

## Middle School

# Social Emotional Ethical Learning (SEEL)

Mount Madonna School's commitment to Positive Character Development is demonstrated by the number of classes and experiences dedicated in part or in full to Social, Emotional and Ethical Learning. The principles of character development permeate all the curricula at the school, including academics. In addition, the SEEL program dedicates many classes and experiences almost exclusively to character education.

### Middle School SEEL

#### **Beginning of the Year Learning Excursion (Grade 6-8)**

The Mount Madonna middle school spends the first week of school on an outdoor camping adventure that includes learning experiences in riparian and redwood ecosystems. Students participate in leadership and team-building activities designed to develop their skills in interfacing with their community outside their family of origin. Students contribute to meals and other camp chores, which supports community and service learning and an understanding of the role each individual plays in the whole. Spending the first week of school traveling, learning, playing, and facing challenges together teaches them to rely on their community of teachers and peers for support. Being away from the distractions of technology and everyday routines, allows space to explore inner and outer landscapes.

The eighth grade spends a portion of the beginning-of-year camping trip on an intensive, back-country backpacking experience focused on both individual and group growth. Students face individual physical and mental challenges that nurture growth and resilience, engage in personal reflection, develop leadership skills, build connections with their cohort, and identify group goals as new leaders of the middle school.

#### **Boston Learning Journey (Grade 8)**

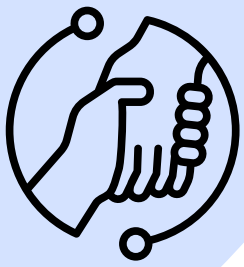
The Boston learning journey for the eighth grade class is an opportunity to support classroom-based learning with visits to sites and locations of historical significance that can make a lasting educational impression on students. The students explore the major events and ideas that led to the American War of Independence through their eighth grade US History course and then get to connect in person with activities and discussions at some of the important locations where those events took place. This excursion showcases the importance of Boston as a city that experienced slavery, revolution, and abolition, and how this impacted the development of the early United States. The trip also allows the eighth grade class to build important connections with their peers and teachers as they spend extended time together learning, playing, exploring experiences that might be new or unusual for many of them. They take time to reflect on how they show up, where they see strengths in themselves, but also where they have opportunities for growth.

#### **Rite of Passage (Grade 8)**

As part of a three-day experience, eighth graders spend most of a day including one night in silent self-reflection on a solo camping experience at the end of middle school. On this trip, students learn about themselves and their process of self discovery by contending with boredom and a lack of technology, but also exploring what happens when they slow down to the speed of nature: medium to slow. What happens when they don't have a to-do list and can simply appreciate the silence of their own company? They also explore traditional and historical rites of passage, and return to process their experience with the community of parents and teachers.

At each stage of a student's growth and development we have in place a rite of passage: from kindergarten to first grade, fifth to sixth grade, eighth to ninth, and twelfth to college. In their elementary years, students are simply "instructed in the values" of the community. At this 8th grade Rite of Passage, students continue to be instructed in the values of the community, but, in addition, are entrusted to "hold (live) the values" of the community. This threshold of adolescence to adulthood is particularly formative and deserves a special focus. In the final stage, from high school to college, they are further extended the privilege and Responsibility of becoming "shapers of the values" of the community.





## Middle School

# Social Emotional Ethical Learning (SEEL)

### Middle School SEEL continued

#### Advisory (Grade 6-8)

The advisory program aims to support students in developing positive social, communication, and leadership skills; flexibly target PBIS goals and initiatives to nourish and sustain a positive school climate; and provide a structured time where students can seek adult and peer support in developing and honing academic skills crucial to success in middle school. The MMS MS Advisory program is an intentional 45 minute period each week set aside to build community by facilitating opportunities for peer to peer connection through mixed age groups of roughly 10-12 students, and providing each student with a designated adult mentor (faculty advisor). There will be three formats for advisory depending on whether groups are meeting separately, together for community building, or together for an all MS assembly. Most advisory meetings will begin with a greeting, followed by a share or check-in (i.e. Rose's & Thorns), and concluding with a pre-planned activity aligned with the weekly learning objective. On occasion the full MS will be together either for an MS educational assemblies that connect to the purpose of advisory, or for all MS community building (i.e. activities, friendly competition).

#### Academic Flextime (Grade 6-8)

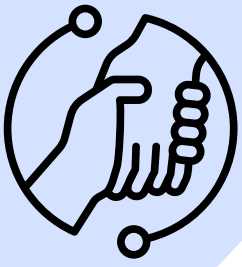
Academic flextime provides a structured study hall opportunity during school hours and allows faculty to differentiate student support based on weekly individual needs. The full middle school faculty collaborates weekly to identify areas each student needs to focus on during academic flextime (i.e. missing work, makeup tests, subject specific tutoring or practice, or organization and time management.) 5 - 6 faculty are present during flextime across multiple classrooms to supervise and provide 1:1 or small group support.

#### Middle School Orientation

The Middle School Orientation is a semester-long course that meets one period per week in the first semester of middle school. The aim of the course is to provide structured time in which students can receive support in their transition to middle school. Rotating faculty and administrators visit to lead workshops and informational sessions, which provides an opportunity for students to connect with and learn from a variety of mentors. The course is intended to feed into the 21st Century Skills program as part of an advisory and skills umbrella at Mount Madonna School. While a portion of the topics or workshops are selected by student-driven inquiries at the start of the semester, the orientation will include instruction in MMS technology tools and accounts, exposure to community service expectations and purpose at MMS and in the community, and an overview of general expectations in Middle School.

The course also introduces students to the fundamental concepts of study to prepare them for success in their classes as well as develop positive habits for lifelong learning. Students are expected to explore and demonstrate an understanding of academic professionalism across classroom contexts. Throughout the course students explore various methods for learning, remembering, organizing, and planning to develop a toolbox of strategies to support students in achieving their goals in the classroom and beyond.





## Middle School

# Social Emotional Ethical Learning (SEEL)

### Middle School SEEL continued

#### 21st Century Skills (Grade 6)

In sixth grade, 21st Century Skills is a semester-long course that meets one period per week in the second semester of middle school. The course is intended to serve as a continuation of middle school orientation, and to prepare students for 7th grade 21st Century Skills.

While a portion of the topics are selected by student-driven inquiries at the start of the semester, a primary objective of the course is to provide a deeper focus on developing each students' individual and team leadership skills, and further exploring habits for lifelong learning and academic success in middle school. Students will explore personal strengths and reflect on how they can use their strengths to achieve their goals. Students will compile and critique virtual resources for reliability and relevance for designated research projects. As their final project students will recommend evidence-based study strategies to peers by preparing and presenting on designated topics

#### 21st Century Skills (Grade 7)

This course will meet once a week and include short segments focusing on different skills that can be learned and practiced that are relevant to our students' academic success and personal growth. Middle School faculty will have the opportunity to recommend what each year's specific group of students is most likely to benefit from. As a result, the topic list will likely change throughout the year and year to year. Each topic that is covered will include instruction, practice, and a mechanism for demonstrating or assignment that allows students to share their level of mastery of the content that will be graded.

#### PE (Grade 6-8)

In Grades 6-8 physical education, students will learn what overall health is. How it ties in with everything we do in daily life. Allowing them to be able to make smarter decisions with physical, mental, emotional health, and diet. Developing a skill set for a healthier life. Leading into a better understanding of how the body truly works and the overall health and wellbeing.

#### Culinary and Garden Science

In this class students will learn and practice kitchen skills, collectively manage our school garden through critical thinking and problem solving activities, learn menu and recipe planning, and implement the principles of regeneration and sustainability. Students will collaborate with their classmates and work individually. There will be opportunities where we will be asked to cater and host events that benefit the community. These opportunities will require additional time outside of scheduled classes. This class will require each member to be flexible, take risks, and step out of our comfort zones. It will require innovation, curiosity, and hard work.





# High School

## Social Emotional Ethical Learning (SEEL)

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### High School SEEL

#### Beginning of the Year Learning Journey (Grades 9-12)

The high school spends the first week of school on a challenging whitewater rafting and open-air camping trip. Students are challenged to face their fears and learn to rely on their community of teachers and peers for support, as they engage with the outdoor environment on and along the American River.

#### Yosemite Learning Journey (Grade 9)

9th grade Biology students will be attending a Yosemite Learning journey in the spring to coordinate with their year long Biology class. Students will explore the concepts learned in Biology class (ecology, environmental biology, animal and plant anatomy and physiology) in one of the most ecologically diverse and environmentally beautiful locations in the world. Students will explore the flora and fauna of Yosemite bringing to life the biological concepts learned in class. During the week, the students will work with their teachers, rangers, hike, swim (if available) and attend programs geared towards science.

#### Ocean Literacy Learning Journey (Grade 10)

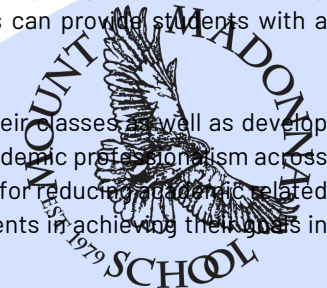
As sophomores, students spend a week in the spring traveling to the Channel Islands. The program is a culmination of their Marine Sciences program, and includes multiple leadership activities. Student teams work together to problem solve as they deploy remote operated vehicles into the kelp forest to view the animals they have studied. They must face their fears as they meet the large fauna in remote areas of Catalina face-to-face underwater, and view the fireworks of bioluminescence and busy creatures that can be seen by snorkeling at night. Students use teamwork to kayak around the islands. Students give back to the global community as they study science by participating in the Big Microplastics Survey, the LIMPETS data monitoring program, beach cleanups, and complete use surveys of the Marine Protected Areas they visit. Students demonstrate their grasp of all seven of COSEE's ocean literacy principles, including the inextricable interconnection between human populations and the ocean.

#### High School Orientation

The High School Orientation is a semester-long course that meets one period per week. The aim of the course is to provide structured time in which students can receive support in their transition to high school. Rotating faculty and administrators visit to lead workshops and informational sessions, which provides an opportunity for students to connect with and learn from a variety of mentors. The High School Orientation course places emphasis on providing an overview of how academic and extracurricular choices across the four years contribute to post-high school goals and college readiness.

While a portion of the topics or workshops are selected by student-driven inquiries at the start of the semester, the orientation will include instruction in MMS technology tools and accounts, discussion around upcoming AP or honors opportunities throughout high school, an overview of the school's organizational structure in order to navigate communicate and practice self advocacy, exposure to community service expectations at MMS and in the community, and exploration of how community service experiences can provide students with a deeper understanding of their academic and career interests.

The course also introduces students to the fundamental concepts of study to prepare them for success in their classes, as well as develop positive habits for lifelong learning. Students are expected to explore and demonstrate an understanding of academic professionalism across classroom contexts. Students receive instruction in college preparatory study skills, exploring various methods for reducing academic related stress, learning and remembering, organizing, and planning to develop a toolbox of strategies to support students in achieving their goals in the classroom and beyond.





# High School

## Social Emotional Ethical Learning (SEEL)

### High School SEEL continued

#### High School Orientation (cont.)

The course also introduces students to the fundamental concepts of study to prepare them for success in their classes as well as develop positive habits for lifelong learning. Students are expected to explore and demonstrate an understanding of academic professionalism across classroom contexts. Students receive instruction in college preparatory study skills, exploring various methods for reducing academic related stress, learning and remembering, organizing, and planning to develop a toolbox of strategies to support students in achieving their goals in the classroom and beyond.

#### Health (Grade 10)

Health is a scientifically accurate, age-appropriate course in skills and knowledge that promotes physical, emotional, mental and social health. This is a one-semester elective spread over the course of the academic year. The course covers health literacy as a consumer, risk assessment, stress management and coping with loss, healthy relationships, conflict resolution, nutrition and physical activity; as well as personal care and body systems, growth and development, drugs and alcohol, diseases and disorders, and safety and environmental health. The course will include the Habits of Mind and cover the Health Connected High School Sex Education curriculum.

#### PE (Grade 9-12 Elective)

In high school PE the focus is on overall health and wellbeing. Using physical activity as a way to focus your health not just physically, but mentally as well. How diet and physical activity have an effect on the total health of one's body. The effects of diet, sleep, and how we deal with stress and other mental health on the body. As well as how to physically stretch to maintain the ability to be able to be physically active throughout life.

#### Yoga (Grades 9-12 Elective)

Students in Yoga class learn how to use the techniques of breathing, meditation, and Yoga postures to increase concentration and relaxation. Students learn self-control and self-awareness while developing strength and flexibility. Yoga is offered to high school students as an elective.

Students will study and explore yoga through direct experience, two periods per week. The program will introduce students to postures (asanas), breathing techniques (pranayama), and meditation techniques (to calm the mind/body). The course will also introduce students to anatomy and physiology as it applies to this discipline.

#### Photography (Grades 9-12 Elective)

This course was designed to help students improve their photography skills.

Goals include: getting familiar with cameras (phone cameras and DSLR's) in order to take quality photos, understanding the basics of lighting and composition, practicing taking photos that tell stories about people and the world. Students will generate photos for use in the yearbook, the student newspaper, and art showings at MMS and elsewhere.

Students will also practice giving and receiving constructive comments on photos, look at the styles of different photographers, and learn basic photo editing techniques.

