

□ Upper School □

Whitehaven Campus

Grades 4 and 5

Grades 4 and 5 comprise three homeroom sections at each grade level. Grade 4 students learn language arts and social studies in their academic homerooms. Beginning in the winter, Grade 4 students regroup, and many change classrooms, for math. In Grade 5, teachers specialize in an academic subject, so students move among Grade 5 classrooms to have different teachers for language arts, history and social studies, and math. Accelerated sections are available in Grade 4 math and Grade 5 math and language arts. Special classes continue in Spanish, science, religion, art, music, and physical education. Teachers integrate technology into student learning experiences throughout the Upper School.

□ Grade 4 □

Language Arts

Promoting love of the English language and its effective use in both oral and written form is the objective of the language arts program. Students strengthen their skills and improve comprehension through whole-class shared novels, small-group shared texts, and independent books. Students reflect on what they read in thoughtful, meaningful responses. They examine the elements of genres such as fantasy, realistic fiction, and historical fiction. They continue to develop skills necessary for reading nonfiction texts for meaning.

The writing program focuses on style, voice, and mechanics. Students move both individually and as a group through the process of generating and developing an idea, drafting, revising, editing, and creating a final product in both narrative and expository writing. They study authors and follow the examples of their craft to hone elements of style, as well as organization, paragraphs, and mechanics. In addition to these individual writing projects, writing is integrated throughout the curriculum. Students are frequently called upon to respond in writing to topics in literature, math, science, and social studies.

Writing mechanics and grammar are reinforced through explicit instruction and daily practice. Spelling continues to be a focus in Grade 4. Students begin by studying high-frequency words and then move on to study specific spelling patterns and rules. Grade 4 students use *Wordly Wise* to encourage growth in vocabulary and verbal reasoning. Students also learn and review content-specific vocabulary words in related subject areas.

Social Studies

The overarching theme of Grade 4 social studies is exploration of the question *How do physical and social environments affect individuals and groups?* Students study different time periods

and varying perspectives in United States history to expand their knowledge of their local community and other areas within and beyond the Mid-Atlantic region.

Grade 4 students begin to identify places, events, and documents that represent the history of the United States. A study of colonization and the American Revolution provides students with an overview of the historical factors that have shaped their community and nation. Using a case study of Chestertown, Maryland, near the Chesapeake Bay, students identify the geographical features that influenced explorers and settlers to come to the region during the colonial period. A field trip aboard the schooner *Sultana*, docked in Chestertown on the Chester River, shows students the ways in which some people lived and the concerns they had in the eighteenth century.

A separate look at the American Revolution expands students' developing understanding of freedom and democracy by examining heroes, traitors, and great thinkers. Throughout this social studies unit, students acquire greater understanding of citizenship, history, geography, and culture from their personal experiences and the experiences of others.

In the second and third trimesters, students focus on the themes of exploration, westward movement, and resettlement. From the Lewis and Clark expedition to Westward Expansion, students use historical maps and read *In Their Own Words: Lewis and Clark* by George Sullivan, diaries, and nonfiction accounts to learn about United States history during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. A writing project during the Lewis and Clark unit requires students to create a first-person narrative journal, much like Lewis and Clark wrote on their expedition.

At the end of the year, students focus on world geography by researching and reporting on physical and cultural aspects of different countries. Students learn how to read various world and continent maps and work in groups to study the geographic, economic, and

cultural aspects of one particular country. Students then assume the role of a “travel agent” and present their findings to “clients” both in writing and as a presentation.

All social studies content is presented as integrated units, including geography, the arts, fiction reading and writing, nonfiction reading and writing, and science and technology. Grade 4 students learn, use, and refine a variety of skills while participating in hands-on projects, simulations, discussions, reading activities, and field trips.

Mathematics

The Grade 4 math program is built on the curriculum Investigations in Number, Data, and Space. By undertaking a series of related investigations, students deepen their understanding of areas of mathematics previously introduced, while also exploring and developing an understanding of new areas. The curriculum focuses on five strands of mathematics: Number and operations, algebra, data analysis, measurement, and geometry.

In the number and operations strand, students begin by returning to the operations of multiplication and division. They strengthen their computation strategies while deepening their problem-solving skills. Students are taught to solve computation problems efficiently and accurately. They then move on to work with fractions and decimals. They continue to develop their understanding of part-whole relationships and move into adding and subtracting fractional parts. In the algebra strand, students determine missing numbers in equations and begin to use symbols to represent numbers. In the data analysis strand, students read and create increasingly complex graphs. They identify common statistical markers such as mean, median, and mode and learn to make meaningful conclusions based on a given data set. In the measurement strand, students use both standard and non-standard forms of measure. Finally, in the geometry strand, students deepen their understanding of shapes and continue to explore three-dimensional geometry. Throughout the strands, there is a coordinate focus on computation and number sense. In addition, students benefit from daily practice and review in each of the five strands.

Science

Experimentation, observation, analysis, and collaborative discussion drive the Grade 4 science experience. Science is an active discipline, and Grade 4 students are expected to be involved participants in a variety of activities that will ultimately enhance their scientific literacy. In the beginning of the year, students explore energy and change through first-hand experiences. Students investigate electricity and magnetism and discover the useful applications of electromagnetism in everyday life through engineering design challenges. Students explore energy transfer through waves,

repeating patterns of motion, that result in sound and motion. In the Grade 4 environments unit, students study structures and behaviors of organisms and relationships between an organism and its environment. Understanding these relationships, students are armed with the knowledge and awareness of limits and how human behavior can change environments. Students explore a variety of organisms across the unit, conducting experiments, collecting data, and analyzing and interpreting results. Grade 4 students participate in a fish-hatching program to help restore populations of the American Shad in the Potomac River. Following the release of newly hatched American Shad fish, students explore river systems, erosion, and patterns of change over time.

□ Grade 5 □

Language Arts

Reading and writing form the backbone of the Grade 5 language arts experience, as students grow as active readers, vivid and precise writers, and critical thinkers. Literature selections reflect a variety of genres offering varying cultural and historical perspectives. While writing assignments do include responses to literature, they focus primarily on the production of original work in a given genre, using shared literature as a starting point. Autobiography, biography, fantasy, historical fiction, nonfiction, poetry, and short stories present students with varying formats to consider the author’s purpose, how the author achieves that purpose, and how student writers express their own purposes. Ongoing work in vocabulary, grammar, and spelling helps students in these endeavors.

Throughout the year, students read books from each of these genres on their own, in small groups, and as a whole class. Independent reading projects afford students opportunities to experience literature in a self-directed manner. In the past, students have read works such as *Sees Behind Trees* by Michael Dorris, *Number the Stars* by Lois Lowry, and *The Phantom Tollbooth* by Norton Juster. Works read by the whole class allow students to create a shared framework for analysis that encourages them to become critical readers. They learn how to make predictions, analyze characters, summarize, and make inferences. The elements of literature—character, setting, conflict, theme, and style—encourage students to consider why the story matters and the influence the story has on a reader.

Students connect their reading to their writing by responding in paragraphs, compositions, essays, letters, and journals to situations in the literature. They relate the issues in the texts to their personal lives and to questions of universal importance. Studying an author’s techniques provides ways of reinforcing skills such as crafting sentences, using supporting detail and examples, adopting a point of view, and observing change over time. Whether

students respond to literature through personal narratives, poems, or persuasive pieces, they follow a writing process of planning (brain-storming), envisioning the piece, drafting, revising, and editing. Grammar study is based in use of the online program IXL. These skills are taught in a dedicated class as well as within the context of the language arts classroom.

History and Social Studies

The Grade 5 social studies curriculum is built around two significant concepts: Geography provides us with the setting of our world's story and the development of agriculture had an immense impact on human advancement. The year begins with a unit focusing on the five themes of geography: Location, place, human-environmental interaction, movement, and region. Throughout this unit, students gain the necessary skills and knowledge to understand how the physical features of an area affect the decisions people make and how those decisions, in turn, affect the land itself. In order to appreciate how agriculture changed the way early people lived and how it continues to influence global relations, students look at the lives of early hominids throughout the world. They explore why people abandoned nomadic life as hunters and gatherers, why they chose agricultural lives, and how advances in technology led to a surplus of crops—all pivotal elements in the birth of civilizations. Students compare how common characteristics of civilizations such as political and religious beliefs, social structures, language, education, arts, and science developed in the first civilizations of Mesopotamia and Egypt.

Throughout the year, students use atlases, maps, *The World* history text, *National Geographic's World Regions* series, magazine articles, resources from our library, audio-visual materials, and field studies. Experiences include writing a piece about personal connection to the land, constructing various forms of maps, creating skits to represent tectonic plate movement, exploring the cave paintings of Lascaux, and designing posters and models that capture research related to the study of early hominids and ancient Egypt.

The highlight of the Grade 5 year is the Archeological Dig, a cooperative effort in which each homeroom develops a fictitious culture using the knowledge students have gained during the study of ancient civilizations. Students create all aspects of the culture, which are then represented by artifacts designed and constructed in class and later buried at the on-site Dig location. Students from another Grade 5 homeroom excavate the artifacts and analyze the created culture in an attempt to replicate the challenges and successes associated with a real archeological excavation.

Mathematics

There are three overarching goals of the Grade 5 mathematics course: Gain computational fluency with whole numbers, make sense of rational numbers, and solve challenging problems.

Continuing with *Investigations* and supplementing with other resources, students begin the year consolidating their understanding of computational strategies for multiplication and division of whole numbers and learn efficient methods for solving problems using those operations. The study of multiplication extends into student work with 3D geometry and volume measurements. An important goal of the year's work is to gain understanding of the relationships among fractions, decimals, and percent. In their work, students learn strategies for computing with fractions and decimals. Students learn to analyze patterns in tables and graphs to reason about and represent change. In addition, students measure, classify, and describe two-dimensional geometric figures. The sequencing of topics in Grade 5 is intentionally designed to coordinate with appropriate science topics, so that students experience a complementary approach in mathematics and science, with overlapping concepts and skills reinforced between the two disciplines.

Science

Grade 5 students have become more adept in their ability to frame By Grade 5, students have become adept in their ability to frame questions about the world. These questions serve to initiate a process of discovery that culminates in a broader understanding of the earth, life, and physical sciences they encounter every day. Students develop this understanding by conducting and developing original experiments and constructing and testing models. Students have the chance to explore the living and nonliving characteristics of oceans. By studying our world's ocean systems, the organisms that inhabit them, and the environmental conditions that affect them, students develop a greater sense of responsibility for their world.

A large part of the year is devoted to exploring the physical properties that help shape our lives. The curriculum covers the fundamental principles behind motion by studying friction, Newton's Laws of motion, force, and speed. In the beginning of the physics unit, students learn how to program robots. Using these robots, students investigate the relationships that exist among motion, force, and energy. Students design and conduct original experiments about speed and friction. Throughout their study, students hone their skills in data collection, analysis, and interpreting graphs. The work enables students to see how some of the world's greatest inventions have resulted from understanding the basic principles of motion. Following the physics unit, students are introduced to principles in chemistry. They learn the basic structure of the atom, how the Periodic Table is organized and how to use it as a resource for understanding elements. They finally progress towards more complex ideas about compounds and chemical reactions. This unit culminates with students collaborating and creating a second original lab investigation.

□ Upper School □

Special-Subject Classes

□ Religion □

As embodiments of the Christian faith, Episcopal schools are created to be communities that honor, celebrate, and worship God as the center of life. They are created to be models of God's love and grace. Episcopal schools have been established, however, not solely as communities for Christians, as parish churches are, but as ecumenical and diverse ministries of educational and human formation for people of all faiths and backgrounds. (National Association of Episcopal Schools)

The study of religion at St. Patrick's is centered around creating lessons and experiences that introduce our students to the principles of Episcopal identity, interfaith understanding, values and ethics, and a lifelong commitment to service. Classroom lessons encourage students to explore ideas freely, while providing an atmosphere that enables individuals to maintain and develop their own religious views and personal values, within the context of structured, academic study. Our aim is to cultivate within the hearts and minds of our students the recognition that we are all part of something larger than ourselves, that we inhabit a country of many faiths, and that all of us are children of God, with infinite value.

The **Grade 4** curriculum is organized around the study of sacred stories, beginning with those within our own families. Students read and explore differing themes of community, responsibility, and the goodness of God as expressed in sacred Hebrew, Christian, Muslim, Hindu, and Buddhist stories. Through class discussions, art and art history, scripture readings, videos, and written journals, students explore the ethical lessons of sacred stories and the teachings of a loving God, ultimately developing an understanding of God in their own lives. In their final project, students create an illuminated letter, in the tradition of illuminated manuscript, that reflects their understanding of a sacred

story and how it relates to their understanding of God.

The **Grade 5** curriculum is organized around social justice. Students explore the ways in which history, the parables of Jesus, and sacred texts from Judaism, Islam, and Buddhism inform our understanding of serving others. Students explore how empathy, compassion, and justice can be fostered in the school community and the larger world. All students participate in our annual Gifts for Good alternative holiday gifts fair and hear from guest speakers from throughout the greater Washington area about what it takes to serve and uphold the dignity of every human being. Close reading and discussion of scripture from many different faiths, writing projects, class discussions, and videos frame the subject matter and enhance the classroom experience. Ultimately, students will learn the essential link between faith and action.

Through the study of world religions, the **Grade 6** curriculum seeks to encourage understanding of, and respect and appreciation for, the pluralistic world in which we live. The class begins with an exploration of four major questions religions of the world seek to answer: *How do I live the right way? What is my purpose in the world? What happens when we die?* and *How do we pray?* Through reflection, note-taking in a world religions journal, creative writing projects, art, film, and guest lectures, students explore four major world religions—Judaism, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Islam. The course culminates with a field trip to houses of worship in the Washington, D.C. area. Studying the history, beliefs, traditions, and worship life of Jews, Hindus, Muslims, and Buddhists, the class seeks to broaden the students' cultural and religious understanding, while deepening their own sense of spiritual identity.

In **Grade 7**, students take part in a class called Prophets through the Ages. In the Bible, a prophet is an individual chosen by God to speak for God and to lead God's people. Throughout history, many men and women have led lives of faith and inspiration, encouraging and teaching others to make God's world a better place. Renowned theologian Walter Brueggemann defines a prophet as

one who “sees the world as it is and imagines the world as it can be.” In the Grade 7 course, we examine the lives of those individuals whose writings, actions, and words have made a transformative difference in society by seeing the world as it is, with its complex challenges and issues, and imagining a better world. We begin by studying the historical and religious roots of prophets such as Amos, Hosea, Buddha, Jesus, and Muhammad and use this lens to analyze contemporary prophetic voices such as C.S. Lewis, Cesar Chavez, Jonathan Daniels, and Martin Luther King Jr. We reflect regularly on the lives of the people we study, asking the question *What can we learn from this person about the world, God, and ourselves?* Through readings, art, videos, class discussions, and a final interview and photojournalism project, we examine the world as it is and imagine the world as God intended it to be, asking *What does it take to change the world?* The culminating project for the class is a website designed by students, featuring an interview with a contemporary prophet from the greater Washington area. This class meets three times per six-day rotation for one trimester.

The **Grade 8** religion course is a study of ethics. The course, embedded in the humanities curriculum, examines the social, cultural, and spiritual influences that inform our personal ethical decisions as well as the values that have shaped our history. This introductory study of ethics and moral formation challenges students to identify the values that they hold and the origins of those values. Through philosophical arguments, literature, historical documents, and personal reflection, students examine the many ways in which individuals and communities live their values and then compare these values with their own. In doing so, students are challenged to examine the complexities of ethical decision-making and the various value systems that have shaped the human experience in general and American history in particular. Students therefore apply an ethical framework to their study of the Progressive Era, the response to the Great Depression, the Holocaust, and the Civil Rights Movement.

Community Service, Grade 6

Service opportunities provide a vital part of the curriculum. Serving others teaches students to move from their own world into the larger world to explore how important, fulfilling, and life-giving the experience of helping others can be. While service opportunities are numerous and varied, they all serve one purpose: To

inspire a spirit of compassion and understanding, not only of oneself, but of those we serve.

Service activities have included:

- the award-winning Salvation Army Grate Patrol program in which members of the St. Patrick’s community prepare and distribute soup, sandwiches, toiletries, and snacks for the homeless twice each month;
- reading partnerships that draw together Nursery School, Lower School, and Upper School students;
- managing the Grade 6 Cake Raffle and Grade 8 Family Fun Day lunch fundraisers to purchase class gifts for St. Patrick’s;
- conducting drives and fundraisers for our sister school in Haiti, St. Etienne (Hoops for Haiti, school supplies, scholarship sponsorships, underwear and socks, toiletries, prescription glasses), along with other relief efforts;
- singing holiday carols at Mologne House at Walter Reed Army Medical Center;
- visiting Lisner-Louise-Dickson-Hurt Home for seniors in Washington, D.C.;
- conducting drives for Miriam’s Kitchen;
- supporting the Dream Dog Foundation in partnership with America’s Bookshelf; and
- making quilt squares for St. Peter’s Love Quilt Project, which provides quilts to orphan children in South Africa.

Service Learning, Grade 7

A more structured approach to community service emerges in Grade 7, where students participate in a service learning class for one trimester. The class enables students to complement classroom learning about critical social issues with experiential learning by providing them with opportunities to engage in service in the larger community. Prior to engaging in service activities, students examine the root causes of hunger, homelessness, and poverty and learn about local organizations that combat these social conditions. Students then participate in the work of these organizations by spending time partnering on specific projects. Finally, upon completion of a service project, students take time to reflect on their experiences. This process of class preparation, engaged service, and thoughtful reflection is accomplished through a variety of methods, including internet research, class discussions, creative presentations, and regular writing assignments.

At St. Patrick's, service learning means that students become actively involved in concrete activities that enhance the community; that students work in a shared space with others from the community; that they work in a respectful, collaborative manner on dilemmas related to life in cities; that they enhance their academic skills as they work on the project; and that they transform their own perspectives, relationships, and understanding of self in the process.

To date, St. Patrick's students have engaged in service projects with organizations that include Iona Senior Services, So Others Might Eat (SOME), Community Council for the Homeless at Friendship Place, City Year D.C., Capital Area Food Bank, Claggett Farm, Martha's Table, D.C. Central Kitchen, and the Lisner-Louise-Dickson-Hurt Home for seniors.

□ Spanish □

Students in **Grade 4** continue their study of Spanish language and culture. Meeting three times in a six-day cycle, they immerse themselves in a multi-sensory environment, first reviewing the alphabet, numbers, and basic salutations. Through conversations, activities, and the use of technology, students continue to build a working knowledge of the Spanish language. Students learn everyday vocabulary such as colors, animals, foods, and classroom objects and incorporate this vocabulary into conversations. Students learn to express likes and dislikes as they begin to form complete sentences. In addition, students learn how to ask questions, form proper grammatical structures, and employ basic verb conjugations. Working through the year to build vocabulary and speaking skills, each student is expected to participate in class. Students learn about various traditions and customs in the Spanish-speaking world and, by year's end, are able to express basic ideas in Spanish.

Students in **Grade 5** continue to become familiar with speaking and listening while learning grammatical concepts and building on their existing vocabulary. Following a comprehensive review of the previous year, students embark on a more intensive Spanish course, which eschews English in the classroom. During the year, students have several oral presentations geared towards developing confidence in speaking Spanish. Classes are multi-sensory and

provide haptic, auditory, and visual input. By year's end, students are confident in listening and speaking and are able to participate in conversations and discussions that employ the vocabulary learned in the course.

Grades 6, to 8 Spanish

By middle school, the purpose of the Spanish program is to develop an immersive environment that fosters rapid growth in students' language abilities and exposes them to the culture and history of Spain and Latin America. The courses focus on using conversational Spanish while practicing listening comprehension skills through a mixture of audio-lingual instruction, grammar-translation, and direct instruction. Reading increases students' vocabulary and knowledge of grammatical structures, as well as their general understanding of the language. By exploring and discussing literary texts, students compare different cultures and increase their understanding of the Spanish-speaking world. *¡Buen Viaje!*, a textbook course rich in resources, is the primary text. Students in Grade 7 complete Level 1, and students in Grade 8 use Level 2. Finally, in both Grades 7 and 8, students examine significant cultural happenings and events related to the Spanish-speaking world.

The **Grade 6** class is conducted primarily in Spanish. The main goal is to continue to develop a novice level of listening, speaking, writing, and reading, while building knowledge of Hispanic culture. Students fine-tune their listening and speaking skills by practicing correct pronunciation and intonation, which helps them gain confidence in using the language. They also develop their reading and writing skills through project-based learning, which allows them to acquire and use vocabulary and grammar concepts. Other activities include dialogues, role-playing, games, songs, and projects related to holidays, culture, and geography.

The **Grade 7** course, which is conducted primarily in Spanish, is centered on improving both oral and written communication. It emphasizes listening comprehension and the use of basic conversational patterns of Spanish. Elementary grammatical and idiomatic structures, as well as appropriate reading material, are introduced. This year is critical for students as they solidify the structural foundations upon which future progress is based. Topics covered include articles, numbers, nouns, possessive adjectives, interrogatives, and regular and irregular verbs in the present

and preterit tenses. Understanding proper sentence structure and incorporating daily vocabulary are both essential to building a strong foundation in the language. Students also acquire a wealth of cultural knowledge and awareness about the areas of the world in which Spanish is spoken.

As the culmination of the study of a second language at St. Patrick's, the Grade 8 course builds on students' Spanish language skills acquired to this point. The class is centered on refining four essential skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Following on the Grade 7 grammar study, students learn many new tenses, including the imperfect, future, conditional, and present progressive. Students also learn to use reflexive verbs, demonstrative adjectives and pronouns, and double-object pronouns with various verb structures. In addition to regular class exercises, students learn about different Spanish-speaking countries, focusing on geography, history, and cultural attractions. By the end of Grade 8, students are able to express themselves orally with more confidence and begin to write longer and more complex compositions. in the course.

Social-Emotional Learning (SEL)

AN expression of St. Patrick's commitment to character education, the SEL program recognizes both the individual and communal dimensions of good character. The program is aimed at teaching children some of the fundamental skills necessary for healthy social and emotional functioning. The Upper School-wide curriculum is informed in part by the work of Daniel Goleman. Emotional Intelligence describes people's awareness of themselves and their own emotions and how this awareness, along with other social skills, is so crucial to interpersonal success. The goal of including EQ activities at St. Patrick's is consistent with the mission of achieving wholeness in the school's approach to education. Taking a proactive approach to teaching these important skills allows St. Patrick's to contribute further to the social and emotional development of students in the Upper School.

The **Grade 4** program, which meets weekly in the fall, introduces the concept of emotional intelligence and how it influences the lives of adults and children. Additional topics include identity, self-esteem, communication, friendship, and conflict resolution. Instruction proceeds through didactic lectures, in-class writing

exercises, moderated discussions, and role-playing. An additional goal of these sessions is to build cohesion and cooperation within the class.

The **Grade 5** program builds on the previous year by reviewing some of the same social concepts and adding greater depth to students' understanding of friendship and conflict resolution. The learning is reinforced through various media, including video presentations and more open discussion. Along with the SEL curriculum, human sexuality is taught for the first time in Grade 5. Students meet in their homeroom groupings for general information sessions and then meet in separate boys' and girls' groups—led by a same-gender faculty facilitator—for an information and discussion session on gender-specific changes during puberty. School nurses work with this aspect of the SEL curriculum.

□ Health □

The goal of the health curriculum is to provide students with the knowledge and skills they need to develop, maintain, and enjoy healthy lifestyles, as well as solve problems, make decisions, and set goals that are directly related to personal health and well-being. The program encourages students to develop attitudes, beliefs, and values related to identity and relationships with a sensitivity to and respect for individual differences. The Grade 6 health curriculum focuses on the body's systems and the developing teenage brain. In Grade 7 health, the major strands center on personal health and growth and development. Grade 8 health continues to encourage healthy individual choices by examining the relationships that information, health promotion, and disease prevention have in establishing and maintaining personal well-being.

Grade 6 This trimester course explores the anatomy and physiology of the human body and its life functions. Students examine the structure, function, and relationships of these systems, including reproduction, to healthy growth and development. Students also investigate the developing teenage brain's prefrontal cortex as it relates to individual critical thinking, decision-making, and emotional well-being. Other areas of concentration are lifetime fitness, disease prevention, and self-management skills. Hands-on activities include:

- Hands-Only CPR,
- basic first aid, and
- digital health journals.

Grade 7 *Growth and development* includes topics of physical and social-emotional growth and development. It also covers human sexuality in its broadest context, including an examination of the emotional and physical changes brought about by sexual development, as well as the cultural and social forces that influence our own self-perceptions. Other areas of interest are reproductive health, feelings, abstinence, and gender roles. *Healthy eating* includes topics related to nutrition, diet, eating disorders, body image, and exercise. The program encourages students to think critically about what it means to be healthy physically, mentally, and socially. Students also learn about the *prevention of diseases* and the *effects of drugs*—prescription and non-prescription, tobacco, and alcohol—and the consequences of their use.

Grade 8 This course thrives on student-centered learning involving individual and group inquiry, collaboration, and critical thinking. Student-chosen topics utilize open-ended questions and discussion formats providing students with the knowledge and subset skills that allow for reflection on and integration of what they have learned. By making health more relevant and applicable, the course enables students to gain deeper understanding and the tools needed for making healthy personal decisions. Topic areas include:

- the developing teen brain;
- what it means to be, and our responsibility to be, global citizens in the twenty-first century;
- stereotypes;
- tolerance and acceptance;
- the role the media plays in how we view the world and each other;
- sexual assault and personal responsibility; and
- the effects of alcohol and drug use.

▣ Library ▣

The goals of the library program in the Upper School are to support students' research and to nurture each student's sense of him/herself as a learner, a reader, and a member of a community of learners and readers. Teachers and the librarians work

together on research units in the library. Students learn about good books through monthly book talks and video book trailers presented by librarians. In between these scheduled times, students are free to visit the library to select books for their own reading or school assignments. Upper School students may have up to five titles checked out at a time.

Grade 4 students refine their research skills and meet for scheduled library classes twice a month. Continuing the process of research, they practice reading informational material for comprehension, developing the skills to identify relevant sections and features of an article or nonfiction book, and recasting the ideas presented into a form that serves their purpose. Grade 4 students also learn about other useful forms of reference, how best to use encyclopedias and online databases for mini-research projects, and more academic databases, such as Grolier. Students are introduced to monthly book talks with a librarian to find literature that complements their work in language arts and social studies.

In **Grade 5**, students expand their research skills. They continue using print references, encyclopedias, and online databases. They consult more than one source to verify information and cite their sources. Monthly book talks continue to acquaint them with a variety of good books that complement the genre they are studying in their language arts class, including nonfiction.

In **Grades 6, 7, and 8**, students reinforce and consolidate research skills that they learned in Grades 4 and 5. They consult a variety of sources and cite them using proper bibliographic format. Librarians work with teachers on collaborative research projects in the library and in the classroom. All Grade 6 students participate in the Green Star Books, a Newbery Award-style process where students read books that are noteworthy and eligible for the annual Newbery Award then vote for a winning title at the end of the school year. Grade 6 students also meet every three weeks with a librarian for book talks based on their genre units. Day School librarians support Grade 6 units of study, research, and inquiry. In Grade 7, students work closely with the librarian on a number of research projects, most notably the Sustainable Cities project that requires academic research, professional interviews, and Washington, D.C. neighborhood visits. Much of the Grade 8 year is spent on the Capstone project, a three-part research project that takes place through much of the year. Librarians work closely with the teachers to provide

research lessons during classes, work as mentors to students, and provide reference materials for student use.

□ Technology □

The technology program empowers students to create, communicate, collaborate, and consume critically as they explore the content they learn in math, language arts, science, social studies, and other classes. By the end of Grade 8, all students will have had experiences with technology and digital resources in the following ways. Students will:

- apply engineering and design strategies while creating software and building physical machines, vehicles, and robots;
- write code in a language widely embraced by the adult coding community (usually Javascript or Python);
- select and apply digital tools to collect, organize, and analyze data;
- create three-dimensional models, video games, simulations, movies, digital presentations, and other products to demonstrate understanding in content areas;
- conceptualize and manage individual or group learning projects using digital planning tools with teacher support;
- evaluate digital resources to determine the credibility of the author and publisher and the timeliness and accuracy of the content;
- organize research and cite sources digitally;
- select and use appropriate digital tools to solve problems;
- use collaborative electronic writing and editing tools to explore ideas from multiple perspectives; and
- create limited, positive digital footprints while acting as good digital citizens online.

Performance expectations for technology are based on “Profiles of Technology Literate Students” from the ISTE National Educational Technology Standards for Students and several authorities on science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) education including Los Alamos National Laboratory, the Capitol Region Education Council, the Massachusetts and Minnesota departments of education, and the Next Generation Science Standards.

Students learn to become advanced users of software to which they were introduced in the Lower School and apply their software skills to enhance their learning. For three-dimensional modeling,

students learn to use computer-assisted design (CAD) programs. Students learn to create videos using WeVideo, an online, multi-track collaborative editing tool. Our school-wide subscription enables students to access WeVideo’s tools and tutorials from any computer at school or at home. In recent years, student work with coding and video editing has earned awards at regional technology competitions.

Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics

St. Patrick’s teachers have developed interdisciplinary science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) units throughout the grade levels. One example of this project-based work in the Grades 7 and 8 program is a STEM class that meets at least once per six-day rotation and engages students in activities such as SeaPerch, where they learn and apply the concepts and skills necessary to build an underwater robot. Students have been highly successful in regional STEM competitions.

□ Learning Resources Program □

The aim of the Upper School Learning Resources Program is to provide academic and organizational support to students who demonstrate specific needs. Learning specialists communicate and collaborate with classroom teachers, special-subject teachers, and parents to identify the current strengths and needs of students and to determine the most effective learning strategies and instruction to ensure maximum academic success. While the goal of the program is to meet students’ needs primarily in classroom settings, there are times when specialized instruction is necessary to assist students in advancing their academic skills. Beyond whole-group instruction in the classroom, students may work individually or in small groups with a learning specialist to strengthen or expand skills and/or learn specific content at any given time. Recognizing the fluid nature of student learning at the elementary and middle school level, the program’s structure is flexible in nature. Learning specialists use ongoing observation, work samples (quizzes, tests, projects, written work, etc.) and, at times, informal assessments to make informed decisions about students’ instructional needs.

The Writing and Learning Center

The Writing and Learning Center is a new program on the MacArthur Campus that will offer students instruction, guidance, and feedback on their evolving student skills and writing needs. Led by

the Director of the Writing and Learning Center and supported by the MacArthur Campus learning specialists, the program coordinates study skills classes for students in Grades 6 to 8, provides individualized instruction for students with executive functioning and organizational challenges, oversees the development and implementation of individualized learning plans for students with diagnosed learning differences, and guides all students through writing work with extra support available either at student request or by teacher direction. In addition, the Writing and Learning Center offers parent programs to help parents navigate the middle school transition to greater student independence.

Study Skills

Based in the work of the Writing and Learning Center, and meeting intensively at the beginning of the year and periodically thereafter, study skills classes taught by the Grades 6, 7, and 8 learning specialists review the tenets of good organization, learning strategies, note-taking, research skills, and review.

▫ The Arts ▫

Studio Art, Grades 4 and 5

In the Upper School art program, we believe creative expression is learnable and attainable. Building students' confidence in their artistic ability is central to the curriculum. Students learn to reflect on, critique, and appreciate their own work and that of others. Student artwork enlivens the walls of the school. Activities in the Whitehaven Campus and MacArthur Campus Art Studios develop students' skills of observation and perception while heightening their awareness of the elements of art and principles of design. Students become increasingly familiar with a broad range of materials, tools, and techniques as well as the methods for their appropriate use and further exploration. Art history and a working art vocabulary are integral to all classes. Subject matter is drawn from a variety of sources, including still life, nature, the work of other artists and cultures, classroom themes, stage design, and one's own life. Students expand their understanding of the connections art holds with many disciplines of study through integrated experiences.

The **Grade 4** curriculum further develops students' observational skills, use of the elements of art, and proficiency with tools and materials. It integrates with some classroom units such as geometry and the concept of journal-keeping. Students deepen their

understanding of realistic work with a variety of drawing exercises as well as a still-life unit and a unit on drawing geometric forms accurately. Students also study and complete projects related to the work of artists Andy Goldsworthy and Wassily Kandinsky, whose diverse styles and artistic perceptions inform students' understanding of abstract work. Students work with contour, line, proportion, positive/negative space, color mixing, and the use of value to create light, shadow, and volume.

The **Grade 5** curriculum continues to reinforce the development of observational skills while refining students' understanding of the elements of art and the principles of design. Projects are completed in a variety of materials with more advanced techniques introduced for each. Students behave like artists, practicing the thorough development of ideas and options for thoughtful execution using paint, ceramics, printmaking, and pen. Many units ask students to discuss and reflect on the compositional decisions artists make and how those decisions can communicate ideas and influence the viewer. Grade 5 focuses on the study of the human figure and learning to depict its movement in accurate proportions. The expressive possibilities of the human form are also explored through the works of various artists. Units also connect with language arts and the Grade 5 Archeological Dig.

Studio Art, Grades 6 to 8

The scope of learning in Grades 6 to 8 studio art involves exploring a variety of art materials, increasing artistic repertoire and skills, cultivating original self-expression, and developing story-telling ability. By revisiting materials with a new set of cognitive, emotional, and physical faculties, students rediscover distinctive properties of each art medium and develop a new array of visual and plastic repertoire. Progressing from their childhood artistic repertoire, students are challenged to develop more advanced and sophisticated creative language that is more suitable for their new ideas and feelings. The primary subject matter for artistic exploration and creation in studio art is one's unique adolescent life experience. Through art-making, students are encouraged to reflect on and foster a deeper understanding of their own life experiences and those of others around them. Through active individual observations and collective discussions of the works of various artists from diverse cultures and periods, students build a strong art vocabulary and learn to analyze and appreciate the artwork of others as well as their

own. Students have the opportunity to explore five major genres—portraiture, still life, landscape, figurative art, and abstract art—in the visual art domain across various cultures and time periods. The program also promotes interdisciplinary learning, connecting art with the humanities program.

□ Music □

The music program fosters a lifelong love of music, develops the competencies that enable children to participate fully in the music curriculum, and lays a foundation for participation in music beyond St. Patrick's.

Music instruction occurs twice a rotation within a comprehensive framework stemming from the experiential processes of Orff-Schulwerk and Kodály. Children are immersed in skills and concepts that they will build upon through the grade levels in what we describe as a spiraling curriculum. In each grade, classroom music includes experiential instruction in the concepts of pitch, rhythm, dynamics, tempo, form, timbre, texture, and style. Music notation and reading become increasingly challenging with the expectation that, as they transition to middle school, students will be fluent in writing and reading all the notes of the C, F, and G pentatonic scales on the treble staff. Students learn these concepts through listening, movement, speech, singing, creating, and instrumental work. Classroom instruments include Orff instruments—xylophones, metallophones, glockenspiels, unpitched percussion, and recorders—and a variety of world instruments.

Opportunities for performance abound at all grade levels. Whether these performances take place in the classroom, in regular chapels, or for a large audience, they are vital to each child's development as a confident, skilled musician. A schoolwide highlight is the Christmas Pageant.

The **Grade 4** curriculum continues to build on the music concepts of melody, harmony, rhythm, dynamics, tempo, timbre, texture, and form through vocal exploration, instrument-playing, movement, improvisation, notation, and creation of elemental melodies, rhythms, and chants. Students increase their repertoire to include rounds, two-part songs, American folk music, and world music. Soprano recorder instruction continues with an emphasis on music-reading and improvisation. In connection with the social studies curriculum, students learn about the important role music played in eighteenth-century America. Through folk dances, hymn tunes, play parties, song games, and dulcimer-playing, students experience

life in colonial times. Grade 4 musical highlights include the American Music Presentation and building a mountain dulcimer with an artist-in-residence in the fall.

The **Grade 5** curriculum continues to build on the music concepts of melody, harmony, rhythm, dynamics, tempo, timbre, texture, and form through vocal exploration, instrument-playing, movement, improvisation, notation, and creation of elemental melodies, rhythms, and chants. Students continue to learn soprano recorder with an emphasis on increasingly difficult music-reading and improvisation. Using traditional drum-circle techniques, students create layered rhythmic patterns through rote learning as they respond to each other as an ensemble. The Spring Trimester encompasses musical and dramatic skills, collaborative work, and community-building skills as students create a full grade-level performance opportunity to be shared on stage. This work is done with the support of their music and art teachers.

Music Matters: Grades 6 to 8

The purpose of the general music program in Grades 6 to 8 is to continue to develop the students' knowledge and perception of music. Students become actively involved as listeners, creators, and performers while they explore the world of music. Their understanding of the structure and aesthetics of music increases as their musical skills strengthen. Students learn to express their knowledge and to communicate musically with others.

Through the use of a variety of music and musical experiences, students continue to gain greater knowledge and understanding of music; increased perception of the structural and expressive dimensions of music; an awareness of the relationship of other art forms with music; independent performance and group-participation skills; and the ability to use their knowledge, perception, and skill to refine their understanding and to facilitate communication with others.

Students examine the elements of melody, rhythm, harmony, texture, tone color, dynamics, and form through guided activities in listening, performing, creating, reading, and notating, with an emphasis on experiential learning. Listening materials come from a variety of cultural, historical, and stylistic examples—from popular music of our time, world music, classical vocal and instrumental music, opera, and folk music, to Blues, Jazz, and American musical theatre.

Classroom instruments include drums and percussion instruments from around the world, keyboards, ukuleles, guitars, and a

synthesizer/sequencer. Students become versed in the computer programs Finale PrintMusic and Audacity as they write and edit their own music. Classroom activities include group and improvisational drumming ensembles; ukulele and guitar ensembles; melody, harmony, and songwriting incorporating singing, keyboards, ukuleles, guitars, and drums; a GRAMMY unit study; creating a podcast about a musician, including researching and writing a short script, choosing representative music, and editing voice and music together; learning about the elements of opera and writing an aria; playing and writing Blues songs; and exploring early American music from the period of Reconstruction through the advent of jazz and country.

Arts Exploration, Spring Trimester, Grade 8

Grade 8 students choose a studio art or musical theatre elective after the Fall Trimester. In the spring, students present their work, either a theatre performance or studio artwork, to the broader school community at the Performing and Studio Arts Night in May.

Studio Art Elective

The art elective course is designed to offer students a more in-depth opportunity to explore visual art forms. Based on broad themes that are identified each year, students independently select art media to represent and interpret the given topics and produce a body of artworks (minimum four). Past themes have included “Positions and Compositions: With, Without, Against, Between, Through,” “Artful Conjunctions: And, Or, But, If, Because,” “Scales Count: Every, Any, All, Some, None,” and “hiSTORY & herSTORY: Near and Far.” Students who desire more artistic freedom and independence may explore subject matter of their own choice. The student is required in that case to submit a written proposal describing his/her individual plans for the coursework.

Musical Theatre Elective

This elective is for students who are interested in theatre performance. After the musical has been selected, students audition for parts. As part of the process of auditioning, students explore elements of acting through games and character development. After the musical is cast, students work on proper singing techniques, learn and assist with blocking, learn choreography, and practice acting skills as they work to memorize the script. Students also assist with set design and construction, program cover design, writing short biographies, and creating a playbill for the show. The culminating activity is the stage performance at Performing and Studio Arts Night in May.

□ Performing Ensembles: Grades 4 and 5 □

The performing ensemble program offers both instrumental and choral opportunities for students in Grades 4 and 5. These ensembles provide instruction in advanced musical techniques, develop self-confidence through performance, and reinforce cooperative skills within an ensemble.

Recorder Consort

The Recorder Consort is open to students in Grades 4 and 5. Members develop ensemble skills, including playing independent parts, using proper technique, and listening to one another. Students hone their skills on soprano recorder and may add soprano, alto, and tenor recorders to their instrumental repertoire. Performances for this ensemble include special chapels and every school concert.

Orff Ensemble

The Orff Ensemble, also open to students in Grades 4 and 5, develops necessary ensemble skills such as playing independent parts, appropriate mallet technique, and the ability to listen. The Orff Ensemble uses recorders and a variety of pitched and unpitched percussion instruments including body percussion, xylophones, metallophones, glockenspiels, drums, and bass tubes. Performances for this ensemble include special chapels and every school concert.

Choir

The Young Singers of St. Patrick’s consists of all Grades 4 and 5 students. Choir members are expected to make a commitment to attending all rehearsals, which occur during school hours, and to singing at all performances, several of which are outside school hours. The Young Singers have represented St. Patrick’s in performances at the Washington National Cathedral, Walter Reed Medical Center, the Kennedy Center, the White House, and the “Today Show,” as well as at children’s choral festivals. Membership in the choir provides an exciting opportunity for students to develop good vocal techniques (sight-reading, ensemble, and choral literature skills), self-confidence through performance, friendships, and leadership skills.

□ Performing Ensembles: Grades 6 to 8 □

The music program in Grades 6, 7, and 8 offers both instrumental and choral performance opportunities for students. The goals of the ensembles are to provide instruction in advanced musical techniques, inspire self-confidence through performance, and develop cooperative skills in a large-group setting.

Choir

There are two choirs on the MacArthur Campus, the Grade 6 Choir and the Grades 7 and 8 Choir. These choirs, which follow a structure similar to that of the Grades 4 and 5 Young Singers, are open to students who choose to join and participate in rehearsals and performances both during and outside school hours. These non-auditioned groups are featured at the Holiday Concert and the Spring Concert.

Every March, St. Patrick's hosts a Middle School Choral Festival that includes several area independent schools. At other times, the choirs participate in special events around the city.

Chamber Singers

This select ensemble comprises a small group of singers from the Grades 7 and 8 choir who have shown exceptional commitment to singing during their St. Patrick's careers and have successfully auditioned to join the group. Members of Chamber Singers make a serious commitment to the choir and to additional rehearsals and performances both during and outside school hours.

Handbells/Handchimes

The handbell program, which begins in Grade 6, features three ensembles. Students in Grade 6 are eligible to participate in the handbell/handchime program, choosing either the fall or spring. In Grade 7 and Grade 8, participants can ring all year. Being a member of Handbells provides an opportunity for a small number of students to participate in an instrumental ensemble. Ringers develop strong rhythm and counting skills as they learn how each individual bell fits together to create a whole. Performances for this ensemble include special chapels and every school concert.

□ Physical Education and Athletics □

Physical education classes take place in Grades 4 to 6 in the Upper School. Grades 7 and 8 students are required to participate in a sport. The goal of the physical education program is to help

children develop a love of and respect for physical movement and fitness. Within that goal is a continual emphasis on individual effort, team cooperation, and social awareness. Ultimately, students establish patterns and habits that allow each of them to have a physically active, healthy, and enjoyable lifestyle.

Upper School physical education classes develop the five concentration areas of the Lower School (body awareness, spatial awareness, locomotion skills, manipulative skills, and social interaction), often using similar, yet more advanced, movements. In addition, students take part in more formalized games and other activities that develop cardiovascular fitness, strength, and flexibility. Examples include field games such as football, soccer, and lacrosse; advanced manipulative skills such as juggling and intermediate gymnastics; and cardiovascular exercise such as running, jumping rope, and aerobics.

After-School Sports Program

Athletic activity is an integral part of St. Patrick's effort to nurture the mind, body, and spirit. Competitive interscholastic sports enable students to practice and understand the values of teamwork, commitment, and sportsmanship and to develop a positive work ethic. Sports are an opportunity for our students to learn how to work with others for a common goal, to discipline themselves mentally and physically, and to gain confidence in their abilities.

St. Patrick's is a member of the Capital Athletic Conference. The conference, which comprises like-configured independent schools in Maryland, Virginia, and the District, provides a safe and compatible level of competition among its members. St. Patrick's also plays non-conference schools, and our teams have faced every major school in the area that sponsors competition for Grades 5 and 6.

All students in **Grades 5 and 6** are encouraged to try out for a team sport. The school offers soccer, cross country, basketball, lacrosse, and track and field as competitive sports.

In addition to interscholastic competition, St. Patrick's offers students the chance to participate in seasonal instructional clinics and intramural team sports, including developmental lacrosse, soccer, and basketball, which are available to students in **Grades 3 to 6**.

Varsity Athletics

Athletic activity is an integral part of St. Patrick's effort to nurture the mind, body, and spirit. Competitive interscholastic sports and the other physical activities in which **Grades 7 and 8** students

participate enable them to understand and practice the values of teamwork, commitment, and sportsmanship and to develop a positive work ethic. Sports and other physical activities provide an opportunity for students to work with others toward a common goal, to discipline themselves mentally and physically, and to gain confidence in their abilities. Rather than take a physical education class during the school day, students in Grades 7 and 8 participate in required athletics at the end of the academic day, four days a week. St. Patrick's uses its own gymnasium and playing fields on the Whitehaven Campus and the Foxhall Campus for practices and games.

St. Patrick's plays in the Capital Athletic Conference (CAC) at the varsity level for Grades 7 and 8. The conference, made up of like-configured independent schools in Maryland, Virginia, and the District, provides a safe and compatible level of competition among its members. St. Patrick's teams also compete against schools that are not in the CAC.

The Grades 7 and 8 offerings in athletics for the fall season are soccer and cross country. Basketball and conditioning are the winter options. In the spring, students may choose from lacrosse or track and field. In any given season, a small number of students may participate in an off-campus athletic activity that meets St. Patrick's requirements.

▣ Clubs ▣

Grades 6 to 8 students meet once a rotation to explore structured extracurricular activities in areas of interest to them. These include Literary Magazine, Battle of the Books, Yearbook, Chess, Chapel Council, CAFE, musical theatre in Grade 7 and, for Grade 8, community service (which is a continuation of work begun in the Grade 7 service learning class).

Student Leadership Council

The goals of the Student Leadership Council (SLC) include serving the school and its students, serving the greater Washington, D.C. community, and acting as leaders in the St. Patrick's community by setting a good example for others. The SLC comprises representatives from each homeroom in Grades 4, 5, and 6 along with two representatives from Grade 7 and four from Grade 8. In Grades 7 and 8, student leaders are elected to the SLC by their peers after candidates submit applications, which are screened by faculty. Grades 7 and 8 SLC members hold leadership roles intended to help them promote and model leadership and honor at St. Patrick's and also

take on additional duties. Serving on the SLC is the highest student office at St. Patrick's. Being a good member of the SLC involves time, commitment, energy, cooperation, good judgment, and a willingness to work for the benefit of St. Patrick's.