2026-27
Lower School
Course of Study

Friends Academy 1876

Mission Statement

Guided by Quaker principles, Friends Academy educates our students to discover and develop the best of who they are and who they can become.

Belief Statement

At Friends Academy, we achieve educational excellence by committing to the highest standards of learning and living.

Our diverse and welcoming community is strengthened by our Quaker values, which empower our students to inquire, reflect, and engage in their classrooms, their neighborhoods, and in the world.

Because when we inspire students to learn and live with purpose, they can achieve greatness without sacrificing goodness.

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Friends Academy Lower School
Course of Study 2026-2027

Introduction

Welcome to the Lower School at Friends Academy! The years your child spends in the Lower School are filled with discovery, wonder, scholarship, and achievement. These are the foundational years for children to develop, 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 them to approach new opportunities and challenges with confidence, competence, and joy.

Our Lower School builds an exceptional foundation of academic excellence. This, combined with real-world skill building, is enhanced by our Quaker values, empowering our children to learn and live with purpose. We engage each child in student-centered, hands-on learning, and teach real-world skills to our youngest learners, including communication, inquiry, interpretation, analysis, and problem-solving. This strong foundation provides our students the tools they need to fuel natural curiosity and develop creativity while maintaining wonder and awe for the world around them.

In the Lower School, we believe that every child has incredible potential and, in partnership with families, we are committed to supporting every child so that they can achieve their fullest potential as they journey through each developmental stage. The results are children who are confident, embrace and persevere through challenges, develop a healthy sense of self, and appreciate and celebrate the unique and diverse perspectives of others in their community, as well as globally.

As you continue to read, you will see that the Lower School at Friends Academy puts every child, Play Group to Fourth Grade, at an unparalleled advantage for that first transition to Middle School, then Upper School, and finally in finding success beyond. From the moment your child enters Lower School, they are enveloped in an academically rigorous setting led by educators who believe each child is capable of great things and who are committed to helping each child find success. We live up to this promise by making sure each child feels seen, heard, and known. Character education is essential to help children rise to high academic expectations. Research shows that character and a values-based education are invaluable in helping children successfully navigate our complex and fast-paced world.

Social and Emotional Learning strengthens all competencies

Responsive Classroom

Responsive Classroom is an approach to building a classroom community that supports students' well-being while empowering them to take ownership of their learning. Responsive Classroom gives equal importance to students' social, emotional, and academic development by intentionally addressing these interconnected competencies. Building a trusting partnership between home and school is essential, as is implementing effective teaching practices, providing meaningful opportunities for collaboration, and honoring students' diverse strengths and learning styles.

Our Approach to Academics

Early Childhood

Reggio-Emilia Inspired

Holding the child at the center

Early Childhood at Friends Academy is grounded in the innovative educational philosophy of Reggio Emilia, Italy. Through meaningful play, hands-on investigation, and thoughtful exploration, children come to see learning as something they actively shape, building the confidence, wonder, and enduring love of discovery that will guide them throughout their lives.

At the heart of our program is the *Atelier*, a dedicated studio where Early Childhood children explore, create, and bring their ideas to life. Surrounded by vibrant open-ended materials and thoughtfully invited to explore, children make their ideas visible, pursue their questions, and develop theories about the world around them. As they experiment, revise, and share their thinking, they build creativity, confidence, and collaboration while discovering their own ways of seeing and expressing themselves as members within a community.

Forest Program

Vital to creative problem-solving

A child's first classroom is the natural world. The launch of our groundbreaking Forest Program in the fall of 2021 gives children the opportunity to use all 65 acres of our vibrant and lush campus to explore, question, imagine, and discover. Guided by our educators, children learn to notice the world around them and develop a deeper connection to the earth and their role as its stewards.

The Forest Program offers children opportunities for creative problem-solving, play, and exploration that are unique to the natural world. Children also strengthen their gross- and fine-motor skills through movement and hands-on experiences that unfold at a pace suited to each child. In the forest, healthy bodies and strong minds develop together.

Emergent Curriculum

Inspires engaged learning

Children are naturally curious. They want to know how things work, why questions matter, and what might happen if they try something new. In Early Childhood, that curiosity is where learning begins.

Each day, children investigate real questions, explore meaningful materials, and learn through hands-on experiences. Their interests help guide the direction of study, while our teachers intentionally introduce new ideas, skills, and challenges. A fascination with insects may lead to careful observation and research; a structure made from blocks may open the door to balance, design, and measurement; a shared story may grow into writing, dramatic play, or a new question.

Through this approach, our youngest learners build strong foundations in phonics, reading, writing, mathematics, communication, and problem-solving, while also developing confidence, creativity, independence, and a genuine love of learning.

Every child arrives at Friends Academy with their own story, strengths, and readiness. We meet them where they are, offering thoughtful support and meaningful challenges so they can grow with confidence and see themselves as capable, eager learners for life.

Block Play

Essential to Early Mathematical Understanding

Block play in Early Childhood is inspired by the work of Caroline Pratt, who designed unit blocks to help children explore ideas through hands-on construction. With each tower, bridge, and imaginative world, children turn simple wooden blocks into opportunities for discovery. Each block's carefully related size and shape invites children to explore number, proportion, balance, symmetry, and spatial relationships naturally through play. As they build, children make predictions, test ideas, discover cause and effect, and develop spatial awareness, collaboration, communication, and creative problem-solving. Block play lays the foundation for genuine mathematical thinking while giving children the freedom to imagine, create, and make meaning from the world around them.

Wilson Fundations

Launches crucial pre-literacy skills

Fundations in Early Childhood is designed to give our youngest learners a jump-start on foundational reading and writing skills. It focuses specifically on building a deep, multi-sensory understanding of letter-sound associations, alphabetical order, and manuscript letter formation to prepare children for Kindergarten. When introduced in the early years through thoughtful, individualized instruction, these skills help children develop confidence, curiosity, and a positive, lasting relationship with literacy.

A Confident Transition from Pre-K to Kindergarten

Our Pre-K teachers truly understand the academic, social, and developmental journey children are preparing to enter. Through close collaboration with our Kindergarten teaching team and a deep knowledge of the Kindergarten curriculum, they ensure that each child moves confidently into the next stage of their Lower School experience at Friends Academy.

Pre-Kindergarten lays the foundation for future academic success by nurturing joy, curiosity, the basis for critical and analytical thinking, and an understanding of both academic and real-world ideas. Children begin to see themselves as capable learners, ready to ask questions, solve problems, communicate their thinking, and make meaningful connections. By the end of the year, children are ready to enter Kindergarten with confidence, resilience, and a growing belief in themselves as learners. They bring the skills to share their ideas, work with others, think creatively, and meet new challenges with enthusiasm, building a foundation for continued growth through Twelfth Grade and beyond.

In Kindergarten, children begin following the formalized schedule that continues from First grade through Twelfth grade. *(Please see the end of the Course of Study for more information as to the Typical Day of a Lower School student.)*

Kindergarten through Grade 4

Wilson Fundations

Uses strategic multi-sensory approach

Pre-Kindergarten through Fourth Grade uses the Wilson Fundations program. Fundations is a multisensory phonics-based approach to language that provides children with a solid foundation for reading, writing and spelling. Phonics and word study are taught explicitly and cumulatively. Children have extensive and authentic opportunities across the curriculum to practice and apply taught skills and strategies.

Structured Literacy

Develops skilled, accurate, and automatic readers

The Friends Academy Structured Literacy approach engages students in reading that is predictable, manageable, and explicit by systematically breaking down the English language into its foundational building blocks. Guided by the Science of Reading, Structured Literacy takes away the guess work of reading and creates a highly skilled and consistent reader. This approach focuses on developing the five aspects of reading: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. Children learn through a multitude of modalities throughout the school day: whole group, small group, and sometimes one on one with their teacher.

Structured Literacy reinforces skills that are essential for emerging readers by unlocking the "code" of the English language in a way that is accessible to all types of learners. Children are taught using texts that both teach them how to read and the idea that we read to learn new concepts.

Reading instruction or pedagogy

Emphasizes deep understanding of literature

Reading instruction in the Lower School focuses on explicit, systematic, and cumulative teaching of foundational skills alongside rich language comprehension. Daily foundational skills include phonemic awareness where students practice hearing, identifying sounds, and manipulating individual sounds in spoken words. Our youngest learners are explicitly taught sound-letter combinations (phonemes and graphemes) in thoughtful, logical sequence. They then move to blending sounds to read new words and segmenting words to spell them by practicing specific spelling patterns and word structures.

Children then use these word writing and reading skills to write sentences and paragraphs all while learning the essential aspect of how and why words operate in the ways that they do. Students build on their comprehension and knowledge by engaging in interactive read alouds, vocabulary instruction and deep discussions about the texts they explore. To support fluency and practice, early readers dive into books containing spelling patterns they have already been explicitly taught, ensuring they sound out words rather than guess. Students read connected text out loud with guidance to build speed,

accuracy and natural expression which supports their understanding for meaning. As they move through Lower School, children use the building blocks of the year prior as a foundation for new learning.

Writing instruction

A structured, skill building process that reinforces literacy

Writing instruction is a coordinated, explicit framework embedded across all academic content areas. Students immediately write the sound-symbol correspondences (phonics and phonemic awareness) they learn during the reading block. Our younger learners, for example, practice spelling and writing CVC words right as they learn to decode them. Teachers explicitly teach handwriting and spelling mechanics. Mastery of these transcription skills reduces the mental strain of writing, freeing up working memory for high-level composition. Instruction focuses heavily on how sentences are built, expanded and combined.

Teachers intentionally choose read alouds and mentor texts to show – rather than just tell – how professional writers organize ideas, build vocabulary and use text structures. Students are taught how to plan, draft, revise, and edit using self-talk and organized routines. Students in our Lower School learn to write across the curriculum by summarizing science experiments, explaining math problem-solving steps in complete sentences, and responding to historical texts, which deepens both knowledge and comprehension.

Mathematics

A language that teaches multiple pathways to solutions

At Friends Academy, mathematics goes beyond learning procedures or computing answers; it is a language for investigating, describing, evaluating, creating, and making sense of the world. Through think!Mathematics, a Concrete-Pictorial-Abstract (CPA) approach, students in grades 1-4 build conceptual understanding by exploring mathematical ideas with hands-on materials, representing their thinking through pictures, models, and visual representations, and connecting these experiences to abstract notation and efficient strategies. Kindergarten teachers utilize Growing Roots to create instruction that emphasizes problem solving, number sense, reasoning, mathematical discourse, and the understanding that there can be multiple pathways to a solution, encouraging students to explain their thinking, make connections, ask questions, and learn from mistakes.

CPA instruction is enriched through everyday-life mathematics activities, projects, and authentic problem-solving experiences that connect mathematics to science, art, technology, and students' own experiences. Furthermore, our Lower School Math Learning Specialist supports Kindergarten through Grade 4 via classroom push-in instruction, small-group remediation and enrichment, collaboration with classroom teachers, and professional development focused on research-based approaches to mathematics instruction. In Kindergarten, engaging lessons incorporate literature, manipulatives, movement, games, visual models, and real-world contexts, while in Grades 1–4, targeted small-group instruction helps students strengthen foundational skills, deepen conceptual understanding, tackle challenging problems, and extend their mathematical thinking beyond the core curriculum.

Social Studies

Elevates skills of research, inquiry, and multiple perspectives

Friends Academy draws upon the Understanding by Design framework of teaching, which emphasizes the use of Essential Questions to guide student inquiry and learning. Social Studies also takes on an interdisciplinary approach, incorporating literacy, mathematics, and science. Our Social Studies curriculum builds upon itself as children progress, and is focused on helping children develop a healthy sense of self and belonging as an individual in their family, school, local community, and in the global community. Students grow in their ability to conduct research, analyze and evaluate primary and secondary sources, and develop an understanding of multiple perspectives in both modern and historical contexts. The celebration of diversity and commitment to inclusion supports children in seeing how their unique gifts contribute to the greater good of their community and the world.

Innovative Programming and Interdisciplinary Studies

Signature Experiences (Kindergarten through fourth grade)

Beginning in Kindergarten, all Lower School students engage in a uniquely designed Signature Experience that is woven into the curriculum of each grade level. Signature Experiences are a one-of-a-kind "rite of passage" that children look forward to as they rise to the next grade level. The Experiences are rooted in the curriculum, yet draw upon all areas and skill sets of a well-designed liberal arts program such as conducting effective research (both in and outside of school), reading for information, writing and publishing to communicate clearly, collaborating with peers and the local community, public speaking and a formal presentation to an audience. Examples of past curriculum ties include:

- Kindergarten's mathematical study on the 100 days of school
- First Grade's research project, based on "What makes a neighborhood?"
- Second Grade's in-depth study of Long Island – past and present
- Third Grade's study of New York
- Fourth Grade's study of the National Park system

<u>The Forest Program (Early Childhood through Fourth Grade)</u>

Based on research and centuries' old Forest School model, The Forest Program at Friends Academy promotes real world exploration, experimentation and innovation in the natural environment. Our interdisciplinary curriculum empowers students to make cross-curricular connections and build skills in literacy, science, mathematics, and the humanities. Students use the natural world as a living laboratory – observing, drawing hypotheses, creating, engineering and testing their theories through hands-on learning that is student driven. Students are empowered to become active stewards of the earth whilst applying foundational knowledge and skills to forward the essential relationship between humans and nature.

Special-Area Subjects Enhance Academics

Science

Lower School Science at Friends Academy is a time to engage in scientific inquiry. Using a phenomena-based approach to learning, students are encouraged to ask questions, make discoveries and develop connections about the natural world. Through a process of sense-making and evidence-based reasoning, students learn to engage in scientific arguments and use the CER framework (Claim-Evidence-Reasoning) to write scientific explanations that support their claims. Our pedagogical approach and science curriculum are aligned with the NGSS (Next Generation Science Standards). Lower School students visit the Forest Area for cross-disciplinary lessons, as well as helping maintain and harvest our aeroponic Tower Garden and outdoor garden throughout the school year. Units of study in science include, but are not limited to:

Grade Level	Unit Topics	Unit Topics	Unit Topics	Unit Topics
Kindergarten	Sunlight and Weather	Balance and Forces: Pushes and Pulls	Needs of Plants and Animals	Journey North: Citizen Science Tulip Test Garden
1st Grade	Animal and Plant Defenses	Spinning Earth	Light and Sound	Journey North: Citizen Science Tulip Test Garden
2nd Grade	Engineering Design Process: Global Cardboard Challenge	Properties of Materials	Changing Landforms	Plant and Animal Relationships: Quail in the Classroom Citizen Science
3rd Grade	Balancing Forces	Inheritance and Traits	Weather and Climate	Environments and Survival
4th Grade	Earth's features	Vision and Light	Properties of waves	Energy Conversions

World Languages

All students in the Lower School participate in the World Languages and Cultures program. To establish a strong foundation for communication, students from Early Childhood through fourth grade study the Spanish language and explore the cultures of Spanish speaking countries. The instructional goals are to develop listening and speaking skills, auditory discrimination and processing, and linguistic awareness, while fostering an appreciation and understanding of the diverse cultures of the Spanish speaking world. Collaboration with classroom teachers and other special area teachers supports an interdisciplinary approach that enriches and deepens student learning. These goals are achieved through engaging, developmentally appropriate activities, including songs, games, music, movement, storytelling, role-playing, technology, and simple conversations incorporated into daily instruction. Learning is grounded in concrete, hands-on

experiences, with visuals, manipulatives, and interactive activities serving as integral components of instruction. These experiences are complemented by opportunities for aural-oral language development, allowing students to build confidence and engage in communication.

Visual Art

The Visual Art curriculum in Kindergarten through Fourth Grade is intentionally integrated with math, science, and social studies when there is an authentic overlap of skills and learning goals. The Art Studio in the Lower School is a welcoming, supportive, and inspiring work environment where students are encouraged to explore and express their authentic selves and develop their aesthetic awareness. All students are honored as working artists and, through carefully designed explorative activities, students witness how it is through a mindful engagement in the art process, rather than a focus on the end product, where they will discover their creative potential. Children are encouraged to lead with curiosity by being offered "challenges" whereby they experiment with multiple ideations.

Throughout their tenure in the Lower School, artists engage in multiple iterations of a variety of art processes that include, yet are not limited to, observational drawing, color mixing and painting, ceramic hand-building, additive sculpture with wood and recycled materials, relief printmaking, paper collage, and fiber weaving. Through an in-depth exploration of these processes, students discover how tools are an extension of our creative self and can support us in self-expression. Emphasis on written reflections supports each artist in understanding their creative process and valuing their unique style. Engagement in "stewardship" – our tool and studio care – fosters an appreciation for our learning space and materials and supports children in developing their independence. Our Arts program is grounded in helping children understand how their artistic learning is valuable beyond the art studio.

Music

It is the goal of the Friends Academy Music Department that each student develops a life-long appreciation of making and supporting music. We employ a "spiraling curriculum," which introduces key concepts that are revisited and built upon throughout a student's musical education in Lower School. Our program is designed to tap into the innate talents in each child and stimulate them into becoming tuneful, beautiful, and artful musicians. Our approach draws upon research that incorporates movement with vocal and choral experiences, in addition to the use of percussive instruments to heighten the experience of music-making. We use a wide variety of activities, which encourage the creativity of each individual through a supportive environment of mutual exploration and focus our learning through the lens of the Friends Academy Five Strands of Music (Music Making, Music Literacy, Music Connections, Music Legacy, and Character Development).

Each of our Lower School musicians explores numerous pitched and unpitched instruments. 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. At the end of their Grade 4 experience, students have the opportunity to explore and select an instrument so they can join the Grade 5 band or orchestra.

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 Pre-Kindergarten to 4th grade students perform in our annual Winter Concert. Third and 4th grade students also perform in the Spring Concert.

Theatre

The Lower School Theatre curriculum provides students with opportunities to develop creativity, confidence, communication, collaboration, and self-expression through imaginative play, storytelling, acting, movement, and performance. Students are encouraged to take creative risks within a supportive ensemble environment where their individual ideas, experiences, and perspectives are valued.

Throughout the Theatre program, students develop three foundational tools of the actor: voice, body, and imagination. Through developmentally appropriate theatre games, improvisation, character work, movement, and collaborative storytelling, students learn to communicate ideas and emotions clearly while strengthening focus, listening, empathy, and ensemble-building skills. Students engage with diverse stories, voices, and cultural perspectives and learn to approach the theatre classroom as both individual artists and responsible members of a creative community.

As students progress through the Lower School program, their work becomes increasingly sophisticated and interdisciplinary. Second Grade emphasizes imaginative exploration, creative movement, character development, and collaborative storytelling. Third Grade expands these skills through character, dialogue, story structure, and introductory playwriting, culminating in the Third Grade Playwriting Festival. Fourth Grade deepens students' acting, character-development, and storytelling skills while providing opportunities to apply their theatrical learning through cross-curricular projects and connections across the Lower School program.

Across all grade levels, Theatre is both a creative discipline and a collaborative process. Students learn to support one another, care for shared spaces and materials, remain engaged throughout the creative process, and contribute their ideas confidently and respectfully. The program ultimately encourages students to see themselves as artists, storytellers, collaborators, and thoughtful members of their community.

Library

All of the children in the Lower School, from Play Group through Fourth grade, have scheduled library classes. Literacy and research lessons are part of each visit. Students will participate in a themed read-aloud. The librarian asks open-ended, challenging questions to assess students' comprehension and the connection they are making to the text. During book selection time, the children are allowed to choose freely from a variety of genres in our collection. Students are encouraged to explore various topics and new genres or to continue with a favorite genre or series.

At each grade level, these opportunities are followed by activities that require children to think critically and analytically about texts and transfer their understanding of both fiction and nonfiction works across the curriculum. Hearing texts reading aloud is an essential activity that benefits the

listener by encouraging vocabulary development, strengthening auditory skills and broadens the imagination to encourage a love and appreciation of reading. Students learn age-appropriate research skills. 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 and research answers to individual questions that they may have. Special collections available for circulation include World Language materials and audiobooks.

Health

The objective of the Lower School Health Education program is to begin equipping students with the knowledge and skills necessary to make healthy choices throughout their lives by promoting healthy attitudes, knowledge, and behaviors. The program provides a foundation for students to understand and care for their physical, mental, social and emotional well-being, build healthy relationships, and make safe and responsible decisions. Through developmentally appropriate lessons, students begin building practical skills to support lifelong health and wellness.

Throughout the Lower School years, students build these skills in developmentally appropriate ways. Examples include second grade students learning to recognize an emergency, stay calm and identify when they need the help of a trusted adult. Students practice getting help quickly, knowing how to call 911. In third grade, students will learn to recognize and name emotions. Students practice healthy strategies for communicating feelings and seeking support from an adult when needed.

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/movement and aerial program inherent in their curriculum, once a week for half of the year.

How does a Quaker education elevate our student's academic experience?

A rich, robust, and rewarding education is rooted in values, and who better than Friends Academy to set the standard with a history and reputation of academic excellence that dates back to 1876.

Our values (also referred to as our Quaker Testimonies) include simplicity, peace, integrity, community, equality and equity, stewardship, and service. Do values elevate and deepen the academic experience? Yes. They create a foundation for academic challenge for children at every stage of their development.

In a Friends School we require even our youngest students to *consider multiple perspectives* when analyzing the real world problems presented in our curriculum. All voices in a classroom must be *included* before a singular answer from a lone participant is accepted by the group. In this manner students are challenged to slow down, discern, and question the information in order to get to the answer or solution.

The belief that a spark or light exists in every child, each one capable of great things, sets the foundation for our learner-centered approach to education. We view children as capable and encourage and empower them to take initiative as they become increasingly confident and independent learners. When expectations are high and teachers share responsibility and expectations for learning, the children rise to the challenge.

The evidence exists in our learners' experiences. Our Pre-Kindergarten students gather in small groups to collaborate and plan structures as part of our Block Curriculum. They recognize they must listen to one another, divide the building tasks equitably, and incorporate one another's ideas in order to engineer a base for their "bakery" that is "more steady" so that their building will not "collapse."

Then we have our third grade writers who choose something they feel passionate about to develop a persuasive essay. They master the art of writing a thesis statement. To have integrity it must be backed up with facts and compelling evidence. Ideas range from persuading their teacher to reduce homework, persuading the Lower School Principal to spruce up the faculty lounge for their hard-working teachers, or convincing their parents that they are ready for the responsibility of caring for a pet.

Research has shown that beginnings matter and that children are never too young to develop the very same skills they will need not only in their academic career, but in life. Academic rigor built on a rock-solid foundation of timeless and time-tested values that are in critical demand now more than ever ensures our students will be prepared to respond to the challenges of an ever-changing and growing world.

How does a Quaker education foster the spiritual life of a child?

Meeting for Worship and Worship Sharing

Meeting for Worship is the center of Quaker life and at the heart of a Friends school. We gather together as a community to share in a silence that grows deeper as it progresses. This sharing of silence helps ground children to listen inwardly. Anyone may speak if they feel inspired to share a message with the group, since everyone can be a minister with insights to share. Kindergarten through Fourth Grade gather in the Matinecock Meeting House on campus weekly. Our Early Childhood (Play Group and Pre-Kindergarten) students engage in Worship Sharing in their classroom, which is reflective of our practice in the Meeting House.

Worship Sharing

Worship sharing can be likened to guided meditation. By focusing on a particular question or query, children explore their own experience and share with each other more deeply than we would in usual conversation. It seeks to draw us into sacred space as a class community. Worship sharing is intimate and gives children the opportunity to share what is on their minds and hearts.

Gathering

Students in Kindergarten through Fourth Grade students come together for Gathering in the Lower School Library every week. We hold a Gathering every week in the Lower School Library. Examples of topics and discussions that take place during this time include the expression of gratitude, service-learning opportunities, events that enrich the life of the school, celebrating the diversity within our community, global events, Quaker history, and the open sharing of ideas to strengthen Quaker student life. We learn about special holidays, cultural events, and traditions. We listen to stories, participate in singing, and learn from our fellow community members as they present about special projects and goings-on in their classrooms. Gathering helps us all remain connected throughout our busy weeks, months and the school year.

A Day in the Life of a Friends Academy Lower School Student

Daily Schedule incorporates all core academics

Our K-4 students follow a schedule that includes reading, writing, and math on a daily basis, in addition to lunch & recess, and a morning and afternoon snack. Social studies is integrated throughout the schedule each week.

Special-Area Subjects enhance daily schedule

Children enjoy two to four special area subjects per day and leave the classroom to attend these subjects in teaching spaces around campus that are designed for each program:

- **Science** – Lower School Science Lab
- **Spanish** – Lower School Spanish Classroom
- **Library** – Lower School Library
- **Music & Theatre** – Music Wing and Theatre in the Arts Center
- **Dance & Aerial** – Dance & Movement Studio
- **Visual Art** – Lower School Art Studio
- **Physical Education** – Main Gym and brand-new Turf Athletic field,
- **Health and Wellness**
- **Technology** – Grade-level classrooms and Maker Space

Our 10-Day Schedule provides balance and flexibility

Friends Academy (K-12) follows a rotating 10-Day schedule, as opposed to a Monday through Friday schedule. This means that each school day is assigned a number from 1-10 and each number day has its own particular schedule. As a result, we are able to ensure that holidays, long vacation breaks, snow days, etc. do not routinely subtract teaching time from certain academic areas or special-area subjects. A rotating 10-Day schedule creates a balanced and equitable schedule for all students in every content area.

Longer instructional blocks ensure depth of understanding, application and acquisition of knowledge

Longer instructional blocks are foundational to the development and success of children. In this way we are able to differentiate and enrich every child's experience. Our 60-to-90-minute math and literacy blocks are structured to allow every child to have the opportunity to get what they need in order to explore, build upon, deepen and heighten their understanding of concepts and craft. In a typical Reading and Writing Workshop block or Math block, the teacher leads a mini-lesson with the class to introduce or build upon a reading strategy, writing technique, or math concept. The class practices the goal of the mini lesson with the teacher in order to deepen their understanding by "doing." Then children move on to work independently or to collaborate in partnerships or small groups.

Differentiated Instruction ensures children reach their full potential

While students are working, teachers meet with each child one-on-one or alongside children in small groups to personalize instruction for every child:

- Children who understand and excel in a given concept are given elevated or more challenging work to deepen their understanding.
- Children who have a grade-level appropriate understanding of a concept will be shepherded toward a more complex and challenging application of the concept to deepen their understanding.
- If a child is struggling with grade-level content in a particular area of study, the classroom teacher will scaffold assignments to help them reach grade-level success. In addition, Friends Academy has a team of learning support specialists to meet each student where they are on their learning journey, providing opportunity for both support and enrichment.

Notes

Notes

FRIENDS ACADEMY
1876