

Upper School Elective
Course Catalog
2026/2027

IGNITE THEIR CURIOSITY



GROWTH BEYOND ACADEMICS

At Maple Street School, we believe that great learning happens when passion meets purpose. Our Upper School elective program is thoughtfully designed to tap into the interests and expertise of not just our students, but also our dedicated faculty. Each course is an opportunity for students to dive deeper into areas they're curious about while discovering new paths they may not have considered. Whether exploring the natural world, experimenting with creative expression, or taking on a new challenge, our electives offer a dynamic, hands-on curriculum that prepares students for high school and beyond.

Every course is one semester long unless otherwise stated.

OUTDOOR EDUCATION:

All students will participate in Outdoor Education each year.

This interdisciplinary course immerses students in nature-based learning through field studies, where they will observe, identify, and collect specimens while developing a deeper understanding of local ecosystems. In addition to scientific exploration, students will engage in environmental writing, crafting poetry, fiction, and non-fiction inspired by their experiences in the natural world.

The course also includes hands-on stewardship projects, such as maintaining the school's outdoor classroom and participating in community service initiatives. Through this work, students will develop environmental awareness, ecological responsibility, and a personal connection to the natural world. Outdoor Education encourages students to appreciate nature through both scientific inquiry and creative expression, fostering a lifelong commitment to environmental stewardship.

CINEMATOGRAPHY:

Do you love movies and want to learn how filmmakers use the moving image to tell stories? In this hands-on course, students will explore the art of cinematography through a variety of creative filming projects and challenges. Using student iPads and the iMovie app, students will learn the basics of camera work, shot composition, lighting, editing, and visual storytelling. Students will complete both individual and collaborative projects while analyzing scenes from critically acclaimed films to better understand how filmmakers create mood, meaning, and emotion on screen.

A required bi-weekly movie log is an important part of the class. Students will watch a critically acclaimed film, preferably with a parent or family member, and write a brief reflection connecting a scene or aspect of the movie to concepts studied in class. No prior

experience is required—just creativity, curiosity, enthusiasm, and a love of movies. Please note that students who have previously taken the course may enroll again with instructor approval.

IMPROVISATION AND THEATER ARTS:

In Improvisation and Theater Arts, students will dive into the world of theater through fun, hands-on experiences that build both confidence and creativity. They will explore the basics of acting, using their voice, body, and imagination to bring characters to life. Through improv games, collaborative activities, and creative exercises, students will learn essential acting techniques, how to support each other as a team, and how to express themselves boldly on stage. By the end of the course, students will have the opportunity to showcase their skills in a final performance for family and friends. This year's course will focus on improvisation techniques. No previous stage experience is necessary—just a passion for acting and a willingness to play!

CHESS:

Chess on the Hill empowers individuals of all ages by using chess to teach sound decision-making, persistence, emotional regulation, and problem-solving, while creating inclusive, shared spaces for learning, connection, and personal growth.

The course will be focused on training students to become the best chess player they can be, rather than the history and culture of the game. There will be four main components to the course: (1) Chess Steps workbooks and curriculum, (2) playing and reviewing over-the-board chess games in class, (3) playing online chess games for homework, and (4) in-class lessons.



DIVING DEEPER

At Maple Street School, a love of learning is at the heart of everything we do. As students move through the Upper School, that curiosity grows into a desire to explore subjects in greater depth and take on new academic challenges.

We believe a strong foundation in English, mathematics, science, and technology prepares students for success in high school and beyond. In response to our students' interests and our commitment to academic excellence, we have expanded our Upper School electives to offer deeper learning in these core areas. These courses encourage students to strengthen essential skills, think critically, and pursue their passions with confidence.

ENGLISH ELECTIVE:

This elective is designed to help students grow into confident, capable writers as they prepare for the increasing demands of high school. At Maple Street, we believe that strong writing is rooted in clarity of thought, attention to craft, and a willingness to revise.

Throughout the course, students will engage in regular writing across genres—analytical, narrative, and argumentative—while developing a consistent process for planning, drafting, and refining their work. Emphasis is placed on organization, voice, and the ability to communicate ideas with purpose and precision.

Grammar and mechanics are taught in context, allowing students to apply foundational skills directly to their writing. Through close reading of engaging texts, students will study how authors build arguments, develop ideas, and use language effectively, carrying those insights into their own work. By the end of the course, students will write with greater independence, demonstrate stronger command of structure and conventions, and approach their work with the confidence and resilience needed to finish strong—both here and in the years ahead.

ADVANCED MATHEMATICS ENRICHMENT:

This elective is designed for highly motivated middle school students who excel in mathematics and are eager to explore concepts beyond the standard curriculum. Through problem-solving, investigation, collaboration, and real-world applications, students will deepen their mathematical thinking and strengthen their analytical skills.

In the fall semester, students will study topics in data analytics and statistics, including data collection, visualization, interpretation, probability, and statistical reasoning. Students will learn how mathematics is used to analyze trends, make predictions, and solve real-world problems using authentic data sets and technology tools.

In the spring semester, students will be introduced to foundational concepts in high school algebra. Topics may include expressions and equations, linear relationships, functions, systems of equations, and quadratics. Emphasis will be placed on conceptual understanding, logical reasoning, and advanced problem-solving strategies.

This course is intended as an enrichment opportunity for students who demonstrate strong mathematical ability, curiosity, and a desire for academic challenge. Students should be prepared to think critically, work independently and collaboratively, and engage with mathematics at an accelerated and exploratory level.

STEM:

This course introduces students to the exciting world of STEM through hands-on projects, creative problem-solving, and collaborative design challenges. Students will explore the foundations of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics by working with robotics, 3D printing, model building, and basic engineering concepts. Through the design process, students will learn how to brainstorm ideas, test solutions, improve prototypes, and think critically to solve real-world problems.

Activities may include programming and operating robots, creating digital designs for 3D-printed objects, constructing structural models, and completing team-based engineering challenges. Emphasis is placed on creativity, innovation, communication, and perseverance while developing practical technical skills and confidence in STEM fields. No prior experience is required.



MSS VISUAL ARTS

The Maple Street School Art Department believes in fostering creativity, exploration, and self-expression through a dynamic and engaging curriculum. From early childhood through 8th grade, students are encouraged to develop their artistic voice while learning foundational skills in a variety of media. The program emphasizes both process and product, inspiring students to experiment, think critically, and appreciate diverse artistic traditions. Through hands-on projects, exposure to professional artists, and opportunities to showcase their work, students gain confidence in their creative abilities while developing a lifelong appreciation for the arts.

All students will participate in at least one Visual Arts elective each year.

STUDIO ART:

The Studio Art elective is designed to encourage students to take time to experiment and play with various media, staying curious with the process of discovery that is inherent to making art. This year's focus will be on integrating the arts with other subjects and personal topics of interest. How can art connect to science or even math? Lessons will be supplemented with a visiting artist and museum field trip.

ART FOUNDATIONS:

Art Foundations offers projects that continue to build on fundamentals in a fun way while stressing compositional principles and the elements of art. This semester's course will focus on how drawing connects with painting and printmaking. Units will include working with observational and figure drawing, and using drawing as a springboard for developing a painting or a print. We will consider different ways of making books to incorporate students' work.

MULTIPLE PERSPECTIVES IN ART:

Multiple Perspectives in Art takes a hands-on approach to appreciating art history, encouraging students to value multiple perspectives and voices as we look at different artworks from a diverse range of cultures and time periods. This semester's focus will take a look at artists who use everyday materials and objects in their artwork, be it collage, assemblage, or sculpture. Students will be challenged to consider what materials from their own lives they can collect and use in their artwork.



MUSIC AT MSS

The Maple Street School Music department believes that music is an essential part of a well-rounded education. From Pre-K through 8th grade, all students are immersed in a diverse and engaging music curriculum that fosters creativity, collaboration, and self-expression. Whether through vocal performance, instrumental ensembles, or composition, students develop skills that enhance their artistic growth and confidence. The music program encourages students to explore various styles, traditions, and techniques, providing them with a strong foundation in musical literacy and performance.

All students will participate in at least one Music elective each year.

VOCAL ENSEMBLE (Semester or Full Year):

In this course, students will engage in developing their vocal skills in a variety of settings. From full group ensembles to small groups and solos, from traditional styles to theater and modern pop, students will be given opportunities to grow in their skill sets as singers and performers. This course is designed to foster confidence, technique, and musical expression in a supportive and engaging environment.

BAND (Full Year):

Band students will rehearse and work together in small groups and as a full ensemble. Pieces chosen will cover a variety of styles, including jazz, funk, rock, movie themes, and classical. Students are expected to have some prior experience with playing a band instrument and to be self-motivated to progress in their instrumental skills. Cultivating a strong personal work ethic along with a teamwork mentality is the goal of this course.

WORLD MUSIC ENSEMBLE:

In this course, students will engage in developing their musical skills in a variety of settings. Students will participate in mixed ensembles (instrumental and vocal) using musical styles from around the world. Instruments may include and are not limited to xylophones, djembes, steel drums, ukuleles, handbells, and congas. This course is designed to foster creativity, collaboration, and a deeper appreciation for global musical traditions in an engaging and supportive environment.

SONG CREATION:

In this course, students will engage in developing their musical creativity and composition skills. Students will explore different approaches to writing and creating songs. From traditional methods to modern, students will learn about the music theory and skills necessary to be successful in creating a variety of different musical compositions. This course is designed to inspire originality, enhance technical knowledge, and support students in developing their unique musical voices.



MSS PHYSICAL EDUCATION

The Maple Street School Physical Education department is committed to fostering a lifelong appreciation for movement, fitness, and well-being. Through engaging and diverse activities, students develop physical skills, teamwork, and confidence while building healthy habits that will serve them throughout their lives. The curriculum emphasizes personal growth, skill development, sportsmanship, and the joy of movement, ensuring that every student finds a meaningful way to stay active and engaged. Whether through competitive sports, individual fitness training, or recreational activities, students are encouraged to set goals, challenge themselves, and discover the value of physical activity in their daily lives.

LIFELONG PHYSICAL ACTIVITY & FITNESS:

This coed course is designed to foster a desire for lifelong physical activity through various sports, recreational activities, and personal fitness. Students will engage in a curriculum that includes racket sports, backyard games, outdoor recreation, fitness concepts, and the use of gamification to encourage healthy living. It's all about building a strong foundation for lifelong fitness while having fun.

ATHLETIC SPORTS: UPPER SCHOOL GIRLS:

Tailored to meet the athletic needs of Upper School girls, this course offers a competitive environment focused on skill refinement, sport-specific rules, game play strategy, sportsmanship, and leadership. Students will engage in team-based sports that mirror the rules and regulations of female athletics, including basketball, softball, volleyball, futsal, modified girls' lacrosse, floor hockey, and handball.

ATHLETIC SPORTS: UPPER SCHOOL BOYS:

Designed to meet the athletic needs of Upper School boys, this course offers a competitive atmosphere where students will focus on skill refinement, sport-specific rules, game play strategy, sportsmanship, and leadership. Students will engage in team-based sports that reflect the rules and regulations of male athletics, including football, basketball, baseball, volleyball, futsal, modified boys' lacrosse, floor hockey, and handball.

UPPER SCHOOL TEAM SPORTS

UPPER SCHOOL ATHLETICS (GRADES 6–8):

Maple Street's Upper School interscholastic athletics program offers students the opportunity to compete against local middle schools in a structured, competitive environment. All teams practice and compete after school and are led by our Director of Athletics, who oversees skill development, team culture, and program integrity across seasons. Coaches emphasize cooperation, sportsmanship, leadership, and commitment to one's team. Practices are designed to strengthen both individual ability and collective performance, helping students build confidence, resilience, and a strong work ethic. Athletes learn to compete with integrity, support their teammates, and represent Maple Street with pride both on and off the field.

Seasonal Offerings:

Fall: Soccer

Winter: Basketball

Spring: Lacrosse, Track and Field





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