



Lower School

Kindergarten -5th Grades

Innovative Education Since 1984



Riverfield Country Day School Lower School instruction has high academic and personalized expectations for each student in classrooms with small student/teacher ratios. At Riverfield, emphasis is placed on supporting each student, identifying each student's learning style while building on his/her strengths. Students are challenged and encouraged to become eager lifelong learners. Riverfield's Lower School fosters a balance between teacher-led instruction and "hands-on, minds-on" exploration, discussion, research and manipulation of concepts applied to memorable situations. Set on a 120-acre campus, Riverfield's unique indoor and outdoor environments support integrated concepts and extended learning.

Riverfield's approach to teaching is well-structured and is strongly backed by educational research and draws on sound learning theory. The Lower School implements elements of Best Practice defined as thoughtful, informed, responsible, state-of-the-art teaching that is student-centered, active, experiential, authentic, democratic, collaborative, rigorous, and challenging.

Teachers value students as capable and intelligent partners in learning and promote student/teacher/family relationships imperative to academic and social success. Students benefit from multi-age groupings (Kindergarten-1st, 2nd-3rd and 4th-5th) by learning from their peers and having the opportunity to lead. This happens with an emphasis on the development of the whole child, addressing the social, emotional, intellectual, physical, and moral proficiencies of each student in a secure and nurturing environment where learning is engaging and real-world concepts and practices are explored.





General Information

Established in 1984, Riverfield has been enriching students through innovation, small class sizes, and positive collaborative relationships. Serving children from 8 weeks through Upper School, Riverfield helps students reach their full potential in a family-oriented atmosphere. The 120-acre campus with its barnyard animals, hiking trails, woods, ponds, and outdoor classrooms, is an inviting introduction to the array of learning opportunities the school offers its students. The challenging, personalized curriculum is presented as an integrated process, blending many subjects and activities.

Faculty

With an average of 14 years of teaching, our experienced Lower School faculty encourage students to achieve their potential in all aspects of development: intellectual, social, emotional, physical, and moral. They promote the development of mutual goals and responsibilities. A trusting, respectful, positive school environment leads to genuine dialogue between faculty and students.

Teachers are constantly learning and growing. They participate in ongoing professional development in order to examine best practices, acquire developmentally-appropriate teaching strategies, and broaden their understanding of advancements in educational philosophies. Examples of the types of professional development for Lower School faculty include, but are not limited to, weekly team meetings, cross-curricular professional learning communities, attending professional conferences or workshops, and hosting initiatives.

Multi-Age Classrooms

Children typically spend two years in the same classroom, allowing for continuity, strong relationships, and development of leadership skills. The mixed age groupings in each class invite and enable mentoring and cooperative relationships and allow teachers to personalize curriculum and support appropriate developmental growth. 4th and 5th grade students continue to have multi-age classrooms in the co-curricular courses such as music, art... while shifting into grade level classes for the core classes such as math and literacy.

EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY

In alignment with what is known about best practice in education, fundamental values of the Riverfield educational philosophy include:

Small Group Activities – Students work together effectively in small collaborative groups that vary by size, focus, and duration. These groups provide an avenue for differentiated instruction, accountability for high academic standards, investigation and research of interests, collaborative problem solving, and meaningful intellectual, academic and social engagement, and higher order thinking.

Ideas and Experiences intergrated in relationship with authentic experiences – “Make it real!” To engage children in truly powerful transformative learning, children have opportunities to work on something that is meaningful. Learning encounters must be based on real interest, problems, concerns, encounters, and experiences, choice, goals and responsibilities. When students are shown respect for their abilities and ideas, intrinsic motivation is not just maintained but strengthened and becomes the driving force behind the difference children make in the world.

Reading and Writing as Thinking – We recognize the powerful connection between reading and writing. As students work to become proficient readers and writers, teachers facilitate skill-building and creative critical thinking skills. The use of literature, both fiction and non-fiction, support children's strategies for engaging, analyzing, understanding and applying their literacy skills in meaningful ways.

Representing to Learn – Motivated to move beyond passive learning, Riverfield incorporates symbolic representations as tools of thinking. These media are valuable in supporting children's acquisition of facts and integral to their synthesis and consolidation of knowledge. In addition to writing to learn, through journaling and learning logs, the use of sketching, clay, wire, construction materials, creative writing, and music are all avenues through which children learn and make their learning visible.



The teachers have clear academic goals for the children and the goals are being achieved through innovative and thoughtful techniques.

Lower School Parent





CO-CURRICULAR COURSES

Art

Students continue development of creative understanding and artistic ability in their core classrooms and the art studio as well as by drawing from exploration of art history in class and during local and regional field trips to significant museums and galleries. Students connect to ideas from core classes while using complex materials in innovative ways to represent ongoing learning. Young artists express themselves through the use of sewing, fiber arts, clay, photography, paint, sketching, printmaking, wire, and more.

World Languages

As children begin the language program we focus on familiar vocabulary using those words in context. Special attention is placed on key verb structures to facilitate fluency in a second language. Both Spanish, which starts in Pre-School, and German, which begins in second grade, utilize the Teaching Proficiency through Reading and Storytelling (TPRS) method; TPRS is a theory that encourages language acquisition through conversation and reading instead of rote memorization, not just language learning. As students get older, expectations continue to grow. In all ages, engaging experiences such as cooking, field trips, music, and games provide enhancing opportunities.

Physical Education

The physical education curriculum includes gross motor skills, introduction of teamwork through beginning level sports, and a variety of games and activities throughout the year. This encourages physical fitness and multiple opportunities for success and development.

Music

Kindergarten through Fifth grade students begin in music with playful skill building that includes singing, dancing, playing instruments and developing music reading skills. Through the Lower School years, students develop into creative, independent musicians. The use of percussion, strings, keyboards and woodwind instruments in connection with the Orff-Schulwerk approach engage students in a love of music that continues to be developed when the Rock Band program is offered as an elective beginning in 4th grade.

Library

Students learn about different genres of books including fairy tales, poetry, non-fiction, and fiction. They engage and explore methods of storytelling including readers theater, puppets, and book making. They also learn about systems of organization in a structured library. The library as well as the librarian provide important ongoing support for the investigation and research developed by students and teachers in all classes.

Technology

At Riverfield, developing strong, competent digital citizens is at the core of our approach to technology. We recognize technology as an everyday tool that supports us in our research, provides occasion to explore, creates opportunity to play with and represent big ideas, and affords avenues to make learning visible. Students work to develop comfort and fluency with technology through hardware, software and applications appropriate to the student's interests and development. Technology and the technology teacher are integrated into the students' day in ways that develop new opportunities and support ongoing work.



INQUIRY-BASED INVESTIGATION & RESEARCH

A unique aspect of Riverfield's Lower School curriculum is a commitment to Inquiry-Based Investigation and Research. This intellectually challenging and academically rigorous approach to learning encompasses strong critical thinking, problem solving, and application in the core academic disciplines of literacy, math, social studies, and science. Concepts and topics vary greatly among classrooms based on students' and teachers' interests, experiences, high academic expectations, and curriculum goals.

An investigative learning cycle begins when the class or a group of children identify a problem or topic for study. Organized into small collaborative groupings, the students proceed to discuss the topic, share prior knowledge, generate hypotheses, pose questions, set goals, and create an organizational plan for research. Children organize their work within small focus groups based on their interests and strengths. The investigative research proceeds in these groups where the teacher serves as facilitator and/or resource for the students, posing questions, and lending knowledge and guidance as needed. As the investigation unfolds, small groups reflect on their processes, articulate and discuss their findings with classmates, and document their learning.

Inquiry-Based Investigation and Research affords students the opportunity to move beyond facts and pursuit of the "right" answer, to a heightened awareness of the process of learning. Throughout this process, the focus is not only on "what we know" and "what we want to know," but also on "how we come to know," learning to synthesize facts and standards into conceptual understanding and real applicable knowledge.

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of Riverfield Country Day School is to provide an excellent education in a family-oriented atmosphere. Students are motivated and encouraged to learn, develop, and mature in a respectful, secure, and diverse environment. A caring, creative faculty and a challenging, integrated, and personalized curriculum promote the development of the whole student as a confident and responsible learner prepared for success today and tomorrow.

ENRICHMENT OPPORTUNITIES



Athletics

Students in K-5th grades often participate on school teams in various sports leagues, with teams coached and coordinated by parents.



After School Activities

Activities include Cub Scouts, Girl Scouts, ballet, martial arts, gymnastics, instrumental music lessons, Midi, drama, and Blue Raven Juniors and singers. Some of these programs require an additional fee.



Before and After School Club

Before and After School Club is the extended day program from 7-8:30 and 3-6pm. In After School Club, the students enjoy a snack, time on the playground and the Multipurpose Room, and activities in K-5th grade classrooms.



Family Atmosphere

Riverfield's family atmosphere embraces parents as an important part of the Lower School community. The partnership between home and school is fostered with newsletters, blog postings, emails, phone calls, and connections made and strengthened in the classroom. Parents and grandparents are welcome and encouraged to volunteer in classrooms.



Student Council

Kindergarten through Fifth grade have opportunity to be part of Lower School Student Council. The Student Council works each year to make a positive difference in the Riverfield community. They meet weekly to discuss ideas to build support and enhance the Riverfield community. This group is organized with purpose and intent to provide opportunities for mindful and respectful discussion. Students work collaboratively to achieve the goals set by the group. Representatives are encouraged to find ways to communicate with and involve all students in order to further develop the connections valued by the Riverfield community. In these ways, the Lower School Student Council offers a forum for students to engage in the skills promoted and supported by our school philosophy and mission statement.

RIVERFIELD ADMISSIONS

Admissions Criteria

Admission is based on a combination of criteria including the student's educational history, personal interview, visit during a school day, and our intuition that the individual is genuinely motivated to succeed and will benefit from the Riverfield experience. No one factor is more important than another. Our main concern is success for the student.

After an initial tour and interview, students spend a day visiting Riverfield in the regular classroom environment. The parents sign a Transcript Release Form to request transcripts and records from the candidate's current school. Once students are accepted, Riverfield may ask that a placement test be taken for certain courses.

Financial Aid

Admission decisions are made prior to and separate from decisions about financial aid. A student must be accepted before the financial aid decision can be made. No family should refrain from making application for admission because of limited finances.

Parents obtain the FACTS Grant & Aid Assessment for Financial Aid packet from the Riverfield Admissions or Business Office and submit completed forms to FACTS by April 1 of each year.

Financial aid will not be awarded until information is received from FACTS and the Riverfield Financial Aid Committee makes its recommendation.

CONTACTS

Kacey Davenport

Director of Admissions
kdavenport@riverfield.org

Katie Musick

Lower School Division Head
kmusick@riverfield.org

NON-DISCRIMINATORY STATEMENT

Riverfield Country Day School is a non-profit, independent school with no religious affiliation. Riverfield is a welcoming community that strives to treat everyone fairly. All decisions regarding admissions, employment, administration, and student and faculty life are made without regard to race, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, ethnicity, age, disability, gender, sexual orientation, marital or family status, or any other criteria prohibited by law. All rights, privileges, educational, athletic, school-administrated programs, and activities made available by the school are extended to all students, families, faculty, and staff.