

Gym/Games Curriculum and Goals, Grades 1 to 8

Introduction

Following is the general description of the movement program at Aurora Waldorf School; this outline is provided to parents. One of the stated goals of the AWS movement program is to prepare every 8th Grade graduate with an 'athletic generalist' foundation of basic capacities and attitudes. We want to make it possible for any student to go on to competition at the high school level, if the desire is there. Quite a number of AWS graduates have gone on to play at the varsity level – some during their freshman years – in volleyball, track & field, cross country, tennis, wrestling, field hockey, lacrosse, swimming, football, soccer, crew, basketball, and more.

Grade 1

- Ability to work in “team learning” environment.
- Imitation and anticipation - the capacity to carefully observe before acting.
- Mastering space in above/below and front/back spatial planes.
- Four lower senses (Touch, Life, Self-movement, Balance). Body geography/proprioception; balance activities; completion of early childhood movement patterns; learning right and left, and strengthening laterality.
- A gentle introduction to games with competition in a story context.

Grade 2

- Increased eye-hand coordination, aiming/precision.
- Moving out of the circle game setting, games with a “danger” story element.
- Introduction of games with personal responsibility.
- Gentle introduction of games with a teasing element (i.e., the ability to not take oneself too seriously, to maintain a sense of humor).
- Preparation for Grade 3 includes beginning to work in the left/right spatial plane, midline crossing.
- Solidifying the goals of Grade 1, i.e. ability to work in “team learning” environment; capacity to carefully observe before acting; mastering space in above/below and front/back spatial planes; completion of early childhood movement patterns.

Grade 3

- Leaving young childhood behind, waking up to individuality, aiming, precision and judging.
- Mastering the left/right spatial plane and midline crossings (foundations for the later development of critical thinking and reasoning).
- Beginning of games that students will understand to be precursors to sports, i.e. kickball as a skill builder for baseball, fireball as a workup for volleyball. Greater formality in gymnastics exercises.

Grade 4

- Introduction to the foundations of team sports through skill-building games and activities (not through sports themselves).
- Sports we begin working toward in 4th Grade (through related games) include volleyball, tennis, baseball, track & field, basketball, football.
- Continuation of goals begun in 3rd Grade, i.e. aiming, precision, judging of individual achievement.

Grade 5

- The Pentathlon provides a wonderful vehicle for the introduction of formal judgment of the individual, by objective standards, and in the context of specialization. It is the first time in our curriculum where some will be singled out for special honors, and all participants are held to account for preparation; there is still “play value” in this preparation but it is nearing a more “athletic” mood. This is the last year in which the majority of activities will have a story basis (i.e., the Ancient Greek Olympics).
- Team sports with concrete rules, and skill drills, introduced.

Grade 6

- Theme: “Waking up to muscle and strength.” Continued introduction to individual and team sports, played now as sports rather than as story-based games.
- Lesson units this year will include basketball, Australian Rules football, collegiate-style wrestling, cross country

skiing, tennis, track & field, volleyball, ballroom dance, weight lifting, and softball.

- Final year of weekly gymnastics class and participation in Annual Circus.

All Grades 1 to 6 participate in the annual Tumbling and Acrobatics Circus

Grade 7 & 8

Program includes 4 hours a week of “PE” for all students in Grades 7 & 8, with the goal that all students enjoy increased fitness and have the foundation for joining a sports team when they enter high school. Three components are:

- Team sports, comprising intermural soccer and basketball, and track & field.
- Life sports units, including ballroom and African dance, tennis, cross country skiing, orienteering, swimming & diving, Australian Rules football, volleyball, softball, advanced gymnastics.
- Fitness, including weight lifting, calisthenics, and distance running.
- Other games and activities from previous years are continued.

Grade 8 Requirements

At the beginning of 8th Grade, students are assigned a listing of required and optional skills (with point values) which are to be worked on over the course of the school year; final grades are based on steady work to accumulate points in the various skill areas. In most skill areas, 1 point represents fair achievement, 2 points represents very good achievement, and 3 points or more represent excellence. Required items include juggling, running 2 miles, doing a set number of pushups and sit-ups, holding a handstand for at least a second, double dutch jump rope, swimming 300 yards, and cross country skiing for 2 miles.