOGY

Our 2:1 (iPad and Chromebook) program builds on the knowledge obtained in the Lower School. Students will continue to build their technology skills, focusing primarily on connecting technology and resources with real life problem-solving, research, information analysis, and decision-making in their content learning. The Middle School Technology Integration Specialist works closely with the teachers to help them develop and implement opportunities with technology that supports and enhances what the students are learning in their classes. Using technology as a tool to enhance the learning environment occurs throughout the curriculum in the Middle School.

THE MIDDLE SCHOOL: CURRICULUM

ADVISORY

The Advisory Program provides further opportunities for Middle School students to grow in self-awareness in light of the Goals and Criteria of Sacred Heart Schools. This program provides a structure for one-on-one meetings between a student and a faculty advisor as well as small group advisory meetings. Approximately 8-12 students are assigned to each group. The group promotes a variety of activities including organization, study skills and appreciation of self and others in the community.

The advisor fosters courage and confidence, and nurtures, guides, and facilitates communication between the student, other educators, and parents. The students develop a connection within their advisory group, build academic and interpersonal skills, and come to a greater understanding of their gifts and personal challenges. Advisory is scheduled twice daily—20 minutes morning and 20 minutes in the afternoon.

COMMUNITY SERVICE

In Middle School, students are taught valuable lessons about gratitude and how to help those in need. Students learn about social justice and explore how people's lives might be improved. These lessons are taught in the classroom as well as in real-world settings. In small groups chaperoned by faculty and parents, students volunteer on a regular basis at school-selected service sites on the city's North Side where they experience significant age-appropriate challenges involving tasks that require thinking, initiative, and problem-solving. Students are asked to demonstrate responsibility and decision-making in environments safe enough to allow them to both make mistakes and succeed.

TRIPS

In the fall, students in **sixth grade** attend an overnight team-building and high/low ropes course. This "challenge by choice" experience engages the

students to work together and start to build bonds to last throughout Middle School. In **seventh grade**, students look forward to a week-long visit to Space Academy in Huntsville, Alabama. This is a highlight of the seventh grade year and focuses on working in teams, meeting new friends from other states and countries while building scientific and cooperation skills. **Eighth grade** students eagerly look forward to May when they visit Washington, D.C. for a four-day whirlwind tour of the "living classroom." Many of the historic monuments, people and places studied in the eighth grade curriculum come to life as they tour our nation's capital and Capitol.

HIGH SCHOOL ADMISSIONS COUNSELING

Sacred Heart families benefit from a thoughtful and thorough high school counseling program that guides students through each step of the secondary school admissions process. Families meet with the high school placement counselor who assists them in gathering information on schools of interest, in arranging school visit days, and in preparing students for admissions assessments, interviews, and essays.

The Schools sponsor a high school fair each fall, where admissions representatives from more than 40 local and national schools make themselves available to speak with parents and students about their programs. A test review course is offered after school that acquaints students with the nature of the various admissions tests they will encounter at the city's independent, Catholic, and selective-enrollment public high schools. As the application process draws to a close and acceptances are received, the counselor is happy to advise on final school choice, as each family deems necessary. Finally, eighth grade students have an opportunity to speak with Sacred Heart graduates who are now freshmen to learn their tips for making a successful transition from Sacred Heart to high school.

Throughout the high school counseling process, emphasis is placed on helping students find the school that is the best fit for them. As a result, our students make school choices that reflect their individual interests, learning styles, and ambitions.

*Good academic programs are not static, but in a continual process of renewal.
Sacred Heart Schools reserve the right to amend the curriculum and school program
described in this overview in order to better serve the needs of the school community.*



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