Middle School Academic learning Programme

This Academic Learning Programme provides parents and students of the Middle School with a detailed summary of the academic curriculum in the Middle School.

Our Middle School academic curriculum is constantly evolving and improving, and this guide provides a snapshot at the time of printing. Curriculum updates are posted online each term with up-to-date news of the curriculum and events, and parents are informed when they are available.

Grade 6 curriculum
Grade 6 students follow a 40-period week, with subject time allocated as follows:
- 10 periods of English – Humanities
- 5 periods of a Language Other Than English (LOTE)*
- 5 periods of Mathematics
- 5 periods of Science
- 4 periods of Physical Education
- 4 periods of Design and Technology
- 2 periods each of:
  - Visual Art
  - Drama
  - Music
- 1 period of Life Skills

Grade 6 students are taught as a tutor group set except for Mathematics and LOTE lessons.

Grade 7 curriculum
Grade 7 students follow a 40-period week, with subject time allocated as follows:
- 6 periods of English or English as an Additional Language (EAL)
- 5 periods of a Language Other Than English (LOTE)*
- 5 periods of Mathematics
- 5 periods of Humanities
- 5 periods of Science
- 4 periods of Physical Education
- 3 periods of Design and Technology
- 2 periods each of:
  - Visual Art
  - Drama
  - Music
- 1 period of Life Skills

Grade 7 students are taught as a tutor group set except for Mathematics, LOTE and Physical Education lessons.

* For some students whose native language is not English and who need extra support in English, an alternative to a LOTE course may be taken. In these cases, students have five periods of Extra English as an Additional Language during this time. This will be discussed with the Head of Grade.

Grade 8 curriculum
Students follow a 40-period week, with subject time allocated as follows:
- 6 periods of English or English as an Additional Language (EAL)
- 5 periods of a Language Other Than English (LOTE)*
- 5 periods of Mathematics
- 5 periods of Humanities
- 5 periods of Science
- 4 periods of Physical Education
- 3 periods of Design and Technology
- 2 periods each of:
  - Visual Art
  - Drama
  - Music
- 1 period of Life Skills

Grade 8 students are taught as a tutor group set except for Mathematics, LOTE and Physical Education lessons.

Middle School timetable

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Period</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8.10–8.45am</td>
<td>Period 1a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.45–9.25am</td>
<td>Period 1b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.25–9.50am</td>
<td>Morning break</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.50–10.15am</td>
<td>Tutor group/assembly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.15–10.50am</td>
<td>Period 2a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.50–11.30am</td>
<td>Period 2b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.30am–12.20pm</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.20–12.55pm</td>
<td>Period 3a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.55–1.35pm</td>
<td>Period 3b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.35–1.45pm</td>
<td>Afternoon break</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.45–2.20pm</td>
<td>Period 4a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.20–3pm</td>
<td>Period 4b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3pm</td>
<td>Dismissed, head to buses or Activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.05–4.30pm</td>
<td>Activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.35pm</td>
<td>Activity buses depart</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please take note:
- regular and punctual attendance is vital
- regular absences result in the loss of important learning opportunities
English

The English curriculum is designed to be a challenging and inspiring course, aligned with UWCSEA's core values. Over the course of the three years, students study a wide variety of literature, gaining an understanding of the myriad ways in which thoughts and ideas may be conveyed through writing. We aim to foster vital critical thinking skills, and to encourage students to appreciate the aesthetic value of literature as an art form in its own right. As well as teaching the skills and concepts of critical literary analysis, we place great emphasis on helping students to develop volume, stamina and fluency in their independent reading lives.

Such in-depth analysis of others’ writing, duly enhances students’ own. In Middle School we aim to develop students’ creativity and individual voice as writers, while reinforcing their understanding and use of all parts of the writing process. English classes also offer students multiple opportunities to practise the speaking and listening skills that are vital for accessing other parts of the curriculum. It is our aim that Middle School students leave Grade 8 as confident writers, lifelong readers and fully prepared for the transition to Grade 9.

What is our approach to reading?

Students are encouraged to read widely and with enthusiasm, and consequently, time for independent reading is built into every lesson. All students keep a record of their reading so that they may reflect meaningfully on their lives as readers and grow in their tastes and habits over the course of the year. One important aspect of our reading instruction focuses on supporting students in knowing themselves as readers and being able to identify the texts that are ‘just right’ for them. For this reason, we do not have a prescribed list of independent reading texts, but use posters, peer recommendation and book talks to help students find books they will love. Our independent reading work is supported through classroom libraries and unit-specific book boxes. These book collections have been developed with a focus on the needs and interests of international Middle School readers.

In addition to developing students’ independent reading lives, we also teach the skills and concepts of formal literary analysis. Over the course of Middle School, students learn how to analyse a variety of texts and begin to use more formal structures to organise their thinking. Students are increasingly encouraged to consider texts in terms of the craft choices an author has made and how such choices relate to meaning.

Students are expected to supplement their reading in school with 30 minutes per day of reading at home.

What is our approach to writing?

Students write in a variety of different forms during their time in Middle School, but whatever the writing type, our aim is to cultivate good practice in the use of the writing process. We place particular emphasis on the importance of revision and encourage students to see quality writing as something to be worked for over time. We use the editing stage of the writing process to reinforce their understanding of the way in which language conventions (grammar, punctuation and spelling) allow for shared meaning. Our aim is always to teach transferable concepts and skills around the way in which writers use structure and language to convey meaning. We also believe firmly in the importance of authenticity in writing, in other words in reproducing the behaviours of professional writers and in giving students independence and choice in their writing.

How is our learning structured?

Each of our units begins with a pre-assessment, designed to inform the teacher as to the extent of a student’s understanding of the concepts and skills that will be taught in the unit. These assessments are not graded, but are used as diagnostic tools to assist teachers in planning the rest of the unit. The unit is then taught as a series of mini-lessons, each aligned to one of the unit’s learning intentions. Throughout the unit, teachers use work done in class and at home to assess each student’s understanding of the learning intention and in order to provide timely feedback. Each unit also contains an on-demand or performance assessment that provides evidence of whether the student can transfer the key skills or concepts in the unit to a new situation. Our approach is designed to be focused on learning outcomes rather than grades and to make learning intentions as transparent as possible for students.

Grade 6 English units of learning

In Grade 6, English is taught as an integrated course along with Humanities (History and Geography) for 10 periods a week.

• reading unit: turning every child into a reader
• reading unit: synthesising non-fiction
• writing unit: information writing
• reading unit: analysing fiction in terms of power, position and perspective
• writing unit: the art of argument in research-based essays
• writing unit: realistic fiction

Grade 7 English units of learning

• writing unit: memoir
• reading unit: poetry
• writing unit: literary essay (focusing on character and theme)
• writing unit: investigative journalism
• reading unit: fantasy novels (with an exploration of Shakespeare)

Grade 8 English units of learning

• writing unit: memoir
• reading unit: media texts
• reading unit: approaching challenging texts
• writing unit: literary essay (focusing on theme and craft)
• writing unit: flash fiction
English as an Additional Language (EAL)

EAL courses are for students who need specialist instruction and practice in order to be able to use English more fluently and accurately. Courses offered are:

• English as an Additional Language (EAL) in place of English (Grades 7 and 8)
• Extra English as an Additional Language (EEAL), in place of a Language Other Than English (LOTE) (Grades 6, 7 and 8)

English as an Additional Language (EAL)

In EAL, the students study both literature and language. The literature lessons involve guided reading and challenge the students’ reading skills, helping them develop an awareness of literature and introducing skills such as character analysis. Texts are selected from the Middle School English book list. The language lessons focus on non-fiction texts, providing students with reading comprehension, discussion and writing practice across a range of common text types. Weekly personal reading time encourages students to develop a reading habit, which helps increase reading speed and expand vocabulary. This lesson also includes an oral presentation component as students report to classmates on a book they have enjoyed and record-keeping of their personal reading on a blog.

Grade 7 EAL course content

In Grade 7 literature lessons, students study the novels Skellig (David Almond) and The Giver (Lois Lowry) as well as the plays Burning Everest (Adrian Flynn) and Frankenstein (Philip Pullman).

In language lessons, topics covered include:
• biographical writing
• introduction to literary analysis
• Point-Evidence-Analysis paragraphs
• written information reports
• news reports
• diary writing
• problem-solution texts
• descriptive writing

Grade 8 EAL course content

In Grade 8 literature lessons, students study the novels Talking in Whispers (James Watson), The Outsiders (S E Hinton), Stargirl (Jerry Spinelli), and/or Across the Barricades (Joan Lingard).

In language lessons, topics covered include:
• personal identity
• travel writing
• media studies
• global concerns

Extra English as an Additional Language (EEAL)

For some students whose native language is not English and who need extra support in English, EEAL can be taken as an alternative to a LOTE course.

Students in EEAL take lessons in language development and curriculum support. The language development lessons focus on more basic grammar structures, with an emphasis on revision and consolidation of the fundamentals of English grammar. The curriculum support lessons help the students to cope with the demands of a mainstream curriculum. In these lessons, students address the needs of their content area subjects with the guidance and support of their teacher and other students. Support ranges from understanding specific words to interpreting and tackling written assignments.

Grade 6 EEAL course content

The development of language skills is the key aspect of the Grade 6 EEAL curriculum. As literature is undertaken in the students’ English classes, the curriculum covers a variety of subjects to improve receptive and productive language skills.

There is also a focus on cross-curricular links. Topics covered include:
• language learning
• bullying
• travel
• development and poverty
• stories by Roald Dahl
• peace and conflict

Grade 7 EEAL course content

Grade 7 EEAL students undertake literature in their EAL classes, so EEAL focuses on reading and writing skills, and curriculum support. Topics covered include:
• History links (what is history, colonialism in Singapore, and the Middle Ages)
• Geography links (tourism and sustainable travel; the environment)
• language support for Science
• music links (technical vocabulary, tracing the origin and development of an instrument, biography of a composer, comparison of world music genres)

Grade 8 EEAL course content

Grade 8 EEAL students undertake literature, poetry and media studies in their EAL classes, so EEAL focuses on reading and writing skills through strong cross-curricular links and curriculum support. Topics covered include:
• autobiography
• Chiang Mai and the river study unit
• development
• globalisation and fair trade
• Cambodia (includes the novels The Clay Marble by Minfong Ho and Children of the River by Linda Crew)
Language Other Than English (LOTE)

There are two types of LOTE courses:
1. LOTE second language (taught foreign language)
2. LOTE first language (native speakers’)

LOTE second language (taught foreign language) courses

The teaching of LOTE is a core element of the curriculum. The ideas of the improvement of communication skills and the propagation of greater understanding of other cultures are central to the aims of the UWC movement.

Language teaching has moved on from the traditional ideas of teaching grammar in isolation, now focusing on realistic language functions such as asking for tickets at a station or ordering a drink in a café. The grammatical notions of the language are presented in a meaningful context. The four skills of language (listening, speaking, reading and writing) are taught in an integrated way, so that grammatical concepts act as a reinforcement of vocabulary learnt. Cultural aspects are also taught so that students gain more understanding of the people who live where the languages are spoken.

Topics and notions covered in Middle School LOTE courses:

Beginners’ courses: introductions, family life, school, daily routine, descriptions, hobbies and clothes

Foreign language courses: education, getting around, leisure, celebrations, health and communications using technology

A more detailed list of the topics, vocabulary and grammatical notions (and Chinese characters) covered in each grade is available from the Head of Subject.

Second languages available in Grade 6
- beginners’, foreign language and second language Chinese (see below)
- beginners’ and foreign language French
- foreign language Spanish

Second languages available in Grade 7
- foreign language and second language Chinese (see below)
- foreign language French
- beginners’ and foreign language Spanish*

Second languages available in Grade 8
- foreign language and second language Chinese (see below)
- foreign language Spanish
- beginners’ and foreign language French

For the foreign language courses, students are expected to have basic knowledge of the language; this usually means at least one year’s previous study of the language is required.

Chinese as a second language and Mandarin as a foreign language

The Chinese as a Second Language course is a course in-between foreign language Chinese (Mandarin) and first language Chinese which suits students with a Chinese heritage but who might not necessarily speak it as the main language at home, or students who have extensive experience of Chinese but are not mother tongue speakers. This offers more challenge and depth in studying Chinese than foreign language Chinese and students need to have a high level of language ability in all four skills (speaking, listening, reading and writing) especially in speaking and listening as the lesson will be conducted fully in Chinese.

LOTE first languages (native speakers’) courses

LOTE first languages courses are for those whose proficiency in the language is of native or near native speakers’ level.

The aim is to develop sensitivity and effectiveness of speaking and listening through various themes, tasks and activities using literary and non-literary texts. Students develop their reading and writing skills, and their awareness in analytical, critical and original thinking using a variety of texts. The appreciation of culture is an important part of the courses. Students study literature texts through various media.

First language available in Grade 6
- Chinese
- French (see below)

First languages available in Grade 7
- Chinese
- Dutch and French (see below)
- German (see below)

First languages available in Grade 8
- Chinese
- Dutch and French (see below)
- German (see below)

Dutch

In addition to the other languages, Dutch lessons are available from Grade 7 to Grade 12 for native speakers of Dutch. For students in Grade 7 and 8, these lessons take place after school, twice a week from 3–4.25pm.

The policy of Dutch language provision is as follows:

UWCSEA, together with the Dutch speaking community in Singapore, operates a joint scheme to employ a fully qualified teacher of Dutch. This teacher provides Dutch tuition both within and outside the normal timetable for native speakers of Dutch. The teacher is a full-time employee of the College, but the Dutch speaking community contributes to the total cost of employing the teacher. The College is thus not obliged to provide Dutch tuition but does so to accommodate the wishes of the Dutch and Flemish community. For this reason, there is an extra charge levied by the Dutch community for any Dutch tuition. The cost depends on the number of students taking Dutch lessons.

French

The College organises tuition of written French for fluent French speakers after school. A qualified teacher employed by UWCSEA teaches students in small, language ability groups. An additional fee is payable for this tuition. Please contact the Head of Department for early arrangements (mpi@uwcssea.edu.sg)

German

In Grade 7 and 8, German is taught as a first language for native speakers according to the Swiss curriculum. This is a provision for Swiss students joining us in Grade 7 from the Swiss School. Other German native speakers may join this class, but will have to sit a test that assesses if their level of German is sufficient to keep up with the specific curriculum requirements. More information is available from the Head of German.
Humanities

Grade 6 — English and Humanities

In Grade 6, Humanities (Geography and History) is taught with English by one teacher for 10 periods per week.

Grade 7 and 8 — Humanities

In Grade 7 and 8, Humanities (Geography and History) is taught by one teacher for five periods per week. Topics from the two disciplines are studied on a rotational basis.

Middle School Humanities standards

All learning is focused around eight standards which are then broken down for the students to understand. The standards are:

1. natural and human systems are interrelated, interdependent and dynamic
2. place, space and time significantly shape human experiences
3. values play a significant role in our interpretation of the world
4. a sustainable future depends upon responsible actions and participation in society
5. the choices made to allocate resources lead to short and long term consequences
6. interactions between significant factors contribute to continuity and change, as well as cause and consequence
7. culture shapes human identity as individuals and groups shape culture
8. through inquiry, humans deepen their understanding of the world by developing research skills

Grade 6 Humanities units of learning

Please also refer to the information earlier on Grade 6 English

• mapping unit in advance of Tioman trip
• dynamic Earth: natural hazards
• development
• ancient civilisations

Grade 7 Humanities units of learning

• weather and climate change
• Singapore in World War II
• sustainability
• the middle ages (societies in transition)

Grade 8 Humanities units of learning

• the future of Singapore (urbanisation)
• the history of Cambodia
• globalisation and migration
• slavery
• fieldwork in Thailand (river and village study) on Chiang Mai trip

To enrich understanding of the Khmer Rouge regime, students are offered the opportunity to participate in an optional house building trip to Cambodia in conjunction with Tabitha Global Concern.

Skills development

A key element of the learning is skills development. In particular we focus on the student-led enquiry process where students investigate questions relevant to the units that are of interest to them. Through this they develop their research, communication, mapping and graphing skills.

Science

Middle School Science is an integrated course aiming to further develop scientific skills and method through the introduction of a range of scientific concepts. It is a dynamic curriculum that aims to be enjoyable and involves ample opportunity for practical tasks and investigations. It seeks to raise students’ awareness and understanding of the social, economic and environmental implications of science. Where possible, scientific principles are linked to everyday situations to emphasise their relevance to students’ own experiences and lives.

Students have ample opportunity to develop their investigative and manipulative skills as well as to process and interpret data through experimentation. Students are encouraged to communicate their observations in a variety of different formats.

Grade 6 Science course content

The development of investigative skills is an important aspect of the Grade 6 Science curriculum. Particular emphasis is placed on students’ abilities to design investigations that are ‘fair’ by first identifying, then controlling the variables. Students then learn to identify relationships between the variables.

Aspects covered are:

Working scientifically

• safety in the laboratory
• use of basic laboratory equipment
• the scientific process
• measurements and units in Science
• recording data in tables
• processing data, including graph skills

Building blocks

• particle theory, including states of matter, changes of state and diffusion
• cell structure
• comparing plant and animal cells
• specialised cells in animals and plants
• cells, tissues, organs and organ systems
• reproduction in humans
• reproduction in flowering plants

Changes

• chemical changes
• comparing chemical and physical changes
• writing simple chemical word equations
• identifying reactants and products in chemical equations
• combustion as a chemical change
• chemical reactions in living things: photosynthesis and respiration
• chemical tests for oxygen, hydrogen and carbon dioxide gases
• energy types
• conservation of energy
• energy transformations
• energy resources and conservation

Forces and their effects

• definition of a force
• measurement and units of force
• contact and non-contact forces
• balanced, unbalanced and resultant forces
• floating and sinking
• friction

Grade 7 Science course content
The Grade 7 Science curriculum builds on the skills and understanding developed in Grade 6. Investigative skills are further developed, with a particular emphasis on processing and analysing data.

Aspects covered are:

Elements, mixtures and compounds
• definition of an element
• introduction to the periodic table
• simple compounds and their formation
• identifying elements and compounds from particle diagrams
• showing reactions in terms of equations and particle diagrams
• definition of a mixture
• identifying mixtures from particle diagrams
• definition of pure and impure substances
• solubility and solutions
• separating mixtures

Go with the flow
• distinguishing between heat and temperature
• measurement and units of temperature
• heat transfer from hot objects to cooler ones
• heat transfer by conduction, convection and radiation
• constructing and drawing simple electrical circuits
• electrical conductors and insulators
• resistance
• comparing parallel and series circuits
• using everyday models to explain electrical circuits

Energy in living things
• food groups, uses and sources in our diet, including what is meant by a ‘balanced diet’
• digestive system in humans
• breathing system in humans
• mechanism of breathing
• role and structure of the heart
• types and functions of blood vessels: arteries, veins and capillaries
• composition and role of the blood
• aerobic cellular respiration

Ecological relationships
• habitats and environment
• adaptations of living organisms
• feeding relationships between living things
• review of photosynthesis

Grade 8 Science course content
The Grade 8 course builds on the knowledge, understanding and skills developed in Grades 6 and 7. It aims to further develop the students’ investigative skills, with particular emphasis on evaluation, so as to thoroughly prepare them for the coursework component of the IGCSE Science course.

Aspects covered are:

Variation, inheritance and genetic science
• variation in living organisms: Comparison of environmental and inherited variations
• simple rules of inheritance
• genetic science: its advantages and disadvantages

Sound and light
• properties of sound
• frequency and pitch
• amplitude and loudness
• sound waves and hearing
• properties of light
• comparing light and sound
• reflection of light from plane mirrors
• refraction of light by transparent materials
• colour: filters and light

Formulae and equations
• combining powers and deriving chemical formulae of simple compounds
• representing chemical equations as words and particle diagrams
• representing chemical equations as symbol equations
• balancing simple chemical equations
• defining acids and bases
• the use of chemicals indicators to identify acidic, basic (alkaline) and neutral solutions.
• neutralisation reactions and their uses.

Human impact and conservation
• awareness of the environmental impact which human actions have on our land, sea and atmosphere
• conservation of the earth’s natural resources
• use of alternative energy resources
• focus on a specific aspect of human impact which is affecting Southeast Asia

Body defences and immunity
• types of microbes
• conditions for microbial growth
• how microbes enter the body
• body’s ‘outer’ defences to microbes
• the role of the immune system in fighting microbial infection
• use of immunisation to boost the immune system
• use of antibiotics to combat bacterial infections
• methods of controlling or preventing the spread of disease (to include historical and contemporary case studies)

Forces and motion
• gravitational force and how it is affected by the mass of objects and their distance apart
• defining and comparing mass and weight
• the application of mathematical principles in Science to include: motion, turning effects, hydraulics, pressure, rocket propulsion, satellite orbits

Transport systems in animals and plants
• transportation of water in plants from root to leaf
• transport of sugars in a plant from leaf to other parts
Design and Technology

The Design and Technology course intends to challenge all students to apply practical and creative thinking skills to solve problems in technology and to raise students’ awareness of their responsibilities as world citizens when making decisions and taking action on technology issues.

The subject uses the design process as the model of thinking and this strategy helps students investigate problems and design, plan, manufacture and evaluate the products and systems that they generate. Combining practical skills with an understanding of function, aesthetics, social and sustainability issues, the course also develops creative and critical thinking strategies.

Students must look for needs, wants and opportunities and respond to them by designing and developing a range of ideas. Students then go on to manufacture fully functioning products and systems from a wide range of materials. In order to develop an understanding of designing and making, students investigate products and find out about the work of professional designers and design movements. As they do so, they reflect on and evaluate present and past design and technology, its uses and effects. New graphical skills will allow them to clearly record and communicate ideas and information. Students use computers, including computer-aided design and manufacture (CAD/CAM) and control software, as an integral part of the design process. The basics of human nutrition and the wise selection of foods are also covered helping students understand the need for a balanced and healthy diet.

Design and Technology is a very broad subject covering both technical and aesthetic disciplines. The separate strands of the subject covered over the three years of Middle School include:

- Product Design
- Food Technology
- Textile Technology
- Electronics, Communications and Technology (ECT)
- Graphic Products
- Engineering

Grade 6 Design and Technology course content

- problem solving, brainstorming and developing solutions through collaboration
- designing and developing design ideas using graphical techniques and Computer Aided Design
- research and analysis
- testing and evaluation of products
- how to work safely in a kitchen and workshop
- manufacturing and cooking by selecting tools and equipment to form and join
- Bauhaus design movement and designers
- different forces which act on structures
- classification of different materials by their properties
- food pyramid as a guide to planning healthy meals
- sustainable issues through renewable energy sources

Grade 7 Design and Technology course content

- problem solving, brainstorming and developing solutions through collaboration
- generation of design ideas using freehand sketching and development using models and prototypes
- development of skills in using computer aided design
- investigation into the symbolism in traditional cultures as the basis of a design
- using mood boards as a source of inspiration
- testing and evaluation of products
- how to work safely in a kitchen and workshop
- manufacturing and cooking by selecting tools and equipment to form and join
- understand how to use a 3D printer for rapid prototyping
- understand the working characteristics, properties and uses of different materials
- decorative methods to embellish and alter the appearance of fabrics including screen printing
- developing awareness of current global issues pertaining to foods, health and nutrition
- programming and building robots to complete open-ended challenges
- sustainability issues through investigation into the uses of materials, methods of recycling and waste reduction

Grade 8 Design and Technology course content

- develop problem solving, teamwork, communication and collaboration skills
- generation of design ideas through modelling and development through scaled prototypes to test comfort
- rendering techniques to communicate design concepts effectively and clearly
- testing and evaluation of products
- manufacturing and selecting tools and equipment to form and join accurately
- Minimalist design movement and designers
- ergonomics and the factors that make a product comfortable to use
- structures and forces through building and testing of different structures
- mechanisms and how they can be used to transfer motion
- electronic components and how they are used as the building blocks of the technology
- programming and building robots to complete an open-ended challenge
- sustainable issues with regards use of energy
Mathematics

Mathematics equips students with a uniquely powerful set of tools including logical reasoning, problem-solving skills and the ability to think in abstract ways. Different cultures have contributed to the development and application of mathematics. Today, the subject transcends cultural boundaries, and its importance is universally recognised. Mathematics is a creative discipline. It can stimulate moments of pleasure and wonder when a student solves a problem for the first time, discovers a more elegant solution or suddenly sees hidden connections.

The Mathematics programme aims to challenge our students and to prepare them with problem solving, logical reasoning and coherent communication skills. Students should develop positive attitudes towards the subject and increasingly make connections between different aspects of mathematics and other curriculum areas. We believe that mathematics plays a significant role in nurturing critical thinkers of the future.

Students entering Grades 6, 7 and 8 bring with them a variety of experience and ability in mathematics. New students are normally tested to establish their strengths and any areas requiring attention. Middle School Mathematics classes are broadly grouped based upon students’ mathematical understanding and work is differentiated when appropriate. Technology is woven through the curriculum, and we encourage its use. Assessment is done through a variety of methods including common tests, homework and investigational problems. Students reflect on their own progress as the end of each unit.

Grade 6 Mathematics unit of study

- problem solving using different strategies and investigational skills, four rules with number
- geometry: shapes, angles and designs, angle rules, geometrical constructions
- data about us, representing and interpreting data using spreadsheets, calculating measures of central tendency
- measurement: perimeter, area and volume
- directed numbers
- number patterns and algebra, simplification, equation solving

Grade 7 Mathematics unit of study

- simplifying algebraic expressions using the four rules, substitution in formulae and constructing more complicated formulae
- percentages: increase/decrease, profit/loss, reverse percentages
- theoretical and experimental probability
- ratio, rates and scale drawing
- assembling and analysing data, questionnaires
- sequences and drawing graphs
- area, surface area and volume

Grade 8 Mathematics unit of study

- Pythagoras and applications
- solving equations, x’s on both sides, algebraic fractions, and using and constructing more complicated formulae
- geometrical reasoning
- linear functions and graphs, y = mx + c
- bivariate data, scatter diagrams and correlation
- transformations (rotations, reflections, translations and enlargements) and congruence

Physical Education

Physical Education encourages a positive disposition towards physical activity. Students are encouraged and taught to apply the basic skills of a sport, learnt in previous years, to the broader game setting. These skills and strategies are developed throughout the Middle School Physical Education programme.

We emphasise that the attainment and maintenance of a good level of fitness is connected to healthy living and that this is the personal responsibility of the individual. We place significant value on the continued development of socially acceptable behaviour relevant to the sporting environment and seek to develop the student’s ability to work with a partner or as part of a team.

The curriculum and teaching philosophy aims to ensure maximum activity time. To achieve this, the games are modified in terms of numbers and equipment, and rules and strategies are introduced appropriate to each grade. We also begin to encourage depth of skill, knowledge and experience.

Students in Grade 6 are taught in their tutor groups, while in Grades 7 and 8 marked maturational differences are evident between individuals, so classes are divided into sets, based on skill level and endurance ability. Boys and girls are taught separately in Grades 7 and 8. Our diverse curriculum provides opportunities to experience a range of activities. All students take two, 70-minute periods of Physical Education per week, covering seven different activities during the year. After each unit students receive an assessment which can be accessed through the parent’s online portal.

A typical programme includes the following activities taken from the seven physical domains.

1. **court based**
   - basketball
   - netball

2. **field**
   - touch rugby (both boys and girls)
   - contact rugby (boys)
   - football

3. **aquatic activities**
   - swimming
   - water polo
   - kayaking
   - water survival skills

4. **gymnastics and movement/parkour**

5. **athletics and health-related fitness**

6. ‘**over the net’**
   - tennis
   - badminton
   - volleyball

7. **striking games**
   - softball

Middle School students also take part in three different ‘Days of Sport’: swimming, games and athletics. These are fun-filled days are driven by the houses system. Students are allocated to one of the six houses and compete against other houses in various events throughout the year.
**The Arts**

**Drama**

The principal aim of Drama in Middle School is to develop students’ skills into confident and sensitive communicators. It is not an ‘acting’ course; the various skills learnt can be applied across many other disciplines and contexts. During the three year course, students work in a secure environment where they are guided to experiment, explore and respond creatively; using drama processes and practices. This means building group trust and cooperation; and thus a greater awareness of the value of meaningful, personal interaction.

Skills for the effective and confident communication of ideas are developed and nurtured; in particular creative spontaneity, an expressive command of voice and movement, and an understanding of forms of communication beyond the spoken word. In addition, students investigate a range of performance forms both traditional and modern, involving a range of cultures.

The course is beneficial for students who intend to study Drama at GCSE level, Theatre at IB level and beyond. However, it is also designed to be a self-contained curriculum benefiting all participants by enhancing their communication skills, confidence and creative expression.

Students are also expected to maintain a reflective journal and complete task-specific written work. All written work is directly related to the practical work. Practical work involves the students in performing in both informal and formal ways to their peers consistently throughout the course.

**Middle School Drama curriculum**

In each successive year, the curriculum builds on basic techniques introduced at the Grade 6 level. These underpin practical work in classroom drama and are essential for the development and attainment of drama skills. Creativity, concentration, cooperation and control are an integral part of the course as students progress through the grades. Students are taught the process of creating, developing and rehearsing drama as well as the skills required for effective and confident performance. The course follows a thematic approach and is taught through a series of units. A core set of skills are introduced and developed through the Middle School years. As the students’ understanding of drama, and the confidence required to use drama techniques, increases they progress from exploration and investigation of the elements of Drama, to research, evaluation and selective use of dramatic elements and technologies. The three year course includes the following core skills:

- cooperation and concentration exercises
- movement and use of space and levels
- still image
- gesture and facial expression
- characterisation and role-play—creating and sustaining a character
- exploring and researching character through analysis processes such as ‘hot seating’ or ‘thought tracking’
- spontaneous and devised improvisation
- response to a variety of stimuli including text, poetry, images and sound
- use of theatre technology, including lighting, sound and multi-media
- development of focus, control and confidence when performing in front of an audience
- communication through effective use of voice and body language
- negotiation and collaboration with others
- evaluation of their own work and that of others

- a combination of journal work and submitted written assignments; including in-role writing, posters, designs, reflections and self assessments, creative script writing and research

**Grade 6 Drama course content**

An introduction to:

- drama skills through group collaboration and individual work
- movement and spatial awareness
- mime techniques
- responding to text through still image
- shaping and structuring original ideas into dramatic form
- stories and story-telling
- using digital technology to produce ‘radio’ drama
- role-play, character and monologues
- exploring topics such as the past and future through drama
- using drama specific vocabulary to reflect on their own work and respond to others

**Grade 7 Drama course content**

Continued development of Grade 6 skills plus an introduction to:

- ensemble devising
- physical theatre
- investigation of culturally specific ceremony and celebration through drama
- non-naturalistic and epic theatre techniques
- narrative techniques in play-making
- traditional Shadow Puppetry techniques and adaptation of stories for performance
- devised response to contemporary issues
- realistic acting through duologues
- drama response to poetry stimulus
- Elizabethan language in drama performance
- additional technical drama vocabulary
- continued self and peer evaluation

**Grade 8 Drama course content**

This year students consolidate their learning and begin to select and refine techniques including:

- further verbal and non-verbal drama techniques
- spontaneous improvisation skills
- using explorative strategies to explore social and historical events
- interpreting text (‘page to stage’)—multi role playing and direct audience address
- the history of melodrama and performance techniques used in the genre
- ritual in theatre
- staging Shakespeare
- further devised responses to contemporary issues
- creating and sustaining dramatic tension, focus and control
- technical theatre and theatre conventions
- responding to constructive, critical feedback to enhance performance
- Collaborative Devising Project

The practical class work is the primary assessment tool, comprising 80% of the attainment grade. Written assessments account for the remaining 20%.
**Middle School productions**

Middle School-specific theatre productions, run after school as part of the extensive Activities programme, provide further opportunities for students with particular talent to further develop and practice the skills, techniques and knowledge they are acquiring in the course, as well as developing their awareness of the power of drama as a performance art in a wider community and global context. These involve students in a professional process model, and roles are cast through an audition process. They require a high degree of commitment for the rehearsal period.

**Music**

Music provides a continuation of the skills developed in the Primary School and helps prepare students for GCSE Music.

**Grade 6 Music course content**

The key skills of listening, performing and composing are included in Grade 6. Each unit involves structured listening and appreciation with a focus on developing music terminology and understanding the ‘elements’ of music. Performance can include voice, keyboards, percussion and mallet percussion along with an opportunity for the students to perform on any instrument that they learn plus an introductory course on our Javanese gamelan orchestra. The students will also experience using iPads as a performance tool in a classroom ‘iPad Orchestra.’ Composition work is largely group based and involves different approaches to creating ‘sound collages’ along with one individual composition task using GarageBand exploring programmatic ‘textures’ in Music.

Topics include:
- the elements of music
- programme music
- graphic notation
- music of Java/performing on the Javanese gamelan
- working with chords – Eleanor Rigby
- iPad orchestra
- musical journeys

**Grade 7 Music course content**

The Music curriculum in Grade 7 offers the student a wide range of experiences in the skills of performance, listening and composition. Students get involved with group and individual compositional work using a range of instruments and more involved approaches (MIDI, samples, effects, mixing, composing to video) to music technology using GarageBand. The Grade 7 curriculum presents the students with extensive listening and appreciation including World Music, Western Classical, Pop and Blues.

Topics include:
- ostinato (repeating patterns)
- blues
- raga and Indian music
- expressionism and disasters – 20th century composition techniques
- rock ‘n’ roll
- gamelan orchestra
- minimalism

**Grade 8 Music course content**

Students experience music in Grade 8 through projects designed to further develop the core skills of performing, composing and listening necessary for continuation to GCSE Music. Practical work is designed to enable students to advance their skills in performance and individual composition figures more prominently supported with listening and appreciation. Those who learn a musical instrument are encouraged to use it in music class to experience performing in a wide range of styles.

Students further develop skills using GarageBand via the extended use of MIDI, samples and audio editing, effects and mixing in composition and performance.

Topics include:
- ground bass
- britpop and wonderwall
- reggae
- hip-hop and rap
- samba

**Visual Art**

Students receive one double period of Art each week. They are also encouraged to participate in artistic extracurricular activities to enable them to enhance and build upon the skills acquired during lesson time. Open studio is available three days a week to complete or continue classwork and homework. Students’ work is showcased in the Art Department Gallery as well as in the Middle School Art Exhibition at the end of the academic year.

The curriculum provides a ‘foundation course’ in which students cover ideas, concepts and practical skills in art and design. Key aspects are:
- creative thinking—students are encouraged to explore and develop their imagination through individual and group work and as a whole class
- experimentation with materials—developing a range of techniques and processes
- research—resources might include art books and websites, posters, photographs, gallery visits, newspapers and magazines
- valuing and using the region’s rich cultural diversity
- problem-solving through experimentation and perseverance; it is important that students learn how to evaluate their work and the work of others. This is done through group and class discussions where students begin to form and express opinions and feelings about a range of art works both verbally and written

Through the study of a variety of artists, movements and concepts, both traditional and contemporary, students have the opportunity to develop their skills in the following main areas: drawing, painting, sculpture, printmaking, digital media and photography, contextual and critical thinking.

Themes, contexts and artists have been chosen to:
- provide stimulating starting points for practical work
- follow a progression of complexity which allows the pupils to develop and strengthen different skills during the year
- showcase a mix of male/female and past, present and emerging artists
- cover a mix of genres, eras and cultures
**Grade 6 Visual Arts course content**

Students are encouraged to regard the acquisition of skills and concepts as a progressive experience, building on work in Grade 5. The focus of the natural environment feeds on their outdoor educational experience in Pulau Tioman and students look at temporal art, the decorative arts, colour and composition.

**Drawing**
Drawing is a fundamental aspect of students’ art experience and features throughout the year as an essential, skill building area. Students work from observational and develop their use of tonal contrast through mark-making, hand eye coordination and close up linear drawing.

**Painting**
Students build on skills acquired in tempera paint and applying colour theory. The focus is on developing fine motor skills and brush control.

**Sculpture**
Students continue and consolidate their skills in ceramics where the focus is on surface decoration and installation art.

**Printing**
Students are introduced to the reverse nature of printing through monoprinting, layering, colour blending of inks and the use of different printing surfaces.

**Photography and digital media**
Revision of digital camera techniques and photography theory continue across the year, with macro photography, cropping, using filters and composition being the focus. Visual literacy is introduced.

**Contextual**
Classroom discussions about artists and themes continue. Students write in more depth than Grade 6.

**Critical**
Students continue to develop their vocabulary in art and their skills in critical thinking and analytical writing.

**Grade 7 Visual Arts course content**

The course covers concepts and practical skills of art and design, building upon students’ learning from Grade 6. Contexts and themes studied include portraiture, natural forms and expressionism.

**Drawing**
Students further develop their use of line and tone, experiment with gestural drawing, learn about proportion and possibly explore soft media such as chalk and charcoal, pastel and resist techniques.

**Painting**
Students explore the use of tempera medium through a variety of techniques and processes and understand the creation and use of neutrals and complementary colours, expressive brush strokes, scale and emphasis.

**Sculpture**
Students are introduced to, experiment and manipulate alternative sculptural media to create conceptual or representational art forms.

**Photography and digital media**
Students use photography as a way to test and experiment with ideas. Students also learn about viewpoint, recording life and possibly the combination of text and image in Photoshop. This is also used as a base to prepare students for the end of year video project.

**Contextual**
Classroom discussions about artists and themes continue as in previous years but include more in depth issues.

**Critical**
Students continue to develop their vocabulary in art and their skills in critical thinking and analytical writing.

**Grade 8 Visual Arts course content**

Grade 8 Art serves as a foundation for IGCSE. Students are guided through units of study with emphasis placed upon a more developmental and personal approach to solving problems. Themes and contexts studied include still life, journey and personal/world events and issues. Students build on the Chiang Mai trip, using this as a basis for further art exploration.

**Drawing**
Students continue to develop their observation skills, creating form with a view to conveying 3D qualities and using linear perspective in their drawings. Experimental work using various media and working at a different scale to extend their techniques.

**Painting**
Students further their knowledge of the vocabulary of colour and composition, through a more experimental approach, with an emphasis on surface qualities continuing with tempera and also with watercolour.

**Photography and digital media**
Students use photography as a way to test and experiment with ideas. Students also learn about viewpoint, recording life and possibly the combination of text and image in Photoshop. This is also used as a base to prepare students for the end of year video project.

**Contextual**
Students become more fluent in contextual writing. Classroom discussions about artists and themes continue as in previous years but include more in depth issues.

**Critical**
Students continue to develop their vocabulary in art and their skills in critical thinking and analytical writing.
Life Skills

The Life Skills programme addresses the social and emotional development of students. Social and emotional learning is the process through which children develop the skills, attitudes, and values necessary to understand and manage life tasks such as cognitive learning, forming relationships, and adapting to the demands of growing up in today’s complex society. Life Skills lessons provide systematic classroom instruction that enhances children’s capacities to recognise and manage their emotions, understand and appreciate the perspectives of others, establish and attain goals, identify and solve problems, and use a variety of interpersonal skills.

The course is divided under five main headings:

1. self management
2. self awareness
3. social awareness
4. relationship skills
5. responsible decision making

Students in each grade level have one single period weekly. Lessons employ varied teaching methods including role-play, simulations, group discussions, oral presentations and research.

Topics are introduced at developmentally appropriate points and key areas such as digital citizenship, study skills or relationships and sexuality are revisited across the three-year programme to allow for deeper understanding with age-appropriate issues. Key concepts include: personal identity, healthy lifestyles, personal learning and thinking skills, organisation and time management, relationships and sexuality, alcohol and drug awareness, developing resilience, values, conflict resolution, recognition and development of strengths, digital footprint, cyber safety and digital life.

Learning Support

The Learning Support programme is designed to help students develop an active approach to their learning. Specific help is provided with activities and concepts related to core academic subjects such as English and Humanities.

The Study Skills (Learning Support) curriculum includes:

- reading comprehension strategies
- spelling exercises
- development of note-taking skills
- fiction and nonfiction writing techniques
- cross-curricula vocabulary development
- memory strategies
- active listening skills
- reasoning and critical thinking
- revision skills

Organisation and self-help skills are also included in the programme:

- effective completion of homework
- time management
- setting realistic targets
- organising materials and equipment
- identifying preferred learning styles and strengths

Learning support staff liaise with parents and other teachers to build a clear picture of a student’s learning needs. They are also qualified and trained to use a range of internationally standardised assessment materials, when additional information about a student’s learning profile is needed. Learning support staff and parents then plan how best to support the student: this may take the form of specialist teaching, guidance or in-class support. At each stage, parents are consulted and involved. There are regular reviews and meetings to discuss progress and agree on targets. In order to reach their academic potential some students require short-term support whilst others may need longer-term support.

Outdoor Education

The College offers a wealth of outdoor educational experiences and the Middle School students undertake many school trips as part of their education. Education in the outdoors is central to our College’s philosophy.

We operate a policy of ‘Challenge of Choice,’ the principle referring to the participant’s responsibility to choose the level of challenge in the learning experience. It is based on the belief that significant learning occurs when one pushes oneself out of a known ‘comfort zone,’ while at the same time recognising that each person’s experience will be different. Students often gain a huge sense of personal satisfaction and achievement during these trips. They learn to rise to the challenge and work well with their peers.

Outdoor Education day

All students have an Outdoor Education day at some point during the year, spending the majority of this day on the campus’ High Ropes course where they develop practical rope work skills and focus on many different personal and group challenges.

Expeditions

Grade 6 students go on an expedition to Pulau Tioman in Malaysia, Grade 7 undertake a 1 star kayak training before their kayak expedition on Sibu Island in Malaysia while Grade 8 students spend two weeks in Chiang Mai, Thailand.

These challenging and fun expeditions provide invaluable learning experiences, and elements from these trips are drawn into the classroom across the academic curriculum. There are additional charges for these trips, outlined in the Information about Fees. The trips are billed at the time the expedition runs.

School trips

There are opportunities to participate in optional expeditions during school holidays. Recent trips have included an adventure week in New Zealand, skiing and snowboarding in Verbier, Switzerland, a humanities trip to Vietnam, cultural trips to China and Spain, a history and service (house building) trip to Cambodia and a trip to South Africa and Waterford Kamhlaba UWC of Southern Africa in Swaziland.
Additional curriculum information

Lockers
Lockers are available for Middle School students to store their books and sports equipment. Tutors distribute locks to students at the start of the school year.

Homework
Homework becomes an increasingly important and time-consuming part of the students’ life in Middle School. The amount of time that any individual may take to complete a task will vary for many reasons, and all students are expected to complete their tasks to the best of their ability even if it takes a bit longer than anticipated. However, if your child is regularly spending considerably more or less time than necessary on homework, please intervene and contact the subject teacher by using the homework diary, or if it proves necessary, the Head of Grade, to attempt to determine the reasons for this.

In Grade 6, homework is usually set after double lessons. It might take up to 30 minutes to complete each piece and may be handed in next time the student takes that subject. The maximum amount of homework per week in Grade 6 is around five hours, though it is rarely that much. We expect a Grade 7 student to have about six hours a week and a Grade 8 student to have about seven hours each week. Students are also expected to read regularly.

Parents should try to ensure that each child has somewhere quiet and comfortable to do homework without distraction. Space to store books and files will be increasingly important. A student’s home working environment can help develop good organisational practices and contribute to successful study.

Reports and assessments
Middle School students receive two sets of assessments and one written report with assessment each school year. Physical Education assessments are available online after each unit of sport studied.

All reports and assessments are available to parents online in PDF printable format via the parent’s online portal. Please visit the website and then log on to the Student Record System to view full details of a student’s profile online, including attendance records and reports and assessments.
# Academic structure for 2015/2016

## Middle School Leadership

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Email</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Principal</td>
<td>Elizabeth Bray</td>
<td><a href="mailto:ebr@uwcsea.edu.sg">ebr@uwcsea.edu.sg</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vice Principal – Curriculum</td>
<td>Paul Brogden</td>
<td><a href="mailto:pbr@uwcsea.edu.sg">pbr@uwcsea.edu.sg</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vice Principal – Pastoral</td>
<td>Karen Cockburn</td>
<td><a href="mailto:kco@uwcsea.edu.sg">kco@uwcsea.edu.sg</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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## Middle School office

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade Secretary</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Email</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grade 6 Secretary</td>
<td>Valerie Nonis</td>
<td><a href="mailto:valuwc@uwcsea.edu.sg">valuwc@uwcsea.edu.sg</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 7 Secretary</td>
<td>Fiona Ellison</td>
<td><a href="mailto:fionauwc@uwcsea.edu.sg">fionauwc@uwcsea.edu.sg</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 8 Secretary</td>
<td>Norsuhaila (Su) Lewis</td>
<td><a href="mailto:norsuhailauwc@uwcsea.edu.sg">norsuhailauwc@uwcsea.edu.sg</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tel +65 6419 9315  
Email middleschooldover@uwcsea.edu.sg

## Middle School subjects – who to contact for information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Head of Department</th>
<th>Email</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Languages</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>Angela Erickson</td>
<td><a href="mailto:ane@uwcsea.edu.sg">ane@uwcsea.edu.sg</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>Li Fang</td>
<td><a href="mailto:lfa@uwcsea.edu.sg">lfa@uwcsea.edu.sg</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dutch</td>
<td>Hans Schellekens</td>
<td><a href="mailto:hsc@uwcsea.edu.sg">hsc@uwcsea.edu.sg</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French</td>
<td>Michele Pirson</td>
<td><a href="mailto:mpi@uwcsea.edu.sg">mpi@uwcsea.edu.sg</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>Maria Trujillo</td>
<td><a href="mailto:mot@uwcsea.edu.sg">mot@uwcsea.edu.sg</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>German</td>
<td>Rahel Probst (until June 2015)</td>
<td><a href="mailto:rpr@uwcsea.edu.sg">rpr@uwcsea.edu.sg</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wolfgang Oesch (from August 2015)</td>
<td>to be confirmed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EAL and EEAL</td>
<td>Sonia Matthews</td>
<td><a href="mailto:som@uwcsea.edu.sg">som@uwcsea.edu.sg</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humanities</td>
<td>Mark Porter</td>
<td><a href="mailto:mpo@uwcsea.edu.sg">mpo@uwcsea.edu.sg</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>Cassandra Burton</td>
<td><a href="mailto:cab@uwcsea.edu.sg">cab@uwcsea.edu.sg</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Design and Technology</td>
<td>Carl Waugh</td>
<td><a href="mailto:cwa@uwcsea.edu.sg">cwa@uwcsea.edu.sg</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>Will Walker</td>
<td><a href="mailto:wwa@uwcsea.edu.sg">wwa@uwcsea.edu.sg</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Education</td>
<td>Mike Little</td>
<td><a href="mailto:mli@uwcsea.edu.sg">mli@uwcsea.edu.sg</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Arts</td>
<td>Jonathan Mayhew</td>
<td><a href="mailto:jom@uwcsea.edu.sg">jom@uwcsea.edu.sg</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music</td>
<td>Miles Tranter</td>
<td><a href="mailto:mtr@uwcsea.edu.sg">mtr@uwcsea.edu.sg</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual Arts</td>
<td>Frank Curkovic</td>
<td><a href="mailto:frc@uwcsea.edu.sg">frc@uwcsea.edu.sg</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life Skills</td>
<td>Karen Cockburn</td>
<td><a href="mailto:kco@uwcsea.edu.sg">kco@uwcsea.edu.sg</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning Support</td>
<td>Dan Forster</td>
<td><a href="mailto:dfo@uwcsea.edu.sg">dfo@uwcsea.edu.sg</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outdoor Education</td>
<td>Patrick Read</td>
<td><a href="mailto:pre@uwcsea.edu.sg">pre@uwcsea.edu.sg</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Contact information for staff can be found in the Staff Directory on the College website.