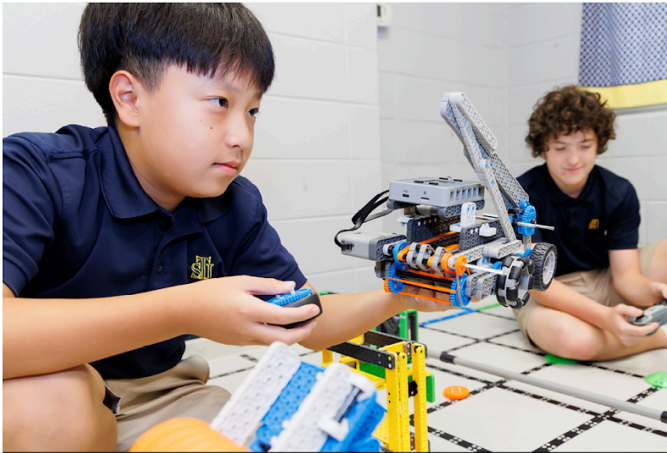




Saint James School

Middle School Course of Study
2024-2025



Character • Commitment • Courage • Community

Saint James is an independent, nonsectarian, college preparatory school with a student body broadly representative of college-bound students. We are committed to challenging and assisting students in realizing their individual potential and preparing them for lives of responsibility, service, and achievement.

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FOREWORD

The middle school program for sixth through eighth grades serves as a transition between elementary school and high school in both environment and course material. Students are introduced to advisory groups, exploratory courses, and electives. The middle school provides the structure and support for these transitional changes.

We recognize the individuality of students and appreciate their unique talents, interests, and needs. Students learn best in an environment where mutual respect, shared responsibility, and the value of each individual are emphasized. All students are held to high expectations and the process of learning as a lifelong experience is encouraged. Academic programs are geared toward providing a challenging college preparatory curriculum while recognizing that middle school students also need structure, support, consistency, and encouragement as they mature through these vital years.

Each middle school student is issued an iPad each year, which has become an invaluable learning tool in our curriculum. This 1:1 program allows the students to always have access to the tools and resources of the 21st-century classroom and helps our students to achieve and be successful in a fully digital learning environment.

Although emphasis is given to the core academic instruction, an integrated curriculum is the focus of middle school. The middle school program is designed to promote the intellectual, social, emotional, physical, and cultural well-being of each of our students. We strive to develop maturity, self-confidence, skills, and knowledge during this immense time of growth and development.

Through advisory periods, exploratory courses, electives, and core academic courses, students explore and develop their individual talents. We strive to create classroom environments that are inviting and conducive to learning while taking into account the varied learning styles of our students. Middle School students are nurtured in an environment created especially for the needs of their age group in which they are encouraged to develop a sense of self-confidence, self-respect, and self-reliance.

6TH GRADE

Core Academic Courses

English 6

Students focus on grammar, reading, and composition with an emphasis on effective communication for academic success. Grammar instruction centers around mastering parts of speech, usage, mechanics, and sentence structures. Students read informational text, as well as long and short forms of fiction from a variety of genres. Composition instruction focuses on the writing process, correct and varied sentences, and the production of essays, short stories, and poems. Students are introduced to writing in MLA format.

Math 6

Students build on their knowledge of adding, subtracting, multiplying, and dividing with whole numbers, decimals, fractions, and integers. Order of operations, exponents, and variables continue to be used.

Pre-Algebra concepts are introduced as students study properties, solve one and two-step equations and inequalities, and learn about functions. Percent, ratio, and proportion are studied, as well as statistics, data analysis with graphs, and probability. Geometry is also a part of this course with students finding perimeter, area, and circumference, classifying angles and polygons, and graphing ordered pairs on a coordinate plane. Both the metric and customary units of measure are used in Math 6. An emphasis is placed on math vocabulary and problem-solving.

Students who complete Math 6 with a grade of 92 or higher for both semesters will be recommended for Advanced Pre-Algebra. In the event that the number of requests of qualified students exceeds the space available, placement will be based on a combination of recommendation and the highest numerical averages.

Earth and Space Science

Earth and Space Science integrates the disciplines of astronomy, meteorology, geology, chemistry, and environmental science. Students develop scientific thinking and process skills through hands-on experiences such as research, lab experiences, writing, and other small group activities. Students will also apply the scientific method to state a hypothesis, follow a procedure, identify independent and dependent variables, make observations, collect data, and draw conclusions. This course will provide students with a sound understanding of Earth and Space Science as well as how to work properly in the lab with others and apply the knowledge learned to other situations.

World History

World cultures is the focus of the sixth-grade history class. The students study ancient river valley civilizations such as Egypt and the Huang civilization in China, military empires such as the Assyrians and Persians, the Greek and Roman empires, European Medieval times, and the European Renaissance.

Skills such as map usage, research, reading comprehension, and note-taking are emphasized. Art is incorporated as an element students use to explore these areas of civilization. Students will also be studying how certain languages developed and changed through history and spread throughout the world. Through this course, the students develop an understanding of how classical civilizations contributed to modern society.

Vocabulary 6

The vocabulary course expands a student's knowledge of words with a study of definitions, parts of speech, synonyms, antonyms, and spelling. Proper usage of the words and application in sentences is emphasized as well. Students also increase their vocabulary by reading a teacher-approved book each quarter. Students will have this class with their Advisor.

Exploratory Courses

Each exploratory class meets five days per week for 9 weeks. All sixth graders rotate through each of these classes. The topics of the exploratory classes are subject to change.

Explore Spanish I

This course is an overview of the basics of the Spanish language. Students will study vocabulary such as greetings, expressions of courtesy, the Spanish alphabet days of the week, months of the year, numbers, colors, etc. Students will also learn grammatical concepts such as verb conjugation, subject pronouns, definite and indefinite articles, and adjective agreement. They will also explore the customs and traditions that are practiced in Spanish-speaking societies around the world. In addition to learning Spanish, students will also be studying how certain languages changed through history and spread throughout the world.

Explore STEM: Coding

Sixth Grade STEM Exploratory is designed to broaden a student's knowledge of the roles of mechanical engineers, computer scientists, and electrical engineers. Students use programming websites such as MakeCode to see how computer scientists build games and programs and utilize tools such as Micro:bit and Cutebot to see how designing helps create items to work alongside programs. All areas of the scientific method are reinforced such as formulating a question, writing a hypothesis, collecting and analyzing data, and writing a conclusion. Teamwork is emphasized through the construction and programming of projects and programs.

Explore Art

Sixth Grade Art Exploratory is designed to broaden a student's knowledge of time periods in art, selected artists, and the works of those artists. Students will be introduced to historical content about the time periods and artists as well as selected works. Students will use similar techniques to create individual visual interpretations of the time period and the artist studied. Students will maintain an art portfolio of drawings, watercolors, sketches, and projects.

Explore Music

This course is an overview of the basics of music. Students will learn about rhythm and develop music appreciation through hands-on, experiential learning. Various instruments will be introduced and different types of music will be explored.

Elective Courses

Sixth-grade students must choose from the following elective courses.

Art 6* (Semester Course)

The sixth grade Art course will involve a review and build upon the elements and principles of design that were introduced at the elementary level. It will encompass an in-depth study of drawing techniques as well as an introduction to acrylic and watercolor painting. The art history component will consist of a comprehensive study of Egyptian, Italian Renaissance, and West African art. Students will be introduced to various aesthetic viewpoints as well as standards of art criticism. **An art fee of \$45 is required.*

Beginning Band (Year-long Course)

Beginning Band is the introductory instrumental ensemble at Saint James. It functions as a performing group of beginning musicians with no previous experience. The class meets the entire

year and students learn aspects of instrumental music performance that include position, flexibility, style, blend, theory, dynamics, articulation, tone, listening, teamwork, breath control, rhythm, and intonation. The Beginning Band requires a commitment to pursue excellence in all aspects of the instrumental music program. Beginning Band members perform in the winter/holiday concert and the spring concert. Parents will be responsible for purchasing or renting an instrument and respective method book. Please keep in mind that the cost of renting an instrument will vary depending on the instrument and vendor. Other supplies may also be required.

Math Magic (Semester Course)

This class is designed to show how math can be magical. Tangrams can be changed from 7 shapes to the creation of a person, animal, boat, house, etc. Toothpicks and clay can be connected into different shapes to make a tetrahedron or a dodecahedron. These can also be used to create different shapes in architectural structures. The students will also have access to Legos and building straws to create different structures, such as cars that can be raced and then distances measured. They can create bridges in different ways to see which design is the sturdiest. In this class, the students will be introduced to probability and pentominoes. Geometry will be further enhanced by putting different shapes together to create an object, such as a robot or a building. Many of these projects the students will work on in pairs or small groups. They will experience the magic of numbers and how they can relate. This class will be a fun way to show the magic in math!

World Cultures (Semester Course)

Students in this course will gain an understanding and appreciation of cultures around the world. They will explore the celebrations, food, music, film, arts, sports, and other aspects of culture in other countries and societies. Through a variety of activities and projects using different media, students will share their findings with the class.

6th Grade Choir (Semester or Year-long Course)

Sixth Grade Choir is a performance-based music class. The students, using technology and their iPads, will learn a variety of music, singing alone and with others; reading and notating music; listening to, analyzing, and describing music; and evaluating and listening to music performances. Technology and iPads will be further used to explore music theory and music composition. Throughout the year, the students have the opportunity to perform in various settings such as the Saint James Holiday Convocation, the Holiday Concert, District and State Festival, the Spring Concert, the Annual Choral Music Department Cabaret Fundraiser, and other community events. Individuals can develop their talents further through extra-curricular activities such as Alabama Vocal Association All State Choir and American Choral Directors Association Young Voices Festival. Emphasis in class is placed on teamwork and vocal development through practice.

Beginning Vocal/Instrumental Dual Studies (Year-long Course)

This class is designed for students who wish to study music on both a musical instrument as well as with the voice. Students will alternate class attendance between Beginning Band and Chorus each day. If the rotation schedule should be altered, the teachers will have the responsibility of communicating this change to the students in advance. Students will be held responsible for maintaining all information given out in class as well as keeping the required level of proficiency with vocal and instrumental performance. Grades assigned for the course will be a numerical average of the grade assigned to students based on their performance in Beginning Band and the grade assigned for 6th grade Chorus. Students registering for this class may do so only with the permission of the band and choral teacher. It is also suggested that students who enroll in this class study with a private teacher on their instrument and voice.

For middle school students, registration payment, current account status, and grade point average (GPA) will be among the criteria used for course placement (Saint James School Student/Parent Handbook 2023 - 2024, pg. 12)

7TH GRADE

Core Academic Courses

English 7

English 7 focuses on grammar, writing, and literature. Students broaden their understanding of grammar with a study of the parts of speech, parts of a sentence, usage, and mechanics. Their knowledge of grammar is put into practice when they compose personal writing and literary responses through expository, descriptive, narrative, or persuasive paragraphs. Students also learn to publish in MLA format, cite sources, and create a works cited page. As they read and discuss short stories, poems, and the classic novel *Where the Red Fern Grows*, students identify literary techniques, analyze plot and characterization, and explore theme, point of view, and setting. The goal of the English 7 class is to further refine grammar skills, study literary works, write effective personal selections, and compose thoughtful responses to literature.

Geography 7

Seventh-grade World Geography is a study of the earth, emphasizing both human geography and physical geography. Studies include world cultures, economic development, world trade, and world resources. Special emphasis is placed on map identification as each of the earth's regions are explored.

Life Science 7

Seventh-grade Life Science is an introduction to biology. The students learn about living organisms from one-celled organisms to the complex human body. The five kingdoms are studied with an emphasis on the processes that maintain life. The novel, *The Call of the Wild*, will also be incorporated into the science program. The human body is investigated through a systems approach.

Pre-Algebra

Pre-Algebra is a study of basic algebraic concepts beginning with operations with integers. This study is then extended to include rational numbers, applying the rules for order of operations with positive and negative numbers, solving equations, inequalities, and proportions, finding slopes of lines, and graphing linear equations and inequalities. Another important aspect of Pre-Algebra is solving word problems using algebraic concepts. Basic geometric principles and solving of simultaneous systems are also introduced in this course. At this level, calculator use is limited, allowing students to continue to improve basic skills.

Students who have at least an 82 average for both semesters in Pre-Algebra during the 7th grade year will take Algebra I in the 8th grade. This will allow them to take Geometry in the 9th grade. Students who have below an 82 average in 7th grade Pre-Algebra will take Transitional Algebra in the 8th grade. This will enable them to take Algebra I in the 9th grade. In order to be able to progress to Advanced Algebra I, students must maintain an average of at least 97 for both semesters in Pre-Algebra and have a teacher recommendation. In the event that the number of requests of qualified students exceeds the space available, placement in Advanced Algebra I will be based on a combination of recommendation and the highest numerical averages.

Advanced Pre-Algebra

Prerequisite: All students who earned a grade of 92 or above for both semesters in 6th grade Math will be placed in this course. In the event that the number of requests of qualified students exceeds the space available, placement will be based on a combination of recommendation and the highest numerical averages.

Advanced Pre-Algebra is a study of basic algebraic concepts beginning with operations with integers, then is extended to include rational numbers. Applying the rules for order of operations with positive and negative numbers, solving equations, inequalities, and proportions, finding slopes of lines, graphing linear equations and inequalities, and solving word problems using algebraic concepts are also significant components of this course. Basic geometric principles, applications to reflections, and translations of figures on a coordinate plane are made, and solving of simultaneous systems is also introduced in this course. At this level, calculator use is limited, allowing students to continue to improve basic skills.

To progress to Advanced Algebra I in 8th grade, students must maintain a grade of 92 or above for both semesters in Advanced Pre-Algebra. In the event that the number of requests of qualified students exceeds the space available, placement in Advanced Algebra I will be based on a combination of recommendation and the highest numerical averages.

Students who have at least an 82 average for both semesters in Advanced Pre-Algebra during the 7th grade year will take Algebra I in the 8th grade. This will allow them to take Geometry in the 9th grade. Students that have below an 82 in 7th grade Advanced Pre-Algebra will take Transitional Algebra in the 8th grade. This will enable them to take Algebra I in the 9th grade.

Vocabulary 7

The Vocabulary 7 study is designed to guide and stimulate systematic vocabulary growth. The study includes word meanings, pronunciation, spelling, parts of speech, synonyms, antonyms,

analogies, usage, and critical thinking exercises. Reinforcement of and exposure to vocabulary is reiterated as students read assigned novels and complete various writing activities.

Exploratory Courses

Each exploratory class meets five days per week for 9 weeks. All seventh graders rotate through each of these classes. The topics of the exploratory classes are subject to change.

Technology Tools II

This is an intermediate technology class designed to further the understanding of the programs that were introduced in the 6th Grade Technology Tools I Exploratory. Students will continue improving keyboarding proficiency and will complete a project using the AVL and other online databases to research biographical information. They will also complete an assignment using a variety of technologies to compare and contrast works of artists or composers. In an interdisciplinary unit, students will do research using online databases and develop a multimedia presentation. Students will also continue to add to their Google Sites Digital Portfolio created in Technology Tools I to showcase their outstanding middle school work. Competent use of MacBooks, iPads, and other appropriate digital devices will be a focus of the course.

World Current Events

World Current Events will allow students to become informed citizens and develop an appreciation for world events as they occur. Areas of study will include local, state, national, and international news using both print and broadcast journalism.

Explore Theatre

This class is designed to expose students to the dramatic arts and the preparation of performance. Students will study and enjoy theatrical works and perform in a welcoming setting of their peers.

Explore Spanish II

In this course, students will be discussing a variety of topics dealing with everyday life and their surroundings. Students will continue to study grammatical concepts, such as the conjugation of regular and irregular verbs. In addition to learning Spanish, they will also be studying how languages have spread throughout the world in the modern era. They will be learning about the languages represented today in certain regions and countries, including the United States.

Elective Courses

Seventh-grade students must choose from the following elective courses.

Art 7* (Year-long Course)

This year-long course will review and build upon the elements and principles of design as well as aspects of aesthetic and criticism. It will encompass an in-depth study of drawing techniques as well as a study of various styles of Art. Acrylic and watercolor techniques will be reviewed. Students will study various art forms including glass, learning the basic techniques of glass fusing, and clay pottery, where they will learn the basic techniques of extruding pottery and firing pottery. Aesthetic viewpoints and standards of art criticism will be reviewed. **An art fee of \$85 is required.*

7th Grade Choir (Year-long Course)

The 7th Grade Choir is a performance-based music class. The students, using technology and their iPads, will learn a variety of music, singing alone and with others; reading and notating music; listening to, analyzing, and describing music; and evaluating and listening to musical performances. Technology and iPads will be further used to explore music theory and music composition throughout the year. The students will have the opportunity to perform in various settings such as the Saint James Holiday Convocation, the Holiday Concert, District and State Festival, the Spring Concert, the Annual Choral Music Department Cabaret Fundraiser, and other community events. Individuals can develop their talents further through extra-curricular activities such as Alabama Vocal Association All State Choir and American Choral Directors Association Young Voices Festival. Emphasis in class is placed on teamwork and vocal development through practice.

Intermediate Band (Year-long Course)

The Intermediate Band meets during the second year of instrumental music. The class meets the entire year, and its members are drawn primarily from Beginning Band. Students will continue to learn aspects of instrumental music performance that include position, flexibility, style, blend, embouchure, coordination, theory, dynamics, articulation, composing, technique, teamwork, rhythm, history, and balance. Intermediate Band students perform at the winter/holiday and spring concerts and will travel to one music festival each year. Intermediate Band members have the option to audition to become a member of the Trojan Marching Band in addition to their regular class. The Saint James Intermediate Band requires a commitment to pursue excellence in all aspects of the instrumental music program. Parents will be responsible for renting or purchasing an instrument and respective method book. Other supplies may be required.

Healthy Living (Semester Course)

This course consists of hands-on activities designed to teach students how to live a healthy life. Students will spend time learning about our bodies and what we can do to keep them healthy. We will also discuss nutrition and exercise as part of a healthy life. Students will learn to choose healthier snacks and explore different types of exercise. This course will be a fun and exciting way to become a healthier individual.

Digital Storytelling (Semester Course)

This class explores the interactivity and narrative of digital media through the creation of audio and video projects. This is a course in which students will use various digital tools to tell a story about themselves, an event, or an idea. Students will combine the art of telling stories with a variety of multimedia, including graphics, audio, video, and Web publishing. The videos created in this semester elective will tell digital stories containing some mixture of computer-based images, text, recorded audio narration, video clips, and/or music.

Robotics 7 (Semester Course)

In this one-semester course, students will take on the roles of mechanical engineers, computer scientists, and electrical engineers as they assemble and program robots using robotic kits. The students will use the kits to design, build, code, and troubleshoot while completing projects with their robots.

Intermediate Vocal/Instrumental Dual Studies (Year-long Course)

This class is designed for students who wish to study music on both a musical instrument as well as with the voice. Students will alternate class attendance between Intermediate Band and Chorus each day. If the rotation schedule should be altered, the teachers will have the responsibility of communicating this change to the students in advance. Students will be held responsible for maintaining all information given out in class as well as keeping the required level of proficiency with vocal and instrumental performance. Grades assigned for the course will be a numerical average of the grade assigned to students based on their performance in Intermediate Band and the grade assigned for 7th grade Chorus. Students registering for this class may do so only with the permission of the band and choral teacher. It is also suggested that students who enroll in this class study with a private teacher on their instrument and voice.

***For middle school students, registration payment, current account status, and grade point average (GPA) will be among the criteria used for course placement (Saint James School Student/Parent Handbook 2023-2024 pg. 12).**

8TH GRADE

Core Academic Courses

English 8

Eighth-grade English encompasses literature, grammar, and writing. Students continue to identify, interpret, and analyze literary elements and techniques as they read and study selected short stories, non-fiction, dramatic pieces, and novels. There continues to be concentration on studying grammar, mechanics, and usage. Emphasis is placed on proficiency and creativity in student writing as well as the further development of writing skills using MLA format.

Advanced English 8

Prerequisite: Students must maintain a grade of 92 for both semesters in 7th grade English and receive a teacher recommendation. In the event that the number of requests of qualified students exceeds the space available, placement will be based on a combination of recommendation and the highest numerical averages.

Eighth-grade Advanced English encompasses literature, grammar, and writing. Students continue to identify, interpret, and analyze literary elements and techniques as they read and study selected short stories, non-fiction, dramatic pieces, and novels. There continues to be concentration on studying grammar, mechanics, and usage. Emphasis is placed on proficiency in student writing as well as the further development of writing and research skills using MLA format. Further emphasis will be placed on critical thinking and higher-level discussion skills. Students in advanced English explore modern classic literature and write papers every quarter.

Transitional Algebra

Transitional Algebra is offered to students who desire to gain a deeper understanding of the basic algebraic concepts before moving on to Algebra I. These concepts include operations with rational numbers; solving equations, inequalities, and proportions; the basics of geometry, finding slope and rate of change, and graphing linear equations and inequalities. Students will also make real-life applications with these concepts through a variety of word problems. At this level, calculator use is limited allowing students to continue to improve basic skills. Successful completion of this course will allow the students to take Algebra I in the 9th grade.

Algebra I

Prerequisite: Students must maintain a grade of 82 for both semesters in Pre-Algebra and receive a teacher recommendation.

Algebra I extends the study of algebraic expressions and the graphing of linear and nonlinear equations and inequalities. Students will solve equations and inequalities algebraically and graphically. There will be an emphasis placed on factoring polynomials and simplifying terms with integral exponents.

Successful completion of this course with a 75 average for both semesters and teacher recommendation will allow students to take Geometry in the 9th grade.

Advanced Algebra I

Prerequisite: Students must maintain a grade of 92 for both semesters in Advanced Pre-Algebra or a 97 for both semesters in Pre-Algebra and receive a teacher recommendation. In the event that the number of requests of qualified students exceeds the space available, placement will be based on a combination of recommendation and the highest numerical averages.

Advanced Algebra I provides an opportunity for students to advance their understanding of the concepts from Algebra I by exploring additional concepts that will broaden their math foundation for Geometry, Algebra II, and Trigonometry. Several more types of functions, their inverses and asymptotes, and rational exponents will be covered as well as the concepts covered in Algebra I.

Successful completion of this course with an 85 average each semester and teacher recommendation will allow students to take Advanced Geometry in the 9th grade.

U.S. History 8

Eighth-grade United States History takes the students on a journey from the discovery of America to modern-day history. Along this journey, students will encounter and discuss issues, controversies, and decisions that have impacted our country. Students will also take in-depth looks at crucial turning points in our history through hands-on projects, self-studies, lectures, and group discussions. The skill of taking notes from outlines and lectures will be stressed and students will utilize many primary source documents in their studies. Historical novels will be used to complement the study of particular periods. With our emerging use of technology, online activities that are historically based will be utilized and primary sources, paintings, documents, etc., will be readily available for the students to see history come alive.

Advanced U.S. History 8

Prerequisite: Students must maintain a grade of 92 for both semesters in 7th grade Geography and receive a teacher recommendation. In the event that the number of requests of qualified students exceeds the space available, placement will be based on a combination of recommendation and the highest numerical averages.

Students in this class will study American History from discovery through the modern era. Advanced students will study and discuss issues, controversies, and decisions that have impacted our country through in-depth discussion and document-based questions that utilize primary sources. Along with hands-on projects, self-studies, lectures, and a mock trial, advanced students will have the opportunity to delve deeper into the study of American History through supplemental readings and responsive essays. Advanced students will be participating in a historical mock trial that will coincide with our unit of study. With our emerging use of technology, online activities that are historically based will be utilized and primary sources, paintings, documents, etc. will be readily available for the students to see history come alive.

Physical Science

The Physical Science curriculum in 8th grade introduces students to various aspects of the physical world, focusing first on chemistry and then on physics with a limited focus on earth and space science. This is a practical science course designed for students who desire an understanding of chemical and physical concepts and applications. The course provides an overview of the physical world and gives students tools and concepts to think clearly about properties of matter, states of matter, atomic structure, the periodic table, chemical bonds, chemical reactions, solutions of acids and bases, carbon chemistry, motion and forces, work, power and machines, energy, mechanical waves and sound, and electricity and magnetism. Fundamental concepts of chemistry and physics with an application to everyday experiences are covered. This course is designed to give the student a working knowledge of the physical factors in our environment.

Advanced Physical Science**

Prerequisite: To be eligible to take Advanced Physical Science in 8th grade, students must have a 92 or above average for each semester in both Life Science and Pre-Algebra. Final eligibility will be reviewed at the end of the year and placement will be determined at that time. In the event that the number of requests of qualified students exceeds the space available, placement will be based on a combination of recommendation and the highest numerical averages.

Advanced Physical Science is an introductory course that covers extensive topics in chemistry and physics and limited topics in earth and space science. Chemistry topics include properties of matter, states of matter, atomic structure, the periodic table, chemical bonds, chemical reactions,

solutions, acids and bases, and carbon chemistry. Physics includes the study of motion and forces, work, power and machines, energy, mechanical waves and sound, and electricity and magnetism. Many of the fundamental principles that are studied require mathematical calculations.

***Students who are eligible and choose to take Advanced Physical Science in 8th grade **are REQUIRED** to take Honors Biology in 9th grade and Chemistry or Honors Chemistry in 10th grade.*

Vocabulary 8

The Vocabulary 8 study is designed to guide and stimulate systematic vocabulary growth in students. The study includes word meanings, pronunciation, parts of speech, synonyms, antonyms, analogies, usage, and critical thinking exercises.

Exploratory Courses

Each exploratory class meets five days per week for 9 weeks. All eighth graders rotate through each of these classes. The topics of the exploratory classes are subject to change.

Explore Spanish III

In this course, students will continue exploring the languages and cultures of the Spanish-speaking world. Students will research famous Hispanic figures. They will also continue studying basic Spanish grammar and learning vocabulary dealing with everyday life. In addition to learning Spanish, they will also be exploring the benefits that knowing a second language can add to different careers.

Explore Speech

The goal of this course is to introduce students to formal public speaking and debate. Students will begin by learning about writing an argument, organizing a logically flowing case, and practicing basic presentation skills. They will then advance to preparing a researched debate case, persuasive appeals, and advanced delivery.

Technology Tools III

Students build on skills and knowledge from the previous computer exploratory courses to learn more advanced skills and to create more complex digital products. Students will learn to leverage technology to express their individuality, creativity, and imagination, and to hone their technological skills. The students will collaborate with their classmates to create projects using laptops, iPads, and other digital equipment and tools.

Explore Civics

Students will explore the three branches of our American Government through hands-on activities, simulations, and working together. Have you ever wondered what it is like to be a Congressman or Congresswoman? Do you know what role the President of the United States plays in our government? Would you like to know the difference between criminal and civil law and follow a crime from an arrest to the courtroom? This will be a fun, interactive class where we learn about our government and how to be informed citizens of good character.

Elective Courses

Eighth-grade students must choose from the following elective courses.

Art and Photography* (Year-long Course)

The 8th-grade art program will continue to build upon the elements and principles of design. The program will include a study of various styles of art, focusing on building drawing skills and improving techniques with varied mediums. The photography component will include the history of photography as well as an investigation of important photographers. Students will explore black and white photography using a Holga pinhole camera while creating a variety of techniques in the darkroom. Due to the photography component and the size of the darkroom, class size is limited to 15 students. **An art fee of \$85 is required.*

Advanced Band (Year-long Course)

The Advanced Band meets the entire year. The daily rehearsals of this group build upon fundamentals learned in Beginning and Intermediate Band. Students are required to attend band camp in the summer prior to the beginning of school, march with the high school marching band, and maintain an after-school rehearsal schedule through October. The Symphonic Band performs at various concerts throughout the year and regularly attends district and state competitions. Parents will be responsible for purchasing or renting instruments and other necessary supplies.

Invention Convention: Exploring STEAM (Year-long Course)

Students who elect to take this semester-long elective will have the opportunity to participate in challenging, interactive, and “hands-on” STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Mathematics) activities.

Students get to investigate various inventions in history through research and writing, designing and building, and film critiquing. Various topics are explored and within each topic, students research and write to gather information concerning the topic, design and build an apparatus to

mimic the invention, and watch a video demonstrating the real-world connection of the invention. The activities will involve problem-solving experiences related to all areas of science. Developing and utilizing critical thinking skills is also prioritized through the activities planned for this class. Activities emphasizing the integration of science, technology, engineering, art, and music are included. All students who are interested in pursuing scientific investigation and exploration are encouraged to consider this class.

Digital Journalism* (Year-long Course)

Students will study the basics of journalism and put what they learn into practice as they use computers, iPads, and other digital devices to create a digital newspaper for the Middle School four times each school year. Students will participate in activities that will improve their basic writing skills, build their vocabularies, and practice word processing. Students will organize still pictures and create videos of various school events including grade-level field trips. Students will create a video to be shown at the end of the year for the 8th grade class which consists of pictures taken of the students during their middle school years at Saint James School.

**Students interested in this elective will fill out an application to become part of the staff. Teachers and administrators will be consulted regarding each applicant's work ethic, conduct, compliance with the RUP, and ability to work well with others.*

Middle School Performance Fundamentals (Year-long Course)

Combining the fundamental studies of theater and the fundamentals of performing vocal music, this class allows students to explore and hone their talents in the realms of theater and choir. Students will explore creating theatrical performances through the use of voice, body, and imagination to create characters.

Acting, techniques, and audition skills for drama and musicals will be covered. Students will participate as members of the Middle School Chorus. They will study music through the preparation and performance of excellent repertoire from various cultures and styles. Students will be expected to audition for various festivals, including Youth Theater Festival and State Choral Performance Assessment.

Advanced Vocal/Instrumental Dual Studies (Year-long Course)

This class is designed for students who wish to study music on both a musical instrument as well as with the voice. Students will alternate class attendance between Advanced Band and Chorus each day. If the rotation schedule should be altered, the teachers will have the responsibility of communicating this change to the students in advance. Students will be held responsible for maintaining all information given out in class as well as keeping the required level of proficiency

with vocal and instrumental performance. Grades assigned for the course will be a numerical average of the grade assigned to students based on their performance in Advanced Band and the grade assigned for 8th-grade Chorus. Students registering for this class may do so only with the permission of the band and choral teacher. It is also suggested that students who enroll in this class study with a private teacher on their instrument and voice.

***For middle school students, registration payment, current account status, and grade point average (GPA) will be among the criteria used for course placement (Saint James School Student/Parent Handbook 2023-2024 pg. 12).**

All Middle School Grades (6th - 8th)

Advisory

Middle School students begin their day in homeroom (or advisory) and then return during advisory class where they learn practices to help them be a successful and organized student, have character-building lessons, and technology lessons related to real-time technology needs (updating iPads, installing needed classroom apps, etc.).

Physical Education and Health

Each student must complete three years of physical education in Middle School. Students receive instruction in team sports, individual and dual sports, and fitness activities. Classes are designed to develop skills, knowledge, and interest through the enjoyment of physical activity by exposing students to a variety of activities, both in sports and fitness units. Development and display of sportsmanship is stressed.

Health education is integrated with the physical education program to develop successful health attitudes and practices. Areas of emphasis include alcohol, tobacco, drugs, nutrition, personal health, diseases, and total wellness. Students learn that health is an ongoing process involving physical, mental, and social well-being and that desirable health practices are necessary for a wholesome life. Students must purchase the required PE uniform and dress out for class daily.

Library

Students learn the location of physical materials in the library and receive instruction in the use of various reference materials, online databases, the internet, and the online catalog. Additional digital materials provided by the library, such as eBooks and PDFs, can be accessed through onCampus. Research assistance and instruction about safe internet research practices are provided for whole classes, small groups, and individual students. The library also houses the Writing Center and Printing Center available to high school students.

Counseling

The counseling services are an important aspect of Saint James Middle School. These services include individual and group counseling, academic counseling, career guidance, national testing programs, individual student scheduling, incentive programs, and much more. Students, parents, and teachers are encouraged to seek assistance from their counselor whenever they see the need.

Middle & High School Math Course Sequencing

The chart below details the expected math track that students will follow in high school. Exceptions to these tracks must be approved by the Mathematics Department Head and the current math teacher.

| 8th Grade | | 9th Grade | | 10th Grade | | 11th Grade | | 12th Grade | |
|----------------------|---|-----------------|---|-----------------------------|---|--------------------------|---|--|--|
| Transitional Algebra | → | Algebra 1 | → | Geometry | → | Algebra 2 | → | Senior Algebra 3 & Trig. | |
| Algebra 1* | → | Geometry*** | → | Algebra 2*** | → | Algebra 3 & Trigonometry | → | Pre-Calculus Adv. | |
| Algebra 1* | → | Honors Geometry | → | Honors Algebra 2 with Trig. | → | Honors Pre-Calculus | → | AP Calculus AB | |
| Advanced Algebra 1** | → | Honors Geometry | → | Honors Pre-Calculus | → | AP Calculus AB | → | AP Calculus BC & Honors Algebra 2 with Trig. | |

**Students with below a 75 average in either semester of Algebra 1 in 8th grade will be required to follow the Transitional Algebra track, repeating Algebra 1 in the 9th grade. By completing Algebra 1 in 8th grade with an average of 90 or above each semester, the student may be recommended to follow the Advanced Algebra 1 track beginning with Honors Geometry in 9th grade. Students who complete Advanced Algebra 1 with an 85 average each semester are required to continue on the honors sequence with Honors Geometry in the 9th grade.*

***Students who complete Advanced Algebra 1 in 8th grade with distinction and upon teacher recommendation may apply to double in math as a 9th grader taking both Honors Geometry and Honors Algebra 2 w/ Trig. These students would progress to AP Calculus BC as a senior. Students must receive written approval from the teachers and the Math Department Head to double in math.*

****Students who complete 9th-grade Geometry and 8th-grade Algebra 1 with distinction may be recommended to follow the honors sequence beginning with Honors Algebra 2 with Trig in the 10th grade.*