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**Friends Academy**

**Strong Minds.**
**Kind Hearts.**
Friends Academy  
Lower School Course of Study

Introduction
Welcome to the Lower School! The years your child spends in the Lower School are filled with surprise, discovery, and achievement. These are the foundation years, and it is our goal to ensure that each child leaves the Lower School with a solid sense of self, a love of learning, and a curiosity for life that enables him or her to approach new opportunities with confidence and competence.

This guide provides parents with some general information and an overview of our philosophy and practices in the Lower School. It includes straightforward answers to some parents’ most frequently asked questions.

Philosophy
Quaker philosophy is at the heart of our school, and Quaker beliefs permeate daily life, providing a framework for the continuing revelation of each student’s unique gifts. Quakers believe that everyone may have direct experience of God by affirming that there is ‘that of God in everyone.” The Quaker tenets of simplicity, moderation, equality, resolution of conflict through nonviolent means, community service, and shared decision-making are interwoven throughout the fabric of school life. These tenets are manifested in the following ways:

Meeting for Worship
Meeting for Worship is the center of Quaker life and at the heart of a Friends school. We gather together as a community in a silence that grows deeper as it progresses. Anyone may speak if they feel inspired to do so, since everyone can be a minister with insights to share. Generally, grades two through five meet on Thursday mornings at 8:30 a.m. in the Matinecock Meeting House while the younger students have Meeting in their classrooms. On special occasions, such as Thanksgiving, Kindergarten through fifth grade students travel to the Meeting House for a special Meeting for Worship with the entire Lower School Community.

Other Quaker-related activities
Gathering
We hold a Gathering every week in the library, before Meeting for Worship to discuss the life of the school, share ideas and give notice to school activities. Every child in the Lower School gathers in the library, and for a short time we are one. At Gathering we speak about special holidays and cultural events, hear a story, sing songs, or discuss community service and more.

Worship Sharing
Oftentimes the Lower School students do not go to Meeting for Worship but stay in their classrooms for worship sharing. “Worship sharing is a kind of guided meditation. By focusing on a particular question, it helps us to explore our own experience and share with each other more deeply than we would in normal conversation. It seeks to draw us into sacred space, where we can take down our usual defenses, and encounter each other in ‘that which is eternal.’” Worship sharing is intimate and gives the most reserved student the opportunity to share what is on his mind.
Quakerism in the Lower School

- Daily use of moment of silence and handshake
- Class period designated in the weekly schedule for Community Meeting
- Quaker-in-Residence regular classroom visits and programs
- Query-based approach (using the testimonies as a framework)
- Lower School TASQUE (Teachers And Students for QUaker Education) is a committee of teachers and students in grades 3, 4 and 5 devoted to educating the school community about Quaker beliefs and practices.
- Stories (library books, Candles In The Dark, etc.)
- Songs (George Fox song, Harriet Tubman, Lucretia Mott, Magic Penny, etc.)
- Journaling (each student keeps a “Quakerism journal”)
- Papers/ideas/presentations at Gathering
- Ongoing family service projects (get the parents and siblings on board…)
- Pen pals with other Quaker elementary schools/ share ideas/video/skype visits
- “Meeting buddies” from other classes
- Worship sharing sessions (activity taught by Quakers on the faculty…)
- Outside speakers/resources

Meeting for Community

Starting in Early Childhood, the children take part in a weekly community meeting where students and teachers participate in open dialogue about their collective triumphs and concerns. When issues of concern arise, the group strives to formulate consensual solutions. There are many opportunities throughout every day for students to practice the peaceful resolution of conflict. It is not uncommon to see teachers huddled with a small group of children (also known as “small g’s”) as they facilitate a resolution to the occasional conflicts that arise between individuals and among groups of children.

During Meeting for Community, the children are introduced to a Testimony of the Month. Each month, the children will learn about one of the testimonies in SPICES and we will implement that testimony into our daily curriculum. At the start of the school year, the children learn about simplicity, the first testimony, with a read aloud titled, Wabi Sabi by Mark Reibstein.

TASQUE (Teachers And Students for Quaker Understanding and Education)

Lower School TASQUE is a committee of teachers, the Quaker-in-Residence and students devoted to educating the school community about Quaker beliefs and practices. TASQUE is open to children of all different faiths and beliefs. In fact, we believe the greater the diversity, the richer the experiences are for the students. The activities and projects are student-centered and children in grades 3, 4 and 5 are invited to participate. Students who agree to be part of TASQUE make a commitment to be involved in a project that usually spans about three months.

Community Service

Consistent with our Quaker mission that emphasizes “caring service to others,” children participate in hands-on, age-appropriate service learning activities. Some of our recent efforts have included making holiday care packages for hospitalized children, collecting food for St. Patrick’s Outreach Center in Glen Cove, and participating in “The Magic Wand Project,” which challenges kids to spread random acts of kindness around the community. Several grade specific projects are done in conjunction with our global studies, such as the sponsorship of an animal at the Australian zoo. More immediately, the children are involved in daily activities and interactions that foster caring service to one another in the classroom and at school.

Responsive Classroom

The Responsive Classroom is a classroom management philosophy that will help:
- Build community
- Teach social skills
- Create a trusting partnership between home and school
- Utilize best practices including collaboration and multiple intelligences
General Information

Teachers and Teams

Our Lower School Teachers

• All of our classroom teachers have undergraduate degrees from accredited private and public colleges and universities;
• Most teachers hold master’s degrees when they are hired and all are encouraged to participate in the professional development program.
• Individuals with special talents and skills
• Their personal and professional goals must be consistent with Quaker philosophy and mission.

The Lower School is divided into four teams:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Team</th>
<th>Grades</th>
<th>Teachers per grade</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Early Childhood</td>
<td>Play Group, Pre-Kindergarten</td>
<td>2 teachers each</td>
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<tr>
<td>K/1</td>
<td>Grades Kindergarten &amp; 1</td>
<td>2 teachers each</td>
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<td>2/3</td>
<td>Grades 2 &amp; 3</td>
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<td>Grades 4 &amp; 5</td>
<td>2 teachers grade 4</td>
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<td>3 teachers grade 5</td>
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We have small teaching groups at Friends ranging from 12 to 16 per class. Our enrollment structure is shaped somewhat like an inverted pyramid, with usually fewer than 16 children in our Early Childhood classes, increasing gradually to 45 in 5th grade. Instructional groups range in size from roughly 6 to 16 students per teacher. Reading groups range from 6 to 8 students per teacher through fourth grade.

Extended Day Programs

In Lower School we have an extended day component connected with our popular Enrichment Program. Extended Day begins on the first day of school, and enrichment starts soon after. Enrichment is divided into two ten-week sessions, with consideration of holidays. Enrichment began simply providing after school chess and Chinese, and now our offerings are quite expansive.

After School Enrichment Program

The Lower School Enrichment Program runs from Monday through Thursday in the fall and again in the spring. These enrichment programs are Monday through Thursday from 3:30 to 4:30 p.m. Snacks and water are provided. To accommodate the varied learning levels, there are generally three sections: EC, K-2nd and 3rd-5th. A sampling of offerings include: chess, Chinese, sports, specialized cooking, aerodynamics, robotics and much more.

After School Extended Day Program

The after school Extended Day Program gives students an opportunity to continue the socialization aspects of their day by engaging in activities. This is a fun, exciting, and interactive program. We bake, do arts and crafts, and have outdoor play. In addition, we set aside time for assistance with homework with the help of responsible adults. There are also games, puzzles, legos, jewelry making and bead work, pretend play, and other stimulating activities. We will also include special visitors such as authors, illustrators, and the Teddy Roosevelt Sanctuary, as well as, other exciting special presentations.

Parents may choose to enroll their student in the Drop-in Service. This service enrolls your child in Extended Day with 24-hour notice for an additional fee.

Snacks and Lunch

All children are served a light snack at mid-morning in their classrooms. All students in grades Kindergarten - 5 have lunch in the dining commons with their teachers and have the option of subscribing to our Meal Plan (a description of this plan is provided by the school’s business office at the time of enrollment). Early Childhood children bring their lunch and eat in the Withington Early Childhood Center.

Bus Service

Friends Academy students may apply to their local school districts for bus service. This application must be made by April 1st and applies to those students who live within a 15-mile radius of the school.
Lower School Goes Global

The Lower School Goes Global program seeks to ensure that students will become successful learners and responsible citizens with a global perspective. The goals of the program are to encourage students to respect, value and celebrate other cultures, as well as to become more socially and environmentally responsible. As a result, students become aware of the interconnectedness of the human and natural environment in our world.

Each year, beginning in Early Childhood through fifth grade, students focus on a specific continent and its nations in order to gain age-appropriate knowledge about the geography, history, and culture of the area. To promote student learning, the use of literature, music, folklore, and art are employed by teachers, as well as a wide variety of web-based geospatial tools, including Google Earth and National Geographic’s Map Maker Interactive. In addition, a comparative learning approach is taken, which enables students to understand similarities among cultures, as well as differing and distinctive qualities.

A wide range of activities takes place in the classroom, such as correspondence with e-pals from around the world, visiting museum exhibits and cultural arts performances, cooking and craft explorations, and service projects aimed at helping the regions of study. In addition, integrated learning through science, art, and music classes are paramount to the program’s success.

While learning occurs throughout the year, the Lower School also holds a culminating event, “Lower School Goes Global,” featuring interactive class presentations in April. Parents are invited in to attend this celebration and students are able to explore the work of other classes.
Early Childhood

The Early Childhood Center combines three-year-olds and four- and five-year-old children. This multi-age group atmosphere offers numerous benefits to all children. The older children become role models of positive behaviors as the younger children learn from them through observation. This peer mentoring is also beneficial in cognitive development and allows the children to thrive in a family-like environment.

**Language Arts**

In the 3s program, children are introduced to literacy skills that are fundamental to our program. In the 4s program, teachers continue to act as guides, increasing the opportunities for self-discovery, and continuing to promote students’ exploration of their environment at their own pace.

Everyone in the Early Childhood Program (both 3s and 4s) participates in Letterland and the Book-in-Hand Program. Children work in small group settings to allow for personalized and individualized instruction. Teachers begin with the Book-in-Hand Program, which puts identical books in the hands of the teacher and the students as the teacher reads aloud. The students are engaged in the book as an art form while they become familiar with the emerging book discussion, order of text, etc. In this program, the children read with their teachers rather than their teachers reading to them. In the 3-year-old group, phonics are added through Letterland, an imaginary land populated with pictogram-based characters, which connect each letter’s shape and sound to a character. “Letterland is a system for teaching children basic literacy: how to read, write and spell using a synthetic phonics approach.”

The 4-year-old group builds off of the Letterland program and progresses to a comprehensive literacy program incorporating alphabet recognition, phonemic awareness, letter sound recognition, and sight word recognition. Children focus on one letter per week integrating the specific letter with a cross-curricular center based model of instruction.

Additionally, the 4s are introduced to the Lucy Calkins Writing Workshop. Children will develop ideas for writing, discuss their ideas with the teacher, and create individual writings with pictures and letters and words. Children participate in independent writing on a daily basis. Writing is shared with their peers in small intimate group settings.

We also investigate several themes throughout the year, such as Community Helpers, Farm and Garden and Sea Life. In our Famous Artists unit, children study the techniques of nine master painters, one each month, including Pollock, Degas and Picasso.

**Math & Science**

Math skills are introduced and supported through games, learning centers and more. Our 4-year-old students are introduced to the more formal Everyday Math sequence. Friday is Cooking Day at the Early Childhood Center. Children learn math through measuring, science from observing a change in ingredients, literacy by reading recipes, as well as cultural and nutrition-related experiences. They work together in teams and build their collaborative skills. The last Friday of the month is Family Baking Day. Each parent has the opportunity to sign up to join us in baking with the children.

**Social Studies**

From November until an all-school culminating activity in April, we have our global education in social studies and other disciplines. The program is called Lower School Goes Global and the children study the continent of Antarctica. All parents are invited to the school for some portion of that day.

The 3-year-old group studies Antarctica for Global and discover the amazing animals that survive that frigid terrain. The 4s study Hawaii, including the culture, climate and animal life of this interesting group of islands.
World Languages & Music
Spanish instruction is offered three times per week. Music instruction is offered two times per week. Multi-cultural instruments are a focus of study in the Early Childhood classroom curriculum.

Fine & Large Motor Development

Music & Movement
Our three-year-olds build new worlds and places with our Block program, which also helps foster large-motor muscles. Children participate in music on a regular basis throughout the week.

Physical Education
Students travel three times a week to the Field House, a space used by all for physical education, where they focus on development of gross motor skills, turn taking and following directions.

Problem Solving & Community Building
The ability to solve problems within a group setting starts with our youngest students. Children sit in a circle and learn to make good eye contact with each other as well as shake each other’s hands. We ask our children to address the highlights and low points from the week in order to work through a problem. Guided by our Quaker principles, children learn to truly listen to each other.
Kindergarten

Our specialized and unique program fosters a genuine love of learning in our students coupled with the heartfelt understanding of others. Students will leave Kindergarten as emergent readers, where each student will be reading at some level. Students will also emerge from Kindergarten with confidence as well as a sense of security with who they are and how they contribute to their community.

**Language Arts**

*Wilson Fundations* – A multisensory language program that provides children of all learning abilities with a solid foundation for reading, spelling and handwriting. In Fundations, phonics, word study, and handwriting skills are taught explicitly and cumulatively. Children have extensive opportunities to practice and apply their skills both in school and at home.

*Sounds in Motion* – A program that supports and enriches Fundations by incorporating body movements based on the articulation of each letter sound. Sounds in Motion helps with the perception and production of specific phonemes and helps the students associate each letter sound with its written symbol. As a result, the program improves the students’ receptive and expressive (oral and written) language skills.

*Balanced Literacy* – An approach to reading where each day the students engage in each of the following: read alouds, independent reading, shared reading and guided reading. Shared reading is interactive reading experience that occurs when students join in or share the reading of an enlarged text while guided and supported by a teacher. Students observe the teacher reading the text with fluency and expression. In guided reading, students are challenged at their instructional level in small groups of 3 to 5 children. Using questions and coaching statements, the teacher guides the children to the author’s message and reinforces particular literacy skills, such as strategies to figure out unknown words and how to deal with difficult sentence structures.

*Writing Workshop* – Children plan, draft, revise, publish, and celebrate their writing. They explore various genres including true stories, scientific and procedural writing (How-To Books), informational and persuasive writing. Writer’s Workshop begins with teachers and children coming together for a mini-lesson, during which direct instruction in a particular skill is provided. Students then write independently, while teachers confer with individuals or small groups with similar needs. At the end of the workshop, there are opportunities for sharing. The goal is to practice communicating ideas, gain confidence, hone skills, and enjoy writing.

**Mathematics**

The Kindergarten class uses the Envisions math program which aligns itself with the common core standards. The students are provided with frequent opportunities to discover and explore the interrelationships among a broad range of mathematical topics. Technology is an integral part of the program, coupled with the use of computer programs and calculators. A variety of math manipulatives are used to help the children understand the concepts taught in each unit. This hands-on method makes abstract math ideas concrete through the use of visuals and frequently allows students to solve problems they might not otherwise be able to solve.

**Social Studies**

In grades K-2, students begin to develop awareness about self, family, neighborhoods, and communities large and small. Community service is also integrated in our social studies curriculum. Teachers teach the children the importance of giving and how to help others by collecting cans for local charities and hosting a coin drive to sponsor an animal. From November until an all-school culminating activity in April, we have our global education in social studies and other disciplines. The program is called Lower School Goes Global, and all parents are invited to the school for some portion of that day. In this event, Kindergarten studies Australia.
Kindergarten (continued)

Responsive Classroom
This is an approach to teaching that creates a warm, safe and happy learning environment. Responsive Classroom supports students in taking risks, learning and reaching their full potential. It also teaches the children how to take ownership in their classroom and school. They learn how to work together by cooperating and including others during activities and through morning meeting they learn to improve their communication skills and gain confidence.

Quakerism
We introduce the incredibly valuable philosophy of Quakerism into the Kindergarten classroom. Each day starts and ends with a moment of silence and happy thoughts. In Meeting for Worship, the children are introduced to a Testimony of the Month. Each month, the children will learn about one of the Quaker testimonies in SPICES (Simplicity, Peace, Integrity, Community, Equality and Stewardship) and we implement the monthly testimony into our Meeting for Worship queries as well as our daily curriculum.
First Grade

Our program focuses on helping students and teachers make connections for learning, vital links that unite all aspects of the curriculum. Quaker beliefs permeate daily life with an emphasis on the discovery of each student’s unique gifts. The Quaker tenets of simplicity, moderation, equality, resolution of conflict through nonviolent means, community service, and shared decision-making are interwoven throughout the curriculum.

Language Arts
Balanced literacy begins with creating a genuine appreciation for good literature. In first grade children are involved in daily reading, writing, speaking, and listening experiences related to learning what good readers and writers do. Direct instruction teaching phonics, grammar skills, reading and comprehension strategies, and writing skills are the foundation of our program. Some of the key components include shared reading, guided reading, and independent reading. Writing instruction includes modeled or interactive writing, shared writing, guided writing (Writing Workshop) and independent writing. Teacher read alouds model fluency and expression and allow for opportunities for students to be exposed to a wide variety of texts.

*Wilson Fundations* – Teachers build on students’ foundation in letter formation, print knowledge, alphabetic awareness, phonological and phonemic awareness. Multisensory routines initiated in Kindergarten continue and additional techniques are introduced. Students receive explicit and systematic instruction in word structure and have multiple opportunities to practice and apply skills such as blends, digraphs, basewords, suffixes, syllable types, and high frequency words when spelling and reading. Vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension are also important components of the first grade Fundations program.

*Guided Reading* – Students continue to learn in small groups at their instructional level. Student progress is ensured by regular, individual assessments and flexible grouping procedures. First grade Guided Reading instruction is bolstered by a large collection of quality children’s literature. Within their groups, students have daily opportunities to practice their skills and add to their repertoire of reading strategies. Emphasis is placed on word recognition, phonics, vocabulary, and literal and interpretive comprehension and students have frequent opportunities to write about their reading.

*Writing Workshop* – Through the first grade Writing Workshop, students learn that there is a process that underlies what all writers do. Through mini-lessons and the close study of grade-level literature, students receive direct and explicit instruction in the skills and strategies of proficient writing. They engage in frequent, goal-driven practice within various genres such as narrative, persuasive and informational writing and they benefit from regular assessment-based feedback. As in all Writing Workshops, students draft, revise, publish and celebrate their wonderful work.

Mathematics
We use the Everyday Mathematics program in first grade. Using a spiral approach, the students are instructed in multiple methods and strategies for problem solving. Our goal is to create a classroom environment in which children are engaged in exploring, learning and using math in real-world problem-solving opportunities. Manipulatives and math centers are incorporated to allow children to develop mathematical thinking using a hands on approach. Math concepts including numeration, operations and computation, data and chance, geometry, measurement, patterns, functions and algebra are introduced and then revisited throughout the year.

Social Studies
The first grade social studies program focuses on helping students learn about their role as members of a family and school community. The development of identity and social interaction are stressed. Students engage in a study of our class as readers and writers and explore their families and family histories. Our studies of holidays, as well as Quakerism, will be interspersed throughout the year. From November until an all-school culminating activity in April, we have our global education in social studies and other disciplines. The program is called Lower School Goes Global, and all parents are invited to the school for this important event. First grade studies North America.
Second Grade

We continue to foster a love of reading by teaching how to choose books that are just right for the child. We teach strategies for making good book choices, including how to know if a book is easy, just right or challenging. We also teach how to “buzz” which means to talk to their peers about books they have read.

Language Arts

*Wilson Fundations* - The carefully structured scope and sequence of this wonderful hands-on program enables teachers and students to build on previously taught skills and provides the framework and routines for introducing new concepts. In second grade students learn to identify all six syllable types, read and spell words with short, long and r-controlled vowels and vowel teams as well as those with unexpected vowel sounds. Explicit irregular word instruction continues and emphasis is placed on mechanics such as capitalization and punctuation as well as vocabulary, fluency and comprehension. As always frequent opportunities for skill practice and application are provided.

*Guided Reading & Literature Circles* - Second graders begin the year in small Guided Reading groups at their instructional level. They review and hone their reading strategies, build their fluency, and explore many facets of comprehension. Midway through the year, the students explore quality books through literature circles. While still small groups, these are now temporary and are based upon book choice. Students have specific roles in their literature circles and there is a sense of excitement about the chosen books. Within group meetings, students have open, natural conversations and open-ended questions and personal connections are encouraged and valued. In addition to building reading skills, literature circles engender a respect for one another as learners and thinkers.

*Writing Workshop* - This writing process approach continues to be at the heart of writing instruction in second grade. Through mini-lessons, practice and publishing, students explore writing across the narrative, opinion and informational genres. They have opportunities to demonstrate command of the conventions of grammar, capitalization, punctuation and spelling and they build confidence in their ability to communicate their ideas when writing. The Writing Workshop experience is enhanced by quality mentor text literature and one-on-one teacher/student conferences. Students regularly share and celebrate their work with one another.

Mathematics

The scope of the K-6 Everyday Mathematics curriculum includes the following mathematical strands:

- Algebra and Uses of Variables
- Data and Chance
- Geometry and Spatial Sense
- Measures and Measurement
- Numeration and Order
- Patterns, Functions, and Sequences
- Operations
- Reference Frames

Social Studies

Our Social Studies curriculum starts with learning about each other by using the Responsive Classroom. We teach and model what it means to be a part of a Peaceable Classroom. After reading and examining the book *The Peaceable Kingdom* by Ewa Zadrzynska and the painting of the same name by Edward Hicks, we speak about ways in which we can have peace in our classroom. Through our literature-based exploration of the different holidays, we are able to discuss different cultures and religions.

We also provide the students with the opportunity to apply their knowledge of maps and globes, neighborhoods and communities. We also incorporate a field trip to a local town.

From November until an all-school culminating activity in April, we have our global education in social studies and other disciplines. The program is called Lower School Goes Global, and all parents are invited to the school for some portion of that day. 2nd grade studies South America.
Third Grade

When entering the third grade classroom, it is immediately apparent that building community, strengthening respectful behavior, and utilizing methods endorsed by the Responsive Classroom and supported by Quaker Values is focused in the day’s work. Throughout the year, the foundation for a respectful community is being taught, emphasized and practiced.

Under the guidance of their teacher, the children establish the base upon which the community operates and thrives. Community Meetings provide opportunities to problem solve and when necessary, make the appropriate “apology of action.” The children learn from the moment they walk through the door that this is a safe place to be: growing as a learner, the children discover that it is alright to make mistakes, learn from them, and move on.

Language Arts

*Reading Workshop:* The third grade language arts curriculum is built around the Lucy Calkins Reading and Writing Workshop model. Building “stamina” and “volume” are at the core of both curriculums and one of the main focal points of our teaching, which is why we continually ask the children to read, read, read. In the Reading Workshop the students read a variety of genres including historical novels, realistic fiction, biographies, mysteries and a wide range of non-fiction books. We meet in small groups for guided reading focusing on different reading strategies such as: Using prior knowledge to make connections with the text, pausing and monitoring for understanding, and making inferences supported by information found in the text. The students learn to identify the different story elements, to recognize how the author uses language when telling the story, to analyzing characters and their motives, and to expand their vocabulary. Learning the difference between an inferential question and a literal one gives the students the opportunity to learn how to dig deeper into the meaning of the story, while at the same time strengthens their comprehension skills. We ask the students to be watchful and observant readers and thinkers.

*Writing Workshop:* In the Writing Workshop, the students focus on personal narratives, informational books, and persuasive arguments. In all units the children work through the writing process: Developing their ideas, writing a rough draft, revising their work, editing, and publishing. In the personal narrative they learn how to expand their writing by using dialogue and good expression. The informational unit calls for them to “write like an expert” about a topic that they are most connected with and one that is the most familiar to them. Persuasive writing teaches students how to collect evidence to support bold, brave opinions through speech writing, editorials, and persuasive letters. Our spelling program is differentiated according a student’s specific needs. We incorporate Words Their Way into the spelling curriculum in which students are taught different spelling patterns in small groups and are given a “No Excuses” word list of high frequency words, which they are expected to know. The students then apply the skills they have learned in their writing. For both workshops, each student has a reading and writing partner in order to provide opportunities to work together discussing what they are reading and writing.

Mathematics

Our Everyday Math program encourages students to become mathematical thinkers, to realize that there are many ways to solve a problem, and to facilitate the teaching and learning from one another. The crux of our program is presented through the use of the SmartBoard, an interactive device designed to include all students. While the use of technology can be seen throughout all areas of the third grade curriculum, it is never more so than in math with a close second being social studies.

Social Studies

The third grade community is built around the acronym C.A.R.E.S., which stands for Cooperation, Assertion, Respect, Empathy, and Self-Control. Students work in cooperative groups to create and develop rules based on these principles. This work sets the tone for developing a global orientation in children and prepares them to become informed and successful global citizens. The third grade curriculum focuses on communities around the world and culminates in our Lower School Goes Global event in the spring; the students showcase their study of Europe to fellow students, their parents and members of the Friends Academy community. The children learn research skills, which incorporates literature, technology, and geographical study. Our Quaker commitment to diversity and the investigation of different cultures, not only within our school community, but also within the broader global community gives the students a wider understanding of the many different people with whom they share the earth.
Fourth Grade

Our aim is to expose the children to and help them make connections with different types of literature. At the same time, we hope to encourage a love of learning and a sense of excitement about the material covered. Through their interaction with literature, students strengthen existing decoding skills, acquire new vocabulary, and enhance their comprehension skills. Small reading groups provide an opportunity for each child to actively participate in reading groups discussions and cooperative activities based on the literary selections.

Language Arts – Balanced Literacy Program

The goal of the fourth grade literacy program is to create a more analytical approach to reading and writing. Through immersion in quality literature, students strengthen their existing decoding skills, acquire new vocabulary and enhance their comprehension of the material read. Children are exposed to a variety of genres, some of which are directly connected to our social studies curriculum. Assessing students’ comprehension is done through group discussion, diverse levels of questioning, dramatic play and activities such as games, the arts, and cooking.

To quote Lucy Calkins, founder of the Writing Workshop, “We need to provide children the opportunity and instruction necessary for them to cycle through the writing process regularly as they write, rehearse, draft, revise, edit, and publish their writing.” The fourth grade writing program encourages each child to think about him or herself as special and to continue the foundation laid in their previous writing lessons. There is continuity across the Lower School as writing traits, such as ideas, organization, voice, word choice, sentence fluency, and conventions are used to augment the Writing Workshop. Fourth graders write in many different genres, but focus on narrative, informational, and persuasive writing.

The spelling program is supported by the Everyday Spelling curriculum, which develops and strengthens previously taught skills and strategies. Students also learn to target their own commonly misspelled words and to become more proficient spellers. Grammar skills are addressed through specific instruction and daily review of material taught.

Mathematics

Fourth grade Everyday Mathematics emphasizes the following content strands: Numeration, Operations and Computation, Data and Chance, Geometry, Measurement and Reference Frames, Patterns, Functions and Algebra.

The units during the year focus on the following areas:
1. A problem-solving approach based on everyday situations that develops critical thinking.
2. Mathematical communication, including understanding and evaluating the mathematical thinking and strategies of others.
3. Frequent practice of basic skills through ongoing program routines and mathematical games.
4. An instructional approach that revisits topics regularly to ensure full concept development.
5. Activities that explore a wide variety of mathematical content and offer opportunities for students to apply their knowledge.

Social Studies

Fourth grade begins by exploring the history of New York State, including Long Island. Students study map skills, the economy and how it has changed, citizenship and government, as well as the history of the region. Areas of history include: the American Revolution, European Exploration and Colonial Life, the building of the Erie Canal, the Underground Railroad and the influx of migrants in the late 19th and 20th centuries. They also read a weekly social studies newspaper called, “New York Studies Weekly.”

From November until an all-school culminating activity in April, we have our global education in social studies and other disciplines. The program is called Lower School Goes Global, and all parents are invited to the school for some portion of that day. Fourth grade explores Africa.
Fifth Grade

Fifth grade is a transitional year. Students learn how to develop and strengthen the necessary skills both academically and socially that allow them to make a smooth shift from being a lower school student to entering the wonders of middle school. Much is changing in their world, and the focus is on reinforcing the values they have been taught through the Quaker tenets as well as the lessons they have learned through Responsive Classroom teachings. The goal is to foster independent, responsible, and confident rising sixth graders. This is a collaborative effort that is infused throughout the curriculum, supported by faculty in all special areas, and strengthened through numerous interactive games, activities, and discussions.

Language Arts

Reading and writing have a powerful interrelationship. When the students are learning how to think about texts as readers, they are also learning how to notice the craft of writing. The hope is to inspire and foster a lifelong love of language in all forms this year.

During reading instruction, students explore genres and develop a variety of reading skills. By incorporating the Reading Workshop model, students’ appreciation for reading is enhanced, as is their understanding of the many reasons we read. Students have opportunities to choose their books, and they read every day, thereby building both their reading stamina and volume. They strengthen their capacity to make text-to-self, text-to-text, and text-to-world connections and broaden their knowledge of literary works. The ability to understand plot elements, comprehend texts, and reflect on reading both verbally and in writing are at the heart of our reading program.

Consistent with the Lower School’s commitment to the Lucy Calkins Writing Workshop, fifth grade students continue to build on the skills and strategies that have been introduced, taught, practiced, and developed since Kindergarten. Writing traits such as ideas, organization, voice, word choice, sentence fluency, and conventions are explored in depth, and the students are expected to produce a high quality of writing in three major genres: personal narrative, opinion/persuasive, and research-based/informational writing. The Writing Workshop also supports other genres such as realistic fiction, fantasy, and poetry. Taking a piece to publication is the same in all genres: collect and select notebook entries, draft, revise, edit, and publish.

Our language arts program addresses grammar, spelling, and vocabulary through direct instruction, active student participation, and ongoing review of students’ written work. In grammar, we study sentence structure, nouns, verbs, adjectives, prepositions, capitalization and punctuation, and adverbs. In spelling, students learn to generalize spelling sounds, patterns, and rules, and they develop strategies for memorizing high frequency words. They also build vocabulary by exploring word origins and meanings. Students have opportunities to practice skills in lessons as well as in the context of Writing Workshop.

Mathematics

Cultivating mathematically proficient students is at the core of the fifth grade math program. Though we do not strictly follow the Common Core Standards at Friends Academy, we do use them as a jumping off point for creating curriculum. It allows us to understand where students are expected to be at various grade levels; we are able to deliver the key concepts, and then expand upon them and enrich our students. Children are encouraged to: reason, learn and apply strategies for problem solving, construct arguments, use appropriate tools strategically, and attend to precision. Throughout the course of the year we focus on the following core mathematics strands: Place Value, Multiplication and Division, Decimals, Expressions and Patterns, Fractions, Geometry, and Measurement.

The highlights of our program include:

- Multiple experiences to build conceptual understanding.
- Strategies for real-world problem solving required for success.
- Extensive online components that allow for review, practice, and enrichment.
- Sharing ideas through discussion.
- Cooperative learning through partner and small-group activities.
- Daily routines, including Problems of the Day.
- Informal and formal assessments.
- Home-and-school partnership.
- Differentiated instruction built into daily lessons.
Fifth Grade (continued)

Included in our program is an enrichment component that encourages the students to develop their problem solving techniques. Each week a set of “Daily Word Problems” (DWPs), which are multiple-step word problems and logic puzzles, are assigned to stretch the students’ thinking. Because producing self-directed learners is a goal, the students are asked to take charge of their own learning by selecting the level at which they feel most comfortable working. The ultimate objective of our program is to help students develop a mathematical understanding and the procedural skills that will enable them to be productive members of our growing global economy.

Social Studies

The fifth grade social studies curriculum centers on five distinct strands: United States Geography, United States History, Government, Economics, and Current Events. During their studies, students will acquire information through a variety of sources, evaluate that information, and then present it in a way that reflects their understanding. Skills such as interpreting primary and secondary sources, research, note-taking, and developing good study habits are continually reinforced throughout the year.

The United States Geography unit emphasizes map and globe skills, the five themes of geography, regions of the United States, and states and capitals.

Our History unit spans the early 1800s through the early 1900s. Students have an opportunity to participate in various activities that enhance their understanding of this time period and the challenges that people faced.

From November until an all-school culminating activity in April, we have our global education in social studies and other disciplines. The program is called Lower School Goes Global, and fifth grade’s area of concentration is Asia. Family and other members of the community are invited to school to share in our learning and to enjoy our global celebration.
Specials

Science
The main objective in Lower School Science is to foster a sense of exploration and discovery by observing the natural world. Students are encouraged to maximize the use of resources to develop their observational skills. As they learn to observe the natural world, students begin to ask their own questions about how and why things work. This in turn leads students to begin to develop their own hypotheses, which naturally leads them to search for answers and attempt to develop inquiry-based experiments. In this way, students are led through the scientific method as a natural process of observing and questioning the world around them. We explore physical science, earth science, life science and technology and work to create a seamless curriculum that encompasses all subject areas.

In all grade levels students will identify the parts of a system, how the parts function together and why they cannot function properly if a part is missing. They can apply this to the many facets of science that will be studied this year. Some of the topics covered in science this year are the human body, space, ecology, metamorphosis of various living organisms, energy, inventions, earth science and environmental science.

Students investigate and explore the process of the “scientific method”–the process of making observations, recording evidence, and drawing conclusions. They focus on both scientific literacy and the scientific process utilizing age-appropriate hands-on activities. They will also have the opportunity to take a closer look at features of specific living organisms that they observe in the science room.

World Languages
Our Lower School World Language program consists of Early Childhood through fourth grade students learning Spanish. The fifth grade students study French, Chinese or choose to continue with Spanish. The Lower School language program seeks to lay the foundation for communication through the introduction of Spanish language and culture. The instructional goal is to develop listening skills, auditory discrimination, auditory processing, speaking skills, and linguistic awareness as well as cultural exposure to the target language. To enhance learning in addition to context, collaboration with the classroom teachers as well as other special area teachers will take place to integrate and incorporate concepts in the grade level curriculum. These goals are achieved by incorporating rhymes, songs, poems, games, music, movement, storytelling, role-playing, art projects, technology, and simple conversations into daily classroom activities. Learning will take place through concrete experiences such as visuals, manipulatives, and hands-on activities that are integral components of instruction accompanied by aural-oral language use.

The Spanish curriculum includes the following concepts: greetings, awareness of self, body parts, games, colors, shapes, numbers, directions, weather, seasons, holidays, traditions, telling time, days of the week, months of the year, foods, family members, clothing, forms of transportation, sports, occupations, knowledge of Spanish speaking countries around the world, and animals found in various environments.

Visual Art

Everyone is an Artist
The Art Studio in the Lower School is a welcoming, safe and inspiring work environment where students are encouraged to take risks and develop their aesthetic awareness. Personal views are respected, differences are celebrated and all students are considered working artists.

Practice Makes Better
Through carefully designed explorative activities, students engage and experiment with a wide range of materials and processes that will allow them to discover their creative potential. Throughout the school year, students will explore a variety of art process and techniques such as drawing, painting, printmaking, collage, sculpture, and clay handbuilding.

Materials are the Best Teacher
Essentially, the learning that takes place in the Art Studio happens primarily through hands-on kinesthetic experiences. In other words, Art is a process as well as a product, therefore, exploration through multi-sensory experience allow students to think about a concept in a variety of ways as well as embraces the multiple intelligences. When children are given the opportunity to explore a material before being told how to use it, they are more likely to build a personal relationship with the material and develop their ability as an artist. In Early Childhood, students engage in experiences
that allow them to experience the materials at hand without arriving at a final product. Students in grades K-5 will often explore a material prior to focusing on a specific concept or being asked to work towards a desired goal or product. Materials and techniques are revisited in future grades in a more advanced way to build skill, creativity and confidence in the art making process.

**Building Global Awareness**
The Visual Art curriculum in the lower school is closely integrated with Global Studies in Early Childhood through fifth grade. Integration takes place where there is an authentic overlap of goals and objectives for both disciplines. Integrated and kinesthetic activities help students gain a deeper understanding of grade level objectives while having the opportunity to think and study them through various artistic, scientific, mathematical and cultural lenses.

**Art/Science**
In addition to the regularly scheduled Art class, Art/Science is offered to students in grades two, three, four and five. By thinking and creating like an artist and scientist, students begin to understand how both disciplines share many skill sets as well as reflect and support one another. Students study concepts that share knowledge based in both the Visual Arts and Science. For example: Third graders study sedimentary layers of earth in Science and explore the various textures of the earth in Art. Using line, shape and pattern, students explore the basic principles and elements of design and develop creative ways to illustrate texture in a monochromatic work of art. Developing an awareness of our natural environment will allow students to build a personal aesthetic and discover how art mimics nature. Students explore the elements and principles of art via natural phenomena and discover how the arts of every world culture are inspired by their surrounding environment.

**Music**
It is the goal of the Friends Academy Music Department that each of our students would develop and nurture a life-long love of making and supporting music both in the local and global community of the Arts. We employ a spiraling curriculum designed to tap into the innate talents in each child and stimulate them into becoming tuneful, beautiful and artful musicians. We use a wide variety of activities, which encourage the creativity of each individual through a safe environment of mutual exploration and focus our learning through the lens of the FA Five Strands of Music (Music Making, Music Literacy, Music Connections, Music Legacy, and Character Development).

Each of our LS musicians explores numerous pitched and non-pitched instruments. (Including Orff Instruments and recorders.) They begin to play in a formal ensemble (Band or Orchestra) in 4th grade. Particular care is taken to introduce students to appropriate care and maintenance for musical instruments and the responsibilities of each individual as a musical ensemble member.

We offer many informal opportunities for performance throughout the year as well as at least two formal presentations in concerts or class presentations. Students regularly accompany songs in our performances. All of our young musicians from Kindergarten – Fifth Grade perform in our annual Winter Concert, which is held the day before our Winter Holiday Break. Third – Fifth Grade students also perform in the Spring Concert.

**FA Five Strands of Music Education**
- Music Making
- Music Literacy
- Music Connections
- Music Legacy
- Character Development

**Music Making**
By exploring, creating, replicating, and observing music, students build their technical and expressive skill, develop their artistry and a unique personal voice in music, and experience the power of music to communicate. They understand music as a universal language and a legacy of expression in every culture.
Specials (continued)

**Music Literacy**
Students develop a working knowledge of music language and aesthetics, and apply it to analyzing, evaluating, documenting, creating, and performing music. They recognize their roles as articulate, literate musicians when communicating with their families, schools, and communities through music.

**Making Connections**
By investigating historical, social, and cultural contexts, and by exploring common themes and principles connecting music with other disciplines, students enrich their creative work and understand the significance of music in the evolution of human thought and expression.

**Music Legacy**
Students discover their place in the future of music as musicians, teachers, parents, philanthropists, and stewards of music.

**Character Development**
Students develop integrity, respect, kindness, teamwork, patience, self-management, focus, critical thinking, leadership, discernment, perseverance, service, and stewardship. Students learn the intrinsic value in creating an aesthetic.

**Library**
All of the children in the Lower School, from Play Group through fourth grade, have scheduled library classes. Students learn age appropriate library and research skills, for example how to locate a book on the shelf. At each grade level the students are also read aloud to. Reading aloud is an important activity that benefits the listener by encouraging vocabulary development and broadening the imagination. During book selection time, the children are allowed to choose freely from the fiction and non-fiction collections. In fifth grade, the librarian works with the classroom teachers as a team. Research skills are integrated into the Social Studies curriculum. Students continue to use print and non-print resources for their research. At all grade levels, the librarian works closely with the classroom teachers to provide materials needed for planned units of study. The Lower School Library is also a place where children are welcome to come find answers to individual questions that they may have. Special collections available for circulation include World Language materials and audiobooks.

**Health**
In Lower School, we have a health program for grades K through five taught by our physical education teachers. One of our main goals of the program is to assist our students in learning how to maximize their own health.

- Anatomy/Body Systems
- Infectious Disease/Safety
- Personal Health/ Social and Emotional Health
- Drugs, Alcohol, Tobacco
- Protecting Self, Bullying, Respecting Diversity
- Reproduction Health—older students
- Nutrition and Physical Fitness

**Physical Education**
In the elementary grades, the physical education program emphasizes the development of fundamental locomotor, non-locomotor, and manipulative skills through the main content areas of educational games and dance. The movement framework, (i.e., body, space, effort, and relationship) is also a part of the core content and is the basis for developing, expanding, and refining children’s range of motor skills and awareness. The motor skill foundations established during the elementary grades enhance children’s social, cognitive and physical development and increase the likelihood of continued interest and participation in physical activity.

Health-fitness concepts at elementary grades are supported by a rich experience in many basic movement forms and are folded into the curriculum. The health-fitness components of flexibility, cardiovascular endurance, muscle fitness and body composition are supported through the Fitnessgram which assesses each individual’s health-fitness levels beginning in 3rd grade and serves as an educational tool to address these concepts within our curriculum.

Students also enjoy a dance program inherent in their curriculum, once a week for half of the year.
Special Programs/Trips

Outdoor Education
Outdoor education activities and field trips, for example, Green Meadow Farm (Pre-K), Planting Fields (Grade 1), Oyster Bay Walk (Grade 2), Fire Island (Grade 3), Ellis Island, Long Island Dog Show and Caumsett (Grade 4), NYC Museums, Nassau County Museum, and Washington, D.C. (Grade 5).

Cultural Arts
The Parent Council provides the Lower School with money to see performances and meet artists. Author Jack Gantos has been a visitor as well as trumpeter Wynton Marsalis, who has worked with our brass students. A wide variety of performances include, ballet, poets, singers, Chinese and Flamenco dancers, the Black Violins, themed assemblies such as Anti-Bullying, science and more.

Student Performances
There are many performances by Lower School students such as: Winter and Spring programs; 100th Day celebration in younger grades; meet the Authors in Kindergarten; Early Childhood Song Feast; first grade Readers Theater, fifth grade Friendsville and Inventions Convention; fourth grade alternative energy presentation and many more. Our largest performance piece is the Holiday Sing, which takes place directly before our Holiday Break in December.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What is Interdisciplinary Curriculum?
Many subjects in Lower School are presented interdisciplinary. That is, teachers help students understand the process and approaches to various disciplines through the connection of ideas, information and perspectives. Some examples of topics that are taught across the curriculum:
• Lower School Goes Global, social studies, arts, geography, modern language, etc. – all grades
• Math and geography – all grades
• Greeting cards for Winter Shelter residence – art, writing, Quaker values – Kindergarten
• Quaker study – social studies, reading, writing art, technology – grade one
• Responsive Classroom and Quaker and Character Education – all grades
• Writing, reading and writing across the curriculum – all grades
• Cell Study in science and art-grade three
• Peaceable Kingdom/Classroom, Quaker tenets, reading and art – grade two
• Art and community service – soup bowls project-grade four and Upper School
• Inventions study in science and social studies – grade five
• Jazz Age – Reading, writing, dance, art and more – grade five

Q: What is the World Language Program; why introduce a second language at the elementary level?
The program’s objective is to expose young children to the sounds and structures of a language other than English, while fostering receptivity toward another culture. The program is content-related, reinforcing concepts, themes and skills presented in the regular class. Songs, games, stories, etc. common to the traditional curriculum for Lower School are easily translated into the target language of Spanish in grades Play Group – fourth grade. The fifth grade children have a choice of French, Spanish or Chinese language selection.

Brain research supports second language learning as soon as possible. Children under the age of ten who learn a second language usually develop native-like pronunciation. Enhanced problem solving skills, improved performance in their first language and demonstrate a broader appreciation for people of other cultures.
Q: What is the communication between school and home?

The school has a number of ways it communicates with parents over the course of the year:

**Back-to-School Night**
In September, the Lower School hosts “Back-to-School Night” and invites parents to view their child’s classroom and hear from the teachers about the curriculum for the year.

**Parent/Teacher Conferences**
As mentioned above, the core teacher convenes two formal parent conferences (one in the fall and one in the second semester) and informal ones as needed. These conferences are designed to give parents an assessment of student progress in areas of social, emotional and academic growth. Dates for conferences will be announced at Back-to-School Night and in mailings.

**Progress Reports**
Formal written reports are submitted to parents twice a year (winter and end of year) in all grades. Goal setting sheets, which documents goals set by teachers and parent, are given to parents at the end of the Fall Conference.

**Parent Coffees**
The Lower School Principal hosts Parent Coffees for parents during the year. These informal gatherings offer an opportunity for parents to hear about the life of the school and to ask questions and raise concerns.

**Mrs. McLean’s Blog**
Lower School Principal Debby McLean posts regularly about life in the Lower School.

Q: How are students assessed?

- Though a formal grading system is in place at the Middle and Upper School levels, our philosophy is consistent in that we do not rank in class nor do we compute grade point average.
- We do assess achievement in reading, writing, spelling and mathematics in the later grades.
- In third, fourth and fifth grades the children take an independent school standardized test called the CPT IV, commonly called the ERBs.
- Portfolios are used for documentation of work, including CDs.
- Speech and language screenings are done by an outside consultant.
Strong Minds. 
Kind Hearts.

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