



NOTRE DAME MARIST ACADEMY
LOWER DIVISION

What is the Primary Years Programme?

Notre Dame is an authorized International Baccalaureate World School, offering the Primary Years Programme to students in Junior Kindergarten through 5th grade. The PYP focuses on the development of the whole child as an inquirer, both in the classroom and in the world outside.

The most significant and distinctive feature of the PYP is the six transdisciplinary themes. These themes are about issues that have meaning for, and are important to, all of us. The programme offers a balance between learning about or through the subject areas, and learning beyond them. The six themes of global significance create a transdisciplinary framework that allows students to “step up” beyond the confines of learning within subject areas.

- Who we are
- Where we are in place and time
- How we express ourselves
- How the world works
- How we organize ourselves
- Sharing the planet

The Five Essential Elements

The five essential elements—concepts, knowledge, skills, attitudes, action—are incorporated into the PYP framework so that students are given the opportunity to:

- gain knowledge that is relevant and of global significance.
- develop an understanding of concepts, which allows them to make connections throughout their learning.
- acquire transdisciplinary and disciplinary skills.
- develop attitudes that will lead to international-mindedness.
- demonstrate deeper learning and responsible behavior through responsible action; a manifestation in practice of the other essential elements.

The Learner Profile

The learner profile describes a list of attributes that promote academic rigor and the establishing of a personal value system leading to international-mindedness. The programme encourages students to become:

Principled
Reflective
Communicators
Risk-Takers
Inquirers
Caring
Thinkers
Balanced
Open-Minded
Knowledgeable



IB in action

What's different about Notre Dame? Students learn with purpose. Consider some of these major lessons and how they fit into the IB framework.

JUNIOR KINDERGARTEN-4 – Students in “JK4” spend the first 12 weeks of school exploring the transdisciplinary theme of “How We Express Ourselves” as they learn how bodies change and grow, how choices have an impact, how feelings make us human, and how God made each of us different. For students who are new to school, they also learn how to adjust to a full school day. As the year goes on, students continue to develop socially and emotionally as they come to better understand who they are and why they are important.

1ST GRADE – When presented with the transdisciplinary theme “Where We Are In Place And Time,” 1st-grade students explore how people and events of the past affect our lives today. Students take a field trip to the EL Johnson Nature Center in Bloomfield Hills to experience what it is like to live like a child in the pioneer days, spending the morning in a real log cabin furnished with all the comforts of a home from the late 1800s. As a summative assessment at the end of the six-week unit, students utilize their technology skills to create a digital story with Web 2.0 tools, such as Prezi or Animoto. These stories reflect students’ understandings of the similarities and differences connecting generations.

4TH GRADE – When considering the transdisciplinary theme “How We Organize Ourselves,” 4th-grade students investigate how a country’s industries and resources contribute to its economic success. To demonstrate their understanding, students participate in a classroom “Mini-Economy” project, for which they are asked to conceptualize a unique product, do market research to see who would be interested in purchasing the product, then create, advertise and sell the product to the student body. Through this unit of study, 4th-graders gain knowledge of concepts impacting our global economy, such as supply and demand, profit, loss and cost.

5TH GRADE – Each spring every 5th-grade student participates in the Exhibition, the culminating project for the Primary Years Programme. Students are placed into small groups based upon their interest in a topic meaningful to them, then work collaboratively over a six-week period to research the topic, conduct interviews with experts, and synthesize their findings for an oral and visual presentation. Students also must present an action plan to explain how they will help solve the problem they have discovered in our global community.



From the Start

Brian Blakeslee '18 truly enjoyed a well-rounded experience as a student at Notre Dame for 13 years. Starting in kindergarten in 2005-06, Brian eventually made his way to the middle and then upper divisions of the school. During his four years at NDP, Brian played soccer and baseball—serving as team captain for both varsity squads—as well as basketball. Brian's love for sports carried over to “press row,” where he provided play-by-play and color commentary at various Fighting Irish contests for the Broadcasting Club.

Outside the lines Brian served as secretary of the Multicultural Alliance, and also participated in Campus Ministry's peer leadership program. In the classroom he excelled in English and Physical Education courses, receiving certificates of excellence in both subjects as a senior.

Brian, whose two younger siblings also attend Notre Dame, recognizes that NDPMA is more than a school. “I am proud to call Notre Dame my family and home,” he says. “There is no better place to discover yourself.”

What you might find, according to Brian, is a school that can meet the needs of a variety of students. “NDP is not just filled with a bunch of brainiacs and bookworms; it is full of unique individuals with lots of different interests,” he says. “At Notre Dame I was able to learn how to build and maintain a healthy schedule consisting of faith, family, friends, school, and sports.”

Brian now is a freshman at John Carroll University in University Heights, Ohio, where he intends to major in communications and hopes to take advantage of an opportunity to study abroad. Brian also will be playing baseball for the Blue Streaks.

According to Brian, all his future exploits will take a backseat to one important thing. “I plan on continuing to live out the Notre Dame mission and being the best person I can be,” he says. “Hopefully it will be contagious with everyone I encounter along the way.”

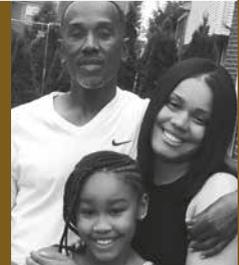
So they say.

Notre Dame asked three Lower Division students—and their parents—what they like most about NDMA and why our school may be the right fit for your family.

DAKOTA RAE (GRADE 5*)

"I love all the fun activities and my teachers at Notre Dame. Mrs. Dugan is my favorite because she is creative, kind, and always thinking of her students. I would tell a new student that everyone here will make the change easy for you, and that you will have fun learning new things." – Dakota Rae

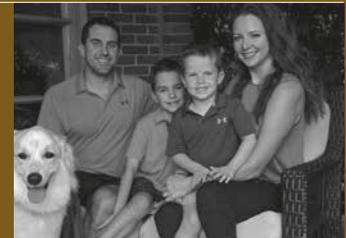
"We selected Notre Dame for our daughter because of the strong education and the low student-to-teacher ratio. The academics are challenging and the teacher involvement is amazing, but the safe and loving atmosphere is at the top of our list." – Sandra and Orlando



ROBBY (GRADE 3*)

"I love my teachers at my school. They're all really nice. I also love going to technology and music class. Mrs. Hall is one of my favorite teachers. She knows so much about music. I play guitar, and one day she shared one of my videos with my class. I felt like I was a rock star! If you are thinking of coming to Notre Dame, I would say, 'Come on! It'll be fun!'" – Robby

"Small class size was a priority when deciding on a school for our children. We also were impressed with the IB curriculum and how each phase relates what the children are learning to the real world. Notre Dame is a wonderful community to belong to. There are so many kind and caring people involved in and employed by the school. We feel like our son has been enriched as well as educated. We are very excited for our younger son to join his brother at NDMA this year." – Lexie and Dave



BRAEDEN (KINDERGARTEN*)

"I love the teachers, playing with all my friends, and technology class because I love to learn on my iPad. You should come to Notre Dame for the kids—all my new friends are great—the teachers, and all the different classes, especially P.E. and technology!" – Braeden

"Both of us went to Catholic schools growing up—Matt at Notre Dame—so for us, the choice to come to NDPMA was a simple one. Once we visited the school, it immediately felt like home. We met some of the teachers and administration, learned about the IB program, and knew it was where our kids were meant to be! We have been extremely happy about our choice ever since. We certainly would encourage anyone interested to tour the school, meet some of the staff, and meet some of the children. If you do, you'll see what we saw: an incredible school and community!" – Tracy and Matt



*denotes grade of student in 2018-19.



NOTRE DAME

Notre Dame Marist Academy—Lower Division (grades JK–5)

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