

Second Language Programming and Option Course Guide 2025-2026

Hillcrest students in regular programming or STEM programming have the choice of enrolling in French as a Second Language or Chinese Language and Culture.

At Hillcrest, we offer a dynamic three-year Chinese Language and Culture program, designed to engage and challenge students at every step. In this unique program, students explore the intricacies of Mandarin through a variety of interactive and creative activities. From mastering character reading and writing to engaging in lively skit-making and acting, our curriculum is crafted to make learning both fun and immersive. Music plays a vital role too; students enjoy listening to traditional and contemporary Chinese songs, and even get the chance to create their own music videos.

While Mandarin is a challenging language to learn, our use of innovative tools like Gimkit ensures that students have the best resources at their fingertips. To enhance language acquisition, we creatively adapt popular games like Pictionary, Taboo, Charades, and Telestrations, making them relevant for language learning. These activities not only make the learning process enjoyable but also deepen understanding of the language in a playful and engaging way. Special cultural activities enrich the learning experience further, such as practicing calligraphy, enjoying a feast during Chinese New Year, and participating in field trips that bring the language and culture to life.

Although we do participate in HSK testing to gauge international standards, our emphasis is on learning through engagement and enjoyment.

Our program is not just about learning a language but about embarking on an unforgettable journey of cultural discovery.

Option Courses

Our school year is divided into 3 terms. Students will take two option courses each term. Our Music option class is offered as a full year course. All other option courses will be offered from September - December (Term 1), January - March (Term 2), and April - June (Term 3). Students taking Music will enrol in 4 different option courses over the year; students not taking Music will be enrolled in 6 different options over the year.

Option course offerings will vary based on availability of teachers, number of students expressing interest, and our ability to schedule the course.



Active Living: Active Living is a course that provides students with more physical activity, movement opportunities and experiences that are in and around our community. Students will be immersed in enriched experiences that include sports, recreational and wellness activities. We will be experiencing a variety of types of opportunities on and off Hillcrest campus, and may include but are not limited to swimming, skating, climbing, river valley hikes, interval training, Spike-Ball, etc. If you love and want to move your body more often throughout the week at school, this is the option for you!

Art: Students will have an opportunity to learn or improve their art skills and techniques through this engaging program. This course helps you gain insight and solve art-related challenges. Students will be introduced to a wide variety of art activities and related compositions, including sketching, doodling, printing, drawing, painting, pen and ink, wire sculpture, clay sculpture, 3D sculpture and many other media to create works of art. In each multi-phased project, the process, rather than product is emphasized.

Career and Technology Foundations: (Robotics and Coding) Students will learn how to wire up circuitry, make lights work, and learn how to use robotic technology to solve real-world problems. They will design, plan, program, and build electronic inventions. In addition, students will have the freedom to try their hand at different coding languages including block based coding and Python.

Construction: In construction classes, students are offered an introduction to drafting and design. They create blueprints and use them in the construction and fabrication process. Students are encouraged to progress at their own rate. Shop safety is always given top priority. After Grade 7, each student, according to their interest and experience level, can choose to work on construction projects such as: a coin bank, bowl, tool tray, serving tray, train whistle, monster truck, folding table, gavel, CO2 car, canoe paddle, toy train or plane, crib board, ice fishing jig, wooden clock and longboard. Between each level of project is a challenge project that the student must create, design and personalize with minimal direction.

Please Note: No previous experience is needed to enrol in Construction

Design Fundamentals: In our makerspace, students will explore a variety of different projects throughout grades 7, 8, and 9. Students delve into the fundamentals of design and learn how to incorporate them to create a variety of 2D and 3D projects, utilizing materials such as paper, cardboard, foam, wood, 3D pens, and 3D printers. Students also get hands-on experience implementing the design process to solve real world problems.

Drafting & Design: Students will reverse engineer a project: they will deconstruct a completed project by measuring and drawing their own blueprints. They will consider materials, tools and procedures necessary to recreate their own version of the project. Through this design process, students will use drafting skills, measuring skills, lab/tool safety, and responsible use of materials. These skills will help students in **Drafting & Design 8**, a hands-on course where they will design, build, paint, and race their own specialized CO2 Dragster car. From initial sketches to a full-scale plan, students will create their



design, learn lab safety and use construction machines to build their cars. Finally, students will test their cars on a track through a competition. This course is perfect for students who are creative and are curious about physics and engineering principles. In ***Drafting & Design 9***, students will use their skills to work on an open ended-project that will be disclosed at the start of the course.

Drama: Let's get silly! Not only for those who are talented at acting, Drama is an important, performance-based course for everyone! As students learn ways to use their voice, expression, and body language, they'll strengthen their personal confidence and presentation skills. Drama students will experience: theatrical games, concentration and relaxation exercises, mime, vocal exercises, script work and scene studies, monologues, radio and video broadcast techniques, audition techniques, creativity, and improvisation. If you enjoy working in group situations or would like to develop leadership skills, then Drama is for you. Develop your creativity and imagination!

Environmental Outdoor Education: Do you enjoy spending time outside? Are you interested in learning more about nature and leading a healthy active lifestyle? Then Environmental and Outdoor Education is the option for you. This class focuses on outdoor skills and expeditions as well as environmental investigations. In outdoor expeditions, you will have the opportunity to develop the knowledge and skills to prepare to participate in a variety of outdoor activities, such as snowshoeing, orienteering, hiking, archery, and shelter building. In environmental investigations, you will develop a greater awareness of and appreciation for the natural world and our impact on it. There will be field trips to support building the knowledge and skills during outdoor expeditions that are an additional cost for students.

Foods and Fashion (Grade 7): In Foods, students study kitchen safety/sanitation, the names and use of kitchen tools, how to follow a recipe, proper measuring, knife skills, and lessons in a variety of food areas. Students participate in food labs and develop life skills that can be replicated at home. Recipe examples include: puffed wheat squares, cookies, biscuits, muffins, pasta, stir fry, and smoothies. In fashion, students learn about sewing tools, basic hand stitches and create a sewing project. Project ideas include: pincushions, friendship bracelets, cross stitching, knitting and crochet. Students have the option to purchase a sewing kit from Classy Threads and make a project such as a stuffed toy turtle, bird, bat, narwhal, mouse, frog, monster, or can choose from a variety of sports cushions (soccer, basketball, volleyball, baseball, etc.) Lots of fun learning!

Optional additional project cost from Classy Threads may be included at student/family choice

Foods (Grade 8 and 9): In Foods, students learn cooking and baking skills through fun recipes, hands on experiences, and food demonstrations. Students study kitchen safety/sanitation, the names and use of kitchen tools, how to follow a recipe, proper measuring, knife skills, and lessons in a variety of food areas. Students participate in food labs and develop life skills that can be replicated at home. Recipe examples include: cookies, puffy pretzels, biscuits, macaroni and cheese, pizza, breakfast burritos, sandwiches, pasta meals, desserts, and more. Enjoy!



Fashion (Grade 8 and 9): In Fashion, students learn about sewing tools, basic hand stitches, sewing a button, the sewing machine and the serger. These skills are applied towards student chosen projects such as hair scrunchies, cross stitching, patch pillows, aprons, friendship bracelets, pincushions, knitting, crochet, and more! Students have the option to purchase a sewing kit from Classy Threads and make projects such as: a stuffed toy (turtle, bird, bat, octopus, narwhal, mouse, frog, or monster), blankets, bags, a plush cushion (yin yang, soccer ball, heart, baseball, music, etc.), dice, a 3D sport ball (volleyball, basketball, football, etc.), a pencil body pillow, and more. Relax, learn, and have fun sewing!

Optional additional project cost from Classy Threads may also be included at student/family choice

Learning to Lead: (Grade 8 and 9) The leadership program at Hillcrest is an option that focuses on building awareness of one's communities, as well as, the impact they have within their various communities. There is a strong emphasis on volunteerism, building school climate and enhancing leadership skills all happen in this wonderful program. There are many different leadership styles to explore, and many character traits to focus on. Mustang Nation targets ways to make everyone feel seen, heard and have a sense of belonging within our school walls. The entire program is designed to create effective leaders who demonstrate pride, enthusiasm and compassion as responsible and active members of our community. If you love to make a difference, or want to learn how to use your voice- this is the option for you!

Music (Full Year): Music class (Band) at Hillcrest gives students the opportunity to expand (or begin) their musical knowledge by learning to play a woodwind, brass or percussion instrument (and even guitar and Ukulele). What instrument will you play? There are many to choose from! Flute, Clarinet, Saxophone, Trumpet, French Horn, Trombone, Baritone, Tuba, Percussion (Drums). The school band performs at two school concerts a year. In addition, students may attend music camps and festival trips. Instrumental music also includes several weeks of guitar and/or Ukulele lessons. *Please Note: Students wanting to enrol in Music in Gr. 8 or 9 should have some music experience on an instrument in the past or have taken Music in grade 7. To enrich their musical experience, students in private lessons (for example, piano or guitar) are also encouraged to participate. Students who are enrolled in Music also have the opportunity to join the Jazz Band which is a highlight of any concert they perform at. It is also a really fun way to explore lots of different styles of music (for example, Rock, Pop, Jazz etc).*

Visual Communications: Delve into the art and science of conveying ideas powerfully through visuals and digital media. In this dynamic course, students will master the foundational principles of design, harnessing the potential of diverse media. They will learn to edit images, construct compelling websites, and craft captivating collages. With an emphasis on industry-relevant techniques, our students will gain hands-on experience in creating standout shoes, iconic logos, and innovative products. This immersive experience not only nurtures creativity but also equips students with valuable skills for the future.

