Springside Chestnut Hill Academy

Lower School Curriculum Guide

PRE-K–4TH GRADE


McCAUGHAN
LOWER SCHOOL

Message from the Head of Lower School

Welcome to the Lower School at Springside Chestnut Hill Academy!

In the Lower School, we meet children where they are developmentally while inspiring them to reach beyond what they thought possible. Our rigorous academic program is grounded in a supportive, nurturing environment where every child is known and challenged. We hold high expectations for all students and partner closely with families to help each child find success.

Our exceptional teachers are the heart of the Lower School experience. They build meaningful relationships with students, creating classrooms where children feel confident to take risks and develop a lifelong love of learning.

Students engage in a rich, interdisciplinary program that includes science, visual arts, music, physical education, outdoor education, library, world language, and our Center for Entrepreneurial Leadership (CEL). Our 62-acre campus, with unparalleled access to the Wissahickon Valley, extends learning beyond the classroom and inspires curiosity and exploration.

Just as importantly, we are committed to developing the whole child. Social-emotional learning and SCH's core values of courage, integrity, thoughtfulness, resilience, and diversity are woven into daily life, helping students grow into compassionate, confident, and engaged community members.

We invite you to explore the pages ahead to learn more about the Lower School experience at SCH. Better yet, come visit us. We'd love to welcome you to campus and share the magic of our community!



Douglas Wainwright
Head of Lower School

Hear more from Douglas Wainwright by scanning the QR code!

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Our Single-Sex Approach

At SCH Academy's Lower School, students learn and grow in single-sex classrooms, an intentional approach that creates space for confidence, voice, and self-discovery during a pivotal stage of development. Single-sex learning environments empower students to engage deeply, take healthy risks, and develop a strong sense of self.

Our rigorous academic program combines responsive teaching, hands-on learning, and rich experiences in the arts, sciences, outdoor education, world language, and entrepreneurship. Every aspect of the Lower School is designed to meet students where they are while inspiring them to think critically, explore boldly, and grow with purpose.

Here, students discover who they are through authentic experiences. They learn to lead and collaborate, create and innovate, persevere through challenges, and care for others. They do it all in a community built on meaningful relationships with teachers who know them well and peers who encourage them to become their best selves.



CURRICULUM AT A GLANCE

Language Arts and Interdisciplinary Studies

Literacy is the key to understanding the world and expressing one's place within it. At SCH, we empower students to think critically, communicate clearly, and engage with diverse perspectives. We value both the mastery of foundational skills and the deep background knowledge necessary for true comprehension. Our approach develops confident, thoughtful readers and communicators who are prepared to thrive in a complex world.

Reading is a layered process built on a foundation of interconnected skills. In the early years, literacy instruction at SCH is grounded in a structured, systematic approach. Fundations provides multisensory instruction in phonics, spelling, and handwriting, while Heggerty builds students' phonological and phonemic awareness, which are critical building blocks for reading success. Together, these programs ensure that students gain decoding and fluency skills with confidence and accuracy.

As fluency grows, students engage more deeply with the meaning, craft, and complexity of text. Beginning in Kindergarten, our core language arts curriculum, Wit & Wisdom, offers intellectually rigorous, knowledge-rich modules centered on compelling texts and essential questions. Through carefully selected texts and guided discussions, students learn to recognize multiple perspectives, develop empathy, and think critically about fairness and community. Together, these programs help students connect ideas across time, place, change, and culture.

To support clear and confident written communication, students develop strong handwriting skills in the early grades, transitioning to cursive writing in 3rd grade.

Language Arts Program Goals

- Develop a lifelong love of reading and an appreciation for diverse genres.
- Build strong foundational reading skills, including decoding, fluency, and comprehension.
- Communicate with confidence and effectiveness in oral settings.
- Write with stamina, clarity, and voice across multiple genres.
- Analyze and respond to texts with insight and precision.
- Construct and present persuasive oral arguments.
- Engage in active listening and participate in thoughtful, respectful discussions.

Interdisciplinary Studies Program Goals

- Build a deep background knowledge base in humanities and the natural world to support comprehension and critical thinking.
- Appreciate the importance of multiple perspectives to deepen understanding of people, events, and ideas.
- Connect past and present, recognizing how historical and environmental contexts shape current events and issues.
- Ask meaningful questions, conduct research using credible sources, and evaluate evidence to form reasoned conclusions.
- Apply learning across disciplines, extending knowledge and skills into the arts, sciences, movement, and other creative or experiential domains.



Mathematics

In the Lower School, mathematics is taught as a language for thinking that equips students with strong numeracy, problem-solving skills, and the confidence to apply them in any context. Across every grade, they learn to approach challenges with logic, flexibility, and perseverance, developing a toolkit of strategies that extend beyond the classroom. Our core program, Math in Focus, builds deep foundational skills. By cultivating fluency and flexible thinking, they learn to analyze problems from multiple perspectives, choose effective approaches, and use mathematics as a powerful tool for understanding and engaging with the world around them.

Lessons follow the *Concrete–Pictorial–Abstract* progression, ensuring that students first experience concepts physically, then represent them visually, and finally apply them symbolically. Through whole-class discussions, small-group explorations, and independent practice, they learn to express their reasoning clearly and accurately. Learning extends beyond the classroom through opportunities such as Snack Math, Morning Groups, and Mathletes, which provide additional challenge, support, and opportunities to develop mathematical confidence.

Mathematics Program Goals

- Develop mathematical thinking by enabling students to reason, problem-solve, and communicate effectively about mathematical ideas.
- Strengthen number sense through varied contexts that build mastery of numerical skills.
- Integrate mathematical strands of number operations, number theory, geometry (2D and 3D), algebraic thinking, measurement (time, money, distance), and data analysis and emphasize their interrelationships.
- Connect math to real life so students see its relevance in everyday experiences and problem-solving.
- Build a strong foundation at each grade level, preparing students to become confident, capable, and comfortable mathematical thinkers.

DEPARTMENTALS

Center for Entrepreneurial Leadership (CEL)

The Center for Entrepreneurial Leadership (CEL) empowers SCH Lower School students to grow as thinkers, creators, and collaborators. At SCH, entrepreneurship is not simply about starting a business - it is a way of thinking and approaching the world. Through the CEL curriculum, students develop four core entrepreneurial mindsets: **opportunity seeking, creative problem solving, resiliency, and resourcefulness**. Embedded in hands-on, project-based learning, these mindsets help students identify real-world needs, generate innovative ideas, and persevere through challenges as they design meaningful solutions.

Students learn to listen deeply and respond with empathy, developing the social awareness to value perspectives different from their own. Working collaboratively, they ask thoughtful questions, exchange constructive feedback, and discover that iteration and failure are valuable parts of the creative process.

With access to a fully equipped makerspace, students harness technology to bring their ideas to life by designing, building, and refining projects with purpose. They might create stop-motion animations, experiment with AI tools, construct large-scale prototypes through cardboard engineering, or bring precision to their designs using laser cutters and 3D printers. Because the curriculum is intentionally flexible, projects evolve in response to student interests as well as the needs of the school and local community. Students also learn to use data to inform decisions, while older students extend their learning into finance by exploring concepts such as budgeting, profit, and supply and demand.

CEL Program Goals

- Students will listen attentively to others' perspectives and respond in ways that demonstrate understanding and respect.
- Students will engage in discussions to identify real-world needs and generate solutions.
- Students will give and receive positive feedback and engage in constructive conversations about project challenges and failures.
- Students will formulate and ask relevant questions, discuss setbacks productively, and participate in feedback exchanges that build ideas and improve outcomes.
- Students will use tools and equipment to enhance, prototype, and execute their ideas.
- Students will collect and analyze data through interviews and surveys; older students will apply introductory financial concepts such as supply and demand, budgeting, profit, and loans.

Library

The Lower School library is a central hub for building strong literacy skills, fostering curiosity, and inspiring a lifelong love of reading. Students develop as critical thinkers, gaining the skills and confidence to navigate an increasingly complex world of information and ideas. Through stories, inquiry, and exploration, they discover themselves as readers while developing the habits of lifelong learners.

Through collaboration with classroom teachers, the library program ensures that students grow into competent, ethical seekers and users of information. Students also develop the foundational skills of evaluating sources and recognizing credible information. Guided research experiences help students locate, analyze, and synthesize information from both print and digital resources.

Library Program Goals

- Empower students to develop as critical thinkers and lifelong learners.
- Promote literacy development and foster a lifelong love of reading.
- Encourage self-awareness as readers by helping students identify their preferences, strengths, and interests as readers and learners.
- Maintain open access to a diverse, balanced collection of resources, across a variety of formats, that meet the informational, curricular, and independent reading needs of the SCH community.



Music

Music in the Lower School invites every child to explore creativity, voice, and self-expression. Through singing, movement, dance, instrumental performance, spoken word, and dramatic expression, children discover that music is both an art form and a way of understanding the world. The program celebrates a rich diversity of musical traditions, honors the heritage of our community, and highlights meaningful connections among music, language, history, mathematics, and science.

Beginning in 3rd grade, students embark on their instrumental music journey through recorder instruction, building the foundational skills needed for ensemble performance while developing music literacy and musicianship. Third graders also participate in Instrument Explorers, a unique program that introduces them to the band and orchestra instruments available in 4th grade.

In 4th grade, every student learns a band or orchestra instrument and performs as part of an ensemble. Students also join either Girls Choir or Boys Choir, strengthening their vocal skills while experiencing the joy of making music together. Through these varied musical experiences, students develop creativity, confidence, discipline, and collaboration while discovering the power of music to connect, communicate, and inspire.

Music Program Goals

- Engage every student in rich, collaborative musical experiences through singing, movement, dance, instrumental play, spoken word, and dramatic expression.
- Develop musical understanding as a unique and meaningful way to know, perceive, and interpret the world.
- Celebrate cultural heritage and community by exploring a diverse repertoire of songs and musical traditions.
- Highlight interdisciplinary connections by showing music's relevance across all areas of learning and development.

> "
> At SCH, students learn not only how to think critically and solve problems, but also how to understand themselves, build meaningful relationships, and navigate challenges with resilience.
>
> Lower School Psychologist

Outdoor Program

Muddy boots lining the hallways are a familiar sight at SCH! Beginning in 2nd grade, the Outdoor Program immerses students in the beauty and challenge of the Wissahickon watershed. Through hikes of increasing difficulty, children come to know its trails, wildlife, and seasonal changes as intimately as their own playgrounds.

Time in nature encourages students to focus on the world and people around them, opening their eyes, ears, and minds. Second graders participate in their first bike hike and test their skills on the rock wall at a local climbing gym. In 3rd grade, adventures expand to include a trip to Hawk Mountain and kayaking on local waters. Fourth graders assist with trail maintenance and develop outdoor survival skills, such as fire building, shelter construction, and navigation, developing teamwork and leadership along the way. Across these experiences, students build courage, resilience, and a deep respect for the land that will stay with them for years to come.

Outdoor Program Goals

- Develop appreciation for and stewardship of the local environment, particularly the Wissahickon watershed.
- Build courage and resilience through outdoor challenges and experiences.
- Foster observation skills, environmental awareness, and respect for natural spaces.
- Encourage teamwork, cooperation, and shared responsibility for community spaces.



Physical Education

Physical Education in the Lower School is all about learning to move and moving to learn! Through a carefully sequenced program, students build coordination, strength, endurance, and confidence, developing the fitness and motor skills that lay the foundation for a healthy, active lifestyle.

Throughout the Lower School, students are introduced to a wide variety of individual and team sports, helping them discover new interests while building the skills and confidence to participate in athletic opportunities both at SCH and beyond.

Signature experiences enrich the curriculum in meaningful ways. At SCH, we believe that learning to ride a bike is an important childhood milestone. Through the Kindergarten Bike Program, students develop balance, coordination, courage, and independence while learning to ride or strengthening their cycling skills. These experiences prepare them for the annual bike hikes that become a beloved tradition throughout the Lower School. Health and wellness concepts are woven throughout the curriculum through activities that explore topics such as heart health and cardiovascular fitness, helping students understand how regular physical activity supports overall well-being. Supported through a school partnership with the Philadelphia Cricket Club, students are introduced to squash and other racket sports, expanding their athletic experiences and exposing them to activities they can continue to enjoy throughout their lives.

The PE program emphasizes respect, inclusion, and responsible behavior, helping students learn how to support one another and contribute positively in a variety of physical activity settings. By combining physical skill development with character-building experiences, students leave the Lower School with the confidence, resilience, and enthusiasm to pursue active, healthy lives.

Physical Education Program Goals

- Develop neuromuscular coordination, fitness, and physical growth through a sequential program of physical activities.
- Encourage a physically active lifestyle both in and out of school.
- Achieve and maintain health-enhancing fitness levels through regular activity.
- Demonstrate responsible personal and social behavior in physical activity settings.
- Show understanding and respect for diversity among individuals in physical activity environments.
- Recognize physical activity as a source of enjoyment, challenge, self-expression, and social connection.

Science

From their youngest years, students see themselves as scientists by posing questions, defining problems, conducting experiments, and analyzing results to draw meaningful conclusions. Science offers a powerful lens for seeing, questioning, and caring for the world while honing observation, prediction, and reasoning skills that apply to everyday life.

Hands-on investigations span life, earth, and physical sciences at every grade. Younger students explore the properties of water and air, study bees and pollination, and engineer simple bridges. Older students dissect owl pellets and join an evening Owl Prowl, test water quality and study macroinvertebrates in the Wissahickon Creek, or design and program simple robots. Whenever possible, learning extends across disciplines through meaningful connections to classroom studies, including literacy, mathematics, music, and the arts, helping students see science as an integrated way of understanding the world.

All Lower School students participate in Science Outdoors once each cycle. Here, students explore the Wissahickon woods as naturalists by observing seasonal changes, studying local plants and animals, and connecting these experiences to classroom learning. This immersive work builds curiosity, environmental stewardship, and the ability to apply scientific thinking in a real-world habitat.

Whether tracking pollinators in the garden, studying stream ecology, or wiring a circuit, students develop problem-solving skills, deepen their understanding of the natural world, and build the knowledge and habits to care for it.

Science Program Goals

- Foster students' identities as scientists by guiding them through the full process of discovery: asking questions, defining problems, designing experiments, making observations, recording data, comparing results, inferring, predicting, analyzing, and drawing conclusions.
- Connect science learning to everyday life
- Develop critical thinking and reasoning skills that can be applied to real-world situations.
- Demonstrate the interdependence of living organisms and the impact of human decisions on the Earth's ecosystems.
- Nurture joy in discovery and an appreciation for the beauty, complexity, and interconnectedness of the natural world.
- Strengthen understanding through research and the development of science-specific vocabulary.

Spanish

Acquiring a new language opens the door to new ways of thinking, communicating, and understanding the world. Beginning in 2nd grade, students engage in an interactive Spanish program that builds confidence through listening, speaking, reading, and writing in meaningful, age-appropriate contexts.

Lessons emphasize communication and cultural exploration through songs, games, stories, movement, and collaborative activities. As students develop foundational vocabulary and language structures, they also gain insight into the traditions, customs, and perspectives of Spanish-speaking communities around the world. Whenever possible, Spanish instruction complements interdisciplinary classroom studies, helping students make meaningful connections across subjects while using language in authentic ways.

Through regular opportunities to speak, listen, read, and write in Spanish, students develop confidence as language learners while strengthening communication, curiosity, and cultural awareness. By fostering both linguistic and intercultural competence, the program prepares students for continued language study and encourages an appreciation for our increasingly interconnected world.

Spanish Program Goals

- Build confidence using Spanish to communicate in authentic classroom interactions.
- Expand vocabulary and language structures through songs, stories, games, movement, and conversation.
- Foster curiosity and appreciation for the diverse cultures, traditions, and perspectives of the Spanish-speaking world.
- Make connections between Spanish and other areas of the curriculum.
- Inspire a lifelong interest in world languages, cultural exploration, and intercultural understanding.

> “
> At SCH, students are encouraged to wonder, explore, create, take risks, and discover just how much they’re capable of.
>
> Third-grade Teacher

Visual Arts

At SCH, art is active and playful, with children working with their hands, experimenting freely, and discovering the joy of turning ideas into tangible creations. They explore a range of media, from drawing, painting, and printmaking to sculpture, ceramics, and photography, often taking inspiration from the outdoors by using natural materials, studying patterns in nature, or sketching in the Wissahickon.

The program blends making with the study of global artists and artistic traditions, fostering visual literacy and an appreciation for diverse perspectives. Throughout the year, visual arts experiences connect with classroom learning, allowing students to deepen their understanding of literature and social studies through artistic exploration. Whether examining Afrofuturism and themes of belonging, creating environmental art inspired by ocean conservation, or exploring Pop Art as an expression of identity, students discover how art enriches learning across disciplines. Fourth graders further extend their artistic experiences through a visit to the Philadelphia Museum of Art, where they engage directly with original works that connect to their classroom studies.

Visual Arts Program Goals

- Build foundational skills in traditional media, including drawing, painting, printmaking, sculpture, and ceramics.
- Develop fine motor skills and hand-eye coordination through age-appropriate techniques.
- Explore the elements of art and principles of design such as line, color, shape, texture, and balance.
- Encourage creative risk-taking and problem-solving through open-ended, exploratory projects.
- Develop visual literacy and cultural awareness by studying global artists and artistic traditions.


SCH
ACADEM

GRADE LEVELS AT A GLANCE

Pre-K

At SCH Academy, Pre-K is a joyful, purposeful year that blends play, outdoor exploration, and emerging academic skills within a nurturing, intellectually engaging environment. Interdisciplinary learning is guided by big ideas that invite children to explore who they are, how the world works, and how they can make an impact through observation, creativity, and care.

Students also begin their Lower School journeys as Brave Smart Girls and Brave Smart Boys, a program that builds positive self-image and purposeful action. Through stories of trailblazers and community-centered experiences, they are introduced to SCH's five core values: courage, resilience, integrity, thoughtfulness, and diversity.

Pre-K is filled with discovery. From holding a newly hatched chick to planting seeds and performing on stage, children learn by doing. Students explore big ideas through authentic, hands-on experiences. As they build, experiment, notice patterns in nature, and solve problems together, they develop foundational skills in literacy, numeracy, collaboration, and critical thinking.

Strong connections with Senior Buddies and 4th grade leaders help children feel part of a supportive community, fostering confidence, belonging, and a smooth transition into Kindergarten.

> "I hope they carry values of kindness, empathy, and confidence in themselves and their ability to change the world around them."
>
> Kindergarten Teacher

Kindergarten

Kindergarten is a year of growing independence, where students begin to see how their classroom connects to the wider world, opening windows into different times, places, and communities. Days are filled with movement, imagination, and discovery, whether sharing books, exploring in the naturescape, or digging in our school garden. As readers, writers, mathematicians, and scientists, students build strong foundational skills while learning to ask thoughtful questions, solve problems, communicate their ideas, and collaborate with others.

Interdisciplinary studies give structure and depth to the year. ***The Five Senses*** invites students to explore how we experience and interpret the world through careful observation, scientific inquiry, and descriptive language, culminating in a visit to a local farm and orchard. ***Once Upon a Farm*** follows life cycles, food origins, and the rhythms of the seasons while helping students grow as beginning writers by organizing ideas through story elements and narrative structure. ***America, Then and Now*** encourages historical thinking as students compare life in the past and present and consider how communities change over time. ***The Continents*** introduces world geography while strengthening map skills and exploring the diversity of cultures, people, and animals across the globe. The unit culminates with a museum visit where students deepen their understanding of the world's continents through exhibits featuring animals from around the world.

Kindergarten is also filled with memorable experiences that nurture growing independence and confidence. Students participate in the Kindergarten Bike Program, developing the balance, courage, and perseverance needed to ride independently while preparing for the beloved bike hikes in 2nd and 4th grades.

By year's end, students leave Kindergarten as beginning readers and writers, curious scientists, creative problem solvers, and collaborative learners with strong academic foundations and an expanding understanding of the world around them.

Grade 1

First grade is a year of discovery, where children deepen their academic skills while growing as independent learners. As readers and writers, they strengthen comprehension, fluency, and written expression. As mathematicians, scientists, and engineers, they ask thoughtful questions, solve problems, and test ideas through hands-on exploration. Along the way, they develop self-awareness, empathy, resilience, and collaboration, discovering that one of the most important worlds they can explore is their own.

Interdisciplinary studies invite children to explore both the world around them and the world within. ***A World of Books*** reveals how access to stories and information can transform lives across the globe while inspiring children to see themselves as readers and storytellers. ***Creature Features*** encourages observation, inquiry, and research as students investigate the remarkable ways animals survive and thrive, culminating in a visit to the zoo where their learning comes to life. ***Powerful Forces*** explores the impact of wind, water, and weather while also examining the powerful role emotions play in our lives. As children investigate how people respond to both natural and emotional forces, they strengthen scientific thinking, emotional awareness, and resilience. The unit culminates in the beloved Wind Day Celebration and a visit to the Franklin Institute. The year concludes with ***Cinderella Stories***, where students compare versions of a familiar tale from cultures around the world, deepening their appreciation for diverse perspectives and traditions.

By year's end, 1st-grade students leave as stronger readers, writers, researchers, problem solvers, and teammates, equipped with the skills, confidence, and curiosity to embrace new challenges and make meaningful connections across disciplines.



Grade 2

Second grade is a year of growing independence, where students take increasing ownership of their learning while developing the stamina and confidence needed for more complex academic work. As readers, writers, mathematicians, scientists, and historians, they strengthen comprehension, communicate ideas with greater depth, solve increasingly complex problems, and think critically across disciplines. Regular homework begins in 2nd grade, which helps students begin to develop organization, responsibility, and productive learning habits.

Interdisciplinary studies invite students to explore the natural world, the past, and their role in shaping the future. ***A Season of Change*** immerses students in the science and beauty of natural cycles while encouraging close observation and scientific inquiry. ***The American West*** invites them to examine the experiences of pioneers and Native Americans, building historical understanding through multiple perspectives. ***Civil Rights Heroes*** inspires students with the courage and conviction of leaders such as Martin Luther King Jr. and Ruby Bridges while encouraging thoughtful conversations about fairness, justice, and making a positive impact. ***Good Eating*** explores the connections among nutrition, personal choices, community, and environmental health, helping students understand how everyday decisions affect themselves and the world around them.

Second grade is also a year of adventure and exploration. Students begin SCH's Outdoor Program, hiking the Wissahickon and observing seasonal change firsthand. They participate in the beloved 2nd-grade Bike Hike alongside their families, venture out on an evening Owl Prowl, tap local sugar maple trees as part of Maplefest, and visit the Woodmere Museum through the Artists at Work program. Our 2nd graders discover that meaningful learning extends far beyond the classroom!

By year's end, students leave 2nd grade as thoughtful readers, confident writers, curious investigators, responsible learners, and engaged community members, prepared to embrace new challenges with independence, perseverance, and purpose.

> "
> I teach because I want to instill in young people a passion to change the world, help others, be empowered to help, and believe in themselves.
>
> Second-grade Teacher

Grade 3

Third grade is a year of expanding horizons, where students grow as increasingly independent thinkers, communicators, and problem solvers. As readers and writers, they engage with more complex texts, analyze multiple perspectives, and communicate their ideas with greater depth and purpose. As mathematicians, scientists, historians, and artists, they ask thoughtful questions, apply critical thinking, and make meaningful connections across disciplines.

Interdisciplinary studies invite students to explore the natural world, the human experience, and the universe beyond. ***The Sea*** blends science and art to examine the beauty, complexity, and interconnectedness of marine ecosystems. ***Outer Space*** introduces the discoveries of astronomers and astronauts, inspiring wonder while encouraging scientific inquiry. ***A New Home*** brings the experiences of immigrants to life through memoirs, narratives, and visual art, fostering empathy and cultural understanding. ***Artists Make Art*** encourages students to develop their own creative voices while learning from influential artists across cultures and time periods. Field experiences enrich these studies through visits to Philadelphia's historic sites, museums, and cultural institutions, bringing classroom learning to life.

Third grade is also marked by many signature experiences. Students visit the Fairmount Water Works, where they investigate water treatment and water quality, which complements their science studies. During a spring kayak trip, they build teamwork and resilience while experiencing the natural environment from a new perspective. A visit to Hawk Mountain brings migration and ecosystems to life as students observe birds of prey in their natural habitat. In music, students begin their instrumental journey through recorder instruction and Instrument Explorers, exploring the strings, woodwinds, brass, and percussion instruments they will have the opportunity to study in 4th grade.

By year's end, students leave 3rd grade as thoughtful readers, skilled communicators, curious investigators, and creative thinkers, prepared to explore new ideas with confidence, compassion, and an expanding sense of possibility.

Grade 4

Fourth grade is the capstone year of the Lower School, where students bring together the knowledge, skills, and confidence they have developed throughout their elementary years. As readers, writers, mathematicians, scientists, and historians, they analyze increasingly complex ideas, communicate their thinking with clarity, and solve authentic problems with creativity and perseverance. As the oldest students in the division, they also grow as leaders, learning how their actions, character, and service can make a meaningful impact on others.

Interdisciplinary studies challenge students to think deeply about themselves, their communities, and the world around them. ***A Great Heart*** explores both the biological heart and the human qualities—such as courage, compassion, and integrity—that shape meaningful lives. ***Extreme Settings*** examines how people respond to adversity through literature and real-world examples, encouraging resilience and empathy. ***The Redcoats Are Coming!*** brings the Revolutionary War to life through multiple perspectives, fostering historical thinking and thoughtful analysis of conflict and change. ***Myth Making*** explores the enduring stories cultures tell to explain the world and teach life's lessons, inspiring students to recognize the power of storytelling across time and place.

Fourth grade is also defined by leadership and memorable capstone experiences. Students serve as 4th-grade Brothers and Sisters to Pre-K children, welcome prospective families as admissions ambassadors, and write, produce, and film the weekly Lower School News, learning firsthand about the responsibility and impact of leadership. Departmental experiences deepen their learning as they dissect animal hearts, maintain individual terrariums, explore financial literacy through a classroom economy, and strengthen athletic skills through sports such as squash, basketball, and soccer. Outdoor adventures, including an extended Wissahickon bike hike, a visit to Ringing Rocks, and the beloved end-of-year campout, celebrate their growth while building resilience, camaraderie, and independence.

By year's end, students leave 4th grade as confident scholars, compassionate leaders, and engaged community members, well prepared to embrace the opportunities and challenges of Middle School.



DEVELOPING THE WHOLE CHILD

At SCH, we believe every child deserves the support and challenge needed to thrive. Our academic and social-emotional programs are designed to meet students where they are while helping them reach their fullest potential. Classroom teachers partner closely with a team of dedicated specialists to provide targeted intervention, individualized support, and enrichment opportunities, ensuring every child feels known, supported, and successful.

Our support team includes reading specialists, a math specialist, a learning specialist, a school counselor, a school psychologist, and a student support specialist, who work collaboratively with teachers and families to foster each child's academic, social, and emotional growth.

McCausland Center for Social-Emotional Wellness

The McCausland Center for Social-Emotional Wellness reflects SCH's belief that social-emotional well-being is essential to every child's growth and success. Through a proactive, school-wide approach, students develop the self-awareness and self-management skills needed to thrive in school and beyond.

Every Lower School classroom participates in weekly social-emotional learning through the ***Second Step*** curriculum, complemented by Responsive Classroom practices. Through role-playing, collaborative problem-solving, discussion, and reflection, students learn to recognize and manage emotions, build healthy relationships, resolve conflicts, make responsible decisions, and demonstrate empathy. Purposeful teacher language, consistent routines, and opportunities for student voice ensure these skills become part of everyday classroom life.

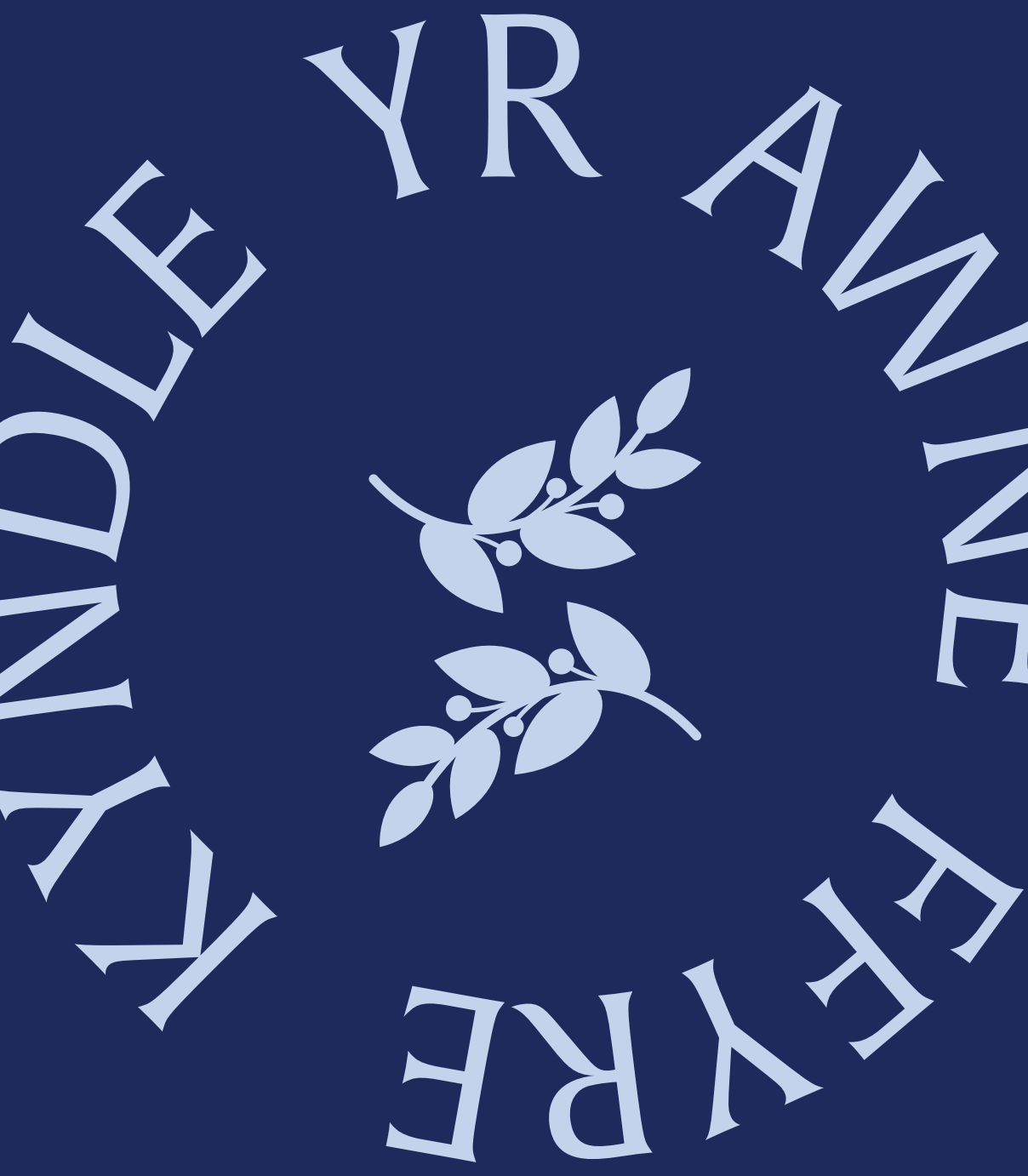
The Wellness Center provides a welcoming space where students can reflect, develop coping strategies, solve problems, and receive individualized support. Together, these approaches help students develop the confidence, resilience, empathy, and self-awareness to thrive in school, build meaningful relationships, and contribute positively to their community.

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging

At SCH Academy, we cultivate a community where students feel safe to ask questions, share perspectives, and learn from one another. We foster meaningful conversations that encourage curiosity, empathy, and critical thinking while helping students build bridges across differences. Guided by our Diversity Leadership Team, we strive to ensure that every member of the SCH community feels seen, valued, and has a true sense of belonging.

Diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging are woven throughout the Lower School experience. Through the Pollyanna racial literacy curriculum, students engage in age-appropriate conversations about race, identity, and inclusion, building the foundation for thoughtful dialogue and respectful relationships. These lessons are complemented by classroom experiences across disciplines. Our reading and writing curriculum introduces students to diverse authors, cultures, and perspectives from around the world, while interdisciplinary studies help students explore how geography, history, and lived experiences shape people and communities. Together, these experiences cultivate racial literacy, cultural competence, and an appreciation for the richness of our diverse world.





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