

A FAMILY GUIDE TO



Quaker Education

Friends  1876
Academy





Let your life speak.

All schools want to prepare students for life's challenges. And today, many seek to foster responsible, ethical, and socially aware citizens through character education and service learning.

These principles have been part of Quaker education for centuries—an approach to moral, spiritual, and intellectual development that has been honed and refined over hundreds of years.

"Let your life speak" is a Quaker phrase encouraging individuals to live in accordance with their deepest values and calling, rather than simply following external expectations. It emphasizes aligning one's actions and choices with one's inner sense of truth and purpose.

Families come to Quaker education seeking a rigorous academic program with depth—a program that asks students to think, to collaborate, to be creative, and to grow—all within a caring community that balances individual independence with responsibility for the common good.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF Quakerism

To understand the unique views and beliefs of Quakers, it's important to understand the history of the religion and the context in which it was created.

Quakerism was founded in England in the 17th century by George Fox, a traveling preacher who was unhappy with the civil and religious turmoil at the time. He spoke of receiving a message from God to break away from the Church of England and start a new religion. Forming The Religious Society of Friends, also known as "Quakers," Fox and his followers believed that all people were equal and the presence of God existed in each and every person. This premise may sound simple, but a belief in each person's dignity was a very controversial idea at the time. This fundamental belief appealed to many, and the Quaker movement grew quickly and started to spread all over the world. Quakers first arrived in America in the mid-1650s.

Quakers were among the first to support a woman's right to worship God at a time when this was neither common practice nor widely accepted. Their progressive views on equality set them apart and helped spread the right for women to worship in other religions. Though the modern concepts of equity and inclusion seem like products of revolutionary thinking from the 20th and 21st centuries, they have existed for hundreds of years within Quakerism.

In addition to their support of these progressive beliefs, Quakers were also known for excellence in socioeconomic endeavors. For example, Quakers were recognized as some of the best farmers in America. They also founded schools that were held in high esteem, many of which still exist today (such as our very own Friends Academy). What's more, Quakers were trusted business owners and bankers because of their integrity—and many businesses today still see the value of doing business the Quaker way.



Margaret Fell



George Fox



“Live with the truth and be what you say you are.”

GEORGE FOX

A founder of Quakerism, 1624–1691



HOW OUR Students Experience Quakerism

Spending dedicated time together in quiet reflection gives students the space and time necessary to think about their impact on the world. They develop lifelong skills such as empathy, active listening, critical thinking, public speaking, and the ability to use silence as a powerful tool for discernment.

Each division—Lower, Middle, and Upper School—comes together weekly during Meeting for Worship. At these times, each person discovers how to be present and let go of distractions, pay attention to their inner voice, and listen to each other's powerful and poignant reflections on life and learning.

Quakers **IN** America

Quakerism has always been on the cutting edge of innovation and insight, leading the charge on many of the historic social and economic reforms that have shaped our world, including racial and gender equality, disability rights, and climate change. For example, long before slavery was abolished in the United States, Quakers were staunchly opposed to it and outspoken in favor of abolition.

As early as the mid-1700s, the abolitionist movement spread among Quaker leaders in places like Massachusetts and Pennsylvania. In 1790, Quakers even formally petitioned U.S. Congress to abolish slavery.



In addition to its college preparatory academic mission, Friends Academy is fully committed to the Quaker Testimonies: Simplicity, Peace, Integrity, Community, Equality/Equity, Service, and Stewardship (SPICESS). These values are not just taught; they are woven into the fabric of the school's curriculum, activities, and daily life. Quakers believe that adhering to these values produces wholeness, maturity, and contentedness in a person—regardless of religious beliefs. They believe that these tenets are universal and can benefit each person.

SIMPLICITY

Prioritize what truly matters, focus on essential needs, and make thoughtful choices about consumption and resources.

PEACE

Be peacemakers, resolve conflicts without violence, and understand the impact of words and actions on others.

INTEGRITY

Be honest and truthful, both in word and action. Live a sense of personal responsibility and accountability.

COMMUNITY

Build and belong to a supportive and inclusive community, where everyone is valued and respected.

EQUALITY

Treat everyone with fairness and respect, and recognize the inherent worth of every individual, regardless of their background or beliefs.

SERVICE

Use your talents and skills to address the needs of others, and practice empathy, responsibility, and connection with our local and global neighbors.

STEWARDSHIP

Serve inside and outside your community, be responsible caretakers of the Earth and its resources, care for the environment, and act in ways that promote sustainability.

REFLECTION

A respect for other people's views, an emphasis on service, and a strong appreciation for the power of shared silence are embedded in a Friends education. Thoughtful reflection leads to a deeper understanding and appreciation of the curriculum.





INCLUSIVITY

Another key element of a Quaker education is the commitment to diverse perspectives, educational integrity, ethical action, and respectful discourse. At Friends Academy, we celebrate each person's unique viewpoint and look for common ground to unify our individual and collective experiences.

INQUIRY

Students are encouraged to ask questions and be curious about the world around them. Thought-provoking questions, called queries, are a cornerstone of the Quaker education system and encourage students to think more deeply. Rather than simply memorize facts or listen to lectures, students of Quaker schools engage with their curriculum, lean into curiosity, share ideas, and build upon the ideas of their peers.





From Lower School through Upper School, experiential learning is prioritized, enabling students to apply creative and critical thinking to real-world situations.



LOWER SCHOOL

Early Childhood students practice mindful listening, tied to the Quaker practice of inner listening. Moments of silence start each morning, and reoccur through the day. In Grade 4 science, students create models using sustainable energy sources such as wind and solar power, and discover how to care for the planet by composting snack waste to use in our Lower School Edible Garden and conserving energy on Lights Out Days. Lessons like these help students become stewards of their internal and external environments.



MIDDLE SCHOOL

Grade 8 history students end their unit on the Holocaust by engaging with a Holocaust survivor and hearing his or her story of courage and strength. Their study also culminates in a Meeting for Worship anchored by an equity- and ethics-focused query.

UPPER SCHOOL

AP chemistry students are learners and teachers. As invited Lower School guests look on, each AP student fuels the curiosity of the next generation by demonstrating riveting chemical reactions of flame, smoke, foam, composition, and color.

THE Benefits OF A Quaker Education

With an educational foundation built on respect, curiosity, communication, and real-world application, students from Quaker schools emerge confident and well-equipped to thrive, succeed, and give back to the world around them.



**QUAKER
SCHOOLS
OFFER...**

**SO
THAT
STUDENTS...**

**EMERGE
AS GRADUATES
WHO ARE...**

belief in the unique
dignity of each person

gain confidence and
reach their fullest
potential because their
uniqueness is valued

CONFIDENT

Testimonies of
Simplicity, Peace,
Integrity, Community,
Equality, Service,
and Stewardship

see beyond
themselves and build
skills that impact the
broader community
and wider world

EMPATHETIC

time for silence,
reflection, and
active listening

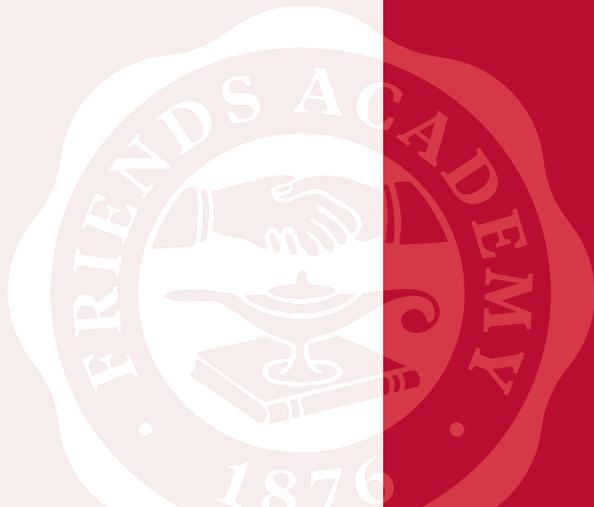
learn the nourishing,
creative power of
mindfulness

RESILIENT

the idea that the
process of learning
is continuous and
deepens through
seeking, experience,
and reflection

become innovative
and resourceful
problem-solvers
and change-makers—
and successful
college students

**CRITICAL
THINKERS
AND PROBLEM
SOLVERS**



Quaker education
makes Friends Academy
an extraordinary place to
learn, explore, and grow.

