When you begin with the belief that each person has a unique inner light, great things can happen. At GFS, we discover and nurture a multitude of hidden talents. We teach each child to speak his or her mind, and make sure every voice is heard. We believe that community is built on a foundation of mutual respect.

**OUR SCHOOL**

Founded in 1845 under the care of the Germantown Monthly Meeting and governed by the School Committee, GFS is a Quaker, independent day school for students in preschool through grade 12, located in the historic Germantown neighborhood of Philadelphia. It draws students from more than 80 zip codes and three countries.

**OUR MISSION**

Germantown Friends School is dedicated to reaching that of God in every person. Our mission is to seek truth, challenge the intellect, honor differences, embrace the city, and nurture each student’s mind, body and spirit.

**HOW DOES GERMANTOWN FRIENDS SCHOOL INSPIRE A LIFELONG LOVE OF LEARNING?**

Creative faculty offer a rich, relevant, and engaging program for all ages—one centered on curiosity, well-being, and joy.

Students find their unique voices through infinite opportunities for discovery and inquiry, with age-appropriate freedoms to chart their own paths.

Our community embraces silence, reflection, and listening as we learn from—and with—each other, bringing our Quaker testimonies to life.

Alumni remain a central part of the GFS experience, mentoring students and sharing their talents as advocates, artists, entrepreneurs, educators, and scientists—changemakers of all kinds.

1,129 STUDENTS

162 FACULTY MEMBERS

(75% HOLD ADVANCED DEGREES)

155 FRIENDS SCHOOLS LEAGUE CHAMPIONSHIPS

19 PAISAA STATE CHAMPIONSHIPS

36.6% STUDENTS OF COLOR

$5.77MM FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE AWARDED TO 28% OF STUDENTS

60+ UPPER SCHOOL STUDENT-LED CLUBS, INCLUDING MORE THAN 25 AFFINITY GROUPS

6:1 STUDENT/TEACHER RATIO
OUR COMMUNITY AND NEIGHBORHOOD ENGAGEMENT

We believe in the power and value of community. By nurturing and embracing bonds with our neighbors and each other, GFS strives to cultivate experiences that remove educational barriers and build affinity and understanding.

Through neighborhood initiatives, environmental action projects, and institutional partnerships, we are deeply connected to Germantown and Philadelphia. While many activities are student-driven and led, adults serve as guides, ensuring that everyone fully understands the important role our neighbors play in our lives and our world. Upper School student clubs, such as Community Action, Lunch for the Hungry, Gardening, and Education Justice, address food and clothing insecurity and educational inequalities. In the Middle and Lower Schools, community projects and service learning are woven into the curriculum. The Community Engagement office leads monthly drives for local organizations, creating partnerships to help identify the current needs of our neighbors.

Our vision for learning in community advances each year. In 2021, GFS deepened its relationship with Breakthrough of Greater Philadelphia—an academic enrichment program for promising middle schoolers from Philadelphia—after housing it on our campus for 27 years. Breakthrough is now an official part of GFS, with faculty, staff, and students volunteering and supporting this growing organization.

OUR COMMITMENT TO DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION

At GFS, we welcome the experiences and perspectives of all members of our community. We strive for continuous growth in understanding and valuing the intersections of age, ability, gender, race and ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, and socioeconomic status. We aim to be mindful of the roles these varied parts of our identities play in making us who we are, individually and as a school community.

Our Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) team coordinates with all members of our community to better engage in these principles. We see DEI as integral to our ethical foundation and as work we all share. GFS is a community that values both intergroup and intragroup connections. The work we do within groups and across our community permeates the fabric of our school life. Our desire is to improve relationships between people by dialoguing, engaging in constructive conflict, and working together in authentic and meaningful ways.

Each of our four educational divisions—Early Childhood, Lower School, Middle School, and Upper School—have dedicated Diversity Committees. These delegations explore where additional work may be needed and address, head-on, questions and fears that individuals may have in talking to students, parents, and colleagues about sensitive topics, such as race, gender, socioeconomic issues, and more.
GUIDED BY QUAKER PRINCIPLES, our multidisciplinary curriculum is taught through a combination of structured activities and free exploration, which fosters children’s natural curiosity while providing them with the foundation needed for success in Kindergarten—and beyond. Classes delve into topics of group interest and critical thinking is woven into every activity as children make observations, discuss them, problem solve, and begin to understand how similarities and differences enhance the classroom community. Fostering a strong sense of self among our youngest learners reinforces positive self-esteem and respect for one another. We value a child’s ability to express his or her feelings and ideas in appropriate ways, and nurture our students’ capacity to listen and take turns. We model peaceful conflict resolution and the importance of being a responsible and engaged member of the group. The Early Childhood curriculum addresses the developmental skills that lead to Kindergarten readiness. This includes helping children sit and listen, focus, make thoughtful choices, interact with one another respectfully, follow multistep directions, and self-regulate. Weekly specials include art, library, movement, and music. We strive to work together, communicate often, and share our insights with parents and caregivers.

EC students attend Meeting for Worship weekly on their respective campus (either Center City or Germantown). Additionally, students from both locations gather together once a month in the historic Meetinghouse on Main Campus. Classes come together to read a story or poem, then sit quietly and reflect on the message of the reading for a few minutes. Children may share their thoughts with the group if they are so moved. We close each Meeting by shaking hands. Additionally, EC students attend GFS’ annual all-school Meeting for Worship in the spring.

AT GFS, THE ELEMENTARY YEARS are truly wondrous, and we provide students in grades K-5 with an academic program that is developmentally appropriate, highly ambitious, well balanced—and joyful. We think of our Lower School students as young learners, but they are also authors and illustrators, mathematical acrobats, scientists, world explorers, and time travelers. Our curriculum is defined by its richness and depth. When our students explore ancient Greece, it is a yearlong experience of immersion: They study politics, commerce, and dramatic arts, make Trojan horses in woodshop, sew chitons for the annual Greek games, and travel to New York’s Metropolitan Museum of Art. The result is a web of meaningful connections—and a sense of mastery.

It is this same mastery children find in art, as they study Mondrian or Jean Paul Basquiat; in math, as they learn not only to solve a problem through a prescribed set of steps, but to see it from every angle and inside out; and in language arts, as they become active and critical readers, equipped with strategies to engage in evermore challenging works. Spanish is introduced in Kindergarten, and students are immersed in the language through fifth grade. Extracurricular options offer even more opportunities: to study American Sign Language after school, to play sports with the Early Risers basketball clinic, to sing with the chorus or perform with the orchestra. Our Lower School provides outstanding preparation for the years ahead, but before looking forward, it is an experience to be cherished in itself.
MIDDLE SCHOOL AT GERMANTOWN FRIENDS is a magical, memorable place, with developmentally designed programs to meet the needs of 11-14 year olds. That includes finding joy in learning, but also finding joy in the discovery of who these young people are as individuals. It’s a time for them to make some of life’s most important discoveries about the kind of person they want to be. Students engage through academics, clubs, affinity groups, athletics, and service in ways that help them to discover their true selves.

The key areas of focus in Middle School include study skills and note-taking; self-awareness and meta-cognition; collaboration; communication and conflict resolution; asking for help and self-advocacy; time management, planning, and organization; social skills; empathy; and health and wellness. In the classroom, they explore works of literature thematically connected to lessons in history, tackle research projects working with primary sources, and master mathematical challenges, preparing them for Algebra or Advanced Algebra in eighth grade. In addition to English, history, math, and science, they choose to study French, Spanish, Latin, Greek, or Mandarin. Outside the classroom, opportunities expand as well: Middle Schoolers take on leadership roles in student government and in organizing community outreach projects, and in a wide and ever-changing variety of mixed-grade clubs and activities, including Yearbook, Adventure Club, Chess Club, and A Cappella. In these crucial years of development and personal discovery, Middle School at GFS is a great place to find yourself.

SIGNATURE PROGRAMS

SIXTH-GRADE SKILLS PROGRAM: Intentional and measurable instruction focusing on academic, organizational, and social-emotional skills.

SEVENTH-GRADE SERVICE & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT MODEL: Full-year exploration of service learning that includes students navigating curricula modulars that focus on food insecurity, homelessness, and environmental stewardship.

EIGHTH-GRADE CAPSTONE: Guided by a question, students explore passion projects that allow them to position learning in ways authentic to themselves.

MIDDLE SCHOOL MINI-COURSES: Week-long interdisciplinary deep dives that center on joy, curiosity, and rigor as students experience uninterrupted learning around a single topic. Teachers partner to design mixed-grade courses and students choose from a menu of options.

MIDDLE SCHOOL PLAY/MUSICAL: Part of a year-long Theatre Movement Arts program, the winter features a Middle School play with participants across grades.
A GFS EDUCATION IS ABOUT each person rising to meet their own standards of excellence; no two students leave having traveled the same path. What our ninth through twelfth graders share, in the process, is an experience of intellectual challenge and curiosity. We don’t compute class ranks or GPAs, and we don’t see test scores as the primary measure of achievement and academic success.

Upper School is a world of choices. Take Bioethics or the Political and Philosophical Origins of the Constitution, Advanced Physics or Ancient Greek, Journalism: Ethics and Activism or Advanced Music Composition. At GFS, high school students have the opportunity to pursue their interests, passions, talents, and goals. They make their education their own. All students read widely and learn to write well. All take at least three years of math, plus multiple years of science, history, and a modern or classical language. And all have the opportunity to do so much more. Through a vast offering of required and elective programs, our students pursue directed independent studies, participate in professional internships, take college seminar-style classes, and have the chance to explore multiple educational opportunities outside the regular curriculum. For those eager not only to learn but also to innovate, this is the place.

We have more than 60 clubs organized and led by students, relating to timely topics or current affairs, such as politics and climate change, social/self identity, service, and journalism. All are designed by students so they can pursue leadership opportunities in a multitude of areas and interests, including literacy, science, advocacy and social justice, mental health, anti-racism, community engagement, finance, law, art, music, sustainability, film, coding, entrepreneurship, and more. Students have the opportunity to participate in more than 25 affinity groups, from Latin American Student Solidarity Organization and Chaverim to the Black Student Union, Asian Students Association (ASA), and Sexuality and Gender Alliance (SAGA).

SIGNATURE PROGRAMS

DIRECTED INDEPENDENT STUDY (DIS)
The DIS program allows students in grades 9-12 to pursue interests outside the regular curriculum by studying individually or in small groups with a faculty member. Areas of study range from Arabic and International Current Affairs to Neuroscience, Jazz Theory, and Java Programming.

GLOBAL ONLINE ACADEMY (GOA)
Germantown Friends School is a founding member of the GOA, a consortium of more than 70 leading independent schools from around the world committed to offering world-class online courses taught by teachers from its member schools. Its mission is to replicate in online classrooms the programs and teaching that are hallmarks of its member schools; to foster new, effective ways for students to learn; and to promote students’ global awareness by creating truly diverse, worldwide, online communities.

ESSENTIALLY ENGLISH
During the spring term, students in grades 10-12 choose from a set of elective courses taught by GFS faculty and scholars from the surrounding community. These classes provide the opportunity to carefully examine the work of a particular author, to explore a specific genre of writing, or to consider how literature reflects certain ideological and cultural patterns. The program also includes creative and nonfiction writing courses.

JANUARY TERM
This month-long program enables students in grades 9, 10, and 12 to explore learning opportunities outside the regular curriculum. They choose from more than 70 “mini-courses,” providing teachers and students space for experimentation and reflection.

JUNIOR PROJECTS
During the month of January, all juniors research, secure, and complete a month-long independent study of their own design under the guidance of a faculty liaison. Students use this opportunity to gain insight into a potential career, pursue a passion, or do humanitarian work in the U.S. or overseas. A final paper and presentation complete the project.
GFS IS PROFOUNDLY ALIVE with the energy of the arts. Creativity and performance are woven into our culture every day, across every division. The choir tours internationally, the theater program takes on classic musicals and modern masterworks from around the world, and the art department transforms the campus into one giant gallery for the annual spring All-School Art Show.

GFS offers a rich and deep curriculum in visual and the performing arts school-wide. Threads of art history and music theory weave through classes in the earliest grades, while students explore advanced electives and embrace ambitious artistic challenges in the Middle and Upper Schools. Our facilities support our top-caliber programs with spacious, light-filled studios, numerous practice rooms, and a main-stage theater with professional quality lighting and sound. Our program not only allows students of talent to go far, but is designed to involve all of our students in creative and meaningful ways.

HARD WORK AND TEAMWORK. These ideals are invoked at GFS so often they’re part of our daily practice. Every time our athletes take the playing field, they bring the best of themselves to the game. They learn lessons for life; they feed the fire of Tiger Pride.

The athletic program at GFS stresses participation and encourages all student-athletes to develop their capabilities to the fullest extent. We focus on process more than outcome, and know that constant improvement yields positive results. We value excellence in each sport, and aim to field successful teams—42 across the Upper and Middle School divisions—that are competitive within the Friends Schools League as well as against other peer schools.

We want our student-athletes to be committed to themselves, their teams, and the GFS school community. We recognize that success takes on many forms, from earning the respect of our peers to setting a personal record to putting in the effort to win a league championship. We prioritize our student-athletes’ wellness and mental agility, and believe good sportsmanship promotes healthy competition. Participation in our athletic program has value well beyond the playing field. Our focus on team unity, the realization of potential, the development of a strong work ethic, and the sense of pride that comes with accomplishment are key components of the GFS athletic experience.
As a student, you have the power to make a difference. We believe that in every way we can, we try to minimize the distractions that can draw our attention from the important things in life. This means not becoming overwhelmed by the busyness of daily routines. It means seeking balance and embracing simplicity.

We aim to deal fairly, equally, and honestly with everyone. We aim to do as we say, reflecting our beliefs in our actions. Even when it is inconvenient or challenging, we stand by our convictions, striving to lead lives of integrity.

We are all blessed with remarkable gifts. We are equally qualified to seek truth and let our inner Light shine. We all deserve the same respect. For these reasons, we work against prejudice and discrimination and for equality.

The planet we inhabit, the talents we’ve been given, the community of which we are a part—all hold remarkable value. We must be responsible, imaginative, and proactive in protecting these gifts and caring for the world and people around us. We must exercise good stewardship.

QUAKER VALUES are at the heart of the GFS experience, serving as our moral compass, driving our interactions with one another, and teaching us to honor the Light in each member of our community. Our educational philosophy is rooted in the Quaker testimonies of Simplicity, Peace, Integrity, Community, Equality, and Stewardship (SPICES).

We believe each life is precious and unique. We stand against war and violence and work to eliminate their root causes, including ignorance, racism, hatred, and oppression. We are committed to creating peace.

‘Alone we can do little, together we can do so much.’* We know there is strength in cooperation and wisdom to be found when many perspectives are shared and valued. We believe in the power of community.

* The words of Helen Keller.

COLLEGE MATRICULATION 2017–2021

Albright College
American University (5)
Arizona State University
Babson College
Bard College (4)
Barnard College (13)
Bates College (2)
Bennington College
Bryn Mawr College
Brown University (4)
Bowdoin College (3)
Bucknell University (2)
California Institute of Technology
Carnegie Mellon University
Case Western Reserve University
Champlain College
Chapman University
Claremont-McKenna College
Clarkson University
Colgate University
College of William & Mary
Columbia University (10)
Connecticut College (4)
Cornell University (5)
Dartmouth College
DePaul University
Dickinson College
Drexel University (12)
Drexel University, BS/MD Program
Duquesne University (2)
Earlham College
Eindhoven University of Technology
Elon University
Emerson College (2)
Emory University (4)
Fordham University (2)
Franklin and Marshall College (4)
Georgetown University (7)
Georgia Institute of Technology (6)
Goucher College (2)
Hamilton College (2)
Harvard University
Haverford College (17)
High Point University
Howard University
Johns Hopkins University (3)
Kenyon College (5)
Lafayette College
Lehigh University (2)
Loyola Marymount University
Loyola University
New Orleans
Manchester College (6)
Manhattan School of Music
Maryland Institute College of Art
Massachusetts Bay Community College
Massachusetts Institute of Technology
McDaniel College
McGill University (4)
Michigan State University
Middlebury College (7)
Mount Holyoke College
Mount St. Mary’s University
New England Conservatory of Music
New York University (16)
Northeastern University (2)
Northwestern University (4)
Pennsylvania State University (2)
Pitzer College (2)
Pomona College
Pratt Institute (2)
Princeton University (7)
Reed College (2)
Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute
Rhode Island School of Design
Rice University (3)
Rochester Institute of Technology (2)
Ryerson University
Saint Joseph’s University (2)
Sarah Lawrence College (6)
Savannah College of Art and Design
School of the Art Institute of Chicago
Scranton College (3)
Skidmore College (2)
Smith College (4)
Soka University of America
Stanford University (4)
Stony Brook University
SUNY (2)
St. Bonaventure College (3)
Syracuse University (4)
Temple University (15)
Texas State University
The George Washington University
The New School (5)
Towson University
Trinity College Dublin
Tufts University (9)
Tulane University (5)
United States Naval Academy
University College London
University of California, Berkeley
University of California, Davis
University of California, Los Angeles (3)
University of Chicago (7)
University of Colorado, Boulder (2)
University of Delaware
University of Edinburgh
University of London - The Courtauld Institute of Art
University of Maryland (3)
University of Miami
University of Michigan (3)
University of North Carolina at Charlotte
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (2)
University of Notre Dame
University of Pennsylvania (49)
University of Pittsburgh (8)
University of Cincinnati, BS/MD Program
University of Rochester
University of Southern California (3)
University of St. Andrews (2)
University of Vermont (2)
University of Virginia (2)
University of Washington
University of Wisconsin, Madison (4)
Vanderbilt University (2)
Vassar College (3)
Virginia Polytechnic Institute
Washington University in St. Louis
Wellesley College (2)
Wesleyan University (13)
West Chester University
Whittier College (2)
Widener University (2)
Williams College (2)
Worcester Polytechnic Institute
Yale University (4)