

Garrison Forest School Lower School

Curriculum Guide



300 Garrison Forest Road
Owings Mills, Maryland 21117
410-559-3111
www.gfs.org

Mission and Philosophy of Garrison Forest School

At Garrison Forest School, we prepare our students in and out of the classroom to thrive in a complex, changing world by

- challenging them to strive for academic excellence and to grow into informed, independent, and creative thinkers;
- cultivating an authentic and resilient sense of self, grounded in respect and integrity;
- creating a diverse and inclusive community built on a spirit of caring;
- inspiring young women to lead and to serve with passion, purpose, and joy.

Our motto informs our mission: *Esse Quam Videri*, To Be Rather Than To Seem.

Statement of Respect

The Garrison Forest School community is deeply committed to equity, honesty, kindness, and respect as part of the educational experience. To this end, we

- celebrate diversity both within our community and our curriculum;
- are concerned for the well-being of all people;
- seek to build the self-esteem of all people;
- aspire to promote the understanding of all people.

We recognize the dignity and worth of all individuals. To protect their rights we confront bias, prejudice, and discrimination. Garrison Forest School does not condone any behavior which is inconsistent with these tenets. We believe that it is unacceptable for our spoken and written language and behavior to demean anyone's physical characteristics, as well as anyone's ethnic, gender, personal, racial, religious, or sexual identities. We, as individuals, must take responsibility for our words and deeds and respect all people.

GARRISON FOREST SCHOOL SCOPE OF PROGRAMS

Garrison Forest School offers an exceptional elementary, middle, and high school program for girls beginning in Kindergarten. For grades 8-12, Garrison Forest also has a regional, national, and international boarding program. The coed Preschool begins with a Parent-Toddler program and has classes for two, three, and four-year-old boys and girls. At the heart of every program are dedicated, talented faculty members helping each child reach his or her full potential to lead a life of purpose. For more information on the Preschool, Lower School, Middle School, Upper School or boarding program, please visit www.gfs.org or contact the Admission Office at (410) 559-3111.

NWEA TESTING

All grades, Kindergarten through Fifth Grade, are enrolled in the Northwest Evaluation Association assessment program in which each girl is assessed online three times a year in Math, Reading, and Language Usage. The assessments provide valuable information on each girl's yearly progress; the feedback is immediate and helpful in providing individualized academic plans and strategies.

AN OVERVIEW OF THE LOWER SCHOOL

The Lower School is comprised of Kindergarten through Fifth Grade. From Kindergarten through Twelfth Grade, Garrison Forest is a college preparatory school for girls.

Pre-First is for students who turn six after September 1st and for those who would benefit from an additional year before First Grade. Children should be six-years-old to enter First Grade.

Kindergarten through Fifth Grades: daily from 8:00 until 3:30 (with the exception of Thursday mornings when school begins at 8:50).

Afterschool Care: beginning at age five, care is available until 6:00 P.M..

Class Sizes: In Kindergarten to Fifth Grade, two heterogeneous homerooms at each level have one teacher for 12 to 16 students. For Reading and Math, smaller flexible grouping or homogeneous grouping allows for the challenge, enrichment, and support that best serve the needs of individual students.

Seven-Day Schedule: From the Preschool to 12th Grade, GFS's academic cycle is based on a seven-day rotation of classes.

Thursday mornings: As faculty members are involved in meetings every Thursday morning, the school day will begin at 8:50. Complimentary care will be provided for those children who will need supervision prior to 8:50.

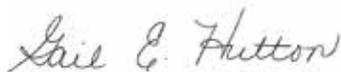
Dear Parents,

Our primary goal is to instill a love of learning in all of our students. We hope this guide gives you a sense of our outstanding curriculum and a feel for the environment of warmth and understanding in which it is provided. We always strive to balance the exhilaration of discovery and exploration with the security of routine and trusting, respectful relationships. As the curriculum engages each student's interest and enthusiasm, every girl is encouraged to advance as far as her maturity, interest, and ability permit in every area. We stress group collaboration and cooperation, just as we recognize and support individual needs and differences.

Close ties between the School and our families allow us to work together to support and appreciate each student as an individual. Communication between parents, teachers, and administrators is encouraged in numerous ways, from formal and informal parent conferences to progress reports. Parent involvement in the life of the School community is always welcome.

In all aspects of the day, respect, fairness, kindness, and courtesy are given foremost attention. The students learn values through countless "life lessons" where they're guided in their ability to interact respectfully with both adults and peers. Independence and the acceptance of responsibilities, challenges, and limits are also emphasized. As our students move through Garrison Forest School with increased confidence and competence, the teachers revel in their successes, keeping a close eye on those they have taught and those they will teach. Ours is a community in the true sense of the word. Please use this guide as a beginning step in getting to know Garrison Forest, and continue the process with visits to our website (www.gfs.org) and our campus. We hope to see you!

Sincerely,



Gail E. Hutton

Interim Head of Lower School



Kindergarten

The Lower School begins with our Kindergarten classes. Teachers work together on curricular themes, projects, a play, field trips, and daily playground time. The program offers a wealth of cognitive and social experiences within a developmentally appropriate framework. Printed material, art, music, scientific exploration, literature, mathematics, poetry, cooking, and small and large motor activities are incorporated into the day to foster the development of a solid foundation for more advanced academics. Free play also plays an important role in helping the children develop creativity, the ability to understand alternate points of view, and the leadership and cooperative skills that will be valuable throughout their lives.

Language Arts and Math concepts are revisited and expanded as the children progress through a carefully designed set of skills. They are challenged at their different readiness levels through multi-sensory activities that emphasize learning through meaningful experiences. Expressive and receptive language, phonics, and whole language reinforce phonemic awareness, letter-sound relationships, high frequency and sight words, visual and auditory discrimination, and comprehension. In conjunction with the best children's literature and other reading materials, Saxon Phonics develops and reinforces each child's ability to recognize and produce the primary sounds of the alphabet. Creative writing works hand-in-hand with reading to foster the development of students who view printed material as an integral and joyful part of their lives. Houghton Mifflin's *Go Math!* units include number recognition, patterns, sets, addition, subtraction, estimation, graphing, geometry, and measurement. It is well-suited to the hands-on needs of Kindergarteners.

Words Their Way, a research-based approach to growing children's literacy progress, is our primary resource, Kindergarten through Fifth Grade, in shaping our students' phonics, vocabulary, and spelling foundations.



HIGHLIGHTS OF THE LOWER SCHOOL

Over three-fourths of the lead teachers have advanced degrees in the field of education.

An extensive professional development program encourages faculty to stay abreast of advances in education, child development, and technology.

Access to three age-appropriate playgrounds and 110 acres of paths, woods, and fields allows for free play and supervised walks including visits to horses in the barn or the fields.

Numerous extra-curricular activities after school include Robotics, Girl Scouts, lacrosse, instrumental music, dance, and riding.

Reading Buddies, Big Sisters, and all-school activities pair younger students with older role models.

Every spring First through Fifth Graders participate in a Lower School-wide poetry recitation event.

Fifth Graders enjoy additional responsibilities, leadership opportunities, and privileges including running for Light Blue and Dark Blue Captains and being elected by Lower School students.

An Academic Resource Coordinator as well as Reading Specialists work with students, ensuring that the reading groups are small enough for each student to succeed.

SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL LEARNING

In keeping with our mission and core values, the focus is on developing a caring and respectful community. We understand that a child's social-emotional development is just as important as her academic growth and development. With this in mind, we purposefully teach cooperation and collaboration and maintain the routines and consistency children need. With their extensive experience in education, child development, and social emotional development, our teachers and school counselor have a level of expertise that allows them to collaborate closely to meet the needs of the "whole" child.

All adults in the community model our goals, and we use literature, group and individual discussions, and group activities to address situations that arise. Expectations are clearly outlined and discussed with the children regularly. Our school counselor regularly visits classrooms to engage in age-appropriate social skills lessons including group discussions and activities that promote pro-social behaviors. The safety and overall well-being of each child is our highest priority.

At the heart of the program is communication with families. The Lower School administrators, teachers, and school counselor work closely with parents to develop a plan of action to assist when remediation is needed. We employ a team approach, as we understand the efforts of faculty, parents, and administrators are all important in the creation of an optimal learning environment.

Pre-First

Pre-First is an advanced academic program that provides a solid foundation for Garrison Forest's First Grade. The teachers work closely with the girls in small groups and in a flexible environment that provides both challenge and nurture for each student. A particular focus is placed on developing strong intrapersonal skills and the ability to act with initiative and independence. The girls learn to accept challenges with confidence.

Thematic units provide the framework for the curriculum. Studying the rainforest for example, allows teachers to integrate literacy and math goals with other curricular areas such as art, music, and science. The Language Arts program focuses on reading, listening, speaking and writing. Phonics instruction and vocabulary development are important aspects of the program. Reading instruction is individualized according to the student's readiness, using decodable, phonetic readers and beginning reader books. Writing is carefully integrated with reading, and the girls have numerous opportunities to express themselves by writing stories, journals, descriptions, lists, opinions, books, and poems. The final writing project for the year is a research-based country report.

The Pre-First math program uses the highly successful Singapore Primary Mathematics series. In addition to building strong foundational arithmetic skills and number sense, the program develops a fundamental understanding in algebra and geometry. Supplemental units on time and money are also incorporated into the academic year. Through direct instruction and hands-on activities, concepts are presented in a clear and logical way to develop a deep understanding of math. Each lesson emphasizes critical thinking skills and stretches the mind to promote an understanding of the way mathematical processes work.



The Pre-First students produce a play for their parents and friends in the spring, working collaboratively and cooperatively on everything from scenery and costumes to memorized lines and songs. They learn important skills and responsibilities as they take the lead in this exciting experience and hone their skills in their own production.

First Grade

The two homerooms work as one First Grade community and as two cohesive classrooms depending on the activity. The Language Arts curriculum is designed to nurture the competency, fluency, and verbal expression that foster the desire to read. Using Houghton Mifflin basal readers and literature sets the teachers help the girls develop confidence in reading and promote an interest in, and an appreciation for, the written word. Phonics instruction (Saxon Phonics) and word study (Words Their Way) provide the necessary foundation to achieve successful decoding, fluency, and spelling skills. Teachers also encourage daily independent reading at school and at home.

Using the skills and concepts from the 6+1 Writing program, students learn the writing process (brainstorm, prewrite, first draft, edit, final draft) and produce final projects for both individual and group assignments. The students learn to write to inform, persuade, describe, and make a list. They also write in journals and use story starters to creatively write and compose. A final research-based expository report on a chosen dog breed culminates their year. Grammar and sentence mechanics are critical components of the writing curriculum to ensure competence, clarity, and thoughtfulness.

The Mathematics program, Houghton Mifflin's *Go Math!* is designed to develop strong mathematical thinkers and confident problem solvers. Concepts and strategies in arithmetic, algebra, and geometry engage the students to reason mathematically by developing number sense and an array of problem-solving approaches. The girls are encouraged to creatively explore different solutions to authentic and relevant problems. The students competently explain their mathematical thinking verbally and in written form using appropriate vocabulary in a meaningful and logical sequence. Teachers regularly provide opportunities and experiences for students to work collaboratively and participate in small group discussions using a wide variety of resources including manipulatives, technology support learning, and exploration in the classroom. Our teachers engage the girls at all levels of conceptual understanding, appropriately supporting and challenging them to ensure confidence as they progress in our program.

Homework begins in October and is limited to 20 to 30 minutes each night, with an additional 20 minutes of free reading.

The First Grade participates in a Global Read Aloud Program in which they read the same book as classes from around the world. They connect with students using Skype, Edmodo, and blogging; activities and projects that relate to the shared read-aloud are pursued during the six week program.

In each grade, from Kindergarten through Second Grade, students produce a yearly play for their parents and the other members of the community. The First Grade play often has a connection to a Social Studies or Geography theme. The memorization, speaking, and drama skills of the girls are always in evidence when they have worked together as a grade to bring a production to the stage.

THEMATIC ACTIVITIES

Themes and thematic study nurture a child's interest in specific topics and serve as a motivating force when it's time to practice writing, reading, and numerical skills and concepts. They allow for interrelated activities that cross different areas of the curriculum, creating an environment that fosters and encourages the process of learning and the active involvement of the students. While studying the ocean, the Kindergarten students sing *Baby Beluga* in Music class, dissect crabs in Science, create fish prints in Art, crab-walk in Physical Education, listen to *Rainbow Fish* in Library, and learn about endangered whales in Social Studies. The children relate the themes to their own real-life experiences and build on what they know as they make connections between different curricular areas, transfer knowledge, and apply it in new and meaningful ways. Literature, assemblies, discussions, field trips, and community service projects all support and reinforce the value of thematic learning.

Sample Themes

Kindergarten: The Ocean

Pre-First: Rain Forest

First Grade: Around the World

Second Grade: The Iditarod

Third Grade: Colonial America

Fourth Grade: American History

Fifth Grade: The Environment

ART CLASSES

Beginning in Kindergarten, students have Art classes in our large, bright studio where there is ample space for a variety of projects and a kiln for pottery and sculpture. Using 2D and 3D formats and a variety of media, students develop an appreciation for the art of other cultures alongside an awareness of the beauty around us. Hands-on, open-ended projects include collage, sculpture, paint, textiles, watercolor, printmaking, ceramics, mosaics, woodworking, and mixed media. The year culminates in an Art Show where work from each student is exhibited.

MUSIC CLASSES

Music classes give children the tools to express themselves musically in meaningful and joyful ways. Songs and activities are chosen to develop skills, supplement classroom themes, promote musical understanding and appreciation, develop the ability to hear and generate the patterns and sounds of language, and enhance the appreciation of different cultures. The children sing, play Orff instruments, experiment with music and patterns, and participate in several performances including all-school Winter and Spring Concerts. Lessons include classical music as well as contemporary and multicultural selections that represent various styles, eras, genres, and traditions. The children sing, move, and play instruments as they enjoy the beats and rhythms that are closely aligned with reading and counting.

Second Grade

Working in small groups, the Second Graders develop fluency, expression, and comprehension skills as they become more solid readers. The Saxon Phonics program continues to develop an understanding of phonics and word attack skills through daily lessons and practice. The teachers also enhance comprehension skills through factual, analytical, and inferential questioning. In addition to the stories in their Houghton Mifflin reading series, they read trade books, poetry, biographies, and plays. Reading is integrated with Social Studies and Science, emphasizing the ability to comprehend and appreciate both fiction and nonfiction. Reader's Theater provides individualized, fun practice in fluency. The program aims to stimulate an interest in books and foster a love of reading.

Second Graders focus on fluency and accuracy in their writing. They use the writing process (brainstorm, outline or web, rough draft, edit, final draft) and develop a deeper understanding of the 6+1 Writing Program. Their work is narrative, expository, and creative, and it includes letters, journal entries, poetry, and stories. Research skills and nonfiction writing are introduced with individual animal reports.

Words Their Way reinforces phonetic skills and helps expand vocabulary and hone proofreading, alphabetizing, and spelling skills. Continuing with Handwriting Without Tears, cursive handwriting begins in the late fall, developing naturally through repetition and practice both at home and at school.

The Second Grade level of the Houghton Mifflin *Go Math!* program is used with two homogeneous Math groups. Confidence and success develop from a spiraling approach in which new skills and concepts are taught and revisited in subsequent lessons and grades. The girls gain confidence in their math facts as they review addition and subtraction and move into multiplication and division. Additional content includes measurement, picturing and naming fractions, money, and geometry. Regular cumulative assessments and investigations help track each student's progress.

The Second Grade has nutrition as its Community Service focus. Students take the lead in educating the community about its importance both for Baltimore and for the children of the world. They spearhead a project in which the First to Fifth Grade students, parents, and Upper School helpers make hundreds of sandwiches for Our Daily Bread.



Third Grade

Third Grade homerooms work closely together to ensure the best learning environment for each student. In flexible reading groups the girls further develop word attack skills, sight vocabulary, critical thinking, fluency and expression. The students work with appropriately leveled materials, moving toward acquisition of deeper comprehension skills and the ability to identify story elements such as character, setting, plot, mood, tone, and style. The Houghton Mifflin series, various trade books, analogies workbooks, and spelling, grammar, and phonics materials including Words Their Way support skilled and thoughtful reading and writing. They use reference materials with increased regularity and work closely with the librarian and Digital Learning Specialist as research skills are developed. The writing process comes to life throughout the year as the girls practice descriptive, persuasive, and expository essays and compositions. Creative writing is encouraged and nurtured through narratives and poetry writing. The girls also enjoy regular reading response writing assignments. Third Grade students explore concepts and problem solving using Houghton Mifflin's *Go Math!* The teachers focus on adding and subtracting multi-digit numbers, evaluating data from numerous graphs, multiplying, dividing, understanding fractions, converting measurements, and defining geometric shapes and angles. In addition to developing proficiency with basic math facts, the girls explore challenging and relevant word problems which require two or more steps to solve. As the teachers emphasize mental math and probability, number sense continues to be developed. The girls regularly work in collaborative groups and engage in small group discussions to express their mathematical thinking using appropriate math vocabulary. A wide variety of resources including manipulatives and online services provide support, enrichment and mathematical exploration. Regular assessments help the students become comfortable with testing situations and provide the positive feedback that nurtures confident mathematicians.

Third Grade focuses on the United States with an emphasis on Colonial America. A State Fair brings the girls together for a feast and presentation celebrating all they have learned about the different states and regions of our country. Third graders culminate their study of colonial times by spending a full morning in true colonial dress and spirit. Using the on-campus chapel, the girls portray early colonists, utilizing artifacts and imitating a colonial lifestyle with activities, skits, songs, games, and food. Lastly, the girls are inspired by an American heroine. After reading a biography and completing additional research, each girl dresses and is interviewed as her American heroine.

SCIENCE CLASSES

The objective of the Lower School science program is to immerse students in activities and projects that will allow them to feel like scientists. Beginning in Kindergarten our curriculum provides continuous opportunities for students to explore most areas of science. The goal of Garrison Forest's science curriculum is geared to developing a sense of natural curiosity and the exploration of the unknown. Emphasis during lessons is on developing science skills while exploring content. Establishing the most basic scientific skills such as observing, describing, and collecting begin in Kindergarten, and advance to skills such as deduction and writing conclusions in the upper elementary grades. All grades engage in the process of the Scientific Method.

SPANISH PROGRAM

The Lower School Spanish program is designed to improve oral proficiency and second language skill development. The Kindergarten through Second Grades meet six times in a seven day cycle (once for 45 minutes and five times for 20 minutes) and the Third through Fifth Grades meet three times for 45 minutes. The same textbook series is used from First Grade through the Fifth Grade, and themes are reinforced each year by building on familiar words and introducing additional vocabulary. Every class begins with a student leading her classmates in an oral exercise. In this way, each girl becomes comfortable hearing herself use Spanish and experiencing others' responses to her. Throughout the year, the class actively engages in learning the three modes of communication: interpersonal, interpretive, and presentational.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

The Physical Education program enables each student to achieve and maintain her personal best level of physical fitness. The emphasis is on fun, child-centered activities that promote locomotor and non-locomotor skills, body awareness, spatial awareness, personal space, upper body strength, balance, and eye-hand and eye-foot coordination. In addition to physical skills, opportunities to develop self-confidence, initiative, and responsibility abound.

Cooperative games and relays teach self-confidence, initiative, sportsmanship, and individual responsibility. As they introduce the prerequisite skills for soccer, lacrosse, basketball, field hockey, tennis, and other cooperative games, the teachers reinforce the rules necessary for fair play. In Fourth Grade, the curriculum transitions from low organization games to more structured games and sports. The girls participate in both cooperative and competitive situations, and good sportsmanship is a prime expectation. At this time there is also an increased focus on individual fitness and the value of a healthy, physically active lifestyle. Once in each seven day cycle the First to Third Grade girls go on a Power Walk around the campus, keeping track of their miles with a goal of walking across the USA and back in one school year.

The Fourth and Fifth Graders also participate in mini-units of riding, polo, and dance as part of their Physical Education program.

Fourth Grade

Fourth Grade homeroom teachers maintain flexible heterogeneous groups for reading and/or math and work closely to provide an enriched program of Social Studies including geography, American History, and economics. Students receive between 40 and 50 minutes of homework each night and are expected to read for an additional 20 minutes.

Reading focuses on advanced reading and comprehension skills through fiction, nonfiction, drama, and poetry. The teachers use novels and trade books, connected to Social Studies units, to emphasize comprehension and critical thinking at a deeper level. Research and oral presentations accompany formal written responses to reading materials, connecting reading and writing in a meaningful way. Using the 6+1 Writing Program, students participate in numerous writing forms including expository, persuasive, descriptive, and narrative essays, and poetry. Students use their Chromebooks to create and polish their work. Grammar, vocabulary study, and spelling studies, using *Words Their Way*, complement the reading and writing programs.

In Social Studies the students explore the events leading to the Revolutionary War. The girls participate in numerous simulations in class, integrating role-playing and creating video, art, and writing projects. Students track the events of this time period and carefully examine the consequent “domino effect.” By doing this, they are able to fully understand how specific events led to the Revolutionary War. The girls also analyze and evaluate the opposing perspectives of the British and the Colonists.

Fourth Grade continues with Houghton Mifflin’s *Go Math!* Skills including decimals, measurement, fractions, geometry, and charts and graphs. Mental math, word problems, manipulatives, and problem solving occur on a daily basis. An emphasis on deeper conceptual understanding and the ability to express mathematical thinking is fundamental in the classroom. The girls work collaboratively and in small groups to explore different strategies and approaches to solve real-world problems. In addition, they study the stock market in order to build mathematical confidence, algebraic thinking, statistical interpretation, and complex problem solving. Students also continue to develop mathematical skills through the use of online services and other enrichment materials.

The girls also participate in the Global Read Aloud Program in which they read the same book as other classes from around the world. They connect to discuss the book with global friends using Skype, Edmodo, and blogging; activities and projects that relate to the shared read-aloud are pursued during this six week program.

Fourth and Fifth Graders participate in Junior Achievement’s BizTown which introduces economics with hands-on, realistic activities. The lessons culminate in a day at a simulated city where students take on different roles from police officers to bank owners and shopkeepers. They create their own business plans and logos and handle the banking, payroll, advertising, and profit margins of their chosen businesses. JA BizTown is an incredible two-year program where business, economics, and community living come alive.

Fifth Grade

Fifth Grade girls are the leaders of the Lower School. They take responsibility for morning carpool, digital projection at Morning Meeting, several community service and outreach projects, and the orientation of Kindergarteners. Homework is assigned to take between 60 and 70 minutes each night with an additional 20 minutes of reading.

In Fifth Grade, each student purchases a Chromebook that is fully integrated with classroom and home assignments. Building on their experience and skills, the students and teachers incorporate the technology into Language Arts, Math, Science, Art, Foreign Language, and Library, maintaining the best balance of digital and traditional learning. The girls take responsibility for more of their own learning, actively participating in innovative activities and projects made possible by technology.

In reading, the girls develop advanced skills with fiction, nonfiction, drama, and poetry. While the focus is on comprehension and critical thinking, vocabulary, spelling, fluency and decoding skills are also refined through Words Their Way. With novels, nonfiction, e-books, and trade books, they focus on character development, setting, tone, style, plot, and other literary devices as they prepare for Middle School English. Fifth Graders produce narrative, persuasive, expository, and creative writing pieces with the rubrics, concepts, and skills of the 6+1 Writing Program. They practice taking notes from written and orally presented material in Social Studies, Science, and Reading. A comprehensive Fifth Grade project involves extensive research on a chosen topic, a formal written report, and an oral and digital presentation given to parents and other Lower School students. The Fifth Grade “speech” is a testament to the confidence and competence the girls have gained in their time in the Lower School.

Math classes are flexibly grouped using Houghton Mifflin’s *Go Math!*, which is the precursor to the Sixth Grade Connected Math Series. The concepts and skills include mental math, problem solving, patterns and functions, measurement, statistics and probability, fractions, decimals, and geometry. There is also additional work with exponents, square roots, graphing, algebra, integers, estimation, and functions. The program includes extensive enrichment with supplemental materials, computer programs, and websites.

The Social Studies curriculum includes a unit on Global Sustainability and Leadership that focuses on government and our changing world. The culminating, student-led project is based on the environmental needs identified in our Garrison Forest community. Students also explore economics through JA Biztown and spend a day running their own town. The year concludes with a unit on inventors and inventions and a student created Invention Convention!

The Fifth Graders love Genius Hour which allows students to explore and research topics of personal interest. Each project concludes with a final presentation.

IMAGINEERING

Imagineering is a hands-on program for all Kindergarten through Fifth Grade students designed to develop valuable spatial reasoning and problem-solving skills in a fun, inquiry-driven environment. The three areas of focus are engineering, programming and technology, with students designing, manipulating, and creating 2D and 3D objects. Students will practice Design Thinking, a cyclical process that includes the following stages: empathy, definition, ideation, prototype, and test. Their work will reinforce resilience and perseverance when faced with a challenging problem and will foster curiosity and creativity.

“THE WORD OF THE DAY”

“La Palabra Del Dia” is Spanish for “The Word of the Day.” During our Morning Meetings, we introduce a Spanish word that is connected in some way with current and/or school events. The word is practiced throughout the week and used in different ways. In this way, our girls understand that learning takes place not just in the classroom but throughout the building. The weekly Parents’ Notes lists the words we have introduced for families to learn, practice, and use together.

COMMUNITY SERVICE

Beginning in Kindergarten, the girls lead different community service and outreach projects based on the five United Nations Rights of Children – shelter, nutrition, education, the environment, and health. Each grade takes on a project related to one of these themes and engages the rest of the community in supporting its cause. Whether rallying support for the Garrison Forest Race for the Cure team or making educational activity packets for a transitional shelter for homeless families, the girls experience the power of working collaboratively and advocating for others in need.

SOCIAL STUDIES

The Social Studies curriculum promotes an understanding of self and a respect for and appreciation of others from those in our community to other people and cultures around the world. This goal is accomplished both inside and outside the classroom through themes and activities, literature, assemblies, field trips, Morning Meeting topics, and community service projects. In our youngest classes, the focus moves from self, to peers, to family, and to the immediate community. Then the curriculum grows to include a larger focus on geography, cultures, and traditions that are less familiar to the students. Beginning in Second Grade, *Time for Kids* provides an avenue for discussing and understanding current events, geography, and different cultural mores.

Extracurricular Programs and Activities

Afterschool Care: This program is for students from five-years-old through Fifth Grade. Pick-up is either at 5:00 or at 6:00 p.m.

Dance: We offer dance classes in our dance studio once a week beginning in Pre-Kindergarten.

Girl Scouts: Two active Troops, Brownies (Second and Third Grades) and Juniors (Fourth to Sixth Grades), meet twice a month after school.

Instrumental Music: Private after-school instrumental lessons are offered in piano and violin beginning in Kindergarten. Guitar and flute are offered beginning in Fourth and Fifth Grades.

Riding: From Kindergarten to Fifth Grades, students may opt for lessons in lieu of one Physical Education class a week. Additional programs are available to experienced riders after school and on weekends.

Robotics: The Robotics Club is for students in Fourth and Fifth Grade. It meets one to two days a week after school.

Sports: During various seasons, sports opportunities are available for our girls depending on the season and availability of resources. In the past, our girls have participated on the Middle School cross country team, Lower School Grizzlies basketball team, and a spring lacrosse team.

The STEM Club meets to create, explore and discover in the areas of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math. The STEM club meetings will help develop the children's natural curiosity about their world. Opportunities for exploration and projects abound both inside and outside of the classroom. For example, our inaugural lower school Maker Space Program offers many opportunities to create and tinker!

There maybe additional charges for these extra-curricular activities with the exception of Lacrosse.

“I love GFS. It is the best school ever because everyone is nice, and the teachers are *amazing!* Everyone takes care of one another.”

Hannah, Grade 3

Sample Schedule

First Grade 2015-2016

	1 M	2 T	3 W	4 TH	5 F	6	7
7:45	Arrival			Faculty Meeting	Arrival		
8:00		MM			MM		
8:15	LA	LA	LA	LA	LA	LA	LA
8:20							
8:45							
9:15							
9:40	BREAK	BREAK	BREAK	BREAK	BREAK	BREAK	BREAK
9:50	MATH	ART	MATH	SCIENCE	MATH	MATH	MATH
11:05	LUNCH	LUNCH	LUNCH	LUNCH	LUNCH	LUNCH	LUNCH
11:25	RECESS	RECESS	RECESS	RECESS	RECESS	RECESS	RECESS
11:45	WRITING AND GRAMMAR	MATH	GRAMMAR	MATH	DEAR	READ ALOUD	SOCIAL STUDIES
12:10			SCIENCE				
12:35					WRITING AND GRAMMAR	WRITING AND GRAMMAR	
1:00	LIB	SCIENCE	WRITING	SOCIAL STUDIES COMBO			ART
1:25	SPAN						
1:50	PE COMBO 1st/2nd	MUSIC	SPAN	PE	MUSIC	PE	PE COMBO 1st/2nd
2:15			READ ALOUD				
2:40	SOCIAL STUDIES COMBO	SPAN	SHOW AND SHARE	WEEKLY READER	LIB	SPAN	IMAGN
3:05		DEAR					
3:30	DISMISSAL						

MORNING MEETING AND SOCIAL SKILLS

For Lower School students, Morning Meeting times are devoted to lessons in respect, manners, and civility with engaging discussions and activities that give the girls examples and resources for developing into respectful young women. Two times each week, the community gets together to sing, learn, share presentations and community service projects, and celebrate birthdays and other special events.

The Lower School counselor meets with grade level groups, small groups, and individuals to discuss changes and challenges in their lives. She emphasizes the skills necessary to make wise decisions in difficult and risky situations. Group lessons can include respect, feelings, self-esteem, kindness, friendship, empathy, teamwork, and body image. Beginning in Fourth Grade, the counselor and Science teacher address important topics such as drugs, alcohol, and human development in an age-appropriate manner.

LUNCH

Students in Kindergarten through Fifth Grades eat lunch in Alumnae Hall. Because Lower School students do not have the ability to make healthy choices from such a wide selection, they are encouraged to bring a lunch; but they also have the option of buying a hot lunch beginning in Third grade. Milk and water are provided for all students in the dining hall. Weekly menus are available on the GFS website.

HOMEWORK POLICIES

Homework is assigned beginning in the fall of First Grade. It is designed to provide reinforcement and practice of basic academic skills and to encourage good study habits and time management. Parents are not expected to help with the completion of homework assignments except as needed for special projects. As a general guideline, homework is designed to take 20 to 30 minutes in First Grade, 30 to 40 minutes in Second and Third Grades, 40 to 50 minutes in Fourth Grade, and 50 minutes to an hour in Fifth Grade. To allow for planning around weekly family activities, teachers prepare weekly homework sheets that are posted on the school website on Fridays or Mondays.

LIBRARY

The Lower School Library classes utilize a collection of over 9,000 titles, 35 magazine subscriptions, and school-wide online databases available from the library and from home. The Lower Division librarian promotes a love of reading and literary enrichment and provides instruction in information research skills. Weekly classes for the students feature literacy activities, research instruction on using the library databases, finding online resources through effective web searching, and selection of reading material from print and digital collections. The Black-Eyed Susan Book Club for Fifth Grade students meets once a month in the Library. Select students from the Fifth Grade book club also participate in the annual Battle of the Books competition.

Lower School Faculty

2015-2016

Gail E. Hutton
Interim Head of Lower School

Jenni Glose
Administrative Assistant

Liz Schindler
Lower School, Admissions Director

Amanda Berdan
Assistant to the Head of Lower School

Octavia Beard
Art

Ashley Behrens
First Grade

Tracey Brocato
Science

Stephanie Brown
Fifth Grade

Ashleigh Cicconi
Music

Laura Cline
Physical Education

Shondra Cowling
Guidance Counselor

Christine Grant
Academic Resource Coordinator

Leigh McDonald Hall '81
Physical Education

Lisa Jenkins
First Grade

Caroline Kettler
Kindergarten

Kellie Kesler
Pre-First

Dana Livne
Fourth Grade

Deborah Fusting Lynn '75
Third Grade

Rachel Mejibovsky
Fifth Grade

Louise Moran
Kindergarten

Suzanne Rossi
Physical Education

Liz Sadler
Math Specialist

Christine Shriver
Imagineering

Ashby Litz Thoeni '02
Curriculum Specialist

Jamie Thompson
Third Grade

Andrea Vespoint
*Spanish, Co-Chair,
Diversity Leadership Council*

Erin Viana
Fourth Grade

Faith Ward
Librarian, Reading Teacher

Amy Welling
Second Grade



Garrison Forest School. **YOU CAN. YOU WILL.**

For more information
about our school or summer camps,
please visit www.gfs.org
or call 410-559-3111.