

BROOKWOOD SCHOOL



CURRICULUM OBJECTIVES

2024-2025

Department: Literacy

The literacy program at Brookwood is designed to foster a lifelong love of reading, critical thinking, and effective communication skills. We teach reading in a structured, research-based continuum that includes reading, vocabulary, phonics, spelling, and word study.

We believe in the power of literature to broaden perspectives and cultivate empathy. Our curriculum includes a diverse range of literary works that represent multiple perspectives, cultures, and experiences. By exploring literature from various backgrounds, students at the youngest ages through the 8th grade develop a deeper understanding of the world and build sensitivity for others. They learn to critically analyze texts, challenge assumptions and consider alternative viewpoints.

From EC to grade 8, we emphasize the importance of the writing process, from drafting to revising and editing. Students begin by telling their stories and then develop strategies for brainstorming ideas, organizing their thoughts, and crafting coherent and engaging pieces of writing. They will receive guidance and feedback from their teachers and peers to improve their writing skills and develop a strong sense of authorship. At Brookwood, our students graduate with the ability to approach any writing task with skill and confidence.

We are proud to prepare our students for success in high school and beyond by fostering a lifelong love of reading, critical thinking, and effective writing.

Lower School Departmental Goals:

- Explicit instruction in word study, handwriting, and reading and writing workshops.
- Develop a love of the written word through read alouds, storytelling, trips to the library, and sharing books students love.
- Develop an appreciation and understanding of the reading process and get daily practice with letter-sound relationships through explicit and direct instruction in how our language is written
- Engage in small group, partner, and independent reading to hone their skills and practice strategies immersed in quality literature.

Upper School Departmental Goals:

- Develop strong annotation and close reading skills.
- Actively engage with texts, making thoughtful observations, asking questions, and drawing connections to enhance student understanding.
- Discover the layers of meaning in literature, uncovering symbolism, themes, and author's craft through close reading.

- Apply reading skills to other contexts, including learning to critically evaluate information, discern biases, and make informed judgments.
- Develop strong writing skills across a variety of genres.
- Explore and embrace different forms of expression, such as stories, poems, and essays, mixed media and digital writing.
- Encourage experimenting with graphic novel-style storytelling, presentations, videos, and podcasts.
- Explore creativity while developing effective communication skills in various formats.

Department: Mathematics

At Brookwood, we strive to help students become creative thinkers and problem-solvers, not calculators. Students make connections and build understanding of math concepts through exploration, visual models, hands-on experiences, discussion, writing, and play. We follow a developmental continuum that helps students build a solid conceptual understanding and access mathematical ideas at the concrete, representational and abstract levels. Teachers help each student find an entry point and provide experiences that allow them to move along the continuum with improved efficiency. Through exploration and investigation with manipulatives, lively discussions with classmates and real-world applications of mathematical ideas, students construct viable arguments and learn how to respectfully critique the reasoning of others.

In adherence to the eight mathematical practices included in the *Common Core State Standards for Mathematics*, we provide a range of experiences that allow students to do the following: make sense of problems and persevere in solving them, reason abstractly and quantitatively, construct viable arguments and critique the reasoning of others, model with mathematics, use appropriate tools strategically, attend to precision, look for and make use of structure and express regularity in repeated reasoning. As students collaborate with peers and communicate their thinking, they deepen their conceptual understanding rather than simply following a prescribed set of steps.

We also strive to connect math to real-world experiences as well as to other disciplines, knowing that we are preparing students for jobs that may not yet exist. When students have a deep understanding of mathematics and embody the habits of mind of mathematicians, questioning, analyzing, exploring and connecting ideas, their future possibilities are endless.

Lower School Departmental Goals:

- Inspire curiosity about math
- Instill confidence in each student as a mathematical thinker
- Develop a strong number sense (good intuition about numbers, their magnitude, relationships and how they are affected by operations) through a variety of hands-on, engaging activities and games
- Compute with accuracy, flexibility, and efficiency
- Communicate ideas verbally, as well as with pictures, words and numbers
- Discover, construct and apply mathematical relationships

- Develop a strong conceptual understanding across the areas of number and operations, geometry, measurement and data

Upper School Departmental Goals:

- Immerse students in a culture of exploring math through problem solving
- Enhance student confidence in their problem solving ability from first read to final answer
- Encourage students to effectively **use** mathematics, not just **do** mathematics
- Inspire curiosity by investigating more than just the *what* and *how* of mathematics, but also the *why*, *who*, *where* and *when*
- Use math as a platform to inspire discovery and open conversations about the diverse world in which we live
- Build student proficiency in creating logical arguments and making sense of the reasoning of others
- Learn to communicate with precision, orally, in writing, and with equations.
- Establish a firm foundation in grade-appropriate core mathematical skills

Department: Science

At Brookwood, science is taught as a process through which students can understand the natural world. Science isn't a text book to be memorized, but rather an unending series of questions whose answers may or may not be discoverable. In recording and using evidence to support and answer those questions, each student understands their potential as a scientist. Students learn to communicate effectively in small groups while thoughtfully challenging the claims of others. Science at Brookwood is about the real world. Our students are constantly probing our campus, a living laboratory, as they seek answers to questions of their own design, giving them agency over their learning. They learn to partner with their peers as well as with local non-profit organizations to solve some of the problems facing our planet.

Our science department goals are achieved through a combination of experiential, engaging and fun activities. Science classes at Brookwood can be dirty, loud and full of energy! Those experiences last a lifetime, as do the skills and practices of the scientist.

The science practices are adapted from the *Next Generation Science Standards* to prepare our students to approach solving issues that we can't, as yet, imagine. The practices are utilized in all science classes, across all grade levels, across all content areas including the Life Sciences, Physical Sciences, and Earth Sciences.

Lower School Science Departmental Goals:

- Reinforce science as a process-oriented activity
- Uncover students' background knowledge and questions prior to exploration to give context to inquiry
- Develop science vocabulary and challenge students to deepen their descriptive language when sharing their observations
- Leverage innate curiosity and challenge students to develop their question-asking and observation skills.
- Conduct inquiry-based learning inside and outside the classroom
- Tackle local environmental issues
- Engage in activities that create joy to develop an emotional connection to the natural world

Upper School Department Goals:

- Develop the ability to analyze information, evaluate evidence, and solve complex problems
- Apply logical reasoning and creative thinking to real-world scenarios

- Engage in activities that promote critical thinking, such as debates, case studies, and simulations
- Develop active listening skills and the ability to engage in meaningful discussions.
- Understand the basics of research methods and citation techniques
- Learn how to locate, assess, and use reliable sources of information
- Engage in group projects that require cooperation, compromise, and effective teamwork
- Explore ethical considerations in decision-making and problem-solving
- Discuss the impact of actions on both local and global communities
- Develop confidence in one's ability to think outside the box and approach challenges with creativity.
- Explore the interconnectedness of the world and develop an understanding of global issues
- Encourage local and global citizenship and responsibility towards addressing challenges.

Department: Social Studies

Brookwood students are socially conscious and global thinkers. In our earliest grades, students strengthen their sense of self and begin to see themselves as members of a broader community outside their families. They build awareness of how their actions and contributions affect their peers. Students examine connections both locally and globally, and learn about spheres of influence that impact their lives in various ways, ranging from their classroom to the natural world.

In Lower School, units are integrated with Social-Emotional Learning, Social Justice Standards and our Personal, Growth and Development curriculum (PGD). The tenets of our Social Studies curriculum include empathy, perspective, resilience and advocacy. Classroom jobs, class contracts, community projects, conflict resolution strategies, and morning meetings all foster growth through daily practice.

In Upper School, there is a strong emphasis on the writing and reading associated with the field of Social Studies as students explore Geography followed by History each year. Additionally, the Upper School Social Studies curriculum has a structured progression of research skills that align with the developmental stages of our students. Starting from 5th grade, students will learn the fundamentals of research, including identifying reliable sources, and utilizing reference materials. As they progress through 8th grade, they will engage in more advanced research

techniques, such as analyzing primary and secondary sources, evaluating conflicting accounts, and synthesizing information. We strive to foster inquisitive minds that are equipped to investigate the past and uncover the truth.

In the Upper School, we emphasize the critical analysis of sources. Access to more and more information, including the advent of artificial intelligence, requires ever more skills and vigilance. And we intentionally instruct students to be able to identify and evaluate the trustworthiness of all informational sources. Our curriculum places a strong emphasis on engaging with primary sources, enabling students to directly connect with the voices of people from the past. Through the examination of diaries, letters, photographs, and artifacts, students will gain a firsthand understanding of historical events and the lived experiences of individuals. They will also learn to contextualize primary sources by utilizing secondary sources that provide broader perspectives and scholarly analysis. This approach enables students to construct a comprehensive and well-rounded understanding of history.

Lower School Goals:

- Develop a vocabulary around concepts of identity, perspective, culture, community and stereotypes
- Explore culture, geography, civics, economics and historical context, and appreciate the connections between them
- Explore aspects of culture, such as family, traditions and religion, that are similar and different from their own
- Develop a sense of agency through service learning
- Examine how students' actions and contributions can enrich our communities
- Create solutions for real life problems
- Question and seek information through a variety of sources
- Embark on the research process, including taking notes from different sources, discerning pertinent versus nonessential information and presenting information through formally written and performed pieces

Upper School Departmental Goals

- Articulate thoughts and ideas clearly and concisely by practicing organizing arguments, employing evidence, and crafting persuasive narratives.

- Refine the abilities to construct well-supported arguments and convey complex ideas effectively through engaging in historical writing.
- Develop critical reading skills, honing the ability to analyze and interpret diverse primary and secondary sources, such as historical texts, documents, diaries, and speeches.
- Learn to identify bias, evaluate credibility, and recognize multiple perspectives.
- Develop a nuanced understanding of historical events and the people who shaped them.
- Distinguish between primary and secondary sources, understanding their respective strengths and limitations.
- Explore the contextual factors that shape historical narratives and develop the skills to evaluate the credibility, bias, and relevance of sources
- By analyzing a range of materials, students will develop a discerning eye and the ability to extract valuable insights from diverse perspectives.

Department: Visual Arts

Our art program at Brookwood actively nurtures every child's creative potential by giving all students the opportunity to work with and explore a variety of media and techniques. The art curriculum builds on previous years and spirals back to review concepts and skills taught. Our goal is to give our students the tools that they need to be confident and competent artists.

We go beyond the walls of Brookwood to visit museums and galleries on the North Shore and the greater Boston area so that our students can see and learn about works first hand. Student artwork is regularly displayed and shared with the larger community. We also have a specifically curated All-Student exhibit and celebration toward the end of the school year.

Visual Arts Department seeks to have Brookwood students :

- Develop resiliency, while supporting exploration, experimentation and creative risk taking
- Begin to see their environment with more observant eyes and thus become more visually literate
- Work comfortably and responsibly with a range of two-dimensional and three-dimensional materials in such media as drawing, painting, printmaking, collage, sculpture, ceramics, bookmaking, construction, and photography
- Develop a basic understanding of art vocabulary and design concepts
- Develop an understanding of and ability to work with basic art elements (line, texture, color, value, shape/ form, and space) and key art principles (repetition, balance, unity, variety, perspective, rhythm, symmetry, scale, and emphasis)
- Gain exposure to various art genres such as landscape, still life, and figurative work
- Gain exposure and appreciation for contemporary, BIPOC, women and LGBTQIA+ artists
- Develop awareness and appreciation of good craftsmanship, how a piece is organized or put together
- Develop an ability to work comfortably both from visual “reality” and from one’s imagination
- Gain a fundamental understanding of how the artist can use certain materials, techniques, and processes to convey a desired effect or convey a particular message

- Gain appreciation of our own rich cultural and artistic heritage in the United States, as well as exposure to various world art forms and processes beyond the United States
- Develop an appreciation of art as a tangible means of communication, self-expression and wellness
- Gain respect and positive regard for one's personal creativity, perspective, and skill level, as well as respect for the varying perspectives and abilities of others
- Understand the connection between ART and other disciplines

LOWER SCHOOL

- Work with and explore a broad range of art materials and processes
- Develop the ability to focus on a project and work in a directed manner
- Make discoveries through experimentation and exploration
- Introduction and opportunity to actively work with the Art elements (color, form, line, shape, space, texture, and value) and principles (balance, proportion, unity, harmony, variety, emphasis, rhythm, and movement).
- Gain/maintain a sense of pride in their accomplishments
- Begin to work with each others cooperatively on certain projects
- Practice looking carefully (begin to develop an artist's eye)

UPPER SCHOOL

- Continue to be exposed to a wide variety of materials and learn about and practice different techniques and processes
- Through practice, build a working understanding of Art elements and principles
- Learn the concept of cultural variation in artistic expression, as well as cultural misappropriation
- Understand that there are logical steps and sequences involved most artwork
- Begin to defend and explain their artistic choices as well as the processes involved in making their art
- Develop a willingness to analyze, interpret, and discuss one's own work and the work of others informally and formally in critiques (learn how to "critically" look at artwork)

- Develop a fundamental understanding of aesthetics (what is beautiful) and an appreciation for how that understanding changes and varies across time, place, and culture
- Support each other as artists and creative makers (understanding that there are numerous solutions and approaches to an assignment or project)
- Practice patience with one's self and with one another

Department: Performing Arts

Love of music is paramount. We aim for each of Brookwood students to self-identify as “musician”. We believe that “talents” are simply skills that have been grown through discipline and excitement.

In Lower School, music classes are filled with dancing, singing, and playing instruments. Students are encouraged to develop an appreciation and respect for many styles of music while they expand and deepen their understanding of musical concepts. In addition to broadening their singing range to include more notes and simple canons, they also learn to coordinate singing with movement by playing violins, cellos, and Orff instruments (xylophones and rhythmic instruments) while engaging in song. Through our performing arts curriculum, students also act in various productions such as the annual Kindergarten & First Grade Play and the Lower School Play.

In Upper School, music classes as well as dedicated chorus classes, students foster their ability to perform both individually and as a member of an ensemble. They expand their singing range, sing in two part harmonies and three part canons, sight-read music, and begin to recognize the difference between chest and head voice. Students learn to play steel pans, acoustic and electric guitars, ukuleles, banjos, mandolins, handbells, and many others. Through our performing arts curriculum, students participate in the annual Revels holiday production. Opportunities to participate in School Meeting Band, acapella groups, and other music-based clubs are also offered as part of our Upper School experience. Each year, 7th and 8th grade students have the exciting opportunity to showcase their talents by participating as cast members in our annual musical productions. The 7th grade play serves as an introduction to musical theater, helping students build foundational skills and confidence. In contrast, the 8th grade production is a larger-scale performance, allowing students to further develop their abilities and take on more challenging roles.

Music is to be shared. Overcoming stage fright, learning to applaud, and singing within a stream of a surrounding chorus are all part of a positive community experience. We know that the essential truths gained from music -the passion and joy vital for perseverance, the practice required for mastery, the confidence and poise necessary to perform - are applicable and integral to every avenue in life. Brookwood’s culture of performance makes music a common language for all students.

Lower School Departmental Goals

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- Sing a variety of styles of music, both individually and chorally
- Develop a sense of rhythm and a steady beat
- Experience and understand cultures through music
- Play multiple instruments and understand “high and low” and “fast and slow”
- Grasp and appreciate the fundamentals of music through listening and creating
- Sing, dance, and act in various productions at multiple grade levels
- Gain experience with performance in many settings
- Understand the expectations of an audience in different performance settings

Upper School Department Goals

- Sing a variety of styles of music, both individually and chorally
- Develop a sense of and ability to read complex rhythms
- Play multiple instruments, applying thorough music theory knowledge
- Explore and understand cultures through music
- Grasp and appreciate the fundamentals of classical, jazz, rock, pop, and world music
- Sing, dance, and act in various productions at multiple grade levels

Department: World Language

The ultimate goal of Brookwood's World Language Department is to empower students to become confident global citizens with strong communication skills in French or Spanish. Starting from grades 1 through 3, students embark on a journey of language acquisition, studying both languages. As they progress to grades 4 through 8, they have the opportunity to focus on one language, allowing for a deeper exploration and understanding.

Using the three American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) communication modes - interpersonal, interpretive, and presentational - our students develop well-rounded language skills. Through interactive activities, engaging conversations, and real-life scenarios, they learn to communicate effectively in their chosen language. Alongside language proficiency, we emphasize cultural competence, immersing students in the rich traditions, customs, and perspectives of French and Spanish-speaking countries. By exploring different cultures, our students gain a deep appreciation for diversity and develop a global mindset, preparing them to thrive in an interconnected world.

Students acquire their language in a nurturing and supportive environment where they feel encouraged to take risks and build their language skills with confidence. We celebrate progress, embrace challenges, and provide dynamic learning experiences that foster creativity, critical thinking, and self-expression.

Lower School Departmental Goals

- Develop foundational language skills to enable basic communication and understanding in French or Spanish
- Cultivate cultural curiosity by exploring traditions and customs of French and Spanish-speaking countries
- Build confidence in language use through speaking and listening activities, allowing students to engage in short conversations and express preferences and opinions
- Introduce basic reading and writing skills, enabling students to read simple texts and write short paragraphs
- Foster enthusiasm for continued language learning

Upper School Departmental Goals

- Strengthen linguistic proficiency in French or Spanish, allowing students to engage in detailed discussions, express complex ideas, and understand authentic texts
- Develop cultural competence through the exploration of literature, history, and social issues of French or Spanish-speaking countries
- Enhance reading and writing skills by analyzing texts and effectively expressing ideas in writing
- Refine pronunciation and spoken language proficiency
- Foster critical thinking and analysis skills through engaging discussions and project-based learning, enabling students to evaluate complex ideas and cultural perspectives in French or Spanish

Department: Physical Education & Athletics

At Brookwood, we believe that physical education is an important part of the total education process. Our physical education program provides students with age appropriate physical activity opportunities that enhance overall skills, cognition and spirit. Combined, these three qualities help form the foundation for a lifetime of commitment to physical activity as part of a healthy lifestyle. Furthermore, physical education at Brookwood provides learning experiences for children that meet the developmental needs of students which helps improve their mental alertness, academic performance, readiness to learn and enthusiasm for learning.

Lower School Departmental Goals:

- Perform a variety of motor skills fluidly
- Perform locomotor movement patterns with ease
- Move each joint with full range of motion
- Support body weight for climbing, hanging and momentarily taking weight on hands
- Gain experience in several sport related activities
- Experience and express pleasure from participation in physical activity
- Engage in physical activity outside of Brookwood

Upper School Departmental Goals:

- Understand that appropriate practice improves performance
- Achieve and maintain a health enhancing level of physical fitness
- Demonstrate responsible personal and social behavior in physical activity and team sport settings
- Choose physical activity and sport for health, enjoyment, challenge, self expression and/or social interaction
- Acknowledges good play from an opponent during competition
- Choosing an activity because they enjoy it and not because all their friends are in it
- Knowing how to improve and maintain personal fitness
- Understands and implements strategies used in game play
- Plays within the rules of a game or activity
- Feels satisfaction when engaged in physical activity

- Become more skilled in a favorite activity or sport

Department: Leadership, Changemaking, and Technology

At its core, Brookwood's Changemaking program is designed to empower students to build essential skills and habits of mind through authentic and engaging learning experiences that prioritize agency, inquiry, and connection. We utilize a range of learning models that help us develop a greater sense of empathy, hone our approaches to creative work, foster communities of feedback, and root ourselves in persistent iterative effort. With access to an incredible array of "high tech" tools (robotics, drones, 3D printers, laser cutters, VR, MacBooks, iPads, etc), "low tech" tools (hot glue, craft sticks, cardboard, duct tape, etc) and a fully-equipped woodshop, our students are able to dive into the deep end of creative problem solving. Whether they have a personal passion, a class assignment, or are engaged in an Inquiry Project, students have the opportunity to leverage the tools, space, and faculty expertise to bring their ideas to life.

Curriculum Objectives:

- Understand and Implement the Design Cycle
- Appreciate that every challenge is an opportunity
- Identify opportunities for change and develop sustainable solutions
- Utilize a range of high tech, low tech, and no tech skills and tools to solve problems
- Take ownership of their learning and use it to support our communities

Department: Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Justice, and Belonging (DEIJB)

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Justice, and Belonging (DEIJB) are concepts that are celebrated and are interwoven across all disciplines and all grade levels at Brookwood. We use Learning for Justice's *Social Justice Standards* as a framework for grounding our anti-bias education from Early Childhood- Grade 8 and providing common language and developmental benchmarks. There are four domains within the standards including: Identity, Diversity, Justice, and Action. The standards recognize that, in today's diverse classrooms, students need knowledge and skills related to both prejudice reduction and collective action. Together, these domains represent a continuum of engagement in anti-bias, multicultural and social justice education. The IDJA domains are based on Louise Derman-Sparks' four goals for anti-bias education in early childhood.

Four Domains include:

- **Identity:** Each child will demonstrate self-awareness, confidence, family pride and positive social identities.
- **Diversity:** Each child will express comfort and joy with human diversity; accurate language for human differences; and deep, caring human connections.
- **Justice:** Each child will increasingly recognize unfairness, have language to describe unfairness, and understand that unfairness hurts.
- **Action:** Each child will demonstrate empowerment and the skills to act, with others or alone, against prejudice and/or discriminatory actions.

One specific time during the school week set aside for the social justice curriculum to be taught is during the Personal Growth and Development (PGD) Program. The program exists in different, developmentally appropriate incarnations throughout the grade levels. The PGD Program consists of scheduled time designed with multiple goals in mind including:

- To nurture the personal growth and social competency skills of each child at Brookwood
- To encourage the development of solid decision-making skills, an appreciation of civility, and a sound ethical grounding
- To offer opportunities for the explicit consideration of social and moral issues in order to help each student gain an understanding of self, of others, and of the relationships between and among them
- To promote self-respect, self-confidence, respect for others, and empathy
- The Buddy Program brings grade levels together in order to practice the various skills and principles they consider throughout the year and in an effort to tighten the school community.

- Understanding and practice of service is a goal of both Brookwood and the PGD program

Department: Wellness

Our Wellness program is designed to support the whole child through their social, emotional, academic and physical development while at Brookwood. At the foundation, is the education, understanding, and practice of mindfulness which naturally interweaves with our social and emotional learning (SEL) program, RULER – developed by the *Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence*. Ancient practices taught are supported by decades of research, such as yoga, qigong, and meditation, to aid in an experience of physically embodying the skills taught through mindfulness and RULER.

Our nutrition curriculum is evidence-based with the core curriculum developed by Tufts University and Harvard University programs. The curriculum focuses on how to fuel the mind and body to best support learning, movement, and social behaviors. Mindful eating exercises and cooking workshops are hands-on opportunities for students to experience the information shared in class.

Our Wellness philosophy intends to provide the Brookwood student with social and emotional skills and tools that will enable them to be their best selves –an attentive, engaged, curious learner; a kind, compassionate, empathetic person; and a positive steward for themselves, the community and the Earth.

Curriculum Objectives:

- Develop self-awareness of thoughts, feelings, emotions, physical sensations, and external stimuli with the goal of building skills of self-regulation, concentration, self-compassion, and empathy
- Build emotional intelligence through the recognition, understanding, labeling, expressing and regulating of emotions
- Develop an understanding of how different foods affect learning, mood, performance (in the classroom, with friends, or in physical activity)
- Understand the purpose of foods and identify those that provide fuel to support health and well-being
- Nurture an awareness and understanding of Intuitive Eating principles
- Develop an understanding and embrace the concept of a healthy body –accepting and respecting the natural diversity of body shapes and sizes
- Empower students to be open and curious to practices that may not be familiar to their personal family traditions and culture, such as yoga, qigong and meditation

- Educate students in other areas of self-care such as sleep and safe use of technology.