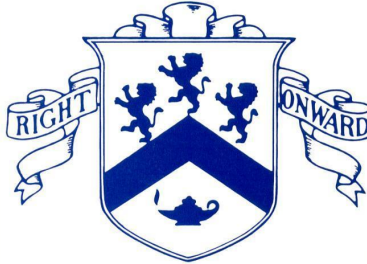


# Doane Academy



## 2023-2024 Lower School Student & Family Handbook

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**Doane Academy  
Since 1837**



***An Independent Episcopal Day School  
Grades PreK-12***

**Mission**

Doane Academy, an independent Episcopal day school, age 3 through 12th grade, provides an exceptional college preparatory program while cultivating character development and nurturing the emotional maturity essential in preparing students for life.

We develop intelligent, capable individuals within a community where all are known, loved, and strongly encouraged to discover their unique potential.

**Vision Statement**

Doane Academy develops confident, ethical leaders prepared to improve the world.

**Values and Beliefs**

- *Academic Excellence* – Doane Academy encourages development of the highest standards of knowledge, inquiry, creative expression and academic success.
- *Character* – Doane Academy inspires integrity and responsibility for improving the lives of others.
- *Diversity* – A diverse community sharing different ideas, beliefs and cultures, strengthens Doane Academy.
- *Faith* – Doane Academy is a multi-faith community inspired by the Episcopal values of love and service, providing members the opportunity to reflect on their relationship with God.
- *Fellowship* – Doane Academy is a family. Every member of the community is nurtured and supported with love, compassion, and respect.
- *Leadership* – Doane Academy believes that good leaders are those who inspire and work with others in achieving extraordinary goals.
- *Social Responsibility* - Doane Academy encourages members of our community to behave ethically and with sensitivity toward social, cultural, economic and environmental issues.

## Lower School Academic Overview

In the Lower School, we strive to bring the mission to life every day by knowing, loving, and encouraging our students, recognizing each of them as the unique, intelligent, capable individuals they are. Each learner comes into our classroom full of different questions, interests, and strengths, and we help them to name, appreciate, and grow their abilities--not only in academic areas like math, literacy, language, and research, but in social-emotional areas like character, leadership, social skills, executive functioning, and artistic expression.

We encourage all students to discover their unique potential with thoughtful, differentiated instruction and curriculum that inspires deep thinking and enduring understanding. The skills and habits of mind that children build in the Lower School are the foundation for the rest of their academic journey. While we ground our curriculum in big ideas and important content, it is perhaps even more important to us to kindle each learner's innate curiosity and wonder. We equip and empower students with tools and strategies that foster the key 21st century competencies of critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and communication.

We build a positive, loving, and respectful community of learners, ready to actively participate in and contribute to ever-widening circles of community. We honor each student's individuality and all the different identities, experiences, and preferences they bring to the classroom. We believe it is essential for all children to find both "mirrors and windows" in our curriculum. We ensure that they see themselves reflected in our curriculum and in our library, and that they also have the opportunity to develop empathy and respectful understanding as they learn about the diversity of the world around us. Ultimately, we hope to inspire our students to approach the world with Doane's mission in mind, ready to "know and love" everyone they meet and to recognize the shared humanity that unites us all as a global community.

Here is more specific information about our curriculum and instruction:

- We take a workshop approach to reading, which gives students the opportunity to practice research-based reading skills in "just right" books and to receive individualized coaching from their teacher that continually pushes them to progress to the next level of fluency and comprehension. This approach encourages and supports children to see themselves as capable and independent readers, surrounded by a community of other avid readers with whom they talk about books and build a lifelong love of reading.
- FUNdations is a multisensory, systematic program that unites spelling, handwriting, and word study, giving children the explicit instruction they need to develop their phonemic awareness and build their knowledge of phonics.
- We base our mathematics instruction in the Singapore method, building in-depth mastery of concepts. Learners do not simply memorize a rule; instead, they develop the numeracy skills and the flexibility to approach a problem in multiple ways, as well as the algebraic reasoning skills needed for success with complex, multi-step problems. The

“concrete, pictorial, abstract” progression allows children to develop understanding with hands-on, experiential practice and to reinforce that understanding as they draw representations of concrete objects--all before they begin working with abstract equations.

- Our student-centered writing workshop is a spiraling curriculum that continually revisits and builds on the skills needed to write informational, persuasive, and narrative pieces. Students learn a writing strategy and immediately put it into practice in their own writing, engaging in a process that includes drafting, revising, and editing. Each child learns to “read as a writer,” on the lookout for the engaging and important craft moves a published author makes and ready to apply those moves to their own writing.
- We take an inquiry-based approach to social studies, integrating history, civics, geography, and economics through investigation and action. Each unit of study launches with a compelling question that sparks curiosity, moves through a sustained investigation of content, and culminates when students use their learning to create solutions that make an impact on the world around them. Students engage in research and critical thinking as they learn how to collaborate, craft their own questions, evaluate evidence, and take informed action.
- Our social-emotional curriculum supports students in acquiring and applying the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to develop healthy identities, manage emotions, achieve personal and collective goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain supportive relationships, and make responsible and caring decisions. We implement evidence-based practices recommended by the Collaborative for Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL). We follow the same sequence of fifteen units in each grade level, giving students consistent practice and reinforcement while adding to the previous year’s foundation and building in complexity over time. These units are: safe relationships; brain; breath; feelings; body; impulse control; gratitude; optimism; grit; resilience; perspective taking; empathy; kindness; compassion; and hope.
- Our specialist classes (Art, Music, PE, Library, STEAM, and Spanish) are based in experiential learning, honoring students as young scientists, artists, athletes, and global citizens. Specialist teachers integrate their curricula whenever possible, building multidisciplinary projects that develop each child’s 21st century skills.
- Technology is integrated into all subject areas and students in Grades 1-5 use their one-to-one Chromebooks in intentional and meaningful ways. Our goal is not simply to replace traditional materials with digital ones; we also investigate the ways that new technological tools can transform our teaching and assessment, allowing us to modify and redesign learning tasks and projects in ways that engage and empower each child.

Regular, ongoing academic assessments give us insight into areas of challenge where we can focus targeted instruction that will support all learners’ needs and enable them to thrive. Developmental Reading Assessments (DRAs) and running records help us understand each child’s skills in phonics, phonemic awareness, reading fluency, and comprehension. Assessments aligned with Singapore Mathematics give us a window into each learner’s number sense and their ability to count, sort, compare, add, subtract, represent, model, and quantitatively reason.

## Reporting Student Progress

In the Lower School, the school year is divided into two semesters. At the end of each semester, teachers share a report card that includes standards-based assessment, using a measurement scale consistent with classroom assessment tools, as well as thoughtful narrative feedback. Our goal is not only to provide families with a window into their child's learning and a comprehensive overview of their progress, but also to inspire and facilitate conversations at home. Each classroom teacher will explain that grade level's progress reports and overall communications as part of their Back to School Night presentation on **Thursday, September 28th**.

Parent-teacher conferences are scheduled at the beginning of the year and halfway through each semester. In late August or early September, we begin with a Getting to Know You listening conference in which each child's family has the opportunity to share their insights, experiences, and goals for the year. The mid-semester conferences will occur this year on **October 27th and on March 15th**. We request that all parents schedule a conference at that time; the grade-level teachers will send out online sign-ups well in advance of the dates. Students do not attend school when conferences are scheduled so teachers are free to confer with parents. It is strongly encouraged that parents attend conferences in person to be able to see their student's work, but a video conference can be requested.

Teachers will keep parents apprised of their children's progress between marking periods by phone calls, e-mails, or additional conferences if necessary. Parents with particular questions or concerns are encouraged to contact their child's teachers directly.

The Head of Lower School stays closely connected to each teacher and student, and is always available to discuss classroom concerns; however, **it is expected that you will make initial contact with your child's teacher if a concern arises**.

## Homework

Lower School teachers assign homework with a goal of helping families to understand and appreciate what their children are learning. Homework builds on skills and content learned during the day, and does not introduce new material. No homework is assigned over holiday breaks. Each teacher will share more about their homework model at Back to School Night on Thursday, September 28th.

While homework expectations will vary from grade to grade, one consistent homework expectation is independent reading for an age-appropriate amount of time. Here are some ideas about how to promote your child's enjoyment of their at-home reading homework.

### **Why daily reading?**

- Reading for pleasure has an incredible impact on children’s academic success. Literacy expert Nancie Atwell notes that “the highest-achieving students are those who devote leisure time to reading. Recently, the largest-even international study of reading found that the single most important predictor of academic success is the amount of time children spend reading books” ([The Reading Zone](#)).
- Just as importantly, pleasure reading helps to develop our children’s humanity. Regular reading allows children to develop empathy and reduces their stress levels as they become knowledgeable about and compassionate toward the range of human experience.

### **How can I support my child’s reading?**

- We encourage you to have a conversation as a family about the best time and place for reading to happen at your home. It might be a fun family activity to create the perfect “book nook” in a quiet place with good light.
- Our goal at school is to support students in finding a balanced reading diet. Diversity in difficulty level, genre, and format will help students to grow independence as readers and to explore the wide variety of wonderful children’s books. Please let us know if you notice that your child seems to be “stuck” in any way—for example, if they tend to read a particular series or genre, or if they tend to choose books that are too challenging. We look forward to partnering with you to help expand their repertoire.
- We talk a lot in the Lower School about how books can serve as both “windows” and “mirrors” for readers, and how important it is for all of us to actively seek out both kinds of reading experiences. Our hope is that all of our children will read “mirror” books (affirming and empowering them as they see their own experiences and identities reflected) and “window” books (giving them the opportunity to feel deep empathy for characters and situations that are less familiar to them). This is another area where you can provide guidance and inspiration to your children. Grace Lin’s short TED Talk on the [Windows and Mirrors of Your Child’s Bookshelf](#) is worth watching.
- Please know that your child is never too old to be read to. Children of all ages cherish the literary worlds that adults bring to life with their voices. If a chapter book is too time-consuming as a family read-aloud, encourage your child to check out some picture books from our library and read those together. Shared listening to audiobooks can also be a wonderful opportunity for family bonding.
- More specifically, for those of you with children in grades PreK-2, here are some excellent tips from Nancie Atwell for how to read with your child to encourage their burgeoning skills: [Tips for Parents of Beginning Readers](#)

## Lower School Disciplinary Overview

Our goal is to create a structured, supportive, and respectful community in which the teacher takes an authoritative stance toward classroom management and discipline. This means that the teacher is not authoritarian (do exactly as I say) or permissive (do whatever you want); instead, they focus on building strong relationships, providing firm boundaries, validating students' experiences and emotions, and modeling care and empathy. Students collaborate to develop classroom norms at the beginning of the year and engage in conversations about why those norms are important (for example, we raise our hands and share airtime because everyone's voice is important, because we all deserve an opportunity to share our ideas and to be heard, and because we get to a better idea at the end if we hear lots of perspectives along the way). We proactively teach social-emotional skills to help students practice self-awareness, manage their emotions and behaviors, take others' perspectives, make responsible decisions, build resilience, and solve problems.

Even with this proactive teaching in place, we expect that students will sometimes act out of alignment with classroom norms—this is part of learning how to be in community with others. Our goal is to ensure that missteps are experiences that lead to growth. We know that children are most likely to engage in inappropriate behavior when one of their fundamental human needs (for relatedness, competence, or autonomy) is not being met. Before we choose how to respond, we do our best to understand what the student is telling us through their behavior. That way, we can create an effective plan that will help them grow their skills and meet classroom expectations. These are a few of the developmentally appropriate mistakes we see students make in the lower school:

- Interrupting and calling out while others are talking
- Getting very upset when their work isn't "perfect" and erasing it all or ripping it up
- Bumping or jostling one another in an argument over line order
- Inserting themselves into a conflict that doesn't involve them and escalating it through gossip
- Having a difficult time sharing and grabbing an item away from a classmate
- Name-calling
- Getting into a conflict about the rules of a game at recess and yelling at a classmate, or even escalating to an inappropriate physical response like pushing
- Not including a classmate in a conversation or activity that they want to join

### Responding to minor missteps and inappropriate behavior in the lower school

When a student has made a mistake, we address it immediately with a reminder and/or redirection (e.g. "We use kind words with our friends" or "We walk in the halls"). When a reminder/redirection is not effective, we employ natural and logical consequences to help students understand the impact of their behavior. Our goal is to ensure that the consequences



are related to the behavior, respectful of the student, and reasonable for the student to carry out. Some of the most common consequences are to fix something that you broke, to lose a privilege, to take a break (either in the “peace corner” or in a buddy classroom), and to make an apology of action. Here are some examples of how that might play out in a few common scenarios:

- A child who makes a mess will clean it up.
- A child who is given the opportunity to choose their own seat and then has difficulty concentrating will have that privilege taken away; the teacher will choose where the child sits.
- A child who is arguing during a game at recess will take a break from that game and engage in reflective time with a teacher.
- A child who pushes someone else in line will walk with the teacher at the end of the line and have a one-on-one discussion with the teacher once the class has arrived at its destination; they will then be supported in making an apology of action.

Teachers use their expertise and discretion to determine if they need to let a child’s family know about a behavioral incident. Teachers generally will not communicate home for minor incidents where a child is easily redirected and is able to take responsibility for their actions. If a child makes the same mistake several times and a pattern begins to emerge, the teacher will let the family know and engage in conversation about possible causes and effective responses or interventions. The teacher may suggest to the family that they implement a daily or weekly behavior log in order to track the impact of the chosen intervention over time.

#### Responding to major missteps and inappropriate behavior in the lower school

There are rare occasions when a child makes a more serious mistake, such as causing physical harm to someone else, stealing, cheating, lying, or damaging/misusing property. In these uncommon situations, the family will be notified as soon as possible and the head of lower school will become involved in the disciplinary process. The head of lower school will determine appropriate consequences in consultation with the head of school and will keep the family informed every step of the way.

#### A note on the word “bullying”

Bullying is an extremely serious offense that can cause children to experience negative physical, social, emotional, academic, and mental health issues. Bullying involves many incidents of persistent meanness that take place over an extended period of time and that are specifically intended to harm someone or make them feel scared. Bullying often includes a component of unequal power, where someone with greater social power consistently belittles or intimidates someone with less social power.

What we have noticed in the last few years is that the word “bullying” has become a default to describe an individual incident of meanness or teasing and the word “bully” has been used as a

label. Such labeling is inaccurate and harmful. While individual incidents will occur on occasion in any lower school, bullying is not something that we have seen taking place in Doane's lower school.

We take the potential for bullying quite seriously if we observe that a pattern of meanness is beginning to emerge or that a school experience is causing negative mental health issues for a student. However, our proactive measures and our immediate responsive actions generally ensure that individual incidents do not escalate. When a student has been on the receiving end of meanness or teasing, we make certain that they are given the attention and time they need to feel safe and heard.

### **Communication Norms and Expectations**

Clear norms and expectations lead to more effective communication and problem-solving, and a stronger school-family partnership. Norms are particularly helpful in situations that bring up big emotions. Many of us in Doane's lower school are parents as well as educators, so we have been in your shoes—we know it can be unsettling when your child comes home feeling upset about an event that happened at school. These are the communication guidelines that have served us well as both parents and educators in all situations, but especially in these more challenging moments.

#### Our expectations of ourselves:

- We believe that every child is “good inside” and we value and celebrate all of our students.
- We build a strong relationship with every child, getting to know their unique personalities, strengths, gifts, and talents. We work to make sure that every child feels known and loved in a community of inclusion and belonging.
- We differentiate our instruction to encourage the unique potential of every student.
- We engage in authoritative classroom management and discipline. Our goal is not to control students or to enforce a mindset of compliance—instead, we aim to build students' skill and agency. We bring a warm and responsive demeanor to the classroom, ready to strike the balance of being firm and loving as we set clear boundaries and ensure student safety.
- We commit to giving students voice in constructing classroom norms and to deploying positive reinforcement and logical consequences in a flexible, fair, and equitable manner.
- We approach families with respect and honor for the expertise they hold about their children, knowing that we are on the same team and share the same goals.
- We honestly and compassionately communicate with families if we start to notice a pattern in a student's behavior so we can learn from parents' insights and observations of what is happening at home.
- We call home as soon as possible if your child is injured during the school day or if your child has made a serious mistake, such as injuring someone else.
- We do our best to let you know by the end of the day if your child is involved in a physical incident during the school day that upset them, even though they were not hurt.

Sometimes we may need to send a quick email rather than making a call, but we are always open to a longer conversation as a follow-up to that email.

- We respond to emails or calls from a family within 24 hours (unless it's a weekend).

Our expectations of you:

- Read all school communications thoroughly and fill out paperwork promptly when requested.
- Follow school procedures, as outlined in the lower school handbook, that ensure your child's safety: report absence and tardiness promptly and communicate changes to your child's usual dismissal routine with as much notice as possible.
- Ensure that your child arrives at school before 8:10 am and is picked up on time.
- Attend all conferences and Back to School Night; participate in additional events when you are able (e.g. homecoming, cultural block party, and kite festival).
- If you would like to talk to a teacher or administrator, email to set up a phone call or a meeting. It is important to talk directly with a teacher before contacting an administrator.
- If a concern or a question arises, contact your child's teacher. Please do so promptly, as we think it is important to talk through an issue when it first comes up and before it potentially escalates to something more serious. The whole lower school team cares deeply about your children, and we want to know when something is bothering them so that we can address it quickly.
- Approach us with curiosity, trust, and an open mind. Remember that an adult perspective often includes information of which a child is not aware and that we have your child's best interests at heart.
- Honor and respect our perspective and our expertise. Be open to hearing about what we observe at school, knowing that children can often show different sides of themselves at school and at home.
- Be ready to help your child engage in perspective-taking. Support your child in practicing empathy for their classmates and considering the larger context when they are upset about something.
- Practice an empathetic mindset toward all other members of our school community, including students, faculty, and other families. Refrain from gossip.
- Unless you have a close relationship with another parent/guardian, do not contact them directly with a concern about an interaction between your two children. Instead, inform the school of your concern so that we can provide context and determine the next best steps.
- Follow through in a timely manner when we recommend outside services for your child (e.g. a learning evaluation, occupational therapy, speech, or counseling).
- Be thoughtful in your language choices. In particular, we ask you to be mindful of the word "bullying" and avoid using the word "bully" to label children.

## **Materials Needed**

Lower School students will need a book bag (without rollers), a reusable water bottle, and an art smock (an apron or old shirt will suffice). Each classroom teacher may request additional materials and supplies. Specific grade level needs will be communicated directly by classroom teachers in late summer.

## **Absence**

**You must contact the school prior to 8:10 a.m. on any day that your child will not be in school or on any day that they will arrive late.** This will allow the school to keep accurate attendance records and thereby ensure the safety and well-being of each student.

If your child will be absent or tardy, or needs to leave early, you may call or email anytime, 24 hours a day, to leave a message at the main desk (609-386-3500) or email MaryAnn Sieb ([msieb@doaneacademy.org](mailto:msieb@doaneacademy.org)). Not having this information in a timely fashion is worrisome and time-consuming for the staff. We appreciate your cooperation with this very important protocol.

## **Absences for Religious Reasons**

We are proud of the religious diversity of our student body and seek to support students' various faith traditions. We recognize that a student might need to miss school to fulfill the tenets of their religion and, in these cases, a student will not be penalized in any way for such an absence. We only ask, as with any other absence from school, that the school be notified in advance of the absence, including the reason for that absence.

## **Impact of Absence on After-School Activities**

Students who miss the academic day may not participate in after school activities.

## **Vacation**

Regularly scheduled vacation times are listed in the school calendar. Interruptions in a child's regular class attendance should be avoided. **Parents are strongly discouraged from taking their children out for a vacation at times when school is in session.** However, if a family commitment necessitates a student's absence, parents must make all necessary arrangements with the classroom teacher and school administration well in advance. Under normal circumstances, parent permission automatically excuses an absence, but the School reserves the right to define an absence as unexcused with or without parent permission. The student will need to complete missing assignments – including making up any missed assignments – in a timeframe delineated by the teacher. Failure to complete missing assignments within the specified time line may be reflected in the child's academic progress, as shown on their report cards.

## Lower School Arrival Procedures

- Please plan to arrive at school by 8:05 am so that children are ready to begin their day promptly at 8:10 am. An on-time arrival allows students to engage in the routines that not only help them transition smoothly into their school day, but also enhance and strengthen their essential executive function skills.
- Students are **not allowed on campus before 7:30 am**. Students who arrive between 7:30-8:00 a.m. will report to the designated before-care area for their grade level, where supervision is provided. Students are not allowed in any other classrooms prior to 8:00 a.m.
- No one is allowed to park on Riverbank, the road in front of the school. This area must be kept free for buses.
- **If you are running late, you must call the reception desk to let us know. Please park in one of the visitor spots located adjacent to the Chapel and escort your child to the Fisk Portico entrance and inside to the front desk to sign in.**

## Tardiness

In order for your child to benefit fully from their educational experience and not disrupt the classroom schedule and the learning of their peers, it is important that students arrive at school no later than 8:05 a.m. This will ensure that they are prepared to participate when the school day begins at 8:10 a.m.

## Lower School Dismissal Procedures

- The school day ends at 3:20 p.m. Lower School students are allowed on school grounds after dismissal time only if they are under the supervision of a teacher. Normally, at the close of school, Lower School students will be escorted to one of three places: After-Care Program, Parent Pickup, or Bus Pickup Area. If they have signed up for an after-school program other than After-Care, students will be told of the special arrangements they need to follow to get from their classrooms to the location of the activity.
- Parent pickup for students in PreK through 5<sup>th</sup> Grade is at the Fisk Portico. Parents should remain in their vehicle as they queue up in the main parking area. Students are not allowed to walk to a car until the teachers supervising Parent pickups have arrived to escort them. Please do not encourage your child to break the rule.
- Parents are asked to pick up their children on time. Families who cannot be here at dismissal time should make arrangements for the After-Care Program, at an additional fee. Drop-in after-care is available in emergency situations for \$30.00, with cash or check payment preferred. If you do need to utilize drop-in after-care, please send an email to your child's classroom teacher as well as MaryAnn Sieb ([msieb@doaneacademy.org](mailto:msieb@doaneacademy.org)), Mariana Oropeza ([moropeza@doaneacademy.org](mailto:moropeza@doaneacademy.org)), and Chance Van Sciver ([cvansciver@doaneacademy.org](mailto:cvansciver@doaneacademy.org)).

- Once students board a school bus, they should not leave that bus until they arrive at the assigned bus drop-off area at, or near, their home.
- Parents planning an alternate pickup arrangement on a particular day must **email Mary Ann Sieb (msieb@doaneacademy.org) before noon and CC their child's teacher on that email. For last-minute changes, make sure to call** Ms. Sieb at the front desk (609-386-3500) and she will make sure to communicate the change to the classroom teacher. **If plans are made to visit another student's home, written permission is required from both families.** Either family can email Ms. Sieb to communicate the plans for the playdate and CC the second family, who should then respond to confirm the plan. Please note, students may not accompany a friend home on the bus unless they routinely ride the same bus. Changing bus routes to accommodate a visit is also not possible.

## **Safety Reminders for Dropoff and Pickup at Fisk Portico**

### Morning Dropoff

- Drive at a safe and slow speed in the parking lot and after you take a right out of the lot onto Riverbank.
- **Do not pass cars ahead of you in line.**
- **We ask that parents stay in their cars at all times** while in the car line. If your child needs help getting out of the car, the staff member on duty will assist them.
- We strongly recommend that children walk into school independently to help build their autonomy. However, if you need to accompany your child inside, park in one of the visitor spots alongside the Chapel.
- **Do not park in any of the numbered spots**, which are assigned to faculty and staff who may not yet have arrived.

### Afternoon Pickup

- Drive at a safe and slow speed in the parking lot and after you take a right out of the lot onto Riverbank.
- **Do not pass cars ahead of you in line.**
- **We ask that parents stay in their cars at all times** while in the car line. If your child needs help getting into the car, one of the staff members on duty will assist them.
- If your child needs your assistance to buckle their seatbelt, pull over into one of the visitor spots alongside the Chapel so that you can get out of the car to assist. Alternatively, you can park in any spot in the parking lot (numbered or visitor) when you first arrive, and walk over to Fisk Portico to pick up your child.

## School Bus Transportation

School rules apply when going to and from school in vehicles belonging to an independent carrier or school district. It is essential that nothing distracts the driver or endangers the safety of the vehicle and its passengers. The School supports the policy of the transporting districts: any student receiving three disciplinary slips from the bus driver is subject to a suspension of bus privileges for a period of time to be determined by the Head of the Lower School. If a public school bus is late or fails to pick up a student, parents should contact the transportation office of their local school district.

## After Care Program

The After-Care program provides a safe and secure environment for children from 3:30-5:30 p.m. Students enjoy outdoor play and get the opportunity to begin homework. School rules apply to this after-school program. Information regarding registration and fees is shared with Lower School families in mid-August, before each school year begins. **Note that any families who are late for pickup more than two times will incur a fee for each additional time they are late (starting with their third late pickup).**

Drop-in after-care is available in emergency situations for \$30.00, with cash or check payment preferred. If you do need to utilize drop-in after-care, please send an email to your child's classroom teacher as well as MaryAnn Sieb ([msieb@doaneacademy.org](mailto:msieb@doaneacademy.org)), Mariana Oropeza ([moropeza@doaneacademy.org](mailto:moropeza@doaneacademy.org)), and Chance Van Sciver ([cvansciver@doaneacademy.org](mailto:cvansciver@doaneacademy.org)).

After-Care takes place in the Kindergarten classroom located in the basement of Rowan Hall, and students spend time on the playground when weather permits.

No snacks are provided in the After-Care program. Please pack a healthy after-school snack for your child(ren) on any day that they are registered for our After-Care program. In addition, we encourage you and your child to make sure to pack a fun, high-interest independent reading book in their backpack; research shows that daily reading practice has a huge payoff in cognitive development and academic success.

All Lower School students are discouraged from bringing personal electronic devices, including cell phones, to school. If they do bring a device to school, it must remain turned off in their backpack throughout the day, including at After-Care.

Parents will park and walk into Doane to pick up their children from After-Care. A phone number will be provided to After-Care families to make direct contact with the supervisor if necessary.

## **Leaving Campus**

No student may leave campus during the school day without prior permission. Students needing to leave during the day must bring a note from home and be excused by their teacher. When a student has been excused from their classroom, they should go to the main desk, where they will sign out with MaryAnn Sieb. When their parent/guardian arrives for pickup, they should ring the bell at Fisk Portico to come in and meet their child at the main desk.

## **Chapel**

Chapel services are an integral part of the program and the environment that Doane Academy offers. While the chapel service is conducted in the Episcopal tradition, we are proud of the religious diversity of our multi-faith community, and our goal is for the service to provide students and faculty of all faiths with an opportunity to reflect on their spirituality and their relationship with God. If a student or teacher's religious affiliation prevents them from actively participating in the service, we simply ask them to be respectful of others.

## **School Families**

Each student enrolled at Doane Academy is assigned to one of 14 School Families. Each School Family is named after a significant individual from the school's history. School Families play an essential role in building community across all ages and disciplines at Doane, creating a deep sense of belonging as older and younger students develop positive relationships and build leadership skills. Each School Family has at least two faculty "parents" who help coordinate activities, discussions, celebrations, and school service projects.

## **All School and Lower School Meetings**

On alternating Monday mornings, Lower School students will participate in either an All School Meeting or a Lower School Meeting.

In All School Meetings, 1<sup>st</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> graders come together as a community to highlight student accomplishments, discuss issues that impact the entire school, and give students an opportunity to share their talents. It is a time when all can see that they are a part of something larger than themselves.

In Lower School Meetings, PreK-5th grades gather in order to listen to stories, share projects and ideas with one another, honor holidays and heritage months, and celebrate their learning. Each meeting includes an opportunity to reflect on a theme related to social-emotional learning, such as collaboration; gratitude; growth mindset; and leadership.



## Lunch

Students bring lunches to school or have the opportunity to buy lunch using our declining balance debit card system.

### *Buying Lunch*

Our food service provider, NexDine, provides a variety of appetizing, nutritious lunches as well as various snacks and treats. They offer a separate Lower School menu that offers kid-friendly entrees and portion sizes at a lower price point than the Middle and Upper School menu. To purchase food, families must set up an account with [MySchoolBucks](#) and use their declining balance system. **We strongly recommend that all families create a MySchoolBucks account in case of an emergency** (e.g. a lunch has been forgotten at home and a parent cannot drop it off at school).

Lower School families must pre-order lunches for their children. Pre-ordering has many benefits for Lower School students: it allows more time for children to eat and socialize, gives parents the opportunity to make healthy choices that nourish kids, and results in less food waste. Each Tuesday, you will receive an email with the following week's menu and will fill out a Google Form to place your order. This order must be placed by noon on Friday. If you do not pre-order, your child will have a choice of a few options from the Lower School menu; these options may not include the day's hot entree.

NexDine offers a variety of snacks that your child can purchase to supplement their pre-ordered entree. Examples of items that are commonly available are chips, soft pretzels, fruit, veggies, desserts, beverages, KIND bars, and bagels. Items available vary from day to day. You will be asked to sign a permission slip indicating if your child has your permission to purchase these supplementary snack items. **If we do not have a signed permission slip on file, your child will not be permitted to make any purchases from NexDine.**

### IMPORTANT REMINDERS:

- Families must log into MySchoolBucks.com and fund that account before any purchase can be made. Once the account is funded, parents will be able to see the purchases made on their child's account at any time, simply by logging into MySchoolBucks.com.
- **It is your responsibility to check your child's MySchoolBucks account on a regular basis** to make sure that you are aware of their purchases. We recommend that you engage in regular conversations with your child about what they are purchasing.
- **If your MySchoolBucks account goes down to a zero balance, your child will not be able to purchase any items from NexDine.** If your account has a zero balance and you have not packed a lunch, a school administrator will be in contact with you. While we will ensure that your child does not go hungry, we expect that this will be a very rare occurrence and will institute consequences if it happens on a regular basis.

- Note that you can set up your NexDine account to automatically refill if you enter your credit card information, which will avoid any zero balance situations.

Questions about the food service and/or NexDine can be directed to the Business Office.

### *Packing a Lunch*

Please be aware that, due to time constraints and safety concerns, we are unable to heat up foods brought from home. Therefore, foods that need to be heated are not permitted. Parents may wish to place foods that need to be kept warm into a thermos when packing their child's lunch. Likewise, it would be beneficial to include a small ice pack in your child's lunch bag/box to keep foods cool.

Students must not trade or share lunches with one another. Candy, gum, and carbonated sodas are not permitted.

### **Snack**

Please pack a healthy snack for your child each day that is low in sugar. For ideas, please consult this recommended snack list from the Center for Science in the Public Interest: <https://cspinet.org/protecting-our-health/nutrition/healthy-school-snacks>

Please also pack a reusable water bottle each day. Students will have the opportunity to refill it, as needed, at our contactless water filling stations.

### **Recess**

All Lower School students have at least one daily opportunity for free, constructive play on the playground (or, in inclement weather, in a designated indoor area). Recess provides opportunities for fun, games, movement and engaging interactions between peers. Students are asked to play only in the assigned area and in a safe way. No one is allowed to leave the recess area without permission from the teacher in charge. Parents should ensure that their children have appropriate layers for the season and the weather. All children are expected to participate in outdoor recess.

### **Library**

The Lower School Library is called The Katherine Potts Library and is located on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor of Odenheimer. It has been created in remembrance of a former Doane Academy student, Katherine Potts, who passed away after her year in kindergarten. Each grade level, PreK through 5<sup>th</sup> grade, will visit the library once each week.

## Field Trips

No child may take part in a field trip unless the proper release form is signed by a parent or guardian and returned to the school prior to departure. These forms, along with an explanation of the field trip in question, will be brought home by the student prior to the trip. Unless otherwise specified, students are expected to maintain both dress and disciplinary codes while away from campus.

Based upon the nature of the trip/activity, parents are sometimes invited to take part in field trips as chaperones. On these occasions, parents are asked to find alternative childcare for other children in the family so that they can focus their attention on the demands of effective chaperoning. Since the number of parents participating in a given field trip is usually limited, every effort is made to ensure that all parents who wish to serve as chaperones have an opportunity to participate at some point during the year.

## Support Services

At Doane Academy, we provide the following Support Services:

- Full-time School Nurse
- Full-time School Psychologist and Director of Student Wellness
- Full-time School Counselor
- Part-time Speech Therapist
- Full-time Director of Learning Support
- Part-time Literacy Support Teacher
- Access to a New Jersey State provided Child Study Team

The Wellness Center is located on the first floor of Odenheimer and is staffed by a full-time Registered Nurse. The Center focuses on maintaining and enhancing age-appropriate self-care, health, fitness, and independence in keeping with the School's "education for life" mission statement. The nurse is available to students and faculty regarding any and all serious inquiries or health related issues. Small bumps and scrapes that occur in the classroom or on the playground will be referred to the nurse only if the teacher's best judgment rules the situation as serious or if the student's reaction to the condition is disruptive. Any medication, including "over the counter" products brought to campus, must be submitted to the school nurse with the dosage and times of its administration clearly marked. Students are not allowed to be in possession of any medication without permission from the school nurse. **Note:** All students are required to have an annual physical by their physician and submit a medical report to our school nurse by the beginning of each school year.

Our full-time School Psychologist and School Counselor are available to meet with students directed to their offices by either a faculty member or at the request of a parent. Additionally, the school psychologist and school counselor lead group discussions with students covering developmentally appropriate topics designed to aid students in their development of healthy habits.

All students new to Doane Academy, up to Grade Three, are evaluated by our Speech Therapist. Should the Speech Therapist determine that a child is in need of additional support, the parents will be notified and asked to give their approval for speech therapy to occur. Meetings with the Speech Therapist will occur as a pull-out during the regular school day. Students who are returning to Doane might also be referred to our Speech Therapist, should the student's teacher(s) perceive a possible need for their involvement. Contact with the parent would occur prior to any sessions with the Speech Therapist.

## **Literacy Support Services**

Doane offers in-house literacy support for Lower School students who demonstrate a need for such support. If a need for literacy support services emerges mid-year, it is possible that the literacy support specialist's schedule will be full. We will do our best to accommodate the mid-year student, but the family may also need to engage the services of an external provider.

Our literacy support specialist focuses on providing services for students in the areas of reading and word study. These services are provided based on in-house assessments.

- Lower school teachers administer Developmental Reading Assessments (DRAs) to all students in grades K-5 either twice or three times per year, depending on the grade level. The classroom teacher, director of learning support, literacy support specialist, and head of lower school review these results to determine who would benefit from literacy support services.
- In some cases, the team will engage in additional testing to develop a clearer picture of a child's learning profile and better understand a student's challenges.
- The child's family will be kept informed throughout this process.

If a student is diagnosed with a specific learning disability (SLD) in written expression during their time in Doane's lower school, then the literacy support specialist will provide services to that student in the areas of writing and grammar.

- Lower School teachers make note of writing challenges that emerge for students. In the case of a serious writing challenge, the lower school team will recommend a learning evaluation for that student.
- If that evaluation determines that a student has a specific learning disability (SLD) in written expression, we will commence writing support services if there is room in the schedule of the literacy support specialist.

The literacy support specialist creates a schedule that is most supportive of each individual student. The schedule may include individual and group support sessions, and may include pull-out and some push-in sessions. Most often, a student receiving support will see the literacy support specialist twice per week for an age-appropriate amount of time (likely 30-45 minutes). This schedule will be determined and communicated with families by the end of September.

At the end of the school year, the literacy support specialist assesses each student currently receiving services in order to measure their progress. These assessment results are used to determine which students have made sufficient progress to graduate from literacy support services and which students would benefit from ongoing support.

- Generally, a student will graduate from reading support when they can independently decode and fluently read grade-level text.
- A student will graduate from writing support when they can independently meet grade-level expectations for composing sentences and paragraphs and have mastered the use of supportive technology/resources to aid their spelling and grammar.

## **Lost Items**

**We strongly urge that all clothing regularly worn to school, lunch boxes, and book bags be clearly marked with the student's name.** Spending money, toys, and items of monetary or sentimental value should not be brought to school. Responsibility for such items being lost, misplaced, or stolen rests with the student who brought them to school. Students looking for lost articles should check in the Lower School Lost and Found, which is located on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor of Odenheimer immediately beyond the 1st Grade classroom.

## **Cell Phones and Personal Electronic Devices**

We recognize that cell phones and other digital devices often function as important educational tools that allow us to explore questions, seek answers, and connect with the world. However, they can also prevent us from fully engaging in face-to-face interactions and prove distracting while we are trying to concentrate on our work.

Our guidelines for device usage support our students in finding a balance between technological access, in-person engagement, and digital citizenship development. These guidelines are in line with the American Academy of Pediatrics' report on [Media Use in School-Aged Children and Adolescents](#), which is full of important research and information.

**Lower School students are strongly discouraged from bringing cell phones or other personal electronic devices to school. If a student does bring a device to school, it must remain turned off and in their backpack throughout the duration of the school day, unless a teacher gives them permission to use it.**

If a student has their cell phone out of their backpack and/or is struggling to monitor their use of any digital device (including a school-issued Chromebook), a teacher will collect the device for the duration of the day. If a student has received multiple warnings about appropriate use of digital devices, teachers and the Head of Lower School may suspend privileges for a period of time.

Lower School students are discouraged from making telephone calls from the school. In the

event of an emergency, a school phone will be used.

We appreciate your support in enforcing these age-appropriate limits. If it is necessary for you to communicate information to your children during school hours, please call Doane's front desk at 609-386-3500.

### **Chromebook Use**

Students in Grades 1-5 are assigned a school-issued Chromebook. Students will be responsible for the care and use of their devices with the following guidelines:

- Each Chromebook will come with the necessary charging cable. This will generally be stored at school and the Chromebook will be fully charged if it is sent home with students at the close of the school day.
- All students will need a pair of non-wireless headphones with a microphone for use throughout the day. Students should double-check their Chromebook ports before purchasing a pair of headphones.
- Each Chromebook is assigned to an individual student. Students should not "swap" or "share" their Chromebook.
- All of a student's documents should be stored on their Doane account's Google Drive, which integrates with the Chromebook. No files should be stored on the Chromebook itself.
- Students are prohibited from using their Chromebook for non-academic purposes.
- Students should not alter the configuration or functionality of the Chromebook.
- Students should refrain from sharing log-in information with anyone else.
- Students should inform their teachers of any technical issues that arise as soon as they can.

Here is a link to the entirety of Doane's [Acceptable Use Policy](#).

### **Parties**

Class parties may be held for various holidays throughout the year. If needed, the classroom teacher will be in touch to request parent assistance with activities and refreshments.

Birthdays may be celebrated with the class during the school day by sending in a special snack or treat. The teacher should be notified in advance so a convenient date is scheduled. Please let the teacher know what food item your child will be sharing with the class, so we can make arrangements as needed for any students with allergy issues.

We recognize that the costs involved in inviting all students from your class to a party can be substantial, and therefore you might choose to invite a smaller group of students to a party. If you do so, we ask that you talk to your child about how to be sensitive and inclusive when discussing their party plans, so that no classmates feel excluded.

## **Fire and Security Drills**

Doane Academy completes fire and security drills on a regular basis, as required by law, and uses best practices to ensure student safety throughout the drills. Lower School teachers are trained in using developmentally appropriate language when conducting drills to minimize student anxiety and maintain children's sense of safety and security.

## **Snow Days**

When road conditions are hazardous, a decision regarding our school being open, closed, or delayed will be made at or about 5:30 a.m. and will first be announced via a text alert which will be sent to all student and parent cell-phone numbers listed within our database (*please keep us updated with any changes in your cell phone numbers*). The announcement will then also be shared via email, in an alert on the school website homepage, and also on the various local television and radio stations.

Given the variety of road conditions over the attendance area served by the school, attendance is ultimately left to the parent's discretion when school is open, but road conditions are questionable. If parents decide not to transport their child(ren) to school on an inclement weather day, they need to follow procedures listed in the section entitled "Absence."

## **Visitors to Campus**

All visitors must park in designated visitor spots by the chapel. All visitors are required to check in at the main desk and secure a visitor's pass. Visitors must abide by the school's rules of conduct.

## **Extra Help and Tutoring**

We encourage students who are feeling challenged to ask the teacher for assistance as soon as they have questions; we want to prevent minor confusions from growing into major problems, and develop students' ability to be their own advocates.

Students have many opportunities to obtain additional help with their studies. Typically this is accomplished by the teacher within the regular class time--one of the many benefits associated with small classes. However, if a student's needs are such that more time is needed for one-on-one sessions with the teacher, this may be arranged at a mutually agreed time after school (3:20-4:00) with their teacher. If the session will be after school, note that the parent must either pick the student up by 4:00 or arrange for the student to go to the After-Care Program, where the student will remain until the parent picks them up.

Outside tutoring, in some cases, may prove beneficial for a student who is experiencing ongoing

difficulties in a particular subject. Parents should discuss their child's situation with their teacher before arranging for tutorial assistance to make sure that the student is already taking full advantage of resources here at school. Tutoring is much more effective when coordinated with the student's regular classroom instructor.

Students who have been identified through standardized testing and/or teacher recommendation may be referred to learning professionals outside of Doane for further evaluation. For New Jersey residents this will be provided privately or by Catapult Learning, a NJ State approved child study team. For others, evaluations are obtained either through the family's local board of education or privately. Doane Academy provides speech therapy and supplemental reading instruction to students demonstrating a need for such services.



## LOWER SCHOOL 2023-2024 UNIFORM REQUIREMENTS

All uniform pieces can be purchased from Flynn & O'Hara.

### 2023-2024 UNIFORM REQUIREMENTS PREK-SECOND GRADE

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>Tops</b>  | Polo shirt (with school logo) <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Blue or dark navy</li><li>• Long sleeve or short sleeve</li></ul> <i>Optional:</i> Navy jumper over the polo  |
| <b>Bottoms</b><br><i>Dress code - no uniform bottoms required.</i> | Children are expected to wear solid unicolor bottoms in black, navy, or khaki. <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• These bottoms can be pants, shorts, or skorts.</li><li>• No denim, leggings, patterns, or logos are allowed.</li><li>• PreK and Kindergarten students should wear pull-on/pull-off bottoms that encourage bathroom independence (no buttons or zippers).</li></ul> <i>Optional:</i> Students wearing a jumper can wear solid unicolor black or navy tights or leggings underneath. |
| <b>Outerwear</b>   | The following are <i>optional items</i> : <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Navy sweater (with school logo) - pullover, sweater vest, or cardigan</li><li>• Warm-up jacket in navy with white piping (with school logo)</li></ul>   |
| <b>Shoes</b>   | Self-selected sneakers with white socks   |

**2023-2024 UNIFORM REQUIREMENTS  
THIRD-FIFTH GRADE**

|                  |  |
|------------------|--|
| <b>Tops</b>      | Polo shirt (with school logo) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Blue or dark navy</li> <li>● Long sleeve or short sleeve</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Bottoms</b>   | On <u>non-PE days</u> , students should wear the following bottoms to school: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Uniform khaki or navy pants</li> <li>● Uniform khaki or navy walking shorts</li> <li>● Uniform khaki or navy two-pleat skort</li> </ul><br>On <u>PE days</u> , students should wear the following bottoms to school: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Warm-up pants in navy with white piping</li> <li>● Note that if it is a hot day, students can wear mesh gym shorts under their warm-up pants and take off the warm-up pants for PE class</li> </ul> |
| <b>Outerwear</b> | The following are <i>optional items</i> : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Navy sweater (with school logo) - pullover, sweater vest, or cardigan</li> <li>● Warm-up jacket in navy with white piping (with school logo)</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Shoes</b>     | Self-selected sneakers with white socks  |