

Hour of Code in Darien Public Schools to Prep Kids for the Tech Future

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Dynamic presenters, programmable robots, and endless opportunities to experiment and tinker will be available for students across the district early this month.

The Darien Public Schools, along with millions of students in more than 180 countries, will again be joining the Hour of Code.

The Hour of Code started as a way to get students interested in coding, and has evolved into a worldwide celebration of computer science. For students, it also encourages problem-solving and creativity all while having some fun.

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Library media specialists, computer teachers, administrators, students, classroom staff, and school-based PTOs have coordinated a variety of events for this year.

The following are some of the activities being planned at each school:

Darien High School

Hour of Code will be held on Wednesday, Dec. 6 during all school periods in the day. Students will have the option to do several things in any given time slot. They can practice coding from watching video tutorials on the *Hour of Code* site, “play” in the Makerspace with various hands-on activities, or attend a session on Python, Java, Arduino, or Game Design presented by iTeam and Programming Club students.

Middlesex Middle School

All students are invited to an after school (2:30 to 3:45 p.m.) Code.org Event on Tuesday, Dec. 5 in the Media Center. Computer classes in the 7th and 8th grades will be programming and coding during the week in their computer class.

Hindley

Hour of Code Week brings unique opportunities to Hindley School each year. We are proud to recognize that every teacher and student participates in this international event!

Our tech buddies meet at coordinated times and locations throughout the school during the course of the entire week. In addition, classes will participate in “unplugged” activities in the library that are designed to build fundamental coding language.

We create Gingerbread Escape Routes and solve “Elf-O-Rithms.” Furthering the theme, library visits provide the opportunity to explore Color Coding with Ozobots, Scratch Coding from MIT, and Finch Coded Robots from Carnegie Mellon. This year we will be submitting our ideas and questions directly to researchers at Carnegie Mellon University.

Holmes

The students at Holmes school will be participating in Hour of Code in partnership activities. The younger students will be paired with an older student as a coding buddy and they will be able to use the activities on the [Code.org](https://code.org) site.

In addition to using the Code.org site, there will be some activities in the library that will offer students “unplugged” centers as well as continuing work on the Code.org activities.

Ox Ridge

“Computer science is changing every industry on the planet. Every 21st-century student should have the opportunity to learn how to create technology. Computer science concepts also help nurture creativity and problem-solving skills to prepare students for any future career.” —

[HourofCode.com](https://hourofcode.com).

We will provide a whole school paired programming experience on Dec. 4 and 11. Leading up to our whole school Hour of Code Days, all students in Grades K-2 are working on hands on coding activities during their fixed classes.

These activities include coding Bee-Bots, Code and Go Mice, a Cubetto (storytelling with coding), and working on coding games from Hourofcode.com.

Students in Grades 3 to 5 are visiting the library for “coding training” in order to prepare for their buddy programming day.

The training includes revving students up for their Hour of Code of days, explaining the difference between “driver” and “navigator,” and asking students to choose an appropriate and fun coding activity for their younger buddies.

Students from DHS will also be joining in to help students with programming. A guest speaker from COMPUCHILD of Fairfield is working with first grade students in their library classes in order to supplement their coding work with more hands on activities.

We are also inviting Sarah Judd, from Girls Who Code, to join us for our Hour of Code Days. The library space will also have littleBits Code kits, Cubelets, and a Dash Robot available for exploration.

Royle

Royle students (K-5) will learn about computer programming through online tutorials and exploring hands-on activity stations around the library. The Kids Care Club is hosting a “Code-a-thon”, Wednesday, Dec. 6.

Students will celebrate their love of coding while giving back to the community. Sponsors will give donations for each line of code written. Proceeds will support “Emerging Technology and Computer Science Resources” for the library.

Tokeneke

All students in grades K through 5 will participate in the schoolwide Hour of Code event on Dec 1. Students will be pair programming using the activities on the Code.org site. The younger student (driver) will be

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paired with an older student (navigator).

The younger student will write code while the older student offers assistance and suggestions when needed. After 25 minutes, the younger grades will return to class and the older students will be able to practice code writing on their own.

During the week of Dec. 4, students in Grades 4 to 5 will have the opportunity to work with the littleBits code kits to create programmable circuits using the littleBits app on their Chromebooks.

— Marc Marin is district director of instructional technology. This article is republished from the Darien Public Schools News of the Week newsletter. Except for the photo caption — you can blame that on Darienite.com.