



SHADY SIDE ACADEMY

Junior School Student-Parent Handbook

2024–2025 School Year

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Dear Junior School Families,

Shady Side Academy's Guiding Principles of Honesty, Kindness, Respect, Responsibility, and Safety are the foundation of our community and our partnership in your student's educational journey. This handbook outlines the guidelines and expectations specific to Shady Side Academy's Junior School community.

This handbook is designed to provide you with the information needed to navigate through daily life at the Junior School. By carefully reading this information, you will be able to answer many questions that may arise as you begin to prepare for the school year. After reading, please seek clarification for any area that is unclear to you. It is vital that you have an understanding of all of the material so that you can be an active and informed participant of the school community.

It is a pleasure to be part of the Junior School community and I look forward to partnering with you to ensure the best educational experience for your child. Shady Side Academy Junior School is fortunate to have a dedicated administration, faculty, and staff who are here to help answer any questions you may have or offer the support needed as we embark on this educational journey together.

Please do not hesitate to contact a member of our Junior School community should you have any questions regarding this handbook. Additional resources and information can be found at www.shadysideacademy.org.

Sincerely,

Dr. Jennifer Asmonga
Head of Lower Schools



Introduction

This Student/Parent Handbook is designed to acquaint you with the traditions, privileges, and regulations of Shady Side Academy. All Shady Side students and parents are expected to be thoroughly familiar with the material contained in this handbook, and these regulations are the official policies of Shady Side Academy's Junior School.

Shady Side Academy is a community of students and teachers learning and growing together in an environment of academic and personal integrity, trust, and respect for others. Shady Side expects each student to accept responsibility for their actions and to abide by the rules the Academy has established for the benefit of the Shady Side community.

Each parent acknowledges and accepts those rules when the parent enrolls a child at Shady Side. Shady Side Academy expects its students to have a strong sense of personal ethics. Shady Side does not accept behavior (academic, social, or personal) that compromises Shady Side's standards of kindness, responsibility, honesty, respect for others, and safety of the school community.

Mission

Shady Side Academy (SSA)'s mission is to challenge students to think expansively, act ethically, and lead responsibly.

Philosophy

SSA is a vibrant learning community that values intellectual curiosity, personal integrity, and diverse perspectives. Through a rigorous and balanced curriculum of academics, arts, and athletics, our students are challenged to explore their passions and excel beyond expectations. Supported by active alumni and parents, our unique culture of faculty-student mentorship inspires students to become lifelong learners and engaged, thoughtful citizens of their communities.

Guiding Principles

Shady Side Academy students are expected to abide by the Academy's Guiding Principles of **Honesty, Respect, Responsibility, Safety, and Kindness** while enrolled in the Academy. These guiding principles serve as the touchstone for all adults and students working together in our community. These principles guide our activities and interactions, helping us to measure not only what we attempt but also the spirit in which we do so.

While these principles guide our daily interactions, they point to the larger, more encompassing ideals and behaviors of integrity, thoughtfulness, and compassion. Each guiding principle is linked to another. For example, we cannot be respectful individuals if we are not honest with ourselves and others.

If we do not act responsibly, we are not being respectful of adults, peers, and ourselves. If we make unsafe choices, we are being neither responsible for nor respectful of ourselves or others. If we act unkindly, we are acting neither respectfully nor responsibly.

Parents play a key role in helping students to uphold our standards. In partnership with the Academy, and in accordance with the SSA Family and School Partnership, parents and the Academy work together to support and endorse the philosophy, mission, and guiding principles of our school.



Honesty

Honesty is the essential guiding principle. Honesty is the act of representing and articulating thoughts, feelings and actions to self and others in an accurate and timely manner. An open, honest environment is essential to our personal well-being as well as the community's well-being.

Personal integrity is based on our honesty and is demonstrated by truthful words and by ethical behavior. Truthfulness in every situation is what we expect of our students at SSA, because acting honestly is respectful and responsible.

We acknowledge the difference between being honest when confronted and volunteering to be fully truthful knowing that consequences are likely. We acknowledge the higher degree of integrity and personal responsibility in being fully truthful before being confronted by an adult.

Respect and Responsibility

The Academy recognizes and safeguards the importance of each of us in the life of the school. Respect and responsibility are closely linked.

Respect is the attitude and behavior of valuing oneself as well as other people, their roles in the community, and the property of the community by acknowledging their inherent value and treating them accordingly. We each have the right to be respected by others, a right that carries with it the responsibility for each of us to respect the students, faculty, staff, and the property of others, the school facilities, and the Academy itself.

When a teacher makes a request of a student in the tone of voice with which they would like to be addressed, this is respect. When students assume responsibility of maintaining their lounge areas instead of looking at that maintenance as "someone else's job," they respect the roles of various members of the community as well as community property. In keeping with the Academy philosophy and our commitment to each other as members of the Shady Side community, learning begins with respect for others and respect for others begins with respect for oneself.

Responsibility is the ongoing understanding and acceptance that our beliefs, attitudes, decisions and actions have implications and outcomes both positive and negative and that we are accountable for our decisions and actions. Responsibility demands that we be mindful of the choices we make, the reasons behind those choices, and the willingness to be truthful about our individual and collective roles in the events that grow out of our choices.

We therefore strive to be kind and truthful, to respect rights and property, and to provide each member of the community with the physical, emotional and intellectual safety necessary for growth in a supportive environment. We accept that our decisions both on and off campus can enhance or discredit the reputation of both the individual and the Shady Side community.

Safety

Acting safely is to speak and act in such a manner that allows self, others and property to be free from the risk of harm. Security of people and property is essential to living and working together in a community. The responsibility of maintaining a safe environment lies with students and adults alike, no matter what their role in the Shady Side community.

We must come to the aid of those in need, quickly react in a responsible manner to any situation that may threaten our safety or the safety of others, confront those who are in the process of making decisions that will put their safety or that of others at risk, and inform the appropriate person when an unsafe situation exists or is developing.

Our school should be a place where each of us feels both physically and emotionally safe. We, therefore, have a responsibility to help promote and maintain an environment which is free from all forms of violence.



Kindness

Kindness is thinking, speaking and acting with consideration for oneself and others. We hold ourselves to kindness in thought when we first imagine what a situation seems like from another's point of view. In seeing through their eyes, empathy and helpfulness become our primary concerns.

We guide ourselves to speak kindly when we consider the sensitivity of others to the power of the language we choose before we put our thoughts into words. We act with a kind heart when we seek to help others and are careful to avoid harming others while pursuing our own goals.

Kindness requires that we continually strive to shape our thoughts, words and actions with sincerity, gentleness and benevolence. Community members are expected to treat each other with kindness. Shady Side Academy is a community in which all members have the right to feel both safe and respected.

The Shady Way

Shady Side Academy's guiding principles of Honesty, Kindness, Respect, Responsibility, and Safety, are the values that connect every one of us to make our community strong. This is why at the Junior School we refer to these values as The Shady Side Way.

The Shady Side Way encapsulates the central components to the social emotional development of our students. They are reinforced each day in our classrooms, in community assemblies, and every interaction we have with one another. Embodying the Shady Side Way every day helps us to create an environment where students can feel safe to express their feelings, take risks, and reach new heights with the support of a caring community. We ask that you join us in exemplifying and reinforcing these values with your children.

School Leadership

The Shady Side Academy Lower Schools employ a leadership model that has one Head of Lower School and Assistant Heads of School at each school.

Dr. Jennifer Asmonga assumes the role of Head of Lower Schools and spends time at both the Junior School and Country Day campus. Dr. Asmonga leads the Lower Schools as a whole, developing curriculum and serving as the principal steward of our excellent program.

At the Junior School, **Mrs. Melanie Smith** serves as Assistant Head of School for Grades PK-1, and **Mr. Daniel Stern** serves as Assistant Head of School for Grades 2-5. Each oversees the day-to-day activities of their assigned grades and serves as the initial point of contact for parents.

We hope that clarifying the roles and responsibilities of everyone on the leadership team is helpful, but please know that we are all here to serve the entire Junior School community.

History

As far back as 1894, Shady Side Academy posed the question of properly educating younger children, and in 1909 opened the Junior School in rooms on the first floor of a building on Ellsworth Avenue. When the Senior School moved to Fox Chapel in 1922, the Junior School occupied the full Ellsworth Avenue space. In 1940, when Arnold School and Shady Side Academy merged, the Junior School was moved to the Arnold property on South Braddock Avenue.



The Shady Side Academy Junior School has long had a special pride and character of its own. Those who have attended remember it fondly; those who send their children there do so with full confidence. Much of this is due to Erwin W. Cole, who joined the Junior School in 1913 and served as headmaster until his retirement in 1953. Known as "King" Cole to all his students and faculty, he created an atmosphere that was a combination of warm friendliness, firm discipline and sound educational philosophy.

Historian George Swetnam called him "the true spiritual architect of the school as it stands today."

The Junior School of Erwin Cole is very much the Junior School of today. In so many ways, while the Junior School has changed since 1953, it has remained the same. Shady Side Academy Junior School is a school that cares for individual children in a tradition of high academic standards, superb teaching, respect for values, and the joy and love of learning.

School Crest

"On the face of the Shady Side Academy seal are a book, a torch and a pen. The book is the emblem of that for which the Academy stands first, education. The torch represents man's desire for knowledge, that fire which burns and never is consumed. The pen signifies a means by which man conveys his knowledge to others. In the circle below this symbol are the Latin words *Fide Semper Vincere*. Freely interpreted it means, "They conquer always who have faith." Source: Swetnam, George P. *So Stand Through the Years: A History of Shady Side Academy 1883-1958*, pg. 184-185.



We as a faculty always have faith in our students and truly believe in their abilities and will do our best to reach each child as a learner.

Declaration For a Diverse and Inclusive Community

As an Academy, we must cultivate, understand, and embrace the differences among us as part of our educational endeavor. Academy leadership, faculty, staff, alumni, parents, and students provide an example by fostering an environment of understanding and respect of all people.

Further, we must instruct and empower our children to challenge assumptions and ask questions in order to become responsible citizens in a diverse world. We believe that the recognition and appreciation of differences in race, socio-cultural status, religious tradition, age, gender, ability, and sexual orientation enhance the individual's sense of identity, broaden respect for others, and inspire strong character.

As we strive for academic excellence, so shall we strive for richness and depth in the community life at SSA. Through curriculum and informal school experiences, students at SSA must appreciate and respect the inherent value of all people.

Statement of Non-Discrimination

Shady Side Academy, as an educational institution and as an employer, does not discriminate on the basis of disability, race, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, genetic information, marital status, familial status, sex, age, sexual orientation, veteran status or gender identity and expression in its programs and activities.



The Academy does not tolerate discrimination, harassment or retaliation on these bases and takes steps to ensure that students, employees, and third parties are not subject to a hostile environment in Academy programs or activities.

The Academy responds promptly and equitably to allegations of discrimination, harassment, and retaliation. It promptly conducts investigations and takes appropriate action, including disciplinary action, against individuals found to have violated its policies, as well as provides appropriate remedies to complainants and the campus community.

The Academy is committed to taking prompt action to end a hostile environment if one has been created, prevent its recurrence, and remedy the effects of any hostile environment on affected members of the campus community.

For further information on the Academy's Nondiscrimination Policy or to report suspected discrimination, please contact the dean of student life, the chief inclusion, equity and community relations officer, any school counselor, school nurse, or head of school.

Family and School Partnership

Educating children is a team effort. As educators, we at SSA strive to provide the support, guidance, and instruction for children to both develop as people and, of course, as learners.

Beyond the faculty, coaches, and administrators at SSA, the parents of our students are a crucial part of the equation. When students aren't in school, it is parents who are providing encouragement and guidance to their children. Parents help ensure that their children are making choices outside of school that would help them to be successful in school.

We all have the same essential goal: That each SSA student will attain the knowledge, skills, character traits, and habits of mind required not just for the next step in their educational journey but so that they may live lives that are healthy, fulfilling, and productive. Since we have a common goal, it is essential that SSA personnel and families work in partnership to help students achieve that goal.

At the heart of any good partnership are a few foundational concepts. Here are some for the SSA/parent partnership:

- **We all must start with one assumption: That school personnel and parents of students are making decisions that are well intentioned.** We may sometimes disagree about a particular issue or course of action. Let's not lose sight of the fact that we all have the same goal. Let's try to understand and respect where each other is coming from.
- **Like it or not, we all sometimes make mistakes.** This is true of both educators and of parents. Educating children and raising children are two of the hardest challenges in life. No matter how "expert" we might feel about what we are doing, to be a perfect teacher or a perfect parent is likely not an attainable goal. There is nothing more humbling than being an educator or a parent.
- **Good communication is essential to a good partnership.** In addition to standard, scheduled communications (grade reports, interims, etc.), communication between school personnel and parents often entails e-mails, phone calls, and in-person conversations. If school personnel have a concern about a student – academic or behavioral – they should convey these concerns to parents in a timely fashion. The same is true of parents.

What we ask is that the following, normal chain-of-command is followed:

1. Individual teacher, advisor, or coach as needed in ongoing conversations
2. Department Chair (where appropriate)



3. Division Head
4. Academy President

- **It is imperative that *all* communication between SSA personnel and parents/guardians remains courteous and respectful.**
- **Whenever there is an issue or problem with a student, we all need to do our best to ascertain what is really going on.** A student's version of events might be different from a teacher's or coach's version of events. While we are all trying to be supportive of our students, we would encourage a healthy skepticism until all information is gathered. Some students may try to pit their parents against particular school personnel, and that isn't a healthy or productive situation for anyone.

We do our best to instill the Academy's core values of honesty, kindness, respect, responsibility, and safety with our students. These values must also characterize the relationship between Academy personnel and our parents. When we adhere to these values, we not only practice what we preach to our students; we also provide the best possible foundation for the school/parent partnership.

Communication

The Junior School faculty, staff, and administration work hard to communicate with families about events that are happening in the school. The Head of Lower Schools will send specific Junior School updates weekly in the Bulldog Bulletin. Classroom teachers will send updates to families about what is happening in their classrooms every Friday.

To get in touch with a teacher, email is the most expedient method of communication as teachers will aim to respond to any email during the week within 24-hours. Faculty and staff e-mail addresses are formatted as follows:

First letter of first name, last name @shadysideacademy.org.

- For example, Joe Smith would be jsmith@shadysideacademy.org.

For relaying important information that must be immediately communicated, faculty can be reached by phone by calling the office number: (412) 473-4400.

If there is a message that is not urgent and the classroom teacher is in the middle of instruction, the Administrative Assistant to the Assistant Heads of School, Jocelyn Scalise, will relay any messages when they have a break. Teachers are not to be communicated with via text message or phone calls on their personal phones to respect their personal time and space.

Weather and Emergency Notifications

Shady Side Academy makes every effort to announce a weather-related delay or closing by 5:45 a.m. This decision is made by the president of the Academy, taking into account other area school districts' decisions as well as local road conditions. The Junior, Country Day, Middle, and Senior Schools will follow an identical procedure on a given day.

In the event of a weather-related delay or closing, families will be notified by Finals site text message alerts and email. Closure and delay notices are also sent to local TV stations (KDKA, WTAE, and WPXI) and posted on:

- The SSA website
- SSA's Instagram account and Facebook page
- Weather hotline (412-447-2202)
- Switchboard voicemail (412-968-3000)



No announcement will be made if the Academy is opening on a normal schedule. If you do not receive an email or text message alert and the weather appears to be bad, please check one of the other sources as a backup before leaving home.

For students who travel by public school district transportation, SSA has a liberal attendance/arrival policy when its schedule conflicts with that of your school district. For example, if your district is closed (no buses) and SSA is open, we would encourage attendance but not penalize a student who arrives late or is unable to attend due to lack of transportation or hazardous road conditions.

If your child rides a bus, please stay informed of the closures of your home district as bussing is run by the district and not Shady Side Academy. We recognize our students come from all over the region, and weather conditions may vary widely. Always take a “safety first” approach when deciding whether to attempt to get your child to school. Please be sure to notify the school office if your child will be late or unable to attend due to weather. Lastly, there is before care on two hour delay days beginning at 9:30 a.m.

Cultivating a Positive Learning Environment

At Shady Side Academy, we understand the importance of ensuring students can learn in an environment that is physically and emotionally safe. Our goal is to help each child develop a sense of pride in themselves, their classmates, and the school. We expect the children to respect each other, school property, and the adults around them. We endeavor to teach our students to be considerate of others’ feelings and to be polite and have a positive influence on our school community. Parental support of our decisions in promoting appropriate behavior is essential to cultivating a positive school experience for everyone.

The partnership between parents and the school is invaluable in helping students have a positive influence on the school community. Like learning an academic subject, students may also need support in making good choices, following school rules, and navigating social interactions with peers and adults.

Many of these lessons are reinforced through morning meetings, community assembly, wellness classes, and our individual interactions with students. These are just a few of the mechanisms that are used to foster a student’s social emotional development and to cultivate a positive school community.

At the Junior School, the responsive classroom approach is utilized by all of the faculty to communicate a common language, behavioral expectations, and consequences to reinforce positive student-teacher interactions. If a student is needing some reinforcement in class they will be met with the following natural consequences:

- **Take a break** - Each classroom has a take a break space that provides students the opportunity to have some time to reflect on their choices and/or calm down so that they can begin to contribute positively to the class moving forward.
- **Loss of privilege** - A student may lose a privilege if they are not contributing positively to the community. This may include participating in a fun community activity, special event or utilizing a particular resource. However, students will never lose the ability to participate in recess as we feel having time in the day for play and physical activity are imperative to their healthy development.
- **Break it, fix it** - All students will make mistakes, this is where they have the opportunity to fix a relationship or a material if they break it. Students are never made to apologize; they instead are given the opportunity to consider how to mend a relationship after they have negatively impacted it.

In the instance when behaviors are more severe, the Assistant Heads of School and/or the Head of Lower Schools will be involved. These behaviors include but are not limited to:

- Severe and/or continued classroom disruption
- Bullying behaviors (repeated unkind behaviors towards another student)



- Severe physical altercations
- Disrespect of property
- Academic dishonesty (including plagiarism)
- Severe disrespect to a community member
- Inappropriate use of technology
- Theft
- Possession of weapons
- Possession of drugs
- Threats of physical harm

When a student meets with an administrator, the parents will be informed either by phone or by email. In such instances, the student will discuss with the administrator the actions they will take to mitigate the effects of their negative impact on the community. The administration uses restorative practice approaches to help students understand their impact on the community and to begin to restore the relationship with those their actions negatively impacted.

Sometimes, this may lead to additional logical consequences or actions the student will have to experience to take responsibility for their behavior. Often community relationships can be restored and student behaviors can change through communication and collaboration amongst the parent, teacher, and head of school.

In severe cases, a student may have to participate in an activity to give back to the community, or serve an in school or out of school suspension. If the behaviors pervade they may need additional behavioral assessments and supports. A parent conference with the Assistant Head of School and/or the Head of Lower School and teachers may be required as a result of behavioral difficulties. Such conferences will be mandatory after a student is suspended.

In some cases, a student may be asked to leave the Junior School if behavioral difficulties have had too negative an impact on the community. While we want to provide a space for all students to grow social-emotionally, we must also take into consideration the impact of severe or continued negative behavior on the entire community of learners. We thank you for your partnership in helping us to create a positive school environment.

School Health

The school nurse is available to students, families, and faculty to support health and physical concerns. Discussions and assessments take place with the boundaries of confidentiality. The nurse offers consultative, screening, and referral services to outside medical professionals, and serves as a liaison between the Academy and outside medical professionals when appropriate.

Required Household Medical Forms

Several required household forms must be completed online on the Veracross Parent Portal by August 1 prior to each school year. The Veracross Parent Portal can be accessed at <https://portals.veracross.com/ssa/parent> (login required) or via the button the the Parents page of the SSA website.

Once logged into the Veracross Parent Portal, follow the instructions to complete the required forms, which include:

1. The Household Profile Update;
2. School Policy Forms;
3. Medical forms in your Magnus Health account.

Most medical forms can be completed online; forms that require a doctor's signature can be downloaded, completed and signed by a doctor, then re-uploaded to your Magnus health account. Please do not send or deliver forms to the school, they must be submitted through the Magnus health account. Please note: If you did



not receive a login to the Veracross Parent Portal, or have trouble logging in, email helpdesk@shadysideacademy.org.

State Immunization Policy

All students must have current physical exam forms and immunization records, completed and signed by a physician on file in Magnus Health, in order to begin classes. **The State of Pennsylvania requires every student to have up-to-date immunizations or the state will not permit the child to attend school.**

Academy Medication Policy

The Academy has closely followed the Pennsylvania Department of Health’s “Guidelines for Pennsylvania Schools for the Administration of Medications and Emergency Care” in developing the Medication Policy to ensure the safe administration of medications to its students. Academy nurses cannot lawfully delegate medication administration to teachers or administrative personnel. The school nurse will be on duty in the school building to aid students who become ill and to administer medication if needed.

Taking medication of any kind involves some risk of complications, and for this reason, the Academy has developed strict guidelines for dispensing medication to students on campus. Every effort should be made to give medication at home; but if a child is required to take medicine during school hours, and a parent cannot be at school to administer it, then it may be given in compliance with the school medication policy. Prescribed medication is to be administered only under the direction of a school nurse.

All medication will only be administered by the school nurse. (Exception: Inhalers and Epipens may be carried and self-administered by older students as long as a Completed Medication Authorization form signed by both the parent and physician is on file in the nurse’s office).

Prescription medications must be sent in a prescription labeled container and must remain in a locked cabinet in the nurse’s office. The medicine cannot be returned daily and needs to be delivered to the health office by a parent or guardian. If necessary, parents should request a duplicate container from the pharmacist. A Medication Authorization form, available on the Veracross Parent Portal, must also accompany the medication. This form must include the following:

1. Physician and parent signature with child’s name
2. Name of medication
3. Time to be administered
4. Dosage
5. Termination date for administering medication

If you wish your child to take an over the counter medication not provided by the school, the medication must be sent from home in the original container, labeled with the student’s name, dosage, and time it is to be taken. A Medication Authorization form, available on the Veracross Parent Portal, must also accompany the medication, requiring both parent and physician signatures. The medication will then be stored in a secured cabinet in the nurse’s office and administered by the nurse at the appropriate times.

Unused medication will be returned to the parent only upon request. Otherwise, the prescription will be discarded after one week following the termination date of the prescription.

Medication will not be administered except as outlined in this policy.

If you have questions concerning medication, please contact Mrs. Stephanie Kiger skiger@shadysideacademy.org at or 412-473-4189.

Keeping an Ill Child Home

Occasionally parents must make a difficult decision regarding their child’s health and ability to attend school. When should you keep your child from school? The following are a few suggestions:



- A fever of 100.0 degrees or more - A child should be fever free for 24 hours without the aid of any fever reducing medications before coming to school
- Diarrhea within the last 24 hours
- Stomach ache or fatigue, accompanied by nausea or vomiting
- Acute cold and/or persistent cough- these symptoms can be difficult to manage throughout the school day and be disruptive in class
- Red, irritated eyes with pus-like or excessive watery drainage
- Inability to sleep well the night before due to not feeling well
- An undiagnosed rash

Accidents or Illness and Returning to School

In case of illness or an accident, your child will be taken to the school nurse for evaluation. You will be called following this initial evaluation. In the event you do not answer, one of your emergency numbers will be called.

If your child is sent home due to illness, he or she may return when:

- They are free of fever for 24 hours without the aid of fever reducing medications
- They are free of vomiting overnight and tolerating food/liquid
- They are free of diarrhea for 24 hours
- A noncommunicable disease has been diagnosed and certified in writing by a physician

State Mandated Screenings

The Pennsylvania School Code requires all school-aged children receive the following screenings:

- Vision: Annually – Grades K-12
- Hearing: Annually – Grades K, 1, 2, 3, 7, and 11
- Height and Weight (including calculation of Body Mass Index): Annually – Grades K-12

Parents and/or teachers can request testing at any time if a problem is suspected. Abnormal screening results will be communicated to the parents. If you do not want your student to receive these screenings, please contact the school nurse.

Arrival & Dismissal

The school day begins at 8:15 a.m. and ends at 3:10 p.m. Students in PK-5 are to report to their classrooms by the 8:15 a.m. bell. Students are to be picked up by 3:30 p.m. Students who have not been picked up by 3:30 p.m. will be enrolled in the After School Explorers program and a fee will be applied.

You will receive a dismissal information form before the start of school. This sheet **must** be on file in the office by the first day of school. Changes in carpool or transportation arrangements made during the school year must be reported to jstransportation@shadysideacademy.org. Any questions about or changes in bus transportation must also be reported to the Transportation Coordinator, Linda Porter, lporter@shadysideacademy.org.

Arrival Procedures

Arrival time is between 8 and 8:15 a.m. every day. Students who arrive after 8:15 are considered tardy. At 8 a.m., students will be able to enter the 1st-5th grade building and Early Learning Center through the main doors.

When in the carpool line, a Junior School faculty member and the fifth grade Morning Greeters will come to your car on the passenger side. Please do not get out of your car as the faculty member or the student greeters will help your child exit the vehicle. This procedure enables the carpool line to move efficiently.



PK and Kindergarten parents will follow the road to the right and will drop their children off at the Early Learning Center. They will then rejoin the traffic flow for students in Grades 1-5 being dropped off at the other building.

If there is no need to drop off at that building, you can continue to proceed slowly past the cars dropping off by remaining on the inside lane. Parents who are dropping off students in Grades 1-5 will remain left and will drop students off directly at the large building. Students will exit the vehicles near the sidewalk around the circle near the entrances of the school. If you want to exit the vehicle and walk your child into the building, you must remain in the carpool line and then park at the parking lot.

Dismissal Procedures

All students must be picked up by 3:30 p.m. each day unless they are enrolled in the After School Explorers program. Students remaining on campus after 3:30 p.m. will be automatically enrolled in the After School Explorers program at the parents' expense.

Any changes to your child's dismissal plans must be emailed to both your child's homeroom teacher and jstransportation@shadysideacademy.org by 1:30 p.m. If the change involves the After School Explorers program, please also include explorers@shadysideacademy.org in your email.

Dismissal changes will be communicated to classroom teachers to ensure that students follow the updated dismissal instructions. Changes communicated after 1:30 p.m. create challenges for faculty and staff to ensure the requests are followed and communicated promptly. Therefore, all transportation requests must be communicated by 1:30 p.m. Please do not email or call after 1:30 p.m. unless it is an emergency.

Carpool Students

Carpool students are dismissed after the buses have departed at 3:20 p.m. On the first day of school your child will bring home a placard that has your last name and your child's homeroom teacher's name. Please display this placard on the passenger side visor the entire way through the carpool line every day. We often rotate car pool helpers so not everyone will recognize your car. If you lose your placard or if someone else is coming to get your child then please be sure to make your own. Having these placards makes the car pool run much more smoothly.

When the carpool begins, the first person on the walkie-talkie will call students from inside and assign them to a numbered cone in seven car cycles. It makes the car line run much quicker if students and parents go to that assigned number instead of just stopping and getting into the car as soon as they see one another. A faculty member will walk your child to their car and will open the back door of the car so students can sit in the back seat. For smaller students in five-point harness car seats we ask that you please move forward and pull aside to the parking lot to get your child buckled in correctly.

Half Day Pre-K Carpool

Cars can pull up near the pre-k entrance and the students will be brought to the vehicles by a teacher and will be placed in the back seat.

Going Home with Another Student

- No child will be permitted to leave the school with friends or with adults at any time unless specific permission – a telephone call or an email – has been received from a parent in advance. If your child is to leave school at any time other than the normal dismissal time, please notify the office by phone as early in the day as possible or email jstransportation@shadysideacademy.org.
- School districts providing transportation for our students do not permit children to ride any bus or van other than the one to which they have been assigned.



Walkers

If your child will be walking home, please indicate that on the Transportation Form that will be sent out via email right before the start of the school year. Walkers will be escorted to either the field or the front porch by a teacher. The student will be allowed to walk home once their parent/guardian has arrived and signed their child out. Students are not allowed to walk home alone; they must be escorted by an adult.

Bus Students

When the dismissal bell rings at 3:10 p.m., all bus riders are to go to check in with their assigned bus faculty member. They will take attendance and then be escorted onto their bus. All buses typically leave by 3:20 p.m. If a bus is running late we will do our best to contact families to inform them.

The majority of Junior School students ride buses provided by their respective public school districts. Shady Side Academy does not bus students to or from school and they do not have authority or control over the bussing that each district provides. If you have a bus related question or concern or would like to see if bussing is a possibility for you, please contact the Transportation Coordinator, Linda Porter, at lporter@shadysideacademy.org. If you have any feedback about your bussing experience, contacting the transportation office at the district is the best course of action.

Bus Rules

- The bus driver is in charge and is to be obeyed at all times.
- Students are to enter and exit in an orderly manner.
- Students must sit in specified seats, if seats have been assigned.
- Students are to remain seated at all times on the bus.
- Students must use seat belts if the bus is so equipped.
- The following behaviors are prohibited on the bus: name-calling, screaming, using profanity, pushing, hitting, touching items belonging to someone else, throwing items, eating, leaning out of the windows, or putting hands or arms out of the windows.
- Use of electronic devices of any kind are not allowed on the buses.

Riding the school bus is a privilege; it is not an automatic right. Any student who repeatedly disobeys bus rules will lose the privilege of riding the bus for a period of time to be specified by the bus company or the school. If the problem persists, the child will lose bus privileges for the year. The student's parents will be expected to arrange for alternate transportation to and from school.

Religious Holidays and Cultural Observances

Every member of the Shady Side Academy community should be free to observe religious and cultural holidays without concern that doing so will compromise their standing in our community, classrooms, or extracurricular venues. All students and faculty are entitled to reasonable excused absences for these observances. The School Heads and faculty will make appropriate arrangements for those students who must miss school because of a religious holiday. The following are examples of the considerations and accommodations that families can expect for a religious observance:

- No tests or major assessments should be scheduled on a major religious holiday or the day immediately following such observances. It shall not be expected that a student will complete projects or lengthy homework assignments for submission the day following a major observance.
- Since students are learning to plan their work in an organized fashion, they are responsible for making up any work that may be interrupted by a religious holiday. However, students—or parents of younger students—may request in advance an individual extension for homework or projects.
- While faculty should not be expected to re-teach lessons that are missed, they can be expected to provide an outline of the upcoming material in advance of an absence for religious observance. Students or parents should request such material several days ahead of the event.
- Consideration shall be given as well to a student's inability to prepare for tests during major religious observances.



- Students will be excused from athletic and other co- and extracurricular commitments for religious observances.

As is true of nearly all that we—parents and school—do on behalf of children, the success of this philosophical approach depends upon partnership, mutual responsibility, and communication. The school asks parents at the outset of the school year to convey to the Assistant Head of School the religious and cultural observances that might affect a child's school experience.

Before and After School Care

Before School

Before-school care is available from 7:30 to 8 a.m. every day in the gymnasium and outside. Any student can attend before school care at no cost and there is no need to sign up in advance. During this time, students have the opportunity to play and interact together. Families can just arrive anytime after 7:30 a.m. and drop students off at the gymnasium entrance and the before care teachers will take care of them from there. At 8 a.m., the before care teachers ensure that the students arrive at their classrooms to begin the day. Lastly, there is before care on two hour delay days beginning at 9:30 a.m.

After School Explorers

After School Explorers (ASE) is a program that provides students the opportunity to engage in supervised activities after school. The program is developed by highly qualified and experienced teachers who have a passion for working with children. The After School Explorers program is available to all Junior School students and runs every weekday school is in session from 3:20 to 6 p.m.

It follows a trimester schedule with three 12-week long sessions and a flat daily rate by term with additional enrichment classes available. Each day will feature fun and engaging activities, including outdoor/ indoor organized sports and games, arts and crafts, homework time, snack and more, including additional per term enrichment classes.

Please visit the [SSA website](#) for updated and evolving information. If you have questions please email Explorers@shadysideacademy.org. Registration can be found online [here](#).

Lunch

Lunch is included in the tuition and therefore all students can participate in the hot lunch program. If you would prefer to pack your child a lunch, you can do that as well; however, they will not be able to heat any food at school. If they forget to pack a lunch they will be given a school lunch.

Students in Grades 1-5 who participate in our hot lunch program will select their food in a serving line and will eat in the cafeteria. Students in grades Pre-K and Kindergarten will have a different lunch menu and will have it delivered to their classroom. All school lunches are nut free. The half day pre-k students will have lunch before their dismissal at 12:30 p.m.

Our monthly menus are available on the [SSA website](#). All hot lunches include the following: An entree, 3 side dishes (choice of fruits, vegetables, starches and salad items), and a beverage.

After going through the lunch line once, students in grades 1-5 can go back through to get seconds. These extra servings are not covered under the included tuition plan and the students' account will be charged accordingly. Metz staff keeps track of what students get when they choose extras. Please see the cost of the extra items below: Additional entrees \$2.25, Additional side dish \$1.95, additional milk \$0.95.

For any questions about the meal service, please contact Cindy Wise at cwise@shadysideacademy.org.



Snack & Water Bottles

Students in all grades are able to bring a snack and water bottle with them to school. Each grade has a designated snack time depending upon when their lunch is. For some grades, it will be in the morning and for others it is in the afternoon. The classroom teacher will communicate when snack time occurs.

Please send in healthy snacks that will give students the nourishment they need to actively participate in the rest of their day. We ask that you refrain from sending candy, soda, or any other snacks high in sugar or that are otherwise unhealthy.

Please also be cognizant of any dietary restrictions that may exist in particular classrooms due to student allergies. The classroom teacher will inform you of any restrictions at the beginning of the year. Students in pre-k will have snacks provided for them each day, but they can also bring snacks if they have a particular preference.

Birthday Policy

Students at Shady Side Academy often celebrate their birthday with their peers. We encourage birthday celebrations to occur with a minimum disruption to our learning environment and ask that you consult with your child's teacher to acquire an optimal time in the day for the celebration.

Please email both the classroom teacher and the school nurse at least one week in advance to both adequately plan the celebration and take into account allergies and dietary restriction of the classmates.

If you wish to cater your birthday treat through Metz, you can coordinate with Cindy Wise at metz@shadysideacademy.org. They can provide many options for birthday treats and are aware of all student allergies and dietary restrictions.

You are able to bring in snacks from another bakery or store, please contact the school nurse to ensure the treat provided is safe. If you are celebrating a birthday outside of school, you may not distribute invitations in school unless the entire class is invited.

Dress Code

The dress code for the children at the Junior School is one of "common dress." Clothing may be purchased anywhere you wish. New sweatshirts and other clothing items are available from the Shady Side Academy store at [SSA Spirit Store](#). There is also a second-hand uniform exchange located in the lower level of the school. This is for previously worn clothing that has been donated by other community members. You may come to the school during school hours to shop and donations can be given to Jocelyn Scalise.

Uniform Options for all Students

Shirt	Solid white, navy blue, light blue, or yellow long-sleeved or short-sleeved shirts with a collar.
Sweatshirt/Fleece	Solid white, navy blue, light blue, or yellow sweatshirts or fleeces or any with an SSA logo which can be purchased through SSA Spirit Store.
Sweaters	Navy, white, yellow, or light blue sweater.



Pants	Navy or khaki pants or slacks that must be tailored and should not drag on the floor. No sweatpants, yoga pants, velour, corduroy, or gaucho pants.
Shorts/Skortts	Navy or khaki shorts and skortts. No running, gym shorts, or short shorts. Shorts are to be no shorter than mid-thigh in length. Shorts may be worn during the fall and spring.
Skirts	Navy or khaki knee-length skirts should be worn with bike shorts or tights.
Dresses	Navy, yellow, or light blue polo dresses, khaki jumpers, or navy jumpers.
Tights	Navy or white tights.
Shoes	Tennis shoes only (heels and toes must be closed).

Clothing for Recess and Outdoor Learning

Students do go outside year-round and in all types of weather. For this reason, it is very important that students have the appropriate dress for recess and outdoor learning time. Please ensure students have what is needed to participate fully in outdoor activities during the following seasons:

- Fall/Spring: sunscreen, rain jacket and rain boots as needed.
- Winter: Snow pants, waterproof gloves, hats, coat, boots, scarves (Students will go outside in temperatures as low as 10 degrees).

Please make certain all of your child’s clothes are marked with his/her name, including gloves, boots, and shoes. Clothing items are often left throughout the school and this enables them to be easily returned to their owner.

If a clothing item does not have a name on it, it will be placed in the lost and found. The lost and found is located near Wing Hall and families can look for lost items there. Lost and found will be sorted over Winter Recess, Spring Recess, and the end of the school year. Any items without a name on them will be donated to the second-hand uniform exchange.

Dress-Down Days

Dress-down days are organized by the school or individual classroom teachers and often have a theme associated with the event. Students and families will be informed of the dress down theme and what clothing will be permitted prior to the dress down date. No matter the theme of the dress down day, students should always follow these guidelines: no revealing clothing (eg: short shorts, crop shirts, overly tight clothing) no inappropriate sayings on T-shirts. Jeans, sweatpants or leggings can be worn and the footwear should remain sneakers.

Additional Guidelines

- Hats may not be worn indoors.
- Only stud earrings are permitted as dangling earrings could be pulled during play.
- In inclement weather, students may wear boots and change into tennis shoes at school.



Programs and Policies

K-5 1:1 iPad Program

At the Junior School, we are committed to creating a rigorous and inspiring learning environment, where student learning is enhanced through a variety of instructional methods and experiences. The iPad is one of the many powerful teaching tools that we have at our disposal; our 1:1 program allows students to collaborate and create in order to showcase their creativity and to strengthen their understanding of learning objectives. As technology becomes an increasingly present part of our world, we also believe it is important to help our students develop safe and appropriate technological habits and boundaries to ensure they are being resourceful and responsible digital citizens.

Computer/Internet Policy

Shady Side Academy has set guidelines in an effort to promote the responsible use of technology in education. The use of computers and iPads is a privilege and all members of the community should follow an ethical and respectful approach in using these. Should a student bring the name of Shady Side Academy into disrepute (via text, photos, voice, or video), that student will be held accountable and may face disciplinary consequences, possibly including separation from the school. Any inappropriate Internet activity involving Shady Side Academy students, including, but not limited to, photos, web pages, text, or videos is subject to Shady Side disciplinary action. Dangerous or harassing Internet behavior is in violation of the school's Guiding Principles and may also be subject to disciplinary action.

Mobile Devices and other Electronic Device Policy

Junior School students are not permitted to have cell phones, smart watches, or other personal electronic devices during the school day. If there is a need for a student to make a phone call, telephones are available in the Junior School office. Phones, smart watches, and other devices must be turned off and left in backpacks or lockers throughout the school day. If used during the school day, such devices will be confiscated.

Library Program

The library has over 12,000 print books, five magazines, and access to a variety of subscription databases through the Library homepage. There are no fines for overdue books, but a child will be charged for the cost of the book if it is lost or damaged. Students are able to check books out during library class.

Community Assemblies

Assemblies are an exciting and valuable part of cultivating our close community. Assembly takes place every Monday and will be held in person. Every student and faculty member attends the assembly. This is a time when students share highlights from their particular class and we have lessons focusing on particular social-emotional learning concepts. This is also a time when we have special guests or programming. Families are always welcome to join the assembly.

Community Events

Back to School Picnic - This event takes place at the beginning of the year and serves as an opportunity for us to gather as a Junior School community before the first day of school. There is picnic food, activities for the students and lots of fun on the playground.

Junior School/Middle School Concert - In December, the Junior School and Middle school musicians come together to perform. Junior School students in grades 3-5 play their instruments and we are excited to welcome our Middle School musicians to the Junior School.

Winterfest - This is held in December and is an opportunity to gather as a lower school community. Families from the Junior and Country Day schools gather at the Senior School to sing songs and engage in winter themed activities.



International Fair - This event enables us to share the many diverse cultures and traditions that exist within our Junior School community with all of our students. A number of parent volunteers come into the Junior School to share about a country representative of their heritage. Students spend a portion of the school day visiting countries and engaging in fun activities and presentations. At the end of the day, we have a community wide potluck that has many foods from around the world on display.

Moving Up Day - This is a culminating event that occurs at the end of the year. Students in every grade level sing or play instruments. We celebrate our students “moving-up” to the next year. We also honor our fifth graders as a community as they are moving onto sixth grade. It is a wonderful way to celebrate another great year at the Junior School.

Report Cards and Conferences

In an effort to make communication about student progress continual, conferences and report cards are spread throughout the year. Families can decide to meet in person or virtually via Zoom for conferences, whatever works best for them. Teachers will send out conference sign up information prior to the conference date.

Evaluation Days

Evaluation days take place multiple times a year around report cards or conference times to provide teachers the time needed to prepare for those events. On evaluation days, there is no school and there is nothing the students are required to do on that day.

Hopes & Dreams Conferences

All parents and guardians are invited to join their child’s classroom teacher for a “Hopes and Dreams” conference. These conferences occur at the beginning of the school year. Families will have the opportunity to meet their child’s teacher and share their thoughts and experiences concerning their child’s social, emotional, and intellectual journey. The teacher’s role is to listen and reflect upon the shared information. We highly encourage all families to participate in these authentic and meaningful conferences as it often serves as the inaugural meeting for parents and teachers to start building their relationship.

Promotion Policy

Although most Shady Side fifth graders go on to the Middle School, and most students completing 8th Grade go on to the Senior School, promotion from one division to the next is not automatic. On the other hand, fifth and eighth graders who have the endorsement of their teachers are not required to take the regular entrance tests to the Middle and Senior School, respectively.

If a student's performance is unsatisfactory, and if their teachers believe it would not be in the child's best interest to continue at Shady Side Academy, the student will not be promoted to the Middle School. The intent of this policy is to ensure that both parents and teachers carefully consider the possible consequences of asking a student to undertake a rigorous program that may not be the best fit for the student. If a student is in danger of not being recommended for enrollment at the Middle School, the Head of School will inform parents at the earliest possible opportunity.

Class Placement Policy

At the Junior School, we see each child as an individual. We understand the different academic and social-emotional needs they have. When contemplating the placement of a child into a particular class, there are many factors that are considered by the faculty and administration. Placing students in learning environments is a well thought-out and individualized process that we as professionals tend to each spring. Class placement requests must be communicated in writing no later than June 1st to the Assistant Heads of School. Although we take all requests into careful consideration, we cannot guarantee any or all requests will be made. Class placement information for the next school year will be distributed to families in August.

Pre-K Toilet Training Policy

In order to attend school it is important that our youngest learners are toilet trained and can do the following independently:



- Children are able to verbalize their need to use the restroom (i.e. “I need to go potty.”)
- Children are able to use the toilet consistently and independently without the assistance of a teacher.
- Children wear underwear and keep them dry throughout all parts of the day. Pullups and diapers are not used in the classroom and are not worn during rest time.
- Children can independently wipe themselves and manipulate their clothing while in the restroom.

If your child is unable to perform these skills, then we are happy to welcome them to school once they have mastered them.

Learning Support and Enrichment

Shady Side Academy has a tradition of providing all students with a quality education and to achieve this endeavor the Academy recognizes the need to meet the needs of a neurodiverse student population.

Learning Support at the Junior School

The learning specialists and teachers collaborate to support the development of students with and without identified learning differences. As the students advance through the Junior School, the learning specialists’ primary focus is on the academic areas of reading, writing, and math.

Students are supported in the classroom, in a small group, or in a one-on-one setting. Systematic interventions that incorporate multisensory strategies help students progress toward their learning goals. In partnership with the classroom teachers, the learning specialists also provide strategies to improve students’ organization, self-monitoring, and self-advocacy skills which are critical to their development as learners. For a student with a diagnosed learning difference, an accommodation plan is created by the learning specialist to identify the strategies and conditions needed to help foster the student’s success.

Enrichment at The Junior School

Recognizing that every child’s journey is unique, the Junior School offers many opportunities for academic enrichment. Teachers use numerous formal and informal assessments to identify when a student may need enrichment. This data informs the teacher’s instructional decisions to ensure all students are being challenged. Individualization and rigor are cornerstones of the reading, writing and math curricula.

For example, in reading, students may read a book that is on their individual reading level in addition to being exposed to texts above their current level to further their progress. In math, students may be given enrichment problems that expand upon the current lesson. In writing, teachers use one-on-one conferencing to help each student develop their specific skill set. For students needing enrichment beyond the curricula, the administration, classroom teacher, and learning specialist will use data to make programmatic changes that will address a student’s individual needs. A variety of options may be considered, such as utilizing additional above grade level resources, participating in an independent study or working with the learning specialist.

Emergency Procedures

Fire Drills

The Junior School holds monthly fire drills. Anyone in the building at the time must evacuate.

Run. Hide. Fight. and the Evacuation Drill

At Shady Side Academy, we take the safety of our students very seriously. We are continuously reviewing and updating our policies and practices. As such, Shady Side Academy has adopted the Run. Hide. Fight. protocol, which is used by many educational institutions nationally and is promoted by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). Run. Hide. Fight. provides three tactics (options) students, faculty, and staff can utilize in the event they encounter an armed assailant. Resources can be found [here](#).



Much consideration is given as to how the active assailant information is presented to ensure it is age appropriate. Specific information will be provided closer to when those conversations are planned.

All students will participate in one evacuation drill a year to ensure the students know where to meet in the event they need to evacuate the building and campus. Parents will be informed of when the evacuation drill will occur closer to the date. In the event students need to evacuate the Junior School, the school will communicate with parents to inform them where they will be able to reunite with their children.

Parents should wait for communication from the school that details the location of the reunification site and should not respond to the Junior School campus in the event of an incident. During the reunification process, parents should follow instructions of the Shady Side Academy personnel at the reunification site. Shady Side Academy personnel will only be permitted to release children to parents/guardians during the reunification process. Please know that much thought and care has been put into how to best inform students so that they have all the information they need to be as safe as possible.

Unified Parents’ Association

We are a part of a Unified (Junior, Country Day, Middle, and Senior School) Parents’ Association. There is one board of elected members to represent all four SSA divisions. Also, each school campus has their own elected chairs. The Parents' Association invites you to participate in various activities that will be presented at the beginning of the year.

Homeroom Parents

The Parents' Association president is in charge of selecting the homeroom parents. Homeroom parents aid the teachers in many ways, such as notifying parents of upcoming events, planning parties in the lower grades, and chaperoning classes on field trips.

Visitors and Volunteers

When visiting the campus outside of arrival times, all visitors will need to check into the office to have their information put through the Raptor Visitor Management System. The first time you visit, you will need a license to process your personal information in the system. A license will not be needed for subsequent visits. Once your information is processed, you will receive a visitor badge that must be worn as long as you are visiting the campus. This is an important safety measure as the visitor badge informs our faculty that you are an approved visitor to the campus.

If you plan to volunteer for a prolonged period of time while on campus, volunteers will need to fill out the Limited Volunteer Contact form.

Important Contact Information

Name	Title	Phone Number	Email Address
Administrative Staff			
Dr. Jennifer Asmonga	Head of Lower Schools	412-963-8644	jasmonga@shadysideacademy.org
Melanie Smith	Assistant Head of School PK-1, Junior School	412-473-4180	msmith@shadysideacademy.org



Dan Stern	Assistant Head of School 2-5, Junior School	412-473-4182	dstern@shadysideacademy.org
Jocelyn Scalise	Administrative Assistant, Junior School Assistant Heads of School	412-473-4400	jscalise@shadysideacademy.org
Maggie Marquette	Director of Admission, Junior School	412-473-4402	mmarquette@shadysideacademy.org
Staff			
Mary Aiken	Library Assistant	412-473-4439	maiken@shadysideacademy.org
Brittany Andy	Education Technology Collaborator		bandy@shadysideacademy.org
Don Aubrecht	Campus Security	412-447-2258	daubrecht@shadysideacademy.org
Bud Butler	Custodian		
Sarah Chedwick	Director of After-School Explorers		schedwick@shadysideacademy.org explorers@shadysideacademy.org
Hannah Godwin	Site Coordinator, After-School Explorers		hgodwin@shadysideacademy.org explorers@shadysideacademy.org
Joyce Greece	Admissions Assistant	412-473-4437	jgreece@shadysideacademy.org
Sheila Kelly	Custodian		
Stephanie Kiger	School Nurse	412-473-4189	skiger@shadysideacademy.org
John Knapp	Custodial Supervisor		jknapp@shadysideacademy.org
Hayley Lawton	Speech Therapist	412-473-4194	hlawton@shadysideacademy.org
Joe Mollinaro	Campus Security		jmollinaro@shadysideacademy.org
Linda Porter	Transportation Coordinator	412-968-3022	lporter@shadysideacademy.org
Sterriet Thurman	Custodian		
Cindy Wise	General Manager, Metz Culinary Management	412-968-3111	cwise@shadysideacademy.org
Faculty			
PreKindergarten Teachers			



Brianna Baumgartner	bbaumgartner@shadysideacademy.org
Robert Browne Gartei	rbrownegartei@shadysideacademy.org
Samantha Frankel	sfrankel@shadysideacademy.org
Christin Hudson	chudson@shadysideacademy.org
Ashley Pellegrino	apellegrino@shadysideacademy.org
Chase Walter	cwalter@shadysideacademy.org
Kindergarten Teachers	
Jennifer Andree	jandree@shadysideacademy.org
Nick Hammon	nhammon@shadysideacademy.org
Amy Kim	akim@shadysideacademy.org
Marilyn Martens	mmartens@shadysideacademy.org
Melissa Petitto-Kenny	mpetitto@shadysideacademy.org
Lisa Reppy	lreppy@shadysideacademy.org
First Grade Teachers	
Allison Friday	afriday@shadysideacademy.org
Alexis Randall	arandall@shadysideacademy.org
Jill Velotta	jvelotta@shadysideacademy.org
Gabriela Hundley (First Grade Assistant)	ghundley@shadysideacademy.org
Second Grade Teachers	
Jazmine Pavlick	jpavlick@shadysideacademy.org
Claire Pilarski	cpilarski@shadysideacademy.org
Jenny Rogers	jrogers@shadysideacademy.org
Third Grade Teachers	
Brandon Howe	bhowe@shadysideacademy.org
Kristin Litster	klitster@shadysideacademy.org
Jennifer Riscili	jriscili@shadysideacademy.org
Fourth Grade Teachers	
Marci Anderson	manderson@shadysideacademy.org



Lisa Budd	lbudd@shadysideacademy.org
Susie McLaughlin	smclaughlin@shadysideacademy.org
Fifth Grade Teachers	
Christina Blazin	cblazin@shadysideacademy.org
Paul Schiff	pschiff@shadysideacademy.org
Krystal Smith	krystalsmith@shadysideacademy.org
Art Teacher	
Kelly Bellini	kbellini@shadysideacademy.org
Instrumental Music Teacher	
Adam Janssen	ajanssen@shadysideacademy.org
Learning Specialists	
Erin MacDonald	emacdonald@shadysideacademy.org
Claire Sherwin	csherwin@shadysideacademy.org
Librarian	
Phyllis Guering	pguering@shadysideacademy.org
Music Teacher	
Becky Krivanek	rkrivanek@shadysideacademy.org
Physical Education Teachers	
Jonna Burke	jburke@shadysideacademy.org
Sean Wilson	swilson@shadysideacademy.org
School Counselor	
Michael Speal	mspeal@shadysideacademy.org
Spanish Teachers	
Yuli Giraldo (Pre-K–Second Grade)	ygiraldo@shadysideacademy.org
Tiffanee Peterson (Third–Fifth Grade)	tpeterson@shadysideacademy.org
STEEM Teachers	
Elizabeth McDonald (Pre-K–Second Grade)	emcdonald@shadysideacademy.org
Jeff McCarroll (Third–Fifth Grade)	jmccarroll@shadysideacademy.org



Technology Literacy Teacher (K-Fifth)

Karen Sandora

ksandora@shadysideacademy.org

Theatre Arts Teacher (K-Fifth)

Nancy McGeever

nmcgeever@shadysideacademy.org

Wellness Teacher

Megan Vrcic

mvrpic@shadysideacademy.org

