

8th Grade Elective Descriptions for 2024 - 2025

Not all courses listed may be offered due to school enrollment, scheduling, and staffing limitations.

8th Grade Students may be eligible for 2 electives by taking zero period.

ART (Yearlong Course)

The year long art class strives to build a student's drawing skills, working on basics like how to sketch and create interesting designs. Students will have the chance to work with a wide variety of materials, from pencil, to colored pencils, markers and watercolors. Students will have a chance to grow in their skill, whether they have no experience or if they enjoy art already. Projects are student driven, which means that they will have an opportunity to select their subjects for several projects while learning the fundamentals of art through demonstration and practice.

ART ADVANCED (Yearlong Course) Teacher Approval

This advanced art class is a course that continues a student's education in the fundamentals of art. Experiences in drawing, painting, printmaking, jewelry, and ceramics will progress students into more elaborate projects. Students will also work within themed settings, including studies on portraiture, animals, and landscapes. Students in this class will have a chance to participate in art shows and will learn how to display their work in a gallery setting.

ASB (Yearlong Course) Application/Interview

This course/program is designed to empower students to become effective leaders both on campus and in their own community. Students will explore various components of what it means to be an effective group member and leader through planning and implementing activities, programs, and events for Niguel Hills Middle School students and faculty. In addition to ASB, students will create the NHMS yearbook. Help capture all the excitement of the school year as part of the NHMS yearbook staff. Outgoing students will be called upon to photograph events, classes, activities, sports and more. Yearbook staff members work in teams to create an unforgettable yearbook that will be cherished by students and staff for years to come.

AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination) (Yearlong Course)

AVID is a yearlong elective class for those students who have a desire to do well in school and look forward to attending college. This class will help students with those skills needed to reach this goal. Students will participate in team-building activities, helpful tutorials, and fun Friday competitions. Students will learn the techniques to help them be successful in high school and beyond. AVID is a club-like environment, focusing on leadership skills. Students will learn time management and organization tools which will, in turn, help students with reducing anxiety and stress about school. Students will shadow at the local high school. In addition, they will tour local university campuses to check out college life. Join the AVID family!

AVID PEER TUTOR (Yearlong Course) Teacher Approval

An AVID peer tutor is someone who enjoys helping other students. They are patient, positive and an excellent role model. The peer tutors will be class assistants. In addition, peer tutors help guide students through the tutorial process and assist the teacher with bulletin boards, team-building activities, and many other fun things. They get to attend all field trips and get to be part of a great group of students.

BAND (Yearlong Course)

This is a yearlong course designed to prepare students for ensemble performances, solo performances, Honor Band auditions at the district, regional, and state level. Students will work on personal organizational skills to allow more productive use of available time for practice and homework activities. Performances will include 2-3 public performances, at least one festival appearance, a performance with Dana Hills High School for a football halftime show. Other performances e.g. Knott's Berry Farm, and or other civic events may be scheduled as time allows.

CTI (CAREER TECHNOLOGY INVESTIGATION) (Yearlong Course)

This course provides students the opportunity to investigate careers and innovative technology used in high-demand employment sectors. Students will spend time utilizing these exciting modules to complete projects and work-based learning activities that incorporate STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math) concepts. Each module includes the use of equipment such as 3D Printers, Robotic Arms, CNC machinery, Laser Engravers, Flight Simulator, Virtual Reality, Graphic Design, and much more. Students will also learn related software such as CAD (Computer Aided Drafting) CAM (Computer Aided Machining) and Solid works, to name a few. This course will assist students in planning for college and career pathways throughout high school and college.

Advanced CHOIR (Yearlong Course) Teacher Approval

This yearlong choir class performs music of many styles including Broadway musicals, pop, jazz, holiday, patriotic, classical, multicultural, folk, and music of classic and contemporary composers. No previous singing experience is necessary. Leadership opportunities are available. The biggest difference between this class and the regular choir class is that students must be ready to sing more advanced music, and must be self-motivated & self-disciplined to stay on task. Therefore, teacher approval is required. Students continue to develop music skills such as sight singing (note reading music that has never been seen before), vocal production (how to sing better), and ensemble singing (singing in a group) including singing in unison, 2, 3, and 4 parts. Students also learn how to sing and play ukulele (or improve their current ukulele skills) and write their own songs. This is a performing class and attendance at 4 to 5 evening concerts is required. Additionally, this group performs at many outside events including festivals, Knott's Berry Farm, Disneyland, the Laguna Niguel Tree Lighting Ceremony, and singing the National Anthem at an Angels' baseball game. Students who participate in this class are eligible to audition for the CUSD District Honor Choir which performs at the Segerstrom Center for the Arts. Students may also be eligible for future scholarship opportunities in high school and college because of their involvement in choir. Choir is a great choice for meeting new friends and learning how to collaborate in a positive way with your peers and your audience.

CHORUS (Yearlong Course)

This yearlong choir class performs music of many styles including Broadway musicals, pop, jazz, holiday, patriotic, classical, multicultural, folk, and music of classic and contemporary composers. No previous singing experience is necessary. Leadership opportunities are available. Students develop music skills such as sight singing (note reading music that has never been seen before), vocal production (how to sing better), and ensemble singing (singing in a group) including singing in unison, 2, 3, and 4 parts. Students also learn how to sing and play ukulele and write their own songs. This is a performing class and attendance at 3 to 4 evening concerts is required. Additionally, this group performs at many outside events including festivals, Knott's Berry Farm, Disneyland, the Laguna Niguel Tree Lighting Ceremony, and singing the National Anthem at an Angels' baseball game. Students may also be eligible for future scholarship opportunities in high school and college because of their involvement in choir. Choir is a great choice for meeting new friends and learning how to collaborate in a positive way with your peers and your audience.

GUITAR (Yearlong Course)

This course is for students who can demonstrate skill in both popular and classical guitar, as well as in music-reading ability. Like Beginning Guitar, Guitar will cover classical guitar, guitar ensemble and popular-style playing, however, more emphasis will be placed on classical and guitar ensemble. Guitar, as a continuation of Beginning Guitar, students will further develop technique and perform music in both popular and classical guitar styles. Students will learn to read out of 1st position, learn advanced techniques such as hammer-ons, pull-offs, muting and harmonics and will perform music containing this technique in both popular and classical styles. In addition to being a methods course, Guitar is also a performing ensemble. Students will perform in concerts either as a large ensemble or in smaller ensembles, such as duets, trios and quartets. Students will also have the opportunity to perform as soloists at these concerts.

OFFICE AIDE (Yearlong Course) Application

The Office Aides are an integral partner in the school office. They are the first to greet parents and students at the attendance window. They assist the office staff in delivering call slips, keeping logs of students who arrive tardy to school, and issue tardy slips. They help parents who drop off their student's forgotten items and assist teachers with copies and homework packets. They conduct tours for new students and deliver items to teachers and staff. If there is downtime, students are encouraged to work on homework or read.

ORCHESTRA (Yearlong Course)

In this orchestra class, you will learn a skill in music that can lead to a lifetime of playing. You will learn to appreciate all styles of music. This skill may open up opportunities for you in high school and may help towards college acceptance and scholarship money. Other performances e.g. Knott's Berry Farm, and or other civic events may be scheduled as time allows.

PEER ASSISTANCE LEADERSHIP (PAL) (Yearlong Course) Application/Interview

Peer Assistance Leadership (PAL) at Niguel Hills is an official program supported by and recognized by the Orange County Department of Education. This class focuses on building leadership skills in students and teaching them how to help others and help the community through service learning. Students also participate in service projects for the community and the school. Throughout the year students will develop their interpersonal and communication skills, to foster community awareness, and to apply problem solving and critical thinking skills to peer, social and personal situations. Students in PAL are a visible representation of the school and coordinate activities with a goal of building a positive student community within our school. In addition, students work closely with our special population students on a weekly basis. Interested students will need to complete an application and have two teacher recommendations. An interview will be required. Space is limited.

SPANISH I (Yearlong Course)

Spanish 1 is the same as the Spanish 1 class in high school. This is a fast-paced, intensive, academic, college preparatory class. No previous Spanish knowledge is required, however, students are expected to be academically self-motivated. Good note-taking skills and excellent study habits are a must. This class is the linguistic equivalent of going from kindergarten through 3rd grade in one year. Students will learn how to understand, speak, read and write basic Spanish, which is a prerequisite for Spanish 2 in high school. Students who earn a B- or better during all four quarters will be eligible and ready to take Spanish 2 as a 9th Grade Student. Cultural and historical topics are intertwined with the language so as to allow students to have a more complete understanding of the people with whom they will converse.

STEPS PEER TUTOR (Yearlong Course) Application

A peer tutor may assist the Special Education Teacher in preparing materials and curriculum for students with special needs. You may work directly with students by assisting them with their work in groups or 1:1. A peer tutor (with adult supervision) may take a student on a walk around the school if they need a sensory break. They may help students in the garden behind the classroom.

TAIKO DRUMS (Yearlong Course)

This is a two semester class that includes STEPS students and general education students in a performance oriented percussion class. Basic instruments will include bucket drums and homemade bachi sticks (Japanese drums sticks). Traditional Japanese drums and standard western percussion instruments will be used. Students will study traditional Japanese aural tradition music as well as applying technique to traditional western concepts and notation. There will be a minimum of 4 performances per year. This is a chance to learn to play percussion instruments and assist STEPS students explore music.

THEATRE ARTS/MUSICAL THEATRE (Yearlong Course)

The play's the thing in this class! This is an 8th grade production class with the focus on producing plays for an audience. Students learn acting skills through the process of creating a play from page to stage. Along with the introductory acting skills needed for a play, students also participate in production jobs such as directing, lighting, sound, set design, costuming and stage management, to name a few. Students will apply their talent by rehearsing and performing a play for an audience. If you enjoy acting and love being in front of an audience, this class is for you! If you want to be part of an ensemble that is a family where everyone belongs...this is definitely the class for you!! No experience necessary.

The joy of musical theater is not only performing the songs and choreography, but the compelling music and lyrics that are an integral part of the storytelling. Students will focus on dance/movement, vocal work, and acting. Our time together will culminate in a Broadway Night performance.

VIDEO PRODUCTION (Yearlong Course)

In this class, students will create The Morning Video Announcements as seen on the school canvas website. Students will learn the advanced features of Adobe Premiere, Adobe Photoshop, and other applications included in the Adobe Creative Suite. In addition to creating professional videos, students will develop technology skills in the areas of 3D design and print, Graphic Design used to create t-shirts, and other high-tech projects. Students will work on a variety of video projects, be entered in video contests, create personalized soundtracks, and much more.