

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Why Honors classes?

Honors classes provide students with the opportunity to build on areas of strength while encouraging them to reach for excellence in other areas as well. Honors classes offer a rigorous and challenging curriculum in the four core subject areas. They also offer students an opportunity to develop relationships with peers who will then attend the same high school.

2. How do I refer my child for Honors classes in middle school?

All sixth grade students are considered for Honors classes. Each middle school placement committee works very hard to place students appropriately. Committee members look at the data and carefully consider each student's areas of strength. If you feel that your son or daughter would benefit from Honors classes (or from additional Honors classes), contact the principal at the middle school and provide any compelling information you may have to support placement.

3. My son or daughter was placed in Honors in more than one subject, and I would like my child to take only certain Honors classes. What should I do?

Speak with the director of student services at your middle school and discuss the classes you would like for your son or daughter. In addition, placement decisions can be reviewed at any time during the year to determine whether a class is the most appropriate match for a student.

4. How much homework is involved?

The amount of homework will vary depending on the instructional decisions made by the individual teacher and the learning style of the student. For more information on homework policies, refer to Regulation 3205, which is available online at <http://www.fcps.edu/Directives/R3205.pdf>.



For more details, contact your middle school director of student services. For a complete description of gifted and talented levels of service, visit <http://www.fcps.edu/DIS/gt>.



Middle School Honors CLASSES



FAIRFAX COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS



Overview

Honors classes, aligned with national standards for gifted and talented (GT) education, are for students who have demonstrated high achievement in one or more areas of academic strength.

Honors classes are available in the middle school in the four core academic areas of English, mathematics, social studies, and science. Honors classes use a Fairfax County Public Schools-developed middle school curriculum that extends the FCPS Program of Studies in depth and complexity. The curriculum is based on the Parallel Curriculum Model, a nationally endorsed model for high-ability learners. Honors classes, which are available in all middle schools, seek to provide opportunities to build on the individual strengths of each student.

How Students Are Selected for Middle School Honors Classes

The selection process begins in March when elementary schools send information to the middle schools regarding students' academic records. The information sent to middle schools is part of the students' cumulative files. Middle schools use this information to make decisions. Notification letters are then mailed to parents. Rising seventh grade GT center students automatically qualify for Honors English, Honors Social Studies, and Honors Science classes **at their local middle schools**. Parents help students make the decision whether or not to leave the GT center at the end of the students' sixth grade year. Students enrolled in seventh grade Honors classes carry over their placement into eighth grade unless there is a question regarding whether or not the placement is appropriate. In such cases, the principal at the middle school reviews the information and makes a decision.

English, Science, and Social Studies

Students are placed in Honors English, Honors Science, and Honors Social Studies based on the recommendations of a screening committee after a comprehensive evaluation of the following:

- ★ Ability test data.
- ★ Achievement test data.
- ★ Grades in the core subject areas.
- ★ Gifted Behavior Rating Scale (GBRS).
- ★ Recommendation.

Mathematics

Sixth grade students have the following mathematics options for seventh grade:

Algebra 1 Honors

- ★ To qualify for this course, students must complete Compacted Mathematics 6 or a yearlong accelerated program, score at or above the 92nd percentile on the Iowa Algebra Aptitude Test, and receive a score of pass advanced on the Virginia Standards of Learning grade 8 mathematics test.

Mathematics 7 Honors

- ★ Students automatically qualify for this course if they have completed Compacted Mathematics 6 or a yearlong accelerated program.
- ★ Students who have completed sixth grade mathematics may qualify for this course based on a holistic view of ability test data, achievement test data, grades in mathematics, the Gifted Behavior Rating Scale (GBRS), and teacher recommendation.

Mathematics 7

- ★ All sixth grade students who successfully complete sixth grade mathematics qualify for Mathematics 7.

How Honors Classes Challenge Students

What makes Honors classes challenging is the concept of ascending levels of intellectual demand (ALID). Students' advancement, interest, and strength in certain subject areas vary; therefore, they need opportunities to work at different levels of challenge. In the middle school Honors classroom, this means teachers design learning experiences that encourage and support students as they work at higher levels of challenge. Emphasis is placed on developing emerging autonomy through differentiation of what students learn, the process by which they learn it, and the way in which they demonstrate their learning. The ultimate goal of Honors classes is to ensure that each student has an opportunity to develop his or her full potential.

