

The background is a solid blue color. There are three yellow circular shapes: a partial circle in the top-left corner, a large full circle on the right side, and a partial circle in the bottom-left corner.

# UST Middle School

## Grades 6-8

September 2021

# INTRODUCTION

The world is a big place for a young teenager.

Adolescents need a caring, safe and supportive environment where they can grow up and find themselves and their place in the world.

Middle school students need a dynamic, challenging curriculum to prepare them for high school, university and beyond.

They deserve small class sizes and personalized attention to help them make the most of their education and reach their full potential.

They need support and guidance to navigate the pressures of growing up in our high-paced, high-tech global society.

They need the opportunity to take risks in a variety of learning environments and explore their growing independence.

# Mission and Vision

## Mission

To provide a challenging, holistic, values-based education with an emphasis on academic excellence, character building, service to others, environmental stewardship, collaboration and leadership.

## Vision

By creating a child-centric, community-based environment, UST seeks to unlock the passions, purpose and potential of each student while inspiring a lifelong love of learning.

# Academic Philosophy

Middle School students are questioners, deep thinkers, and doers. That's why the cornerstones of UST's academic program are inquiry, critical thinking, and authentic project-based learning. Through a rigorous academic program, our students don't just learn facts and information. They learn how to ask questions, research, solve problems, and make a difference throughout the international community.

Guided by our mission, our academic program fosters academic excellence and strong character, while helping our students become engaged citizens and thoughtful leaders.

Our program focuses on mastering core academic concepts and critical thinking skills, cultivating independence, and preparing confident learners who are ready for the competitive environments of high school, college, and beyond.

We infuse our program with concepts of empathy, restorative justice, kindness and inclusivity. With these skills, UST students have the confidence to face any situation.

UST students build a love of learning as they progress through our program that focuses on:

## **ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE**

To help students prepare for the next steps of their education.

## **CHARACTER EDUCATION & SOCIAL/EMOTIONAL WELLBEING**

To help raise confident, resilient and compassionate humans.

## **STUDENT-CENTERED, DIFFERENTIATED LEARNING**

To provide personalized learning based on our advantage as a school that is nimble, flexible, inclusive and responsive to student needs.

## **ENRICHED LEARNING**

To offer well-rounded, balanced education through arts, music, drama, athletics, elective subjects and more.

## **EXPERIENTIAL, REAL-WORLD, PROJECT-BASED LEARNING**

To inspire students to challenge themselves and find their passions academically, creatively, physically and socially

## **COMMUNICATION AND INTERNATIONAL MINDSET**

To explore and practice modern world languages (Japanese, Spanish and Chinese) and cultures

## **LEADERSHIP AND CITIZENSHIP**

To engage in community service and environmental advocacy

# Our Approach

UST is dedicated to fostering a love of learning in every child. We understand that children learn at different paces, which is why our small classrooms tap into students' individual strengths and encourage children to learn both independently and in small groups.

As a small school we are nimble, flexible, inclusive and responsive to student needs. Our family-like atmosphere helps build a strong community within our school and a connection to our Tokyo community.

Our inquiry-based, customized approach ensures that each child receives an exceptional education. At all levels, our students are motivated to take risks, solve problems and develop independence.

We place a strong emphasis on language acquisition and teach Japanese as a core second language and Spanish and Chinese as electives.

School-wide, we emphasize self-motivation and focus on developing character, including teaching children both self-respect and to be gracious and kind to others through continuous integration of our Core Values.

# Core Values

At UST, we are committed to providing each student the opportunity to become an independent, secure, and balanced human being. This emerges through an emphasis on our Core Values:



# CORE CURRICULUM

## ENGLISH

From appreciating the classics to analyzing modern works, students widen their perspective by taking part in a lively community of readers, writers, speakers and critics.

## MATHEMATICS

Students grow as mathematicians, building knowledge through problem-solving, projects and applying mathematics to everyday life.

## SCIENCE

Scientists learn by doing! Through experiments, independent inquiries and field work, students quench their thirst for knowledge about the natural world.

## SOCIAL SCIENCES

Through a deep analysis of historical and contemporary issues, students understand how societies develop and find their place in the global community. Social Sciences include History and Geography.

## WORLD LANGUAGES

Learning a second (or third) language helps students connect with the local and global communities. Students study Japanese, Spanish or Chinese.

## P.E. & WELLNESS

In Middle School, physical education focuses on team sports and helps students develop teamwork, cooperation, sportsmanship, and respect. Wellness covers a range of coming-of-age topics relating to the physical and emotional development of young teens.

## ART

Creative exploration using various media allows students to be creative, to uncover hidden talents and to express themselves.

## MUSIC

Our young musicians develop a range of skills and performance techniques through band and choir. Compulsory and elective music classes will help them further develop their instrumental and composition skills.

## TECHNOLOGY

In Middle School, students start using personal computers. Students manage learning through productivity tools and use technology to create, invent and express their ideas. Digital citizenship and responsible use of technology are also taught.

ADVISORY

ELECTIVES

"POWER HOUR"

FLEX TIME/  
STUDY HALL

**SIGNATURE  
PROGRAMS**

SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL  
LEARNING

DUKE OF EDINBURGH  
AWARD

OUTDOOR  
EDUCATION

ANNUAL TRIPS

# Advisory

Faculty-led advisory groups meet regularly to help students build friendships, set personal goals, practice kindness and empathy, prepare for grade-level trips and develop relationships within the advisory group.

Advisory groups are small to emphasize a family-like structure. These are safe spaces for students to practice self-advocacy and self-realization, as well as to have fun!

Advisors are advocates for students and are a vital communication link between parents and the school.

Students learn good decision-making skills and develop attitudes and beliefs towards a healthy lifestyle. With an emphasis on character development and ethics, they practice being respectful towards self, the community and the world around them.

## Advisory Components

### **DAILY 15-MINUTE ADVISORY**

Homeroom tasks, announcements, mindfulness meditation

### **TWICE PER WEEK, 45-MINUTE ADVISORY**

Meaningful conversations and activities:

- Wellness and social-emotional learning
- Executive functioning training and study skills
  - Organizational skills
  - Planning and scheduling
  - Note-taking skills
  - Test-taking strategies
- Skills critical for success: cooperation, collaboration, problem-solving, time and project management
- High-school counseling and exam preparation

### **INDIVIDUAL ADVISORY**

Teachers meet individually with students to carefully guide their progress towards achieving academic, social and emotional maturity. Advisors help select and monitor individual goals and guide their process of selecting a high school.



# ELECTIVES

Beginning in 6th grade, part of each student's schedule consists of courses they select. Electives are taught by experts in the field and are as rigorous as any class. They are designed to help our students:

- develop passions and achieve mastery
- explore new areas of interest
- choose their future path for high-school and beyond

Electives are offered in four main areas:

## 1. Specialty subjects: Art and Music

- Art and Music are offered in two 60-min blocks. One block is compulsory and focused on COMPETENCY. The other block is offered as an Elective and is focused on MASTERY.

## 2. World Languages:

- In addition to Japanese language, beginner Spanish and Chinese will be offered as electives.
- *Note: to go ahead, each language group would need to have minimum 5-6 students.*

## 3. "Power Hour"

Each term students will have a chance to participate in workshops and projects aimed at real-life experiences led by community experts.

## 4. ECAs

ECAs offered in Middle School will focus on athletics, arts and technology.

# Power Hour

Power Hour combines innovation, design thinking and the arts to provide our middle school students with outlets for their creativity and to help make connections between their learning and real-world application. Power Hour's primary goal is for students to uncover their interests and passions by exploring topics in different domains, led by community experts.

Students choose from several exciting and fun professionally led classes during the first structured half of each term.

During the second half of the term, students pursue an individual exploration project on their chosen topic. Students go through the investigating, planning and creating process, which culminates in a presentation before a judging panel.

## Power Hour Areas

### CREATIVE ARTS

Performing arts/Visual arts/Design/ Architecture

### SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

Robotics/Programming/ STEM

### JOURNALISM

School newspaper/Documentary-making/ Podcasting

### ENVIRONMENT & SUSTAINABILITY

Community garden/Renewable energy systems/  
Pollution management

### ENTREPRENEURSHIP

How to start a business/How to manage a business

# FLEX TIME / STUDY HALL

Each week students have several blocks of Flex Time, a time when middle schoolers take charge of their learning.

Students have a choice of what they do during Flextime. They may use this time for study hall to complete homework, meet with teachers for individual enrichment/tutoring sessions or work on an independent project guided by their teacher.

Teachers are there to assist, tutor and guide. As students grow older, teachers gradually release control to teach students independence.

# SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING

Social-Emotional Learning teaches students to understand themselves and others, manage their emotions productively, empathize with others, forge healthy relationships, work toward and achieve goals, make responsible decisions, develop resilience, confidence and well-being

Research shows that students who receive quality SEL instruction demonstrate higher academic achievement, have better mental health outcomes, and are more successful as adults.

We believe that EQ matters as much as IQ. UST's social-emotional learning program has been fundamental to our commitment to nurture the whole child since the school's inception. Our SEL program supports students' learning and growth through the development of these five competencies:

- Self-Awareness
- Self-Management
- Social Awareness
- Relationship Skills
- Responsible Decision-Making

# Junior Duke of Edinburgh Award

JDofE is a holistic accredited learning program for children and young people aged 5 – 14 YO. It develops interpersonal skills - communication, problem-solving, and teamwork - and builds self-confidence and a sense of well-being to engage in formal education. An inclusive award that provides a structure for the start of vocational learning, it serves as a stepping stone towards the Duke of Edinburgh Program offered to students from 14 YO and older.

JDofE enables students to enhance their personal and interpersonal development by learning through experience. The project challenges students to show initiative, demonstrate perseverance and develop skills such as collaboration, problem-solving and decision-making. At the same time, JDofE is an important counterbalance to the academic challenges of Middle School.

## Four Essential Areas & Example Activities

**INTERESTS AND SKILLS:** develop practical and social skills and personal interests

- Learn (or increase your expertise in) a chosen skill outside of school
- Become part of a theater group; join/start a band etc.

**GET ACTIVE, STAY ACTIVE:** improve in the area of sport/fitness

- Take on a new athletic activity
- Complete a challenge

**ME AND MY WORLD:** undertake service to individuals or the community

- Volunteer at the school or in the local community
- Become a mentor (mentor a younger student)

**ADVENTURE:** participate in an outdoor activities that involves teamwork and problem-solving

- Participate in the outdoor/ wilderness program
- Complete wilderness challenges and courses

# ANNUAL TRIPS

We develop students who are curious and courageous change-makers and global stewards.

To that end, UST immerses students in new cultural experiences through dedicated school trips. These transformative trips, extensions of the classroom curriculum, are the time to fully explore, engage and make meaningful contributions to the local and global communities.

## TRIP EXAMPLES:

**GRADE 6 - Kyoto**

**GRADE 7 - Rural Japan homestay**

**GRADE 8 - Cambodia service trip**

# OUTDOOR EDUCATION

Students go on residential trips each term to foster a love of nature, independence, leadership, team spirit, self-care, problem-solving skills and resilience, as well as have a chance to have a break from the digital world.

## TRIP EXAMPLES:

**Fall - team-building trip to Shimoda**

**Winter - ski trip**

**Spring - camping trip**

# UST GRADUATE PROFILE

UST faculty and families work in partnership to prepare our students for the future. Our values of care for self, care for others, and care for the community are the foundation of our culture.

## UST GRADUATES ARE ...

### Self aware

- Self-confident
- Independent and accountable learners
- Physically and emotionally healthy
- Passionate about developing their interests
- Pursuing learning outside of the classroom
- Developing a strong sense of identity and self

### Socially aware

- Kind, considerate, and compassionate
- Able to belong without losing their unique identity
- Caring friends and active community members
- Leaders and collaborators
- Active members of the school community
- Engaged in personal growth

### World aware

- Change-makers
- Exploring and finding their place in the larger world
- Aware of social, global, political and environmental issues