Mission Statement

The Westminster Christian School performing and visual arts program nurtures and develops creative and artistic expression which includes and complements critical thinking and academic skills. The goal is to educate the whole student while providing and encouraging ways to bring glory to God.

The goal of the Westminster Fine Arts Department is to develop each child’s talent and critical thinking skills. The Fine Arts curriculum allows students from preschool through twelfth grade to explore their God-given gifts and sharpen their skills through the following disciplines: visual arts, band, choir, theater, film, dance, and orchestra.

To accomplish this, Westminster provides the best possible teachers and instructors to nurture and inspire students to glorify God to the best of their abilities in school and in regional and state-wide competitions.

Elementary School Fine Arts

Music education for our students begins here at age three. By the time they reach the third grade, they have participated in musical stage productions, have seen professional performances, learned classical music history, know how to read, play and sing from printed music, and can play the ukulele and the recorder.

Grade four students choose between three music electives - band, musical theater, and orchestra. Grade four and five music students typically participate in two annual concerts and perform in chapel. The musical theater students perform on stage in an annual musical and more.

Grades one through five visual arts students study art history, famous artists’ work(s) and how art is created. They have their own art displayed in the annual Westminster Art Fair. Students can tell about their creative efforts and the artists who inspired them. They learn to upload their portfolios onto an iPad and to use it for original artwork. In addition, art students learn to draw, paint, sculpt, do mixed media and fiber art.

Middle School Fine Arts

Students choose electives which include visual arts, band, choir, theater, dance, and orchestra.

Visual arts students participate in the annual Westminster Art Fair. In addition, selected
artwork is entered into Scholastic, Fairchild Challenge, the Youth Fair Fine Arts Show, Florida Student Art Assessment and Virtual Exhibition, the Lowe Art Museum’s Beaux Arts Student Showcase, and more.

Students who play a musical instrument in the band and/or orchestra are tutored during class by adjuncts from UM Frost School of Music, FIU doctoral and various graduate students, and professional musicians. All band, choir and orchestra students are encouraged to participate in Music Performance Assessment (MPA) solo and ensemble performances and honor band auditions. If chosen from Miami-Dade County, they are invited to represent Westminster at the All-County and All-State Festivals in the second semester.

Dance students participate in workshops off campus and will have the opportunity to participate in several chapels and at other school events. Dancers are required to attend class in proper uniform and with their hair up and out of their faces. It is also mandatory to attend performances that the teacher hosts for the dance department as part of their final grade.

Theater students participate in technical or acting roles in school plays and/or musicals. They participate in solo and ensemble district competitions. When chosen, they participate in the Florida Junior Thespian Festival in Orlando, FL.

Film students participate in the writing, production, and post-production of original short films and animations. All students participate in the Warrior Film Festival. Chosen films are submitted to various advanced film festivals.

**High School Fine Arts**

One credit (two semesters) of a Fine Art is required for graduation.

All visual arts students participate in the annual Westminster Art Fair. In addition, selected artwork is submitted to Scholastic, Fairchild Challenge, Youth Fair Fine Arts Show, Florida Student Art Assessment and Virtual Exhibition, the Lowe Art Museum’s Beaux Arts Student Showcase and more.

Students who play a musical instrument in the band and orchestra are tutored during class by UM Frost School of Music, FIU doctoral and graduate students, and professional musicians. Students will continue to develop individual musicianship while developing advance ensemble skills. The Pep Band performs during outdoor and indoor sporting events.

All band, choir and orchestra students are encouraged to participate in Music Performance Assessments (MPA), Solo and Ensemble performances, and Honor Festival auditions. If chosen for Miami-Dade County events, they are invited to represent Westminster at the All-County and All-State Festivals in the second semester.
Dance students participate in workshops off campus and will have the opportunity to participate in several chapels and other school events. Dancers are required to attend class in proper uniform and with their hair up and out of their faces. It is also mandatory that students attend performances that the teacher hosts for the dance department as part of their final grade.

Theater students participate in technical or acting roles in annual school musicals and/or plays. They participate in solo and ensemble regional competitions. When chosen, they participate in the prestigious Florida Thespian Festival held annually in Tampa, FL.

Film students participate in the writing, production and post-production of their original short films and animations. All film students participate in the annual Warrior Film Festival. Chosen work is submitted to film festivals and Scholastics.

**Performing Arts**

Principals pre-approve Fine Arts early dismissals, rehearsals, and performance dates. Teachers are notified in advance if a student will miss class as a result.

After-school rehearsals are required for major Fine Arts events and are communicated at the beginning of the school year when Fine Arts teachers provide a schedule so that students and parents can plan accordingly. Unless it is an emergency, a student must notify his/her teacher or stage manager in advance if he/she needs to miss an after-school rehearsal.

An all-day technical rehearsal is scheduled (with the principal’s approval) in advance for each play and concert. It is considered as a mandatory field trip requiring students to make up their academic class work. The dates are listed on the school calendar and communicated to teachers, students, and parents at the beginning of the school year. A student who needs to leave the tech rehearsal for a class must arrange in advance with his/her Fine Arts teacher and the academic teacher for that class period.

Costumes must be cleaned and returned to the technical theater teacher after the completion of performances, the scenery must be struck, and the stage cleared after the last night of a production.

**Musicians Performance Attire**

Westminster provides middle and high school band, orchestra, and choir boys with tuxedos. Choir and orchestra girls are provided formal dresses. Band girls provide their own performance attire.

At the beginning of the school year the boys are fitted for, and provided with, tuxedoes that have a tracking number assigned to each jacket and pant corresponding to the student’s name.
If articles are lost and/or found, the students can be identified through those numbers. Boys are required to purchase their own tuxedo shirts. Shirts and dresses need to be washed before each performance.

Garment bags are required to store performance attire when traveling to competitions and performances. Personalized garment bags may be purchased through the Fine Arts Association. At the end of the school year, the music teachers collect and account for each student’s tuxedo and formal dress. If formal attire is lost, stolen or damaged, parents will be tuition-billed for the replacement cost.

**Theater Equipment**

With permission and supervision of a Fine Arts teacher, students are allowed in Fine Arts facilities and equipment storage areas. The trained students who handle production gear must have proper clearance and access badges and/or Westminster Production attire. No students are permitted to handle any high-end production gear without proper access or supervision.

All equipment such as microphones and radios must be handled with respect and returned to the proper storage area after use. If damaged, it must be reported to the teacher in charge or the Fine Arts Director.

**Conduct**

At Westminster, your commitment to Fine Arts requires class attendance, completion of assignments and passing grades to be eligible for participation in productions, concerts, contests, and field trips. This includes being respectful to your teachers and fellow students, following the directions of your teachers, and not being disruptive in class.

Fine Arts students are expected to attend all rehearsals, unless absent from school. An unexcused absence from a rehearsal is subject to dismissal from that cast or ensemble.

**Audience Etiquette**

The audience is expected to attend the entire performance with cell phones and electronic devices turned off. No talking, texting, flash photography or videotaping is allowed during the actual performance. If necessary, one can leave only between scene changes and music sets. Food and drinks are not allowed in the Lighthouse auditorium. The audience is free to applaud and give standing ovations whenever warranted.

**Field Trips and Travel**

Participation is required for all Fine Arts class and performance field trips. Cultural, service and workshop field trips are optional.
Students must abide by all trip and Student Handbook rules. School uniforms are to be worn on local off-campus field trips unless formal performance attire is assigned, or unless exceptions are made due to the nature of the trip.

There is about one chaperone per five elementary students and about one per ten middle and high school students. The lead teacher oversees the trip and will follow trip protocol as outlined in this handbook. Students must physically check in with their chaperone when gathering, entering a venue, boarding a bus, or assembling for a meeting point/time. Otherwise, students must stay in groups of not less than three and with their assigned chaperone.

Middle school students must always be with their chaperone or teacher while on the trip unless exceptions are permitted.

Parents who participate in a field trip will follow the lead teacher’s directions when given responsibilities, must abide by the policies set forth for the trip, and sign the parent policy agreement in advance. Adults are not allowed to bring other children or family members with them. Adults on trips must not use profanity, drink alcohol, smoke or use illegal drugs.

All adults attending a field trip are mandated by law to be fingerprinted and have a background check before participating in an off-campus event. The cost to be fingerprinted is $45 and can be done in the Business Office.

Students must have a permission form signed by a parent or guardian, even if the student is 18 years of age, and returned to their teacher by the appointed deadline. If turned in late, the student is placed on a waiting list. It is up to the discretion of the teacher(s) and available space if the student attends.

Students are required to make up schoolwork when missing classes for Fine Arts field and overnight trips. It is the responsibility of the students to seek out their teachers for work they will be missing before leaving for the trip, as stated in the Student Handbook.

If a student cancels a trip after registration closes, the parent will be billed for the student’s expenses that Westminster incurred.

The purchase of travel insurance is highly recommended when traveling by plane.

**Rules of Conduct for Overnight Trips**

Each student and his/her parent signs the field trip contract and trip medical form and must meet requirements such as travel documents and payment deadlines. Parents are asked to attend an information meeting prior to the trip.
Students must follow safety directions and be on time. They must never go anywhere alone. They may not have hotel room visitors, leave a site, or travel apart from the group at any time without an official chaperone. Hotel room doors must always stay locked. No boys may enter a girl’s room, or vice versa. Students must remain in their own rooms at curfew and stay quiet after lights out. Students must follow cellphone protocol established for the trip and its venues.

A student who breaches the conduct rules and trip policies may be sent home before the conclusion of the trip at the expense of his/her parent/guardian.

**District, All-State Music, State Thespian and State Dance Festivals**

Audition and State policy for choir, band, orchestra, theater, and dance:

Parents and students sign a form agreeing to the audition process and the costs if the student successfully makes it into All-State Music, State Thespian and/or State Dance Festivals.

**Westminster pays for:**
- Student’s audition fee
- Student’s registration fee
- Chaperone’s roundtrip mileage when driving students from school to an out-of-town event
- Extra badges for chaperones

**Parents/Students pay for:**
- Hotel
- Food
- Extra activity such as entertainment
- Reimbursement of Westminster’s costs if student reneges after committing

**Fine Arts/Athletics**

Developing the whole student in a faith-based setting and affording students opportunities to develop their potential in both Fine Arts and athletic programs is our desire and goal.

Fine Arts student-athletes are encouraged to participate in the performing arts and vice-versa. The Fine Arts teachers and Westminster athletic coaches work together with a Fine Arts student-athlete so that he/she can do both. Typically, the Fine Arts student-athlete attends afternoon theater rehearsals between 3:15 and 4:00 and then moves on to sports between 4:00 and 5:30.

If Westminster athletic practices conflict with Fine Arts rehearsals, the Fine Arts student/athlete must self-advocate a resolution with their coaches and Fine Arts teachers to facilitate a personal schedule for attending rehearsals, productions, concerts and trips so that he/she may be able to enjoy team sport tryouts, practices and games. It is important that students
communicate conflicts early to the Fine Arts teachers and coaches.

Fine Arts teachers will work together with the student and coaches to determine a student’s schedule. Theater students are not excused from rehearsals for participating in outside entities such as club sports. A Fine Arts student’s grade would never be compromised due to Westminster athletic scheduling conflicts.

District, regional, state tournaments, and Fine Arts concerts and plays take precedence in a schedule conflict over team practices and Fine Arts rehearsals. If an arrangement cannot be reached, the student should request a meeting with the Fine Arts Director to voice his/her concerns and work out a solution.

**Student/Parent Concerts**

Fine Arts strive for every student and his/her parent to have a positive experience. However, if questions or concerns arise, the student should first direct them to his/her teacher. If a satisfactory understanding is not reached, the student should bring his/her concern to the Fine Arts Director. The student may bring a parent or Fine Arts student with him/her for such a meeting. If an understanding has still not been reached, the parent and student should request a meeting with the teacher and the Fine Arts Director. The meeting would be held in the Fine Arts Office at a mutually agreed time.

**Calendar**

All Fine Arts events and performances are posted on the school’s web site calendar. Students receive a list of rehearsal dates and activities from their teachers at the beginning of the school year.

**Billing**

Fees and costs are tuition-billed unless otherwise stated.

**Westminster Fine Arts Affiliations**

Westminster competes on a county and state level in art, dance, band, choir, orchestra, film, and theater through professional Fine Arts education associations. Student Fine Arts national honor societies include memberships in the National Art Honor Society, National Tri-M Music Society, and International Thespian Honor Society. In addition, all five of the Advance Placement Fine Arts courses are offered: AP 2-D Art & Design, AP 3-D Art & Design, Art History, Music Theory, and AP Drawing.