St. Anne's-Belfield School

2026-27 Middle School Curriculum Guide




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All-School Information

2026-27 Senior Administration Leadership Team

Autumn A. Graves, Ed.D., Head of School
A. Randol "Randie" Benedict, M.S.Ed., Associate Head of School for Enrollment Management
Julie Brooks, M.Ed., Head of the Lower School
Lisa Nguyen Ha, M.P.A., Chief Strategic Communications Officer (CCO)
Seth Kushkin, Director of Athletics (AD)
Beth Miller, M.Ed., Head of the Upper School
David Miller, Ed.D., Assistant Head of School
Marie Reed, M.A., Head of the Middle School
Leah Shiraishi, M.A., Director of the Head of School's Office

Misson

"We wish our students to become strong in body, broad of mind, tender of heart, responsive in soul."

— Mary Hyde DuVal, Founding Headmistress

Core Purpose

To inspire and prepare the next generation of exemplary citizens and visionary leaders.

Core Values

Integrity: Cultivating responsible, honorable, ethical behavior

Curiosity: Fulfilling our desire to question, to know and to learn for a lifetime

Diversity: Seeking to know, learn from and value one another

Creativity: Expecting imaginative, critical and divergent thinking

Agency: Empowering students to own their learning

Impact: Accomplishing meaningful, significant work for the greater good

History

St. Anne's-Belfield School is a best-in-class, co-educational independent school in Charlottesville, Va. serving students age 2 through Grade 12. The School's present structure is the result of the merger of St. Anne's School, a girls' boarding school founded in 1910 by the Reverend Dr. Henry Bedinger Lee, rector of Christ Church (Episcopal) of Charlottesville, and Belfield School, a co-educational elementary school established in 1955. Situated on two campuses totaling more than 50 acres, St. Anne's-Belfield School graduated its first class in 1974. While an interfaith Chapel remains one of the School's most treasured traditions, the School is no longer affiliated with the Episcopal church or any particular religion.

Philosophy

We at St. Anne's-Belfield School believe that our students will become exemplary citizens and visionary leaders because of the inspiration of exceptional teachers and the nourishment of every child's innate curiosity. Our mission is to feed this curiosity through exceptional, innovative teaching and learning in an intentional age 2 through Grade 12 community in which close relationships provide the foundation for achievement and where every child is known well. Curiosity — that desire to grow, know, ask, create, and solve — is both the fuel of learning and an essential ingredient to success in an ever-changing world; it must be encouraged from the earliest years and throughout life. Our goal is to nourish our students' curiosity about themselves, their world, and the diverse people around them, in an educational experience that inspires, challenges, and stimulates innovative, empathetic, and creative thought. We pose compelling questions and seek answers through inquiry, application of core skills, development of essential habits, thoughtful reflection, collaboration with others, and the appropriate use of technology. The questions we ask and the answers we seek reflect our commitment to the cultivation of responsible, honorable behavior and to a mindfulness of the needs of others.

We strive to equip our students with the knowledge, skills, habits, and attitudes that will allow them to pursue their dreams in a rapidly changing and increasingly technological world, and to be exemplary citizens in life and work. Ours is a challenging yet charitable community distinguished by superior instruction that is cutting edge and student driven; by exceptionally knowledgeable and highly-trained teachers; and by an environment that exalts growth over grades by providing a culture of intellectual candor and rich feedback. Our community strives for excellence in all aspects of School life and encourages students to discover and develop empathy, diversity of perspective, adaptability, flexibility, resilience, agency, self-efficacy, and inventiveness. We embrace uncompromisingly high expectations for ethical, selfless behavior and hold firmly to our commitment to inclusion, civility, and kindness.

Portrait of a 2036 Graduate

The Portrait of a 2036 Graduate is an articulation of the habits, mindsets, and skill sets that St. Anne's-Belfield School believes are essential for our graduates in the present and the future. With the first phase completed in 2023-24, it is an aspirational document and applicable in an age-appropriate manner for our entire student population, from age 2 to Grade 12. The date, 2036, symbolically represents the year that the then-Kindergarten students will walk the stage at Commencement. The Portrait ties together the St. Anne's-Belfield School mission, vision, and core values. We believe that all of our students should become exemplary citizens, as stated in our school vision statement. We define exemplary citizens as those who are strong in body, broad of mind, tender of heart, and responsive in soul, as articulated in our mission. The Portrait of a 2036 Graduate further explores how we define these ideas and our expectations for our students as they grow into exemplary citizens. Each of the School's six core values (integrity, curiosity, diversity, creativity, agency, and impact) is found in these definitions. You may read the full Portrait at stannesbelfield.org/discover/portrait-of-a-graduate/

Chapel

Chapel is the oldest continuous tradition of St. Anne's-Belfield School, reflecting the history of the School's founding by the Episcopal Church in 1910. The School is independent of any specific faith, and while our Chapel program is rooted in the Episcopal tradition, our community is inclusive of all faiths, backgrounds, and beliefs.

All St. Anne's-Belfield School community members share the common experience of attending Chapel services. Students and faculty gather around a personal reflection from a community member that opens a window into the diverse perspectives and experiences of others, inspires introspection, sparks thoughtful dialogue, or offers a moral lesson. Student-centered voice, in developmentally-appropriate ways, lies at the heart of the Chapel experience.

Across the divisions, three guideposts shape the Chapel experience: the spiritually rooted tradition of our service, the heartfelt community focus of our reflections, readings, and music, and a warm openness to spiritual diversity and belonging in our outlook. In the midst of the busyness of school life, Chapel gives us a place to nurture the fullness of Mary Hyde DuVal's mission: "We wish our students to be strong in body, broad of mind, tender of heart, and responsive in soul."

Statement on Inclusive Excellence

St. Anne's-Belfield School believes that exemplary citizenship and visionary leadership are best nurtured in a welcoming School community based on equity, inclusivity, and the pursuit of excellence. Our School strives to provide a well-balanced educational experience that affirms the richness and diversity of humanity, creates an expectation of belonging based on shared human dignity, and encourages a desire to learn about and from each other.

Non-Discrimination Policy

The School admits qualified students of any race, color, national origin, place of birth, ancestry, sex, religion, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, mental or physical disability, or any status protected by applicable law, and extends to them all the privilege to participate in the educational programs generally accorded or made available to students at the School. The School does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin, ancestry, sex, religion, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, mental or physical disability, or any status protected by applicable law in the administration of its admission or its educational programs.

Accreditation

St. Anne's-Belfield is accredited by Southern Association of Independent Schools (SAIS). SAIS is a professional organization that seeks to strengthen member schools by providing high-quality accreditation processes, comprehensive professional growth opportunities, and visionary leadership development programs. With more than 380 member K-12 schools from 14 U.S. states, the Caribbean, and Latin America (representing 220,000+ students), SAIS is the largest regional independent school association in the country.

Governance

The School is governed by a self-perpetuating board of trustees. It is the responsibility of this body to plan, develop, and establish policy and to assess the performance of the School consistent with the School's mission and philosophy. The Board of Trustees is responsible for the selection of and close collaboration with the head of school. In turn, the head of school is responsible for the implementation of policy and the day-to-day operations of the School.

Middle School Grades 5 – 8

The Middle School curriculum weaves disparate threads. Traditional content and skills coexist with new forms of instruction and application.

Instead of merely combining the old and new, the School reimagines the academic context to create a bold paradigm of learning in which students learn through a variety of methods: collaboration, seminar discussions, student-centered activities, and real-life problem solving requiring critical and creative thinking. The academic program is intentionally designed to build strong foundations in reading, writing, speaking, critical thinking, problem-solving, and collaboration.

Throughout the course of the Middle School, all students study English, history, mathematics, science, world languages (offerings in Spanish and French), and fine and performing arts. Additionally, all students in Grades 5 – 8 engage in the health program and participate in physical education or sports. Every student is required to participate in the entirety of our curriculum and school program, as detailed in the Student and Family Handbook. Students will not be excused from specific units in any course or from community events or activities.

Interdisciplinary study truly begins in Grades 5 – 8, with many teachers planning activities, units, and projects that stretch beyond the boundaries of any one class. The School's Computer Science program brings together mathematical knowledge and fluency gleaned from our Kindergarten through Grade 6 Singapore Math program, computational thinking, and an understanding of coding. Breaking down the traditional silos of academic disciplines better serves to cement understanding in our students.

The Middle School advisory program focuses on social-emotional learning and provides students with the skills and habits they will need as they make important adolescent decisions. Students are split into co-educational groups and paired with a faculty advisor to allow for smaller teacher to student ratios in a

setting where students can feel free to voice their questions and curiosities. The teacher is an advocate for their advisees, oversees their academic progress, and meets with their parents at scheduled parent-advisor conferences during the year. Advisors collaborate regularly with the Dean of Students and the Head of the Middle School, in addition to the School Counselor and the Academic and Learning Support Specialist.

Topics include: identity; friendship; grade-level expectations; integrity and the honor code; community impact; stress management; digital citizenship; and executive functioning. All topics are revisited throughout the Middle School years in different and developmentally appropriate ways. For our Grade 8 students, there is also a special emphasis on community leadership.

Grade Level Introductions

Grade 5

Grade 5 at St. Anne's-Belfield marks the entry to our Middle School program. Our students relish both the new freedoms and the new responsibilities inherent in these years. Core classes of math, science, English, and social studies, enhanced with classes in the arts, world language, and physical education, ensure a balanced curriculum. All Grade 5 students participate in a strings program. Students are also members of a fifth grade advisory, which provides a mentor for each child through their advisor, a Grade 5 faculty member. Advisory extends community-building opportunities on a daily basis. The advisor and students also explore the School's Core Values as they work to strengthen our St. Anne's-Belfield School community.

Highlights of the fifth grade year include designing and developing wind turbine blades, sharing original works at a Poetry Tea, and hosting a South African Chapel and Braai.

Grade 6

Grade 6 students at St. Anne's-Belfield School learn and grow in exciting and important ways. They experiment with words, data, and ideas as they discuss literature, write creative and thoughtful stories and essays, design their own sacred spaces, record and track math data on spreadsheets, and conduct experiments and present their findings at a science fair. They express their talents by crafting artwork, developing their creative skills, performing with an ensemble, speaking and reading in a different language, and progressing as developing athletes. Sixth graders develop essential skills and gain broader perspectives.

Students reflect with advisors, supporting their positive growth in the areas of creating a community of belonging, student ownership of their learning, and diving further into other Middle School Core Values. Through this and other new experiences, sixth graders build a foundation of confidence and self-reliance they will draw upon during their remaining years in Middle School.

Grade 7

Grade 7 students are excited to participate in classes that are housed on the second floor of the Middle School. The upward movement is both actual and symbolic: Grade 7 is filled with greater opportunities to develop leadership skills, and increased academic challenges and responsibilities. "Life upstairs" on the second floor of the Middle School involves classes in English and history, mathematics, science, world languages, arts, health, athletics, clubs, Quests, and an advisory program where students work closely with their advisors on a daily basis.

Seventh graders also participate in interscholastic sports for the first time. The Chapel program and community engagement opportunities help sustain a sense of community and responsible citizenship. Highlights of the seventh grade year include the building and launching of model rockets, making a video game using algebra, investigating historical artifacts in a joint project between English 7 and History 7, and journeying to several historic sites and museums in support of the curriculum.

Grade 8

Grade 8 is the culmination of the Middle School experience. As more independent learners and thinkers, Grade 8 students are given more responsibility as leaders of the division. They take a greater role in managing their own learning through contacting teachers and managing their time independently. They are expected to exemplify the School's Core Values both inside and outside of the classroom. They are encouraged to lead and participate in weekly Chapel, on sports fields, in performance halls, and in community service activities. Some eighth graders step into the role of student Quest teacher or leader of a club. Eighth grade continues to prepare students for the transition to the ninth grade, as academic requirements reflect the vigor and expectations of our Upper School. Grade 8 students attend two Upper School Chapels during the year and attend a spring transition conference with an Upper School faculty member in preparation for their move to the Greenway Rise Campus.

While Grade 8 looks forward, it is also a time of reflection. At the end of the school year, students participate in special capstone projects, known as Exhibitions. These are formal, oral presentations to their parents/guardians, teachers, and classmates about the middle school experiences that have molded and guided them in becoming productive and responsible members of the school and greater community.

Humanities

Humanities 5

Teaching and learning for the 21st century requires a vision of the world beyond our own lives and beyond our own country. The aim of the fifth grade English 5 and Social Studies 5 courses is to enhance our students' global empathy and knowledge through the exploration of cultures, governments, and countries different from their own.

The rich Social Studies 5 curriculum includes studying the Cultural Revolution in China, South Africa's Apartheid, and immigration in the United States. Lessons within these units intertwine with the study of the geography, history, and culture of the places the students explore, and require students to collaborate with their classmates, make choices about what and how they learn, and apply creativity as they complete projects and writing assignments. Complementary literature accompanies each unit, thereby connecting reading instruction to the units of study.

In English 5, daily class time is devoted to the teaching of reading, writing, and language skills. Reading assignments include a variety of texts and are balanced by the independent reading program. Teachers guide students' book choices and encourage selections from a variety of genres. Students write regularly and produce a comprehensive body of written work.

Humanities 6

The Humanities 6 courses, Social Studies 6 and English 6, meet separately and collaborate on several key curricular units and projects, all of which focus on growing students' empathy and honing their critical thinking, reading, and writing skills.

Through a study of world religions, Social Studies 6 explores the beliefs, practices, histories, and traditions of major world religions and examines how they have shaped cultures and societies. Students begin each unit by exploring the origins and historical development of a religious tradition before engaging in deeper study of its core beliefs, sacred texts, rituals, celebrations, and cultural expressions. Students use primary sources, artifacts, informational texts, and visual media to better understand religious beliefs, practices, and traditions. They investigate how religion has influenced communities, art, architecture, and daily life. Students consider both similarities and differences among religious traditions and explore complex questions from multiple perspectives through respectful discussion and inquiry. Students complete a variety of writing assignments throughout the year. Reflections, personal responses, analytical essays, argumentative writing, and research projects help them deepen their understanding of course content while developing their ability to communicate ideas clearly and effectively. The course emphasizes historical thinking, effective communication, critical inquiry, empathy, respect, and an appreciation for diverse perspectives.

At the foundation of English 6 is the belief that every student is a reader and every student is a writer, even if they do not yet know it. By engaging closely with a high volume and wide range of appropriately-leveled texts, students make great gains in their reading ability and nurture their love of reading. As students employ writing strategies and engage in the writing process, they develop their writing ability, confidence, and voice in an array of genres. Simply put, our aim is to develop students into lifelong readers and writers.
Each reading unit includes explicit teaching of reading strategies and exploration of the deeper elements of literature through reading workshop, guided whole-class discussion, modeling, literature response, small-group work, and mentoring younger students. A workshop approach to writing develops student ownership and responsibility, all the while incorporating vocabulary, spelling, and the conventions of grammar and usage. Above all, students learn to write through constant practice, targeted instruction, frequent conferences and feedback, and varied opportunities to revise and publish their work.

Humanities 7

The Humanities 7 courses, including English 7 and History 7, are interdisciplinary and collaborative in their approach. Through projects, writing, critical thinking, and reading, instructors help students better understand topics, explore new perspectives, and present their ideas to their classmates and a broader audience. Students may gather for cross-curricular experiences, including group work, multimedia exploration, and realignment for direct instruction. Each course offers avenues for student choice to pursue their interest in the humanities.

History 7 is a United States history course that helps students understand how the American story has evolved and what it asks of us today. Two guiding questions frame the year: "What does it mean to be an American?" and "What does it mean to be an active citizen?" Students read primary and secondary sources, analyze digital media, notice perspective and bias, develop research questions, and use evidence to explain cause and effect. As they build these skills, students examine social, political, cultural, scientific, and technological changes in American history and demonstrate their learning through independent and collaborative work such as essays, interviews, and presentations for authentic audiences. By year's end, students will have strengthened their research, analysis, and communication skills and will be better prepared to participate as informed, thoughtful, and engaged citizens.

English 7 encourages students to be reflective readers, precise writers, and critical thinkers. Core texts include "A Monster Calls," "To Kill a Mockingbird," and "They Called Us Enemy." Additionally, students participate in several themed book clubs and read a variety of short stories and poems throughout the year. In addition to reading core texts together, students explore their own interests in literature through an independent reading program. Students focus on developing reading skills by tracking themes, annotating a text, and interpreting an author's choices. Both

in and out of class, students write to develop their own thinking, communicate their ideas, and tell various types of stories. By preparing for and participating in many whole-class discussions throughout the year, students develop skills in active listening and respectful dialogue.

Humanities 8

Like other Humanities courses in the Middle School, the Humanities 8 courses are scheduled separately by discipline but are interdisciplinary in their approach. During each unit of study, students are asked to make connections through the themes and essential questions of the courses, reflecting on the core texts through different disciplinary lenses.

English 8 takes students on a literary journey that will, in combination with History 8, broaden their perspective of other cultures and political systems. Units of study will challenge students to consider, by way of thoughtful discussions and written analysis, how human beings from any and all periods contain far more than a seed of similarity: What should be done with power? How can language be used as a tool? Why do good people do bad actions? What does it mean to be civilized? What distinguishes the individual from the state? How does one discover oneself within society?

Course readings include texts whose central themes reverberate with notions of the citizen and the state, such as George Orwell's "Animal Farm," Julia Alvarez' "Before We Were Free," and Markus Zusak's "The Book Thief." Short fiction, poetry, and current event texts are used to deepen and enhance students' contextual understanding.

History 8 explores a number of important ideas and events that shape the modern world. The course parallels the chronology of the seventh grade's focus on American history, but with a focus on world history. Students will investigate European colonization of the Americas, the Atlantic Slave Trade, and the push for independence in Latin America. Students will research and analyze the emergence of new countries and national identities in post-colonial Africa. They will probe the global effects of the Industrial Revolution and World War I. Students examine the causes of the Russian Revolution and discover the contested meaning of what is revolutionary. The course challenges students to grapple with the history of the Holocaust and what conditions in and around Weimar Germany enabled and empowered genocide. Throughout the course, the focus is on understanding the decisions that individuals and groups make. The course challenges students to think using interdisciplinary lenses as they engage with history, economics, politics, sociology, and philosophy. The skills emphasized in the course include engaging with primary texts, utilizing distinct academic disciplines, detecting point-of-view bias, identifying main ideas, drawing conclusions and supporting them with evidence, and crafting compelling arguments.

Mathematics

In Grades 5 and 6, Illustrative Mathematics is a problem-based curriculum that engages students in learning mathematics through exploration, discussion, and problem solving. Students build conceptual understanding, procedural fluency, and mathematical reasoning through a coherent progression of learning that connects mathematical ideas across units and grade levels. The curriculum is grounded in the belief that all students are capable mathematicians and provides equitable access to meaningful, grade-level mathematics.

Students learn by doing mathematics, making sense of problems, reasoning, communicating their thinking, modeling situations, and learning from the ideas of others. Through collaborative classroom routines and mathematical discourse, students develop confidence, perseverance, and a positive mathematical identity while deepening their understanding of key mathematical concepts and practices.

Math 5

In Grade 5, the key concepts in Illustrative Math Grade 5 include developing fluency with addition and subtraction of fractions, and developing understanding of multiplication and division of fractions in limited cases (unit fractions divided by whole numbers and whole numbers divided by unit fractions); extending understanding of division to two-digit divisors; developing understanding of operations with decimals to hundredths, and developing fluency with whole number and decimal operations; and developing understanding of volume.

Math 6

Accelerated Math 6 is the first course in a two-year sequence that compacts the Grade 6, Grade 7, and Grade 8 Illustrative Mathematics curriculum into two years. Key concepts in Illustrative Math Grade 6 include developing understanding of area and surface area; reasoning with ratios, rates, unit rates, and percentages; extending understanding of operations with fractions, whole numbers, and decimals; using expressions, equations, and variables to represent and analyze relationships between quantities; developing understanding of rational numbers, including negative numbers and inequalities; and collecting, representing, and analyzing statistical data. Throughout the year, students solve problems, communicate their reasoning, and make connections across mathematical concepts to deepen their understanding and build confidence as mathematicians.

Math 7

The Math 7 curriculum builds students' computational proficiency with a focus on algebra, geometry, probability, and data analysis. Students use integers, rational numbers, and the coordinate system as they investigate and learn algebraic principles, two- and three-dimensional geometry, data analysis, and the foundations of probability. Practical applications are used extensively and the art of problem solving is modeled and developed from the outset of the course. Students have opportunities to extend learning to a novel context and

apply their mathematical thinking while synthesizing previously learned material. Assignments will encourage student teamwork while also giving opportunities for independent practice and thinking.

Math 8

Math 8 is a combined algebra and geometry course that focuses on building the foundational skills needed to learn higher levels of mathematics. Students work extensively with linear functions and systems of linear equations and inequalities. This course introduces angle geometry within parallel lines and triangle measurements. These concepts are reinforced through many different types of word problems and are applied to the real world through a variety of projects. Throughout the course, students will have opportunities to explore concepts, analyze data, and solve complex problems with realistic data. The focus on word problems builds algebraic skills within a context rather than from drill and practice for its own sake. The amalgamation of geometry and algebraic skills allows for a more dynamic course of study and will provide the foundation necessary for all upper-level mathematics courses. Most students pursue Integrated Mathematics 1 or Integrated Mathematics 2 following Mathematics 8.

Advanced Math 8

Advanced Mathematics 8 is a course that ties algebra and geometry together. Students deepen their understanding of linear functions and inequalities, systems of equations, and inequalities through the investigation of lines. This course introduces right triangle trigonometry, geometric properties of polygons and circles, surface area, volume of three-dimensional figures, and parabolas through a thorough study of polynomials. These concepts are reinforced through many different types of word problems and are applied to the real world through a variety of projects. Throughout the course, students will have opportunities to explore concepts, analyze data, and solve complex problems with realistic data. The focus on word problems builds algebraic skills within a context rather than from drill and practice for its own sake. The amalgamation of geometry and algebraic skills allows for a more dynamic course of study and will provide the foundation necessary for all upper-level mathematics courses. Students typically pursue Integrated Mathematics 2 or Honors Integrated Mathematics 2 following Advanced Mathematics 8.

Science

Grade 5

As an introduction to Middle School science, students explore the impacts humans have on the environment through a study of environmental science. This interdisciplinary approach pulls from various fields such as earth science, physics, ecology, and biology. Students are introduced to these fields though experiential, hands-on, authentic, lab-focused pedagogy. The year begins with learning about sustainability and earth systems, followed by an investigation of energy and energy resources, and ends with a study of our local ecosystems and the value of biodiversity. Through the course of the year, students learn about current environmental issues and participate in a Grade 5 wind turbine building challenge.

Grade 6

Science 6 responds to a student's innate curiosity about the world around them. The Grade 6 journey covers an array of connected scientific concepts as students engage the fundamental relationships, laws, and theories in the field of physics. A student-centered classroom focused on inquiry and experiential learning supports the development of scientific process skills. Students continue to practice careful measurements and data recording in experiments in each unit. Equipped with greater foundational knowledge and an improved toolbox, students will be prepared to apply the scientific method and the engineering design process in solving their own scientific questions and finding success with engineering challenges.

Grade 7

What is Earth? What is it made of? Students tackle these big questions in Science 7. Through the context of understanding Earth, students learn about atoms and molecules, the particles that make up matter, and explore the differences between elements, compounds, and mixtures. Seventh grade scientists apply these ideas to minerals and rocks, which make up the solid parts of Earth, and learn about the internal forces that produce landforms. As students stretch their minds to even bigger conceptual topics, they will learn about the chemistry of the ocean, the layers of the atmosphere, and eventually begin thinking about the Earth as part of the solar system and the universe.

Classroom instruction for Science 7 is based mostly on hands-on laboratory activities and projects. Students take notes at home from teacher-made lecture videos to ensure that they receive thorough exposure to content. Class time is reserved for collaborative projects, experiments, and problem-solving activities.

Grade 8

Science 8 explores the intricate and interconnected systems that make up the living world around us. Our study of life science starts at the microscopic level before building up to appreciate the amazing diversity of life, from the bustling activities of cells to the complex interactions within ecosystems. Our study includes cell processes, DNA as the blueprint of life, the mechanisms of heredity, natural selection, and human biology. Concurrently, the course will deepen students' process skills in the areas of experimental design, data analysis, and engaging in arguments from evidence. In the spring, particular emphasis is placed on the Chesapeake Bay Watershed as we examine our role in preserving the health of our local ecosystem and develop the tools and knowledge to be better stewards of our planet.

Computer Science

Computer Science (CS) at St. Anne's-Belfield emphasizes the technology and design aspects of CS, incorporating engineering frameworks. Distinguished from other technology-related curricula that focus on how to use computer technology, the CS program focuses on how technology works, why it works, and how students can create it through their unique projects. This knowledge forms the basis for a deep understanding of technology and how students can authentically use it as learners and future professionals. Learning computer science involves problem solving, logical reasoning, and design skills, which can be meaningfully integrated into every discipline. Most computer science experiences in the Middle School are interdisciplinary in nature and integrated into course content for all students. As students grow through the program, more choice-based computer science experiences are available in Grades 6 – 8.

Grade 5

In Grade 5, students are given several opportunities to create technology projects across multiple disciplines. These projects expand their computational thinking and design skills as students are given creative freedom within the framework of the learning objectives of the classroom project. As their projects gain complexity, Grade 5 students will also begin making independent decisions in terms of coding, design, and use resources such as laser cutters, 3D printers, and Arduinos. Students will use their new skills to create new and exciting products from circuitry to wind turbines.

Grade 6

In Grade 6, students will continue to grow their computer science skills through independent and interest-based projects across multiple curricular areas. Students will have the opportunity to focus on specific areas in technology and design that most interest them and apply it to their own projects. Students will also have optional experiences to enhance their skills such as the St. Anne's Robotics Teams. Teachers across disciplines will challenge students to consider the usability of their designs and iterate their solutions in projects from designing robot obstacles courses to science fair projects.

Grade 7

In Grade 7, students begin to understand the impact of computer science and technology on the world around them, and how they can both currently and in the future use technology in authentic and meaningful ways. Students have many opportunities to engage in computer science, such as signing up for the studio art course course, computer science Quest courses, interdisciplinary class experiences, and clubs such as the St. Anne's-Belfield Robotics Teams. Students in Grade 7 may start their transition from word-block coding to text-based coding (C++), use Adobe Suite for animation and design, use advanced CAD software, and use an assortment of advanced manufacturing technologies to create their own projects.

Grade 8

In Grade 8, students continue to explore the impacts of computer science and technology and how to use them as a student and as a professional in STEM careers. Students continue to have many opportunities to engage in computer science such as the Digital Design course, computer science Quest courses, interdisciplinary class experiences, and clubs such as the St. Anne's-Belfield Robotics Teams. Grade 8 students will continue to take deep dives into fundamentals of technology and design, which may include arduino coding (C++), using Adobe Suite for animation and design, using advanced CAD software, and using an assortment of advanced manufacturing technologies.

World Languages

French 5

Prerequisite: None

All students in French 5 are new to a school-based approach to French language study. The principal goals of the French program in Grade 5 are to nurture an appreciation of world language and culture, to build basic skills necessary for successful language learning, and to introduce students to the elements of French grammar while expanding their French vocabulary. Through thematic dialogues created by students, readings, and written exercises, students build upon oral skills and are exposed to the formal structures that govern the language. Phonetic exercises encourage proper pronunciation and promote an awareness of the written form. The program is supplemented by cultural lessons, songs, and poems. Through the year, students are building their own book which includes dialogues, reflections, as well as cultural and historical presentations.

French 6

Prerequisite: None

French 6 is open to students with some or no experience studying the French language. The curriculum is based on the text "Mise en Scene" written by one of our French teachers and allows students new to the language to enter our program. The Grade 6 program serves as the link between the informal and formal study of French at St. Anne's-Belfield. Students expand their vocabulary and emphasize their fluency and accent while acting, reading, and pulling grammar from their creative writing. The program is supplemented by cultural lessons, songs, and the reading of "The Adventures of Louis Specteur." The final project incorporates innovative technology, collaboration, and creative thinking where students turn the Louis Specteur stories into a movie, a comic book, and then write their own adventures.

French 7
Prerequisite: None

The Grade 7 French program serves as the first year in a two-year introduction to the formal study of French language and culture.The first half of the program is completed in the Grade 7 and the remaining half in the Grade 8.

The curriculum is based on the text "Bon Voyage," published by Glencoe-McGraw Hill, although the class does not use the book. Instead, students create all the materials needed, from dialogues to presentations, to pulling the grammar from their creative writing. Themes include: school/school supplies, family, real estate, nutrition, clothing, and vacation. The program is supplemented by cultural lessons, songs, and movie discussions. Projects incorporate innovative technology, collaboration, and creative thinking: students engage in a hypothetical real estate project where students buy a vacation home in a Francophone country, they present their own cooking show with food from Francophone countries, and they create a magazine for young adults that includes sections on travel and fashion, an interview of a famous person, as well as a personality quiz.

French 8
Prerequisite: Successful completion of French 7 or equivalent level of proficiency as determined by placement exam

Open only to those students who have successfully completed French 7 or its equivalent, this course completes the first high school level of French. Upon completion of this course, most students enroll in French 2 or Honors French 2 in Grade 9. The program is based on the themes included in the book "Bon Voyage," published by Glencoe-McGraw Hill, although the class does not use the book. Instead, students create all the materials needed, from dialogues to presentations, to pulling the grammar from their creative writing. Themes include: airport/train station, sports, cinema/art, and morning routine.

The program is supplemented by cultural lessons, poems, the reading of "The Giving Tree," and a unit on TV advertisements. The projects incorporate innovative technology, collaboration, reflection and creative thinking. Projects include the creation of a picture book, presentations about the evolution of technology since the 1900s or the evolution of women since 1900, as well as an art project.

Spanish 5
Prerequisite: None

In Spanish 5, students begin to establish the foundation for their Middle School world language experience. They explore different ways of communicating in the target language through dialogues, stories, and skits. Lessons are designed to provide learners with tools to delve into grammar and sentence structure, to develop both oral and written proficiency. Vocabulary is acquired through written and oral repetition. There is also a focus on developing cultural awareness, as students engage in discussions and presentations of Spanish-speaking countries. Teachers interact with students in Spanish in moments throughout the class, exposing students to a rich spoken language.

Spanish 6
Prerequisite: None

Spanish 6 lessons are designed to help students acquire and strengthen foundational linguistic skills. Classes are conducted predominantly in Spanish as students focus on the four skill areas: speaking, listening, reading, and writing. Educators provide structure for their students to create dialogues, skits, and stories. One well-known approach to storytelling that is occasionally implemented in class is Teaching Proficiency through Reading and Storytelling (TPRS). Through a repetitive series of listening, narrating, and acting, students learn vocabulary and grammar in a creative context. There is also a focus on developing cultural awareness, as students engage in discussions and presentations of Spanish-speaking countries and various traditions throughout the Spanish-speaking world.

Spanish 7
Prerequisite: None

The Grade 7 Spanish program exposes students to the first half of a high school Spanish I course. Students strengthen skills in the four areas of speaking, listening, reading, and writing. The course is based on thematic units designed to allow for linguistic exploration through creative lesson plans. Students frequently engage in collaborative activities to enhance conversational skills. They prepare presentations and projects which may include fashion shows, menus for imaginary restaurants, family portraits, and school supply infomercials. Many of these projects are created using various forms of technology and graphic design. Teachers increasingly speak more Spanish throughout the year to expose students to the nuances of spoken Spanish. During the second trimester, students read a short novel entirely in Spanish to gain reading fluency and to acquire new vocabulary in a different context.

Spanish 8
Prerequisite: Successful completion of St. Anne's-Belfield Spanish 7 or equivalent level of proficiency as determined by placement exam

The Grade 8 Spanish program completes the first high school level of Spanish. Upon completion of this course, most students enroll in Spanish 2 or Honors Spanish 2 in Grade 9.

Students continue to strengthen skills in the four areas of speaking, listening, reading, and writing. The course is based on thematic units designed to allow for more linguistic exploration through creative lesson plans. Students frequently engage in collaborative activities to enhance conversational skills as well as discussion and expression of opinion. Projects teach students various forms of technology and graphic design and promote more refined presentational skills. Teachers speak predominantly in Spanish throughout the class, exposing students to a rich variety of spoken language. During the second part of the year, students read a short novel entirely in Spanish to gain reading fluency and to acquire new vocabulary in a different context.

Language 8: Spanish or French

Prerequisite: None

Open to new eighth graders with no language experience, this course provides a foundation for either Spanish or French language learning, exploring basic vocabulary topics and grammar principles. Only one language is offered each year, determined by the School based on enrollment. Students demonstrate learning through reading and listening comprehension activities, speaking presentations, and writing. Understanding cultural products and practices is integrated into all units. Upon completion of this course, students will have the opportunity to continue with the same language or explore an introductory course in a different language in Grade 9.

Visual & Performing Arts

Grades 5 & 6 arts classes offer students broad exposure and exploration within a wide range of arts. All students in Grade 5 take strings, visual arts, music & movement, and theatre. In Grade 6, students choose a yearlong music focus in either orchestra or choir. Students are also enrolled in both visual arts and theatre. The arts program in Grades 7 and 8 provides an opportunity for students to focus on one area of the arts more exclusively. Students may choose to excel in the string orchestra, choir, theatre arts, or visual arts media.

Visual Arts 5

Grade 5 students explore drawing, painting, and sculpture using a wide variety of materials, ideas, and techniques. They work with realistic, abstract, and non-objective images with an emphasis on developing creativity, imagination, and skills. During art class, references to specific artists, art works, styles, and movements are incorporated.

Music & Movement 5

In Grade 5, the Music & Movement program is based on the Orff-Schulwerk approach to music education, and emphasizes advanced ensemble opportunities. This method is characterized by the inclusion of all students in ensemble work; the unity of music, dance, and speech; the emphasis on process teaching; and the guided improvisation and composition experience. Each week the students receive technique lessons in singing, barred instruments, recorder, or dance. Students are also given opportunities to explore literature, songs, movement, instruments, or even visual art as inspiration for their own music and dance-making possibilities. Music literacy is taught through actively making music with the body, followed by identifying patterns in sound, and finally by labeling that sound with symbols. Students address modal literature, advanced instrument technique, layered melodies leading to advanced harmony study through the voice and instruments, and physical-movement work appropriate for adolescent bodies.

Orchestra 5

Beginning performance and music-reading skills are introduced and refined as students study traditional classical, folk, and improvisational repertoire on the violin, viola, cello, or bass. The course is based on the pedagogy of Dr. George Bornoff and provides a logical, sequential, and unique approach to the mastery of instruments in a classroom setting. First-year students are introduced to several bowing styles and finger patterns with many variations to ensure flexibility and understanding. Additionally, music literacy skills are built toward the goal of sight reading simple melodies on two strings. Home practice is required.

Theatre Arts 5

In Grade 5, students begin the year with building ensembles in their class communities in order to have a supportive foundation for personal and collective artistic growth. Students engage in a skill-based introductory curriculum to increase kinesthetic awareness and enhance imagination, analytical thinking, and improvisational response. Grade 5 ensembles will explore the art of physical theatre, mime, and an introduction to character creation.

Visual Arts 6

In Grade 6, students continue to build on the skills and knowledge acquired in Grade 5 and use the elements and principles of design to develop their own sensibilities and meaning in their work. Students learn to use clay in many of its more expressive forms, using glazes and other decoration. Grade 6 students also continue to build on their knowledge of color theory, especially applied to realistic painting.

Choir 6

The Grade 6 year represents an important transition from ensemble work in a general music program to specialization in advanced singing in preparation for the Choir 7 & 8. Students will still have exposure to Orff media — body work and speech — in order to fine tune their musicianship skills. The focus, however, will become introducing students to choral concepts such as vocal warm-ups, breath control, beginning score analysis, two-part sight singing, and diction. In addition, students will receive lessons in embodied vocal techniques appropriate for the young voice. Students at this level perform actively in Chapel and the Grade 6 spring music concert.

Orchestra 6

The Grade 6 Orchestra students continue to refine individual technical skills and learn new collaborative skills for ensemble music. Skills established in the fifth grade classroom lead to more fluent sight reading, varied bow techniques and multi-part playing this year. Home practice is a continued expectation as part of the course. New students interested in joining the orchestra should engage with the orchestra teacher prior to enrollment. Although no previous strings experience is required to join, new students benefit from prior instrumental music experience and may need additional support if they have not played a bowed instrument before. The Grade 6 Orchestra meets two times each week and performs in Chapel and in the Grade 6 spring music concert.

Theatre Arts 6

In Grade 6, students continue to build ensembles with a focus on taking artistic risks and giving constructive feedback. Students will engage with an intermediate curriculum to develop their kinesthetic, vocal, imaginative, improvisational, and analytical skills with a focus on character development and playmaking. Grade 6 builds on students' foundational understanding of theatre conventions and practices by exploring the foundational techniques of improvisation. They will further engage in ensemble collaborations and produce short theatrical adaptations of children's books.

Studio Arts 7 & 8

Taught collaboratively by a team of teachers, this yearlong visual arts class includes 2D, 3D, and digital arts. Students develop and explore foundational techniques and skills using the structure of the elements and principles of design through a wide variety of media. Once foundational skills are attained, students will be challenged to explore their own ideas while using more advanced techniques and processes. Students will be exposed to diverse art genres and the works of historic and contemporary artists.

Student work will be guided by and evaluated using the elements and principles of design and the eight studio habits of mind, developing craftsmanship, engaging and persisting, envisioning, expressing, observing, stretching/experimenting, reflecting, and understanding art as well as the arts community. Students will also be setting goals for themselves based on frequent self-reflective evaluations of their artwork and work habits.

Choir 7 & 8: Saintly Voices

Saintly Voices is an advanced choral opportunity for those looking to grow their singing in an actively-performing ensemble. A key focus is on the adolescent changing voice and how to manage vocal technique during this period of physical change. Students will learn concepts such as advanced choral warm ups, breath control, score analysis, two- and three-part harmony, and diction. Literature will be specially selected to accommodate the needs of the adolescent voice, and allow students to explore various genres and performance practices. Leadership opportunities are available to students who demonstrate excellent learner habits and citizenship in the classroom. Students at this level perform actively through Chapels, Lessons and Carols, and evening performances.

Orchestra 7 & 8: Mozart Orchestra

The Mozart Orchestra is a string ensemble open to any Grade 7 or Grade 8 student who has played a string instrument for at least one school year. Students study beginning- through intermediate-level repertoire including solo, ensemble, and chamber music in classes that meet four times per week. Literature is programmed to support the developing string player, and allow students to explore various genres and performance practices. Leadership opportunities are available to students who demonstrate excellent learner habits and citizenship in the classroom. The Mozart Orchestra performs two school concerts and occasional Chapel services, including Lessons and Carols.

Theatre Arts 7 & 8

Theatre Arts in Grades 7 and 8 is a yearlong course for students interested in further developing their theatre training. Students will work to identify individual and ensemble inquiries and goals. Students will continue to hone their skills and further explore the development of character through physical and vocal training. They will apply these skills to select theatre forms such as improvisation and scene work. As students grow as actors they will also explore aspects of story development and theatre tech and design, and will cap off their Middle School Theatre Arts experience by exploring the fundamentals of filmmaking. Students will produce numerous short films of increasing complexity, incorporating additional cinematic techniques with each successive project. In addition, students are encouraged to support the development of Middle School productions through taking on leadership roles in the theatre space and production processes. Regardless of course enrollment, all Grade 7 and 8 students are invited to audition for the after-school production.

Physical Education & Health

Physical Education 5 & 6

Physical Education is an important part of a well-rounded education. Students in Grades 5 and 6 participate in Physical Education daily. In addition to an emphasis on overall fitness, interacting with peers, and working within a group, our program acts as a stepping stone into our Grade 7 and 8 athletic program. Student choice is intentionally included, providing individual and team sports, competitive and non-competitive options, giving students the opportunity for a deeper dive into the chosen unit. They demonstrate strong cardiovascular endurance by sustaining high levels of effort across complex, game-based and fitness activities while applying pacing strategies and personal fitness awareness. Students consistently exhibit mature sportsmanship by leading and collaborating with peers, modeling respectful communication, and managing both competitive success and adversity with responsibility and self-control.

Health 5

The Grade 5 health curriculum establishes a respectful foundation by introducing classroom ground rules and exploring how personal values shape our lives. Students analyze gender roles, social stereotypes, and the differences between external perceptions and internal identity. The course covers the biological stages of puberty, reproductive anatomy, and the emotional shifts of adolescence, while highlighting personal hygiene habits. As social dynamics evolve, students practice defining consent and build practical strategies for resisting peer pressure. Finally, the curriculum teaches students to recognize the qualities of healthy relationships and evaluate the impact of technology and social media on digital safety.

Health 6

The Grade 6 health curriculum focuses on personal well-being, helping students build healthy habits and self-awareness as they transition into adolescence. Students explore the different dimensions of identity and puberty, learn to identify internal and external stressors, learn about physiological reactions such as the "fight, flight, or freeze" response, and discover positive coping mechanisms. The course covers physical health fundamentals, including basic nutrition guidelines and the biological importance of sleep and circadian rhythms. Additionally, students examine factors influencing self-esteem and body image, the qualities of healthy friendships, and safe technology habits regarding social media and digital footprints. Finally, the curriculum addresses substance awareness by educating students on the physical risks and advertising tactics surrounding vaping and nicotine use.

Physical Education 7 & 8

While the majority of students elect to engage in all three seasons of school athletics, all students in Grades 7 & 8 participate in two seasons of physical activity per year, with at least one of the two seasons being physical activity offered by the School. The time for Grades 7 & 8 athletics is built into the school day. In sports where a 7 & 8 team is not offered, Grade 7 students may try out for JV teams, and Grade 8 students may try out for JV and/or varsity teams.

Health 7

The Grade 7 health curriculum focuses on creating a safe, respectful environment where students can openly discuss mature and essential topics using proper terminology. Students learn the fundamentals of male and female reproductive anatomy, biological facts about human reproduction, and basic methods of pregnancy and disease prevention. The course introduces the core concepts of consent, setting personal boundaries, and understanding diverse aspects of identity and sexual orientation. Additionally, students analyze the physical health risks associated with substance abuse, focusing specifically on alcohol, vaping, and nicotine use. Finally, the curriculum guides students in evaluating their relationship with technology, helping them balance the positive aspects of staying connected with the potential drawbacks of social media.

Health 8

Throughout the year, Grade 8 students will explore the biological and psychological aspects of adolescence by analyzing how the teenage brain functions and how it impacts decision making. Students will study stress response systems, practice regular mindfulness exercises, and examine various mental health disorders to build personalized emotional coping plans. The curriculum features interactive nutrition and body image lessons that teach students how to read food labels and critically evaluate cultural body ideals. As they navigate social dynamics, students will learn to identify the "red and green flags" of healthy relationships and develop practical skills for digital safety, consent, and peer conflict resolution. Finally, the course equips students with vital substance abuse prevention strategies by exploring the mechanics of addiction and practicing specific refusal techniques for scenarios involving vaping, alcohol, and prescription drugs.

Grades 7 & 8 Quests

The Quest program is a unique time in our week where students are in the driver's seat of the learning. In this electives-based program, faculty facilitate groups as students learn and practice how to learn, how to lead, and how to serve.

Quests are student driven in both choice and content. Students can choose to participate in and/or lead a Quest that is project based, problem based, product driven, skill specific, service oriented, or one that evolves with them. With new course options each trimester, students have the opportunity to explore multiple topics outside of the traditional curriculum or follow one project through three courses with each building upon the last.

Sampling of Quests from 2025-26:

- How can we build community through photography?
- How can a Lower School intern make a difference?
- Can ancient strategy games make us better thinkers?
- How can you develop leadership skills to make this school a better place?
- What can we make for the Upper School Wearable Art Runway Show?
- How can we maintain our close connections with the Ronald McDonald House and make a new impact?
- How do we support live events and stage productions?

Curricular Progression

Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8
Humanities: English 5 and Social Studies 5 "The Journey"	**Humanities: English 6 and Social Studies 6 "Identity, Community, and Belief"**	**Humanities: English 7 and History 7 "The American Story"**	**Humanities: English 8 and- History 8 "Global Perspectives on Human Connections"**
Science 5: Introduction to Biology, Chemistry, and Physics	**Science 6: Introduction to Physics and Chemistry**	**Science 7: Earth Science**	**Science 8: Life Science**
Math 5	**Math 6**	**Math 7**	**Math 8** **Advanced Math 8**
Spanish 5 **French 5**	**Spanish 6** **French 6**	**Spanish 7** **French 7**	**Spanish 8** **Introduction to French*** **French 8**
Physical Education/Health 5	**Physical Education/Health 6**	**Middle School Athletics/ Health 7**	**Middle School Athletics/ Health 8**
All students are enrolled in all of the following arts courses: **Strings 5** **Music and Movement 5** **Visual Arts 5** **Theatre 5** **All students take all - one class of each per week.**	Students select either orchestra or choir as a primary focus: **Haydn Orchestra** OR **Choir** In addition to orchestra or choir, all students take Visual Arts 6 and Theatre 6.	Students choose an art elective for the year: **Mozart Orchestra 7 & 8** **Visual Arts 7 & 8** **Saintly Voices 7 & 8** **Theatre & Film 7 & 8** Additional art courses are available through the Quest Program.	Students choose an art elective for the year. They may repeat their Grade 7 choice or make a new selection: **Mozart Orchestra 7 & 8** **Visual Arts 7 & 8** **Saintly Voices 7 & 8** **Theatre & Film 7 & 8** Additional art courses are available through the Quest Program.
		Quests 7 & 8	

* This course provides a foundation for either Spanish or French language learning. Only one language is offered each year, determined by the School based on enrollment.

The School admits qualified students of any race, color, national origin, place of birth, ancestry, sex, religion, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, mental or physical disability, or any status protected by applicable law, and extends to them all the privilege to participate in the educational programs generally accorded or made available to students at the School. The School does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin, ancestry, sex, religion, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, mental or physical disability, or any status protected by applicable law in the administration of its admission or its educational programs.



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