



## Riverfield Country Day

**School** 6th-8th grade Middle School students develop initiative and independence as they explore, learn, and grow in Riverfield's positive and supportive environment. The small classes and close relationships students develop with faculty make Riverfield a safe place to mature through the challenging adolescent years. High academic standards stimulate students to develop abstract, logical, inquisitive, and reflective thinking.

Academic excellence is apparent at state and national levels. We enjoy success yearly in regional and state Academic Bowl tournaments. Students continue to test two and a half grade levels higher on average than their current grade level on standardized tests. Riverfield Country Day School is home to the Raven Chapter of the National Junior Honor Society, open to second semester 7th graders and all 8th grade students.

The curriculum builds upon each student's strengths and experiences with ability groupings in some subject areas. Students benefit from a low student/teacher ratio and multi-age groupings as they learn from their peers and are challenged to move ahead academically.

The multi-age philosophy is a unique aspect of the Riverfield Middle School experience in select classes. Students have the opportunity to be led and eventually lead during certain classes.

Taking the time to recognize, respect, and appreciate each student is a high priority with all Riverfield faculty. Active involvement in the learning process and an integrated, interdisciplinary program make learning come alive. As one student stated, "Riverfield has given me a passion to learn."

# MIDDLE SCHOOL

6th -8th Grades



In these Middle School years of rapid physical growth, intellectual development, and ever-changing interests, Riverfield students have opportunities to observe, consider, and test their philosophies, learning styles, and life skills before moving into the complexities of Upper School and college.

The supportive environment at Riverfield provides the experience of working with others, looking at problems as challenges, and using varied approaches to solve them.

## MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of Riverfield Country Day School is to provide an excellent education in a family-oriented atmosphere. Students are motivated and encouraged to learn, develop, and mature in a respectful, secure, and diverse environment. A caring, creative faculty and a challenging, integrated, and personalized curriculum promote the development of the whole student as a confident and responsible learner prepared for real world success.

## General Information



It is Riverfield's goal to provide a respectful setting for students of all religious, cultural, racial, and ethnic backgrounds.

In small classes, students are encouraged and expected to prepare thoroughly for every assignment and to interact with their teachers and their peers. The school fosters in each of its students the development of self-confidence and a sense of purpose in academic and personal goals.

### Faculty

With an average of 18 years of teaching, our experienced faculty encourages students to achieve their potential in all aspects of development: intellectual, social, emotional, physical, and moral. They promote the development of mutual goals and responsibilities. A trusting, respectful, positive school environment leads to genuine dialogue between faculty and students.

**"What I love most about RCDS is the family-atmosphere that encourages and welcomes parents to be involved with their kids' education. This is done with great communication on a mass level AND a personal level!"**

### Curriculum

All core courses are offered on a grade level basis. The Social Studies curriculum operates on a three year rotation to allow students to participate in Legacy which is the end-of-year, Social Studies-themed carnival. It is integrated with English. Small class sizes give each student the opportunity for personal instruction and attention.

### Homework

Class assignments are posted to the Riverfield website to assist students with access to homework requirements.

### Organizational Skills

The learning and consistent application of research, study, and organizational skills are integral parts of the Middle School program. Students are given an assignment planner and binder at the start of the year. Teachers encourage students to use this system and expect students to take responsibility for their own organization.

## Course Schedule by Grade

### 6th Grade

Math  
English  
Life Science  
Social Studies  
Book Club  
Spanish  
German  
Awareness

### 7th Grade

Pre-Algebra  
English  
Earth & Space Science  
Social Studies  
Book Club  
Spanish or German  
Awareness

### 8th Grade

Algebra  
English  
Physical Science  
Social Studies  
Book Club  
Speech  
Spanish or German  
Awareness

## Course Descriptions

### Core Courses

#### Math ALEKS

Students in 4th-12th grades have a subscription to ALEKS. ALEKS.com is a web-based supplement aligned with student textbooks that gives an individualized snap-shot of all relative concepts. At any time, students may access ALEKS from on-line connections at home or school. Progress is monitored and assessed by their math teachers.

#### 6th Grade Math

Students hone the skills of adding, subtracting, multiplying, and dividing integers, fractions, and decimals. Additional topics include statistics, measurement, and constructions. Enrichment or advanced concept development is available for students who excel.

*\*After 6th grade, students will follow a path that will complete either Pre-Algebra or Algebra I by the end of 8th grade. Past results, standardized tests, and teacher feedback contribute to this decision.*

#### Pre-Algebra

Concepts include working with decimals, negative numbers, unit conversions, introductory geometry, introductory algebra, probability, and equation solving. Real life applications are emphasized throughout the course.

#### Algebra I

Concepts include solving equations with one variable, working with polynomials and fractions, factoring, solving equations with two variables, graphing, working with inequalities, rational, and irrational numbers, and quadratic equations. Word problems related to real life applications are emphasized throughout the course.

#### Social Studies

Social Studies is a project-based course that teaches the skills of an historian on a three year rotation. The first year covers the birth and growth of human societies with ancient and medieval history. The second year encompasses the birth and growth of our nation through the Civil War, including civics. The third year completes the rotation with modern cultural geography, and an exploration of our physical, social, and political world today.



## English

### 6th Grade

Sixth grade English covers a broad range of language arts skills. Students learn literary elements and then apply this knowledge to different kinds of literature including short stories, poems, and novels. Students also learn correct grammar usage, which they apply to many kinds of writing styles including descriptive, narrative, expository, and persuasive. Students write a documented research paper in conjunction with Science coursework. The writing process is practiced extensively along with attention to the Six-Trait model of writing.

### 7th Grade

Students employ the Six-Trait model to expand their abilities in narrative, expository, persuasive, research, and creative writing. This is supplemented with both review and new information in the areas of spelling, vocabulary, and grammar. The students participate in all steps of the writing process, from brainstorming to editing a final draft. Reading units aim to develop a critical eye and deeper reading skills to analyze information. Major units include novels, legends or folklore, and poetry that often integrate with the Social Studies curriculum.

### 8th Grade

Eighth grade English serves as a bridge to Upper School language and literature studies. Correct grammar usage is practiced and applied to multiple types of writing assignments including narrative, descriptive, expository, and persuasive. Literary elements and an extensive study of poetry and poetic devices enable students to have a deeper understanding of literature and the craft of literary writing. The writing process is emphasized and practiced throughout the year with an emphasis on improving the quality of writing.

## Science

### 6th Grade Life Science

Topics include the importance of diversity and adaptations of organisms, structure and function in living systems (plant and animal cells). Students set up and experiment with aquatic and land ecosystems and populations, in addition to study of the human body's circulatory and respiratory systems. Students continue to observe, measure, record, and interpret data.

### 7th Grade Earth & Space Science

Students study the major structures of the earth and earth's history through an introduction to geology and the earth's minerals. Plate tectonics, earthquakes, and volcanoes are studied within the context of the earth system. Students examine the weather cycle, oceanography, and astronomy. Each Science unit is accompanied by major research projects and weekly lab experiences.

### 8th Grade Physical Science

A comprehensive overview of properties, classification, and structure of matter, periodic law and elements, atoms and bonding, basic chemistry, motion, force, and energy, electricity and magnetism, and sound and light. New concepts are studied through student investigation of real world problems within physical science. Concept understanding and mastery is evaluated through student projects, labs, tests, quizzes, and participation in discussion. Laboratory safety and skills are assessed through periodic laboratory practical exams.

## Book Club

Meeting twice a week, Book Club emphasizes Riverfield's commitment to reading and personalized learning. Students read books of their choice and participate in written dialogue with the Book Club teacher about their reading.

## World Language

### 6th Grade

Students take one semester each of German and Spanish to become familiar with both languages.

### 7th and 8th Grade

Students choose either German or Spanish and take only that language for two years. The combination of the 7th and 8th grade years equate to taking Spanish I or German I at the high school level.



## Non-Core Courses

### ALEKS

Students spend a sixth period each week working on ALEKS in a supervised setting.

### Awareness

Each grade level meets once per week to discuss teen issues (e.g. drug use, nutrition) work on media literacy, and participate in community building activities.

### AES

Academic Enrichment and Support (AES) is a proctored study hall during which students can receive support and get ahead on their schoolwork.

## Physical Education

PE classes teach sports skills and teamwork while encouraging students to become "fit for life."

### Service

Students have one period each week for service to the Riverfield community. Volunteering in a Pre-School or Primary School class, being an aide to a teacher or staff member, or caring for the school's many animals are possible choices.

## Electives

### The Arts

#### Visual Art

Opportunities include studio art, street art, and life drawing

### Music

Riverfield Rocks is a program designed to teach music through modern popular music. Currently, there are three Middle School student bands. Each year students perform at several events, including Cafe Night, Street Party and the Cain's Ballroom. In addition, Riverfield offers a choral elective for Upper School students.

### Drama

Students learn theater design and history, as well as performance techniques for individual and group performances. Twice yearly productions are conducted in local theatre settings.

### Speech

Speech class is a required elective for all 8th grade students. It is a one-semester class. Student learn the three purposes of speech: manuscript, notes or outline, and impromptu. Students give a total of twelve speeches during the semester. This experience helps them in giving an end-of-the-year speech for closing exercises, as well as later in life.

### Journalism

A Newspaper elective is available.

### Roots & Shoots

Roots & Shoots students work to improve our world through projects that promote care for animals, the environment, and the human community.

### Technology

Concepts taught in technology include computer hardware and safety, evaluating resources for accuracy and usefulness, conducting online research, and email etiquette. Programs taught include word processing, spreadsheet, database, and multimedia applications. Students participate in projects, labs, group activities. Study skill strategies are taught to help students learn more efficiently. Keyboarding skills are also practiced to develop speed and proficiency with typing.



## Extra-Curricular Activities

### Destination Museum Trip



Each spring, Middle School students and faculty visit a nearby city to explore the diverse culture available in our region. The cities visited in a three year rotation are St. Louis, Dallas, and Kansas City.

### Athletics



Athletics are offered within and outside the school day. Students are strongly encouraged to participate in these activities. Current sports include basketball, cheerleading, cross country, football, golf, softball, tennis, and girls volleyball. These offerings will continue to expand as the school grows with the possible addition of soccer and baseball in 2010.

### Campout



Each fall, Middle School students and faculty go on a three-day, two-night campout that combines academic studies, teamwork, leadership training, and relaxing fun. Activities include hiking, fishing, science exploration, drawing and painting, sports, playing instruments, and teamwork games. The annual campout helps develop relationships and sets the stage for academic and social interactions throughout the year.

### Clubs and Activities



Time is allotted two mornings each week for clubs and activities including Academic Bowl, Chess Club, Drumline, Jazz Club, Spanish Club, Student Government, and Strategic Games Club. Student interests may lead to other offerings.

### Social Opportunities

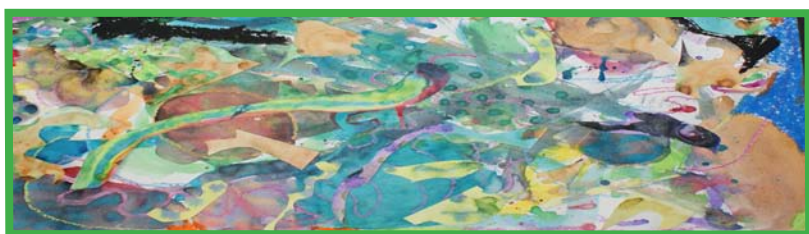


Social activities at Riverfield have expanded dramatically in recent years. Seasonal dances, games nights, Riverfield Rocks performances, and sporting events all provide a wide range of healthy social opportunities.

### Before and After School Club



Before and After School Club is the extended day program from 7-8:30am and 3-6pm. In After School Club, the students enjoy a snack, time outside, study hall, and activities in the Middle School Commons.



## Riverfield Admissions

### Admissions Criteria

Admission is based on a combination of criteria including the student's educational history, personal interview, visit during a school day, and our intuition that the individual is genuinely motivated to succeed and will benefit from the Riverfield experience. No one factor is more important than another. Our main concern is success for the student.

After an initial tour and interview, students spend a day visiting Riverfield in the regular classroom environment. The parents sign a Transcript Release Form to request transcripts and records from the candidate's current school. Once students are accepted, Riverfield may ask that a placement test be taken for certain courses.

### Financial Aid

Admission decisions are made prior to and separate from decisions about financial aid. A student must be accepted before the financial aid decision can be made. No family should refrain from making application for admission because of limited finances.

Parents obtain the School and Student Service for Financial Aid (SSS) packet from the Riverfield Admissions or Business Office and submit completed forms to SSS by March 1 of each year.

Financial aid will not be awarded until information is received from SSS and the Riverfield Financial Aid Committee makes its recommendation.

### Admissions Department

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### Notice of Nondiscriminatory Policy

Riverfield is a non-profit, independent school with no religious affiliation admitting applicants of any race, color, religion, national or ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national and ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, financial aid and loan programs, and athletic and other school-administered programs.