



## VIRGINIA BEACH FRIENDS SCHOOL

*Knowledge. Character. Community.*

### EARLY SCHOOL CURRICULUM

#### Cottage

Open the Cottage door and step into the wonder and magic of an inspiring and nurturing learning environment geared to 3 and 4-year-olds. Through a thematic approach, children are engaged and immersed in a setting and curriculum that promotes their innate love of learning and expands their cognitive, social and emotional abilities. Children delight in learning through active exploration, use of their senses, meaningful events and interactive playtime. Rich and varied experiences in this “home away from home” provide a solid anchor for students who are transitioning to school life.

#### Pre-K

##### *Math*

The Math Program in Pre-K places emphasis on the role mathematics plays in everyday life. Beginning with the language of mathematics, each student builds a foundation for using numbers and number concepts in all areas of the curriculum. Through teacher and child initiated exploration using manipulatives, games, art activities, science projects, and life experiences, students learn the basic skills of counting and sorting, using concrete objects and operations. Other key math concepts include: making comparisons, categorizing, predicting, number recognition, shape identification, spatial/positional directions, simple graphing, patterns and beginning problem-solving. Concept strands are introduced and then repeatedly practiced throughout the year.

##### *Language Arts*

The Language Arts Program in Pre-K is designed to develop reading readiness and communication skills through oral language experiences and exploration of the written word. Learning is augmented by a literature-rich environment where books, illustrations, and art stimulate interest and creativity. Students explore the alphabet through “Letter of the Week” in which the week’s activities revolve around a particular letter. The Pre-K language arts curriculum lays the foundation for phonological awareness and vocabulary and concept development for emergent readers and writers. Emphasis is placed on listening and speaking strategies and applications and other reading readiness skills and concepts about print and story comprehension. Conversation, dramatic play, songs, finger-plays, art projects, and cultural events add dimension and depth and make language development a complete experience. Through whole group, small group and individualized instruction, students practice skills and actively participate in a multi-faceted learning environment which integrates the arts, music, math, science and social studies. Concept strands are introduced and then repeatedly practiced throughout the school year.

## *Science*

The Early School Science Program at Virginia Beach Friends School focuses on exploration and observation of familiar objects, natural events, and living things. Students discover and uncover basic concepts in their world through the use of the scientific process. The curriculum is integrated with other subject areas and students' curiosity, interests and understanding often direct its scope. Specific units of study may vary from year to year and from class to class.

## *Social Studies*

The Social Studies Program in Pre-K is an integral part of each school day. It begins with each student's developing sense of self and with how he/she perceives and interacts with others in his/her environment. Students learn how to cooperate in a group, take responsibility for themselves, try new activities, and recognize and appreciate differences among their classmates and teachers. In keeping with our Friends School philosophy, the curriculum is designed to provide students with experiences that will enable them to become more knowledgeable about the environment, community, and culture in which they live and to provide exposure to people with heritage, cultures, beliefs and values different from their own. Social studies at this level also provide an introduction to the concepts that history relates to people and events of other times and places, that people have basic physical needs, and that geographical and environmental changes happen over time.

## **Kindergarten**

### *Math*

Math activities are an important part of the daily curriculum in the Kindergarten Program. Students develop insight and understanding of math concepts through the use of manipulative materials, exploration and hands-on experiences. Additional mathematics instruction is provided through the use of the Singapore Math program. This program provides students with sequential activities as they progress with their skills. Mathematical strands are presented throughout the year with the time given for practice. Teachers' periodic assessment of student progress provides information about each student's skill level and enables the teacher to individualize the program.

### *Language Arts*

The Language Arts Program in Kindergarten incorporates the core skills of listening, speaking, reading, writing, and story comprehension. It is enhanced by a literature-rich and interactive environment through the Super Kids Curriculum. The curriculum is designed to develop students' oral and written language skills through active participation in multi-sensory learning experiences and is integrated through units of study with music, art, math, science and social studies. Songs, poetry, dramatic play, conversation, art activities and cultural events make language development a positive experience. Individualized activities allow students to progress at their own rate and developmental level. The curriculum emphasizes letter name recall, the relationship between letters and sounds, beginning reading skills, phonics, vocabulary development, fine motor development, beginning writing skills, and self-expression.

## *Science*

The Kindergarten Science Program at Virginia Beach Friends School focuses on exploration and observation of familiar objects, natural events, and living things. Students discover and uncover basic concepts in their world through the use of the scientific process. The curriculum is integrated with other subject areas and students' curiosity, interests and understanding often direct its scope. Specific units of study may vary from year to year and from class to class.

## *Social Studies*

Social Studies in Kindergarten is an integral part of each school day and continues to build on previously acquired skills. It begins with each student's developing sense of self and with how he/she perceives and interacts with others in his/her environment. A positive sense of self and the development of a positive attitude toward learning are core objectives. Students gain proficiency in how to cooperate in groups, take responsibility for themselves, explore new interests, and recognize and appreciate differences among their classmates and teachers. In keeping with our Friends School Philosophy, the curriculum is designed to provide students with experiences that will enable them to become more knowledgeable about the environment, community, and culture in which they live and to provide exposure to people with heritage, cultures, beliefs, and values different from their own. Social studies at this level also provide an introduction to the concepts that history relates to people and events of other times and places, that people have basic physical needs, and that geographical and environmental changes happen over time.

## **Early School Enrichment Classes**

### *Early School Music and Performing Arts*

Early School Music and Performing Arts Music in the Early School is an integral part of the student experience. Music at this age reinforces everyday concepts through beat, rhymes, and patterns instilling the idea that music is life. Students achieve basic music competence and cultural awareness through the introduction of various genres of world music and visual aids. We incorporate elements of eurhythmics in each class in a playful, musically rich setting using movement to teach rhythm, structure, and musical expression. We invite students to respond to music by balancing mind, body, spirit, and emotions while creating an awareness of the music itself. The Early School Music and Performing Arts Program generate a feeling of joy in the students through hands-on and creative movement activities, which foster personal and social development, assertiveness, and confidence. The children participate in Winter and Spring performances as well as in an annual play.

### *Early School Visual Arts*

Early School students are introduced to the Art studio as their creative workspace. They learn about the value and importance of respect of both personal space and safety in a workplace. They gain a new respect for the value of their own creativity as they come in contact with the new space. By actively engaging directly with the materials and medium in their raw forms students are building a strong technical vocabulary. With a thorough demonstration of materials, they learn what is available to them. Students learn about the safe handling, use, and care of materials while building new vocabulary of technique through multiple media and original work.