

Elementary Program Guide

Pods-Fifth Grade

2026-2027

Elementary School
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Our Approach to Learning.....	4
A Whole Child.....	5
Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging.....	5
Social-Emotional Learning.....	6
Practices to Build a Sense of Self in the World.....	7
Project Based Learning.....	7
Systems Thinking.....	7
Starting the Journey with the Pods.....	7
The Rhythm of the Day.....	8
Morning Meeting.....	9
Grade-wide learning blocks.....	9
The Academic Program.....	10
Math.....	10
Developing Roots and “think!Mathematics” Overview.....	10
Curricular Overview.....	11
Pods.....	11
Second Grade.....	12
Third Grade.....	12
Fourth Grade.....	13
Fifth Grade.....	13
Language Arts.....	14
Science of Reading.....	14
Love of Reading.....	15
Writing.....	16
Language Arts Curricular Overview.....	17
Pods.....	17
Second Grade.....	19
Third Grade.....	20
Fourth Grade.....	20
Fifth Grade.....	21
Social Studies.....	23
Curricular Overview.....	23
Pods.....	23
Second Grade.....	24
Third Grade.....	24
Fourth Grade.....	25
Fifth Grade.....	25
Handwriting and Typing.....	25
Curricular Overview.....	25
Pods-Second Grade.....	26

Third-Fifth Grade.....	27
The Specialist Program.....	28
Futures Lab.....	28
Library.....	28
Performing Arts.....	29
Physical Education.....	30
Science.....	31
Visual Arts.....	31
The Community Program.....	33
Buddy Program.....	33
Day of Play.....	33
Grade Level Community Jobs.....	34
Community Time.....	35
Pods-Fifth Grade Student Groups.....	36
Third-Fifth Grade Student Affinity Groups.....	36
Additional Opportunities for Learning and Connection.....	36
Advisory.....	36
Athletics.....	37
Enrichment.....	37
Health & Wellness: The Wildwood Wellness Wheel.....	38
Physical Wellness.....	38
Body Safety, Development & Self-Advocacy.....	39
Digital Health.....	39

Our Approach to Learning

At Wildwood School, we believe children are capable, curious, and thoughtful members of a learning community and that they have ideas, perspectives, and contributions that matter. Our talented faculty act as guides, helping students expand their thinking and navigate their discoveries while they cultivate transferable and lifelong skills. In Wildwood classrooms, teachers ask as much as they tell, inviting students to wonder, investigate, collaborate, and construct understanding alongside their peers.

Across the elementary years, children experience a thoughtful balance of play-based learning, direct instruction, collaborative inquiry, independent practice, small-group workshops, whole-group discussions, and project-based learning. Projects, assignments, and classwork are often interdisciplinary, allowing children opportunities to make nuanced connections and deepen their understanding of the complexities of our world while also noticing and appreciating its wonder and beauty.

The elementary curriculum is designed to help young children stay inquisitive and excited about learning. Our programs and approaches to teaching and learning allow students to build confidence and gain agility in reading, writing, mathematics, social studies, science, and the arts as they synthesize complex ideas and consider multiple perspectives. Students develop the foundational skills for critical thinking, listening and speaking with clarity and conviction, comprehending oral and written language, conducting meaningful research, evaluating information thoughtfully, and creatively exploring their own ideas. Throughout their elementary experience, they learn not only how to acquire knowledge, but also how to ask questions, collaborate with others, solve problems, and contribute meaningfully to their communities.

Learning at Wildwood extends beyond the core classroom curriculum. Students engage with specialist programs in health, library, performing arts, physical education, science, technology, and visual arts, where they deepen skills, explore new perspectives, and express their thinking in a variety of ways. Specialists and classroom teachers collaborate closely to create meaningful connections across disciplines, helping students see learning as interconnected rather than divided into separate subjects.

Our commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging (DEIB) is woven throughout the curriculum and closely connected to our social-emotional learning (SEL) program. Together, these experiences help students develop empathy, strengthen their sense of identity and belonging, appreciate diverse perspectives, and learn how to contribute positively to their communities.

Across all areas of the curriculum, students are encouraged to ask questions, think critically, communicate their ideas, and engage in meaningful inquiry. A systems thinking lens helps students recognize patterns, relationships, and interdependence, guiding them

to understand how people, communities, and the natural world are connected. Learning is further enriched through field trips, service learning, outdoor experiences, and community partnerships that bring classroom learning to life.

At every grade level, students develop the skills and dispositions outlined in Wildwood's Portrait of a Lifelong Learner. These habits of curiosity, reflection, collaboration, resilience, and responsible action are cultivated throughout the elementary years and continue to grow through the Habits of Mind and Heart in middle and upper school. Beginning in 5th grade, students participate in an advisory program designed to support their growing independence and prepare them for the transition to middle school. Throughout their elementary journey, students build knowledge and skills sequentially, gaining confidence, agency, and a strong foundation for lifelong learning.

A Whole Child

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging

Diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging are woven throughout the fabric of our community. At Wildwood, the intentional integration of DEIB shapes how children learn about themselves and others, build relationships, explore the world, and discover the ways in which they can make a difference. This work is not confined to a single lesson or classroom; it is part of the everyday experience of being a Wildwood student.

Guided by our Six Pillars: Identity, Culture, Diversity, Empathy, Justice, and Action, and the standards and skills within each, students develop a deep and evolving understanding of who they are and the many identities, experiences, and communities that shape them. They learn to recognize and appreciate the vastness of their own identities while building curiosity, understanding, and respect for the identities and experiences of others.

DEIB is integrated throughout the curriculum and across our specialist classes. During a shared read-aloud, students might explore identity, culture, or belonging through the experiences of a book's characters. In science, they may learn about underrepresented scientists whose contributions have shaped our understanding of the world. Across disciplines, students encounter diverse voices, histories, perspectives, and ways of knowing that invite them to question, connect, and see the world in new ways.

Students also have opportunities to bring their own identities and experiences into their learning. Families are invited to share aspects of their family, culture, and traditions in the classroom, helping children see the many ways our community is enriched by the people within it.

Through our self-selected student groups children are able to celebrate and learn from the cultures and experiences represented in our community. In grades 3–5, race-based affinity groups provide dedicated spaces for students to connect and explore aspects of their identities, while the option of Perspectives Alliance offers opportunities for students to build relationships, engage in thoughtful dialogue, and learn across differences.

Across grade levels, students engage in meaningful conversations, collaborative experiences, and intentional projects that invite them to consider multiple perspectives, recognize inequities, and explore how systems shape our communities. Wildwood students excel at engaging in thoughtful, respectful conversations across differences, listening with curiosity, considering perspectives beyond their own, and expressing their ideas with empathy and confidence.

As students progress through Wildwood, their understanding deepens alongside their growing capacity to engage with increasingly complex ideas, perspectives, and systems. This work builds a strong foundation for middle and high school, where students deepen their understanding of identity, belonging, equity, and justice through increasingly complex ideas, perspectives, and opportunities for meaningful action. Our goal is to prepare students not only to navigate a diverse and changing world with empathy and curiosity, but also to contribute thoughtfully and courageously to creating a more just and inclusive one.

Social-Emotional Learning

At Wildwood, social-emotional learning is not confined to a single lesson – it is an essential part of the daily experience of being in community with others. While students participate in regular SEL lessons, we believe the most meaningful learning happens in the authentic moments that fill a child's day: during snack, on the Big Yard, while collaborating on a project, navigating a disagreement, welcoming a new classmate, or contributing to the life of the classroom. These everyday experiences are opportunities for children to practice important social-emotional skills in real and meaningful ways.

Our SEL curriculum is aligned with the five core competencies identified by CASEL (Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning): Self-Awareness, Self-Management, Social Awareness, Relationship Skills, and Responsible Decision-Making. Through explicit instruction, guided reflection, classroom discussions, and daily practice, students build the skills needed to understand themselves, form healthy relationships, and contribute positively to their communities.

With the support of our school counselor, Wildwood draws upon a variety of resources and frameworks—including CASEL, SEE (Social, Emotional, and Ethical) Learning from

Emory University, and IFSEL (Institute for Social and Emotional Learning)—to support students' social, emotional, and ethical development. These resources provide developmentally appropriate tools and experiences that help bring SEL to life in meaningful, authentic, and age-appropriate ways while supporting the unique needs of each classroom community.

At Wildwood, SEL is something children practice all day, every day. By intentionally integrating social-emotional learning into classroom routines, academic learning, play, and community experiences, we help students develop the confidence, resilience, empathy, and self-awareness needed to thrive in school and beyond.

Practices to Build a Sense of Self in the World

Project Based Learning

Project-based learning (PBL) is an authentically interdisciplinary approach in which students actively explore real-world problems and challenges over an extended period of time in order to acquire a deeper understanding and knowledge base. While the learning typically culminates in a final product, the main focus is on the process itself. This approach is frequently seen throughout all Wildwood classrooms and is often launched through a systems thinking lens and sometimes includes a design-thinking component.

Systems Thinking

Systems Thinking is often used as an entry point for new concepts and projects and is the practice of seeing concepts, objects, processes and curricular disciplines as interconnected systems in relationship with one another, rather than as isolated entities. This approach to teaching and learning engages students in noticing all that is going on around them and ultimately the many ways that parts of our life and world are interconnected.

Starting the Journey with the Pods

At Wildwood we value intentional learning environments that are responsive to child development, rooted in belonging, and purposely designed to support social/emotional and academic growth and to build community connection.

Our Kindergarten and 1st Grade students learn in multi-age Pods because we believe that collaboration, experimentation, and learning follow different trajectories for each child. In a Pod, children learn alongside peers with a range of strengths, experiences, and perspectives and come to understand on a deep level that every learner, including

themselves, is a multifaceted learner capable of engaging in different ways at different times. One day they may be the one receiving guidance; the next, they may be offering it. Through these experiences, children develop empathy, confidence, independence, and a strong sense of belonging.

Each Pod is led by a full-time lead teacher and associate teacher who work closely together to know every child deeply. This staffing allows for responsive instruction, flexible grouping, and individualized support while maintaining high expectations for literacy, numeracy, inquiry, and critical thinking. In our Pods, children experience both the warmth of a close-knit community and the challenge of meaningful learning because we believe the two grow hand in hand.

The Pod structure also creates a uniquely welcoming community for families. Each year, returning students help new classmates learn routines, traditions, and the rhythms of daily life. New children enter a classroom where relationships are already rooted in care and connection, making the transition to school feel supported and joyful.

As children move into 2nd through 5th grades, learning becomes more naturally aligned within straight-grade groupings as academic development becomes more linear and discipline-specific. Even so, differentiation remains a priority across all grades. Teachers continue to meet students where they are, extending and challenging them through targeted instruction, inquiry, and project work.

Across all grades, we hold a shared belief that children arrive at school already full of ideas, experiences, and capabilities. Our role is to design learning environments that respect that capacity, invite deep thinking, and nurture both academic and human development. The pod structure in the early years is one expression of this belief, ensuring that children are supported, challenged, and deeply connected to a community of learners from the very beginning. Our grades 2–5 program continues this same commitment through thoughtfully designed, grade-level learning environments that preserve flexibility, differentiation, and collaboration while supporting children as they engage in increasingly focused and complex academic work.

The Rhythm of the Day

Our daily schedule is designed with intention to support strong relationships, deep learning, and meaningful connection throughout the entire school day. We see every part of the day as a learning opportunity; not only academic blocks, but also transitions, community time, lunch, and reflection. Each moment is part of how children grow as learners and as members of a community.

Morning Meeting

Each day begins with Morning Meeting, a shared routine where students greet one another, read the morning message, review the schedule, share news, and engage in community-building activities. This consistent start helps students feel grounded, connected, and ready to learn.

Grade-Wide Learning Blocks

Learning blocks are intentionally structured throughout the day and allow time and space for a variety of experiences, including focused core instruction time, inquiry projects, collaborative work, reflection, and integrated learning opportunities. This full-day structure provides students with both the foundation of strong academic skills and the time to think deeply, create, explore, and connect their learning across disciplines.

Across grade levels, schedules are aligned to support flexibility and collaboration. For example, key learning blocks such as math and literacy often occur at the same time to support cross-class and cross-grade collaboration. This intentional structure allows teachers to respond to students in real time, form groups based on readiness and need, and design learning experiences that are both supportive and appropriately challenging.

The Academic Program

Math

Math is a natural part of children's curiosity about the world. From noticing patterns and making connections to wondering "how" and "why," young children arrive as mathematicians ready to explore, create, and make sense of ideas. Our program honors and protects that natural joy by building experiences where every child sees themselves as a capable mathematician — one who can think deeply, ask questions, take risks, and persevere through challenges.

Across all grades, students develop a strong foundation in both conceptual understanding and essential mathematical skills. Through intentional instruction and meaningful practice, students build fluency with core procedures and strategies while also learning why math works, how ideas connect, and when different approaches can be used. Students are encouraged to solve problems in multiple ways, explain their reasoning, and develop confidence in their ability to make sense of complex ideas.

Math is woven into real-life experiences and interdisciplinary projects, helping students see its relevance beyond the classroom. Younger students might practice measurement as they help design a new area for the Pod back patio, while older students might explore percentages and different types of graphs as they learn about the languages spoken in Los Angeles as part of their Social Studies unit. Throughout these experiences, students apply mathematical concepts to meaningful questions and develop the collaboration, communication, and reflection skills that are increasingly essential in our world. They learn to listen to the ideas of others, consider multiple perspectives, revise their thinking, and work together to solve problems.

Teachers cultivate a learning environment grounded in curiosity, collaboration, and a growth mindset, where mistakes and productive struggle are celebrated as essential parts of learning. Students come to understand that challenges are opportunities to grow and that perseverance, flexibility, and reflection are what allow mathematicians to continue developing.

Developing Roots and "think!Mathematics" Overview

Our mathematics program is grounded in the Singapore approach, which is based on decades of developmental research about how children build deep mathematical understanding. At Wildwood, this journey begins in the Pods with Developing Roots, a research-based, child-centered curriculum designed specifically for young learners. Through purposeful play, hands-on exploration, rich mathematical conversations, and

collaborative problem-solving, children develop number sense, mathematical reasoning, and confidence while cultivating curiosity and a genuine love of mathematics.

As students are developmentally ready, they transition into our Singapore-based “think! Mathematics” program, where these early experiences become the foundation for increasingly sophisticated mathematical thinking. Throughout the elementary years, instruction follows the Concrete–Pictorial–Abstract (CPA) progression. Students first explore new concepts through hands-on materials and real-world experiences, then represent their thinking with drawings, models, and visual representations before moving toward abstract symbols and algorithms. This developmental progression helps students build lasting conceptual understanding rather than simply memorizing procedures.

Across all grade levels, our mathematics program values children's intuitive mathematical thinking and emphasizes reasoning, collaboration, communication, and reflection. Students regularly engage in rich mathematical discussions, solve meaningful problems together, explain their thinking, and reflect on their learning through math journals and other forms of documentation. These experiences help students develop not only strong computational skills but also the confidence, perseverance, and flexibility to think like mathematicians.

Curricular Overview

Pods

Pod students develop strong mathematical understanding through hands-on exploration, problem-solving, discussion, and meaningful practice. We believe children are naturally curious mathematicians who learn best when they can investigate ideas, explain their thinking, and make connections between mathematics and the world around them.

Using Developing Roots and “think!Mathematics” as a guide, instruction remains both flexible and responsive in the Pods. Teachers meet students where they are, providing support or additional challenges based on each child’s readiness. This ensures every student continues to grow as a confident and capable mathematician.

Using the heavily researched Singapore Math approach, students first explore concepts with hands-on manipulatives, then represent their thinking through pictures and models before moving to the more abstract mathematical ideas. This progression helps children develop deep conceptual understanding alongside increasing fluency and accuracy.

Through their two years in the Pods, students build strong number sense while exploring patterns, place value, addition and subtraction, geometry, measurement, data, and early multiplication and division concepts. They regularly solve problems, compare strategies,

explain their reasoning, and learn from one another through collaborative mathematical discussions. By the end of their Pod experience, students leave with a strong mathematical foundation, confidence in their problem-solving abilities, and the capacity to think flexibly, communicate their reasoning and apply math in meaningful ways.

Second Grade

In second grade, students deepen their mathematical understanding by developing fluency, precision, and flexibility with numbers while strengthening their ability to reason, solve complex problems, and communicate their thinking. Students build conceptual understanding of addition and subtraction, develop foundational multiplication and division concepts, and expand their understanding of place value as the basis for efficient computation. They apply mathematical reasoning to investigations involving measurement, money, and data; tell time to the nearest five minutes; develop an understanding of fractions as equal parts of a whole; and explore the attributes of two- and three-dimensional geometric shapes. Through rich problem-solving, mathematical discourse, visual models, and hands-on exploration, students learn to justify their reasoning, make connections across mathematical concepts, and develop the confidence and perseverance of thoughtful mathematicians.

Third Grade

In third grade, students deepen their mathematical understanding by developing fluency, accuracy, and flexibility with increasingly complex concepts while strengthening their ability to reason, solve problems, and communicate their thinking. Students build conceptual understanding and fluency with multiplication and division, mastering facts through 100 while using equal groups, arrays, and area models to solve problems. They learn to apply mathematical properties and patterns, solve one- and two-step word problems, and explain their reasoning using multiple strategies. Students also extend their understanding of place value, addition and subtraction, fractions, measurement, area, perimeter, data, and geometry, making connections across mathematical ideas and applying their learning to meaningful, real-world contexts. Through rich problem-solving, mathematical discourse, visual models, and hands-on exploration, students justify their thinking, compare multiple approaches, and develop the confidence, perseverance, and independence of thoughtful mathematicians.

Fourth Grade

In fourth grade, students deepen their mathematical understanding by developing fluency, precision, and flexibility with increasingly sophisticated concepts while strengthening their ability to reason, solve complex problems, and communicate their thinking. Students develop proficiency with multi-digit multiplication and division, extend their understanding of fractions and decimals, and apply place value concepts to solve increasingly challenging problems. They use multiplication and division to compare quantities and solve multi-step problems, investigate factors and multiples, identify prime and composite numbers, and recognize patterns and relationships that deepen their algebraic thinking. Students also explore measurement, data, and geometry, including classifying, measuring, and drawing angles, as well as solving problems involving area and perimeter. Through rich problem-solving, mathematical discourse, visual models, and hands-on exploration, students justify their reasoning, make connections across mathematical ideas, and develop the confidence, perseverance, and independence of thoughtful mathematicians.

Fifth Grade

In fifth grade, students build upon the strong mathematical foundation developed throughout their elementary years while continuing to engage with new, increasingly complex concepts. Students deepen their understanding of fractions and decimals by developing fluency with all four operations, applying place value concepts to larger numbers, and solving multi-step problems with increasing independence. They explore algebraic thinking by writing, interpreting, and evaluating numerical expressions, using parentheses, brackets, and braces to represent the order of operations and communicate mathematical relationships. Students investigate patterns, factors, multiples, measurement, volume, coordinate geometry, and data while applying mathematical reasoning to meaningful real-world situations.

Throughout the year, students continue to use models, representations, and multiple strategies to make sense of challenging problems. Through mathematical discussions, written explanations, and collaborative problem solving, they learn to justify their reasoning, compare approaches, evaluate the efficiency of strategies, and communicate their thinking with precision. As they prepare for the transition to middle school, fifth graders develop the confidence, perseverance, and independence of mathematicians who understand that mathematics is not simply about finding answers—it is about making sense of ideas, discovering relationships, and using reasoning to solve problems.

Language Arts

Science of Reading

Wildwood's K-5 language arts program is grounded in the Science of Reading, which is based on a large body of research about how children learn to read. This research shows that skilled reading develops through two equally important areas: strong word recognition (including phonemic awareness, phonics, and fluency) and language comprehension (including vocabulary, background knowledge, and comprehension). Children need both to become confident, successful readers.

At Wildwood, we provide explicit, systematic instruction in foundational literacy skills using the Wilson's Foundations® program. Students build phonemic awareness, phonics knowledge, spelling, handwriting, and automatic recognition of high-frequency words through daily, developmentally appropriate lessons. Carefully selected decodable texts allow students to apply these skills in authentic reading experiences while developing fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension.

At the same time, we believe that learning to read is about far more than decoding words. Our interdisciplinary Reading Workshop framework immerses students in rich literature, meaningful discussion, and authentic reading experiences that build vocabulary, background knowledge, critical thinking, and a deep understanding of texts. By connecting reading to science, social studies, the arts, and inquiry-based learning, students make meaningful connections that strengthen both comprehension and a lifelong love of reading.

Understanding the importance of not only what we teach, but why we teach it, our teachers engage in ongoing professional learning in the Science of Reading that focuses on these research-based instructional practices, ensuring every child becomes a skilled, thoughtful, and engaged reader.

Area of Literacy Development	Program/Approach
Phonemic Awareness	Students develop the ability to hear, identify, and manipulate the individual sounds in words through explicit instruction, oral language activities, and sound-based routines. These foundational skills support students in connecting sounds to letters and becoming confident readers and spellers.
Phonics	Students build decoding and encoding skills through explicit, systematic phonics instruction using Wilson's Foundations® and

	continued word study. Students learn the relationships between letters and sounds and apply these skills to read and spell increasingly complex words.
Fluency	Students develop reading fluency through practice with accuracy, phrasing, expression, and automaticity. Through decodable books, guided reading, independent reading, repeated reading, and opportunities to engage with meaningful texts, students build stamina, confidence, and a deeper connection to what they read.
Vocabulary	Students expand their vocabulary through rich literature, content-area learning, discussion, and intentional word study. Through Word Inquiry, students investigate the structure, history, and meaning of words, developing a deeper understanding of how language works.
Comprehension	Students develop comprehension through reading workshops, close reading, discussion, and written responses. They learn to make connections, ask questions, analyze ideas and perspectives, synthesize information, and think critically across a variety of texts and genres.
Writing	Students develop as writers through explicit instruction, modeling, practice, and feedback. They learn to organize ideas, craft effective sentences and paragraphs, use evidence to support their thinking, and write for a variety of purposes and audiences. Writing instruction strengthens students' ability to communicate clearly while deepening their understanding of language and text.

Love of Reading

In addition to the skills children are building, our classroom libraries are filled with a vast range of rich texts to inspire and support a lifelong love of reading. A wide range of children's books, from picture to chapter, fiction to nonfiction are integrated throughout the day in intentional ways; some are enjoyed as a shared read-aloud, others used for guided reading practice, and book groups as children develop listening and comprehension skills and learn to express their ideas. "Thinking while reading" strategies are taught to build skills in predicting, visualizing, summarizing, and making inferences.

Writing

Writing is an essential part of our literacy program and develops alongside reading. As students learn to read words, they are also strengthening their understanding of how to write them. From sounds and spelling patterns to vocabulary, sentence structure, and language, daily writing opportunities reinforce the foundational skills students are

developing as readers while helping them become thoughtful communicators who can express their ideas with clarity and purpose.

At Wildwood, we believe every child has stories to tell and ideas worth sharing. Our goal is for every student to see themselves as a writer with a unique voice. Rather than following scripted writing assignments, we go far beyond what traditional workbooks offer, allowing students to engage in meaningful units of study that invite them to write from their own experiences and individualized understanding of the world. As a result, no two pieces of writing are ever exactly alike because every writer brings their own perspective and creativity to the page.

Students write every day for a variety of authentic purposes, including narrative, informational, opinion, and creative writing. Through our Writing Workshop model, teachers provide explicit instruction in writing craft, organization, sentence structure, grammar, spelling, and revision while also giving students extended time to write, reflect, confer with teachers, and revise their work. Students learn that strong writing develops through a process of planning, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing.

Throughout the elementary years, students grow in both skill and confidence. They learn to write with increasing fluency, organization, precision, and independence while developing the ability to communicate their thinking to a variety of audiences. Most importantly, they experience writing as a meaningful act of creativity, reflection, and communication, and as one that empowers them to share their voices and make sense of the world around them.

In addition to all of this, and perhaps most importantly, our teachers model a true love of reading and writing every day. They think aloud as readers, wondering why characters make certain choices, voicing the connections they notice, asking questions, and sharing the joy of revisiting favorite books so they can discover something new each time. By modeling the habits and mindsets of engaged readers and writers, teachers help students see literacy as more than a school subject. They inspire children to develop the curiosity, confidence, and love of learning that will grow into a lifelong passion for reading and writing.

Through a workshop model and with explicit practice opportunities, teachers integrate grammar, spelling, and vocabulary learning in grade-appropriate ways to help students master mechanics while writing for a variety of audiences and in a wide range of genres. Children learn about authors' craft and tools that enrich their writing in order to captivate their reader. The writing process is scaffolded throughout the primary years and includes pre-writing, revising, and publishing. Each student is encouraged to develop skills that lead to a lifelong love of reading while guided in developing a voice as a writer.

Language Arts Curricular Overview

Pods

Reading

In our K–1 Pods, we help children become confident, joyful, and increasingly independent readers through a balance of explicit instruction and meaningful practice opportunities. Because children enter the Pods with a range of experiences and readiness levels, reading instruction is personalized to each learner. Rather than following a one-size-fits-all curriculum, teachers meet students where they are, providing the right level of support and challenge for each child. Our two-year model gives children the time and continuity to develop strong literacy skills at their own pace.

Each day, students participate in Reader’s Workshop which includes whole group mini-lessons, small group instruction, individualized conferences, partner reading, and independent practice. This workshop model allows teachers to provide targeted instruction while ensuring every child spends meaningful time reading each day.

Students read a variety of texts, including decodable books that align with their phonics learning and high quality children’s literature. Through explicit instruction in phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension, students build the foundational skills needed to become successful readers. As they grow, they read increasingly complex texts, develop deeper comprehension, and learn to choose “just right” books that build confidence and independence.

Read-alouds are a central part of the daily literacy experience. Through shared reading of picture books, nonfiction texts, poetry, and chapter books, students engage in rich discussions about characters, ideas, themes, and information. These experiences strengthen comprehension, vocabulary, oral language, and critical thinking while also building community and a shared culture of literacy.

Writing

In our K–1 Pods, children learn that they have ideas, stories, and experiences to share. Our writing program helps to nurture creativity and self expression while also providing explicit instruction in the skills students need to communicate clearly and confidently. Because children remain in the Pods for two years, writing instruction builds along a continuum, allowing each child to grow at an appropriate pace.

In the Pods children begin with Story Workshop, using open ended materials such items from nature, clay, or blocks, as a means of sharing their stories. As they go about representing their ideas, students strengthen their language development and explore story elements such as characters, setting, sequence, and problem-solving. Story

Workshop helps children understand that stories can be planned, revised, and told in many different ways before they are written down on paper.

As students grow, they move gradually from oral storytelling and drawing, labeling, and dictating to writing increasingly detailed pieces and with greater independence. Each year, students write for a variety of purposes, including personal narratives (Small Moments), informational writing, opinion pieces, poetry and fiction.

Similar to reading, writing instruction also follows a workshop model with brief mini-lessons, extended writing time, and individualized or small group conferences. Teachers provide explicit instruction in writing craft, organization, grammar, spelling, and conventions, tailored to support each student's needs. Students learn that writing is a process of planning, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing their work. Completed pieces are celebrated throughout the year giving students authentic and meaningful opportunities to share their writing with their classmates and families. By the end of their Pod experience, students leave with stronger writing skills, greater independence and confidence to see themselves as true authors.

Word Study

Word study is an important part of our literacy curriculum. We believe children need to understand how words work so they can become stronger readers, writers, and communicators. Rather than simply memorizing spelling words, children learn the patterns, structures, and meanings that make up the English language. Pod students build these skills over time. Through explicit, systematic instruction using the Wilson's Foundations® program, children develop a strong foundation in phonics, spelling, handwriting, and high frequency words. As they grow, they apply these skills with increasing accuracy and independence in both reading and writing.

Students also explore language through inquiry. Structured Word Inquiry is an approach that invites students to investigate words as though they are scientists. They question and they explore how words are built (morphology), the sounds within them (phonology), their meaning, and their history (etymology). SWI encourages students to be curious about language and it helps them recognize that the English language is not rooted in sound but is actually based in meaning.

Second Grade

Reading

Second Grade reading skills are taught in a range of forums, including whole class mini-lessons, small skill-based reading groups, and individually through student-teacher conferences. Second graders learn the value of talking about books in ways that support

and ensure fluency, vocabulary development, and comprehension skills. Students also begin to keep at-home reading journals in 2nd grade. This introduction to home-learning encourages each child to be responsible for their daily reading while also building a wonderful list of books that they can then share with their classmates at the end of the week in their weekly "Friday Book Talks."

Writing

In second grade, students learn to write with growing independence. They are encouraged to create a greater volume of writing and to revise, rethink, and rewrite with greater fluency. Through the Writing Workshop model, students explore qualities of good writing, including various crafts and writer's tools, as well as more fundamental ones, including structure, focus, and detail. Units of study include narrative writing, writing with authors as mentors, writing and revising realistic fiction, expert projects, writing to learn and teach about a topic of personal expertise, and poetry.

Word Study

In second grade, students continue to explore the English language through both a Word Inquiry approach and moving onto Tier 2 of the Wilson's Foundations® program. Second graders focus on and deepen skills around letter formation, phonological and phonemic awareness, vocabulary, fluency, comprehension strategies, and written composition (spelling and handwriting). Skill instruction is integrated in a way where daily lessons teach and then reinforce corresponding skills. Word study lessons are designed to scaffold the learning while teaching important skills explicitly, sequentially, and systematically. The Wilson's Foundations® program actively engages students in learning through the use of multisensory techniques and provides multiple opportunities for skill practice and application to build mastery. In addition, through a Word Inquiry approach, students also learn that our language is based in meaning as they explore the rich and interesting histories of base words and the stories behind why words are spelled they are. This fun and engaging approach captivates students and explores deep critical thinking skills beyond simple memorization.

Third Grade

Reading

The 3rd grade reading curriculum includes standards and skills related to fluency, decoding, comprehension, and vocabulary. Third graders also practice responding to reading verbally and in writing. Reading competency is accomplished through shared reading, guided reading, self-selected reading, and phonics instruction. Reading comprehension skills are deepened in 3rd grade as literacy is increasingly critical in mastering concepts across all subjects. Students participate in book groups in which they

engage in collaborative discussions about shared texts. In book groups, students make text-to-text, text-to-self, and text-to-world connections. Students learn summarization skills and make predictions and inferences. Lessons and assignments provide opportunities to practice literary analysis to deepen their reading experience.

Writing

With a focus on personal narrative, poetry, persuasive, and informational writing, students learn to write coherent and cohesive pieces of writing. Students gain a deeper understanding of the writing process by using prewriting strategies and creating a rough draft, an edited and revised draft, and a final draft. As part of this deeper understanding, students learn to write a complete paragraph with a main idea, supporting sentences, and a conclusion. Using a range of writing techniques such as similes, metaphors, dialogue, personification, and snapshots, students discover their own writer's voice and enhance their writing style.

Word Work

Word Work in 3rd grade is partially guided primarily by Wilson's Foundations® program, focusing on foundational word study skills including students' understanding of the nature and uses of print and that written language carries meaning. They build phonological and phonemic awareness to identify and manipulate units of oral language parts such as words and syllables. Phonics and word study include practice with high-frequency words, the ability to recognize the relationship between letters (graphemes), sounds (phonemes), and letter patterns, spelling, handwriting skills, and vocabulary.

Fourth Grade

Reading

Students continue to develop deep and active reading skills. Reading for information is emphasized as students build the skills to research subjects in depth. Students focus on note-taking, highlighting, summarizing, and using tables of contents, bibliographies, and glossaries. Students read expository and reference texts as well as favorites by Sharon Creech, Kate DiCamillo, and Sid Fleischman. In connection to their social studies learning, themes of California are explored in the genres of memoir, historical fiction, and poetry. Book groups are increasingly student-led as students deepen their ability to formulate and express ideas clearly.

Writing

Students continue to work along a writer's workshop framework to explore approaches to writing such as poetry, fiction, personal narratives, descriptive writing, and a variety of

styles of non-fiction. Writing assignments often connect to the social studies curriculum as students learn and synthesize new information. Students will focus on elements of historical fiction as well as informational writing through research and stories from multiple perspectives throughout history. Each student also writes a formal research paper engaging with print and web-based resources. They learn how to write introductory, supporting, and concluding paragraphs, and the importance of citing their sources with a bibliography.

Word Work

Fourth graders review a number of language conventions including homophones, homonyms, synonyms, and antonyms. They explore the etymology of prefixes and suffixes, learn and utilize various tools for self-editing such as COPS (capitalization, organization, punctuation, and spelling), learn to identify parts of speech, the fundamentals of what makes a complete sentence, and more. Word study opportunities take place both in explicit lessons as well as more organically through writing assignments and projects.

Fifth Grade

As students explore themes of "identity" throughout the course of the year, they read and write and present in a range of genres, including prose, poetry, and persuasive writing with the goal of becoming increasingly confident, thoughtful readers and expressive, versatile writers.

Reading

The gradual shift toward more advanced comprehension and analytical thinking continues. In book groups and independently, students read from a wide range of genres and practice comprehension skills through a variety of strategies, such as identifying the theme, making connections, drawing conclusions, analyzing text, and recognizing common literary elements (plot, characters, setting, conflict, and resolution). The reading-writing connection is made as students annotate and write reading responses. Writing skills are developed with guided analysis and modeling of distinguished authors' styles. As literature is increasingly integrated with social studies themes, emphasis is placed on the following:

- Historical fiction: looking at changes in identity over time with a particular look at gender roles in Colonial American history
- Author studies: How does an author create a character's identity?
- Multicultural studies: stereotypes, multiple perspectives, and "unlearning" with a lens on ways one is able, less able, or differently abled

Throughout the year, students are expected to read every day and are required to practice reading aloud to increase fluency and improve oral presentation skills. Fifth-grade students may serve on the annual Wildwood Medal Committee. In this much-loved tradition, students decide which of the five nominated books should be awarded the Wildwood Medal based on literary merit and effective portrayal of the Life Skills. The optional Wildwood Medal program provides passionate readers the opportunity to challenge themselves in a fun, collaborative, and meaningful way.

Writing

Fifth graders write for various audiences and purposes across the curriculum. Students write daily in a 10-minute write, often responding to a prompt, a sentence "stem," a photo, a current event, or a poem of the day. Larger assignments require students to follow the full writing process of prewriting, revising, and producing a final draft. Students complete a minimum of three 5 paragraph essays, as well as narrative, persuasive and research papers. Student work is shared and celebrated in many ways: a poetry slam, research papers and admiration statements at the visual arts exhibition on an indigenous change maker, or argumentative letters to make positive change in their world.

Word Work

Word Work in 5th grade asks students to be word scientists, calling them to ask questions, create hypotheses, test those ideas, and come to conclusions about their wonderings through the Word Inquiry process. Students hypothesize about word meaning, origin, and structure. Literacy lessons include a weekly sentences study based on a mentor text where students notice grammar, punctuation, literary devices, phonics, spelling, and sentence structure.

Social Studies

Curricular Overview

Pods

In our K-1 Pods, social studies is an integrated part of daily learning and community life. Rather than being a standalone subject, social studies provides a way for students to explore identity, relationships, communities, and the world around them through reading, writing, play, projects, and shared inquiry. Learning is deeply connected to social-emotional learning (SEL) and diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging (DEIB), as students develop empathy, understand different perspectives, and learn how they can contribute to a caring and inclusive community.

Because students remain in the Pods for two years, social studies learning is designed as a continuum. Younger Pod students build foundational understandings about identity, belonging, relationships, and how communities work, while older Pod students deepen these ideas by investigating systems, exploring multiple perspectives, and taking greater ownership in contributing to their classroom and school communities.

Our social studies learning is grounded in the essential questions: What does it mean to be part of a caring and interconnected community? and How do we create a community where everyone feels seen and welcome? Through hands-on experiences such as storytelling, dramatic play, art, construction, interviews, field exploration, guest speakers, and field trips, students develop understandings of interdependence, diversity, communication, and civic participation.

Learning is organized around two alternating year-long themes: Homes & Families and School & Friendship. Through Homes & Families, students explore questions about identity, family structures, belonging, and the many ways people create homes and communities. Through School & Friendship, students investigate how communities function, how relationships are built, and how their choices impact others. Across both themes, students learn that communities are shaped by the contributions, experiences, and perspectives of the people within them.

Social studies drives integrated learning across literacy, math, science, and the arts through inquiry, documentation, mapping, storytelling, and collaborative projects. As students grow, they begin to see themselves not only as members of a community but as contributors who can identify needs, take action, and make a positive difference. Through community action projects, students develop early understandings of responsibility, agency, and what it means to care for others.

Second Grade

The second grade social studies curriculum focuses on the idea of community and is guided by the essential question, "How do systems help a community thrive?" Students explore the systems within our school community then branch out and study the systems within our school's neighborhood and communities around the world. They explore the relationships between human-made and nature-made systems and quickly begin to see and learn how everything is interconnected. Second graders dive into a yearlong journey to discover how trade, geography, transportation, and sustainability systems are connected. They explore work/jobs, food/resources, and recreation, all parts of our larger community systems. Students consider how geography affects our everyday lives. Nearby walking field trips as well as field trips out in the broader community help deepen their understanding. Children welcome guest speakers, participate in group projects, discussions, block building, reading, writing, gardening, and art experiences. Service

learning projects also reflect curricular themes and help to deepen and bring meaning and purpose to their learning.

Third Grade

The heart of the Social Studies curriculum in third grade is the study of Los Angeles, covering its early history and its growth into the bustling metropolis it has become. Students' work is guided by essential questions such as, "How are places and people connected?" and "How can city systems support the best lives possible for all its residents?" Third graders examine how past and present systems contribute to what is happening in their city, the country, and the world today. Beginning with the physical environment of the Los Angeles Basin and then exploring why people move from place to place, students explore the lives of early inhabitants and then learn about the different groups of people who arrived and settled here after them. Students consider intent and impact as they examine the encounters of various groups of people. Third graders also explore identity and belonging and practice multiple-perspective thinking. Field trips connected to our curriculum enhance classroom learning by providing hands-on experiences that widen the lens to better view the history of our city and the people in it.

Fourth Grade

Launched by the essential question, "What happens when two cultures meet?" Fourth graders consider the beauty and diversity of California's people, history, land, and animals through the lens of the DEIB themes of nationality and immigration, geographic location, race, and anti-racism. Students engage in a project that includes the collection of "Who am I" photo-essays inspired by Kip Fulbeck's book *Part Asian 100% Hapa*. The study of California begins with a focus on the regions of California and mapping skills. From there, areas of study move chronologically from California's Indigenous peoples, with an emphasis on the Chumash, onto European Explorers, the Mission system, Mexican Ranchos, the Gold Rush, Chinese immigration, and culminates by looking at marginalized communities within the Old West.

Fifth Grade

Guided by the essential question: "How does the legacy of earlier groups and individuals influence subsequent generations?" Students begin to understand the perspective and experiences of the many people who made early America. They explore Native Americans, explorers, colonists, immigrants, slaves, free African Americans, pioneers, and government leaders. Students develop a growing awareness of the past and the

methods and tools of the historian. Fifth graders study how events and ideas shaped the United States. Considering history through the eyes of the people they study, students are asked to reflect on how race influences the course of events. Students deepen their understanding of the interrelatedness of geography, economics, culture, ethics, and political systems. Students gain an appreciation for the democratic system, our relationships with indigenous cultures within that system, the value of our nation's diversity, and a sense of empowerment to work for change within the framework of the law. Utilizing problem-based learning, design-thinking, and systems-thinking as launching off points, students engage in research projects focused around untold/unveiled history and include the options of multiple technological tools, such as Google Docs,, iPads, and more, to enhance and deepen their learning as well as a means to share it with their intended audience.

Handwriting and Typing

Curricular Overview

Across our elementary program, children write every day as part of meaningful learning. They write stories, record observations, respond to texts, and share their thinking across subjects. Writing is always connected to real purpose and grows alongside each child's development.

At Wildwood, handwriting is a central part of how children learn to express ideas. Research in child development consistently shows that handwriting supports brain development to strengthen memory, reading, attention, and writing fluency. The physical act of forming letters helps children connect thinking and language more deeply, especially in the early years when foundational neural pathways for literacy are developing.

In addition, current conversations in education, particularly at the university level and beyond, are increasingly highlighting the importance of handwritten work in response to the growing presence of AI tools. Many higher education settings are reconsidering the role of handwritten expression to ensure authentic thinking, deeper processing, and original student voice. We recognize that regardless of the school and work expectations that lay ahead for our youngest learners, the best preparation we can give them is one that is anchored in human skills, which includes strong handwriting foundations in the elementary years.

We value both handwriting and typing as tools for thinking and communication. Our approach is intentionally developmental: handwriting remains the primary foundation in

the early years, while typing is gradually added as students are ready to use it with purpose and confidence.

Children develop at different rates, and we honor that in our instruction. Some students may use additional supports such as keyboarding tools, modified expectations, or alternative ways of recording their thinking. In all cases, our goal remains the same: that every child can share their ideas clearly, confidently, and meaningfully through writing.

Pods-Second Grade

In the early grades, students develop print handwriting through explicit instruction and daily practice, building strong habits around pencil grip, letter formation, spacing, paper positioning, and control. Students learn how to hold a pencil comfortably and efficiently, how to orient the paper to support natural writing direction, and how to form letters with clarity and consistency. As they move into the upper grades, they are introduced to cursive, which supports fluency, stamina, and a more connected flow of writing.

Third-Fifth Grade

Typing is introduced in 3rd grade as a complementary tool. Students learn correct hand placement on the keyboard and ergonomic habits that support comfort, accuracy, and efficiency. It becomes increasingly important in the upper elementary years, supporting drafting, revising, publishing, and accessibility as students gain independence and prepare for middle school.

The Specialist Program

Our specialist programs are an essential part of every student's educational experience. Through Studio Specialists (Futures Lab, Performing Arts, Science, and Visual Arts), Physical Education, and Library, students have opportunities to explore ideas, develop new skills, engage in creative and critical thinking, collaborate with others, and discover new interests and passions. Together, these experiences allow students to engage in the creative, investigative, reflective, physical, and collaborative processes that are central to each discipline while building connections across their K–5 journey.

Wildwood's specialist program is intentionally designed to provide students with meaningful experiences that complement and extend classroom learning. Specialist learning does not exist in isolation; rather, it is woven throughout the life of the school and connected to classroom studies, school-wide initiatives, and community experiences. Specialist teachers collaborate with classroom teachers to support the development of the whole child and create opportunities for students to apply their learning in varied contexts.

Futures Lab

The Pods–5th Grade Futures Lab journey empowers students to become creative, inclusive designers, makers, and problem solvers who use their curiosity and imagination to make a positive impact. Through storytelling, play, systems thinking, community design, and technology, students explore how ideas become solutions and how design can respond to real human needs.

Using the design thinking process—empathizing, defining, ideating, prototyping, testing, and refining—students learn to approach challenges with curiosity, collaboration, and perseverance. They investigate problems, generate possibilities, create and improve solutions, and reflect on the impact of their work. Throughout their Futures Lab experiences, students come to understand that technology is not just a tool for creating, but a way to connect, innovate, strengthen communities, and imagine a more equitable and sustainable future.

Library

The Wildwood Library is a cozy, welcoming space where students develop a lifelong love of reading, curiosity, and the skills to become thoughtful users of information. It is a place where students can curl up with a favorite book, discover new stories, share recommendations with friends, and build a sense of belonging as readers. Through

scheduled library classes and opportunities to visit throughout the day, students explore books that reflect a diversity of experiences and perspectives while developing their own identities as readers.

Across Pods-5th Grade, the library program supports both literacy development and research skills. Younger students build a foundation for reading through rich literature experiences, story discussions, and opportunities to explore a wide range of books. As students grow, they become increasingly independent library users, learning how to navigate collections, conduct research, evaluate sources, and use information responsibly.

Through research projects, students learn to locate, analyze, and communicate information using both print and digital resources. They develop skills in digital citizenship, including online safety, ethical technology use, recognizing credible information, understanding media messages, and considering the impact of their digital choices. In partnership with classroom teachers, the library supports students in becoming joyful readers, confident researchers, and responsible participants in an increasingly connected world.

Performing Arts

Our Performing Arts program invites students to explore the many ways ideas, emotions, and stories can be expressed through drama, music, and dance. Starting their first year in the Pods, students develop as creative artists who use voice, movement, rhythm, and imagination to communicate, collaborate, and make meaning. Through ensemble experiences and creative exploration, students build confidence, take artistic risks, and learn the value of listening, responding, and creating together.

Through dramatic play, storytelling, music-making, and movement, students explore identity, community, culture, and the world around them. Learning experiences intentionally connect with classroom themes and invite students to engage with ideas from multiple perspectives, exploring how different voices, experiences, and cultural traditions shape the stories we tell. As students progress through the grades, they continue to refine their artistic skills while exploring diverse traditions, genres, and creative approaches.

By engaging with stories, music, and movement from a wide range of cultures and experiences, students develop empathy, cultural awareness, and an appreciation for perspectives beyond their own. Through performance and creative expression, students learn to honor the voices of others while discovering and sharing their own unique artistic voices.

Throughout their elementary years, students have multiple opportunities to share their creative work with authentic audiences, including family members and the broader Wildwood community. These experiences help students develop confidence, presence, and the ability to communicate their ideas with others. By fifth grade, students draw upon years of experience with performance, collaboration, and creative expression as they take on leadership roles, including helping lead Wildwood's Friday All School Meetings.

Physical Education

At Wildwood, we believe movement is an essential part of learning, well-being, and community. Our Physical Education and Wellness program invites students to develop physical skills, build healthy habits, collaborate with others, and experience the joy and confidence that come from moving their bodies. Students participate in P.E. 3–4 times each week, along with daily opportunities for active play, exploration, and connection during recess and outdoor time. Our outdoor campus provides a rich environment for movement, creativity, and collaboration, offering students space to explore, challenge themselves, and build relationships through play and physical activity.

Beginning in the Pods, students develop their physical abilities through four key areas: learning new skills, keeping their bodies strong and healthy, being a good teammate, and growing confidence. Younger students build a foundation of movement through active play, games, dance, tumbling, and skill-based activities that develop balance, coordination, agility, spatial awareness, and body control. As students progress through the grades, they apply these foundational skills to increasingly complex games, sports, fitness activities, and movement challenges while learning strategies, teamwork, and personal responsibility.

Throughout their Physical Education experiences, students learn that growth comes through practice, perseverance, and a willingness to try new things. They develop the ability to communicate, include others, navigate challenges, and contribute positively to a team. Students also build an understanding of personal wellness by exploring fitness, goal-setting, and healthy habits that support their overall well-being.

By the end of their elementary experience, students leave Physical Education with greater confidence in their abilities, an appreciation for the role movement plays in a healthy life, and the skills and mindset to continue being active, engaged members of their communities.

Science

At Wildwood, we believe science is a way of thinking, exploring, and understanding the world around us. Our elementary Science program nurtures curiosity and empowers students to see themselves as scientists who ask questions, investigate ideas, solve problems, and use their understanding to make a positive impact. Through hands-on exploration, observation, experimentation, and collaboration, students develop the skills and habits of mind that allow them to approach the world with curiosity and wonder.

Throughout the elementary years, students learn that scientists do more than find answers—they observe carefully, ask meaningful questions, gather and analyze evidence, communicate ideas, and revise their thinking as they learn more. Younger students begin by developing foundational scientific practices, including making observations, noticing patterns, and exploring the world through their senses. As students progress through the grades, they design investigations, test ideas, collect and interpret data, research from multiple sources, and engage in scientific conversations with their peers.

Students come to understand that scientific inquiry is not always a linear process, but rather an ongoing cycle of questioning, discovery, reflection, and revision. By the end of their elementary experience, students leave Wildwood with a deeper understanding of science as a tool for innovation, problem-solving, and creating positive change in the world.

Visual Arts

Our Visual Arts program invites students to explore, create, and communicate through artistic expression. Students develop confidence as artists by learning to observe closely, experiment with materials, explore artistic techniques, and use their creativity to express ideas, questions, and perspectives. Through the creative process, students learn that art is not only about the final product, but also about curiosity, exploration, reflection, and discovery.

Beginning in the Pods, students engage with a variety of materials, processes, and artistic traditions while developing foundational skills in drawing, painting, sculpture, design, and other forms of visual expression. Students explore the work of artists from diverse cultures and historical periods, making connections between art, identity, community, and the world around them. They learn to analyze and discuss works of art, consider multiple perspectives, and recognize art as a powerful way to communicate ideas and experiences.

The Visual Arts program incorporates design thinking, systems thinking, and Wildwood's commitment to inclusion and belonging, encouraging students to approach creative challenges with empathy, imagination, and a willingness to revise and refine their ideas. Through the use of individual sketchbooks, students document their learning, reflect on their creative process, develop ideas, and make their thinking visible.

Throughout their elementary experience, students develop the confidence to take creative risks, the skills to express their unique perspectives, and an appreciation for art as a way to understand themselves, others, and the world around them.

The Community Program

Buddy Program

A hallmark of the Wildwood experience is our Buddy Program, a tradition that celebrates the power of relationships across grade levels to build community, foster belonging, and create lasting memories. Through our Elementary Buddy Program, older students are paired with younger students to share experiences, build friendships, and learn from one another. These relationships often become some of the most memorable parts of a child's elementary experience, with many students continuing to recall their buddies and the special moments they shared long after they leave Wildwood.

Our Senior Siblings Program extends this tradition by welcoming high school seniors back into elementary classrooms as valued members of the community. Once a month, seniors visit their assigned classrooms to connect with younger students and participate in meaningful ways, often serving as reading partners, math buddies, mentors, or simply a caring presence. These cross-divisional partnerships celebrate the strength of our community and remind students that they are part of a larger Wildwood family that grows alongside them.

Day of Play

Each spring, Wildwood celebrates Day of Play as an opportunity to honor the importance of unstructured play and recognize play as a powerful way children learn, create, problem-solve, collaborate, and make meaning of the world around them.

We believe play is not separate from learning—it is a meaningful pathway for learning. Day of Play reflects our commitment to child-centered learning, creativity, imagination, and the belief that children are capable, curious, and full of ideas. Through play, children develop the skills and dispositions that support lifelong learning, including curiosity, persistence, collaboration, communication, and the confidence to explore new possibilities.

This day offers students an expanded opportunity to engage in open-ended exploration and follow their curiosity. The campus becomes a landscape of possibilities where children are invited to explore materials, collaborate with peers, experiment with ideas, and imagine the many ways materials can be used. Teachers thoughtfully support each space, observe student thinking, ask questions, and support children as they pursue their own ideas and discoveries.

The purpose of the day is not to create a specific product or outcome. Instead, students practice creativity, collaboration, communication, problem-solving, and flexible thinking as they make choices, navigate challenges, and bring their ideas to life. Day of Play reminds us that some of the most meaningful learning happens when children have the time, space, and freedom to explore, connect, and create together.

For many students, Day of Play becomes one of the experiences they remember most fondly from their elementary years. Long after they leave campus, students often reflect on the joy, creativity, and sense of possibility they experienced on this special day—a reminder that the most meaningful moments of childhood are often the ones where they were given the freedom to imagine, create, and play.

Grade Level Community Jobs

One of Wildwood's long-held beliefs is that children learn best when they are part of something real. When their ideas, efforts, and contributions have purpose, children develop a strong sense of responsibility, belonging, and confidence in their ability to make a difference. That is why every student, from the Pods through fifth grade, participates in a grade-level Community Job.

Community Jobs provide meaningful opportunities for students to care for and strengthen our school community while developing leadership, collaboration, and a sense of stewardship. Each role is thoughtfully designed to reflect students' developmental stages, interests, and growing capacity to contribute in authentic and age-appropriate ways.

Students begin their Community Job journey in the Pods as Community Builders, learning how to create belonging through friendship, inclusion, and caring relationships. As students grow, they take on increasing levels of responsibility and leadership, helping younger students navigate school, strengthening connections across grade levels, and contributing to the larger Wildwood community. By fifth grade, students serve as School Ambassadors, representing Wildwood with pride while helping others feel welcomed, connected, and valued.

Community Jobs are much more than responsibilities to complete. Throughout the year, students notice needs, generate ideas, solve problems, and work together to make their community stronger. Through reflection, collaboration, and celebration, students learn that their voices and actions matter. Many Community Jobs connect naturally to students' social studies learning, creating authentic opportunities to explore citizenship, leadership, communication, and stewardship.

Most importantly, Community Jobs help students discover that they are capable contributors who can positively impact the world around them. At Wildwood, caring for our community—and for one another—is not something children wait to do when they are older. It is something they practice every day.

Pods	Second Grade	Third Grade	Fourth Grade	Fifth Grade
Community Builders	Campus Connectors	Community Caretakers	Community Storytellers	School Ambassadors
<i>"Creating a strong sense of belonging by helping our pods and school community work together, care for one another, and thrive."</i>	<i>"Helping our community stay connected by sharing messages, celebrating one another, and ensuring that communication strengthens relationships across our school."</i>	<i>"Taking responsibility for our shared environment by caring for the spaces, systems, and resources that help our community thrive."</i>	<i>"Helping our community know one another by sharing stories, celebrating people's experiences, and highlighting the many ways we contribute to school life."</i>	<i>"Leading with integrity as representatives of Wildwood; welcoming others, sharing what makes our school special, and helping every community member feel seen, valued, and proud to belong."</i>

Community Time

At Wildwood, we believe that building a strong, inclusive community requires intentional time and attention. Belonging does not happen by chance – it grows through shared experiences, meaningful relationships, and opportunities for students to understand themselves, learn from others, and contribute to something larger than themselves. Each week, students participate in Community Time, a dedicated opportunity to build relationships, explore shared interests, and strengthen the connections that make our school community thrive.

Through intentionally designed groups, students connect with peers across grade levels, learn from one another, and engage in meaningful ways that promote kindness, care, curiosity, and understanding.

Pods-Fifth Grade Student Groups

Students in the Pods through second grade choose from several community-focused groups, including Cultural Connections, Green Team, and Community Welcomers. Through these experiences, students explore what it means to care for others, celebrate the many identities and experiences within our community, and take action to make Wildwood a more welcoming and connected place.

Third-Fifth Grade Student Affinity Groups

Students in third through fifth grade continue to have the opportunity to participate in the same community groups they enjoyed during the primaries, while also having the option to join self-identifying race-based affinity groups. Affinity groups provide dedicated spaces for students who share a racial identity to build community, explore their experiences, celebrate their identities, and develop a deeper understanding of themselves and one another. Students also engage in learning that builds empathy and awareness of the diverse experiences and perspectives within and beyond our community. Students who choose not to participate in an affinity group may join Interconnections, a space focused on learning about cultures, traditions, identities, and experiences from around the world. Through discussion, exploration, and reflection, students build cultural understanding and practice the skills needed to engage thoughtfully and respectfully with others.

At its core, Community Time helps students understand that they are active members of a larger community. Whether caring for the environment, welcoming others, exploring identity, or learning about different cultures and perspectives, students discover that belonging comes with both connection and responsibility.

Additional Opportunities for Learning and Connection

Advisory

Wildwood School believes Advisory is essential for student success. Our Advisory program begins in 5th grade and continues through senior year. Like all classes, Advisory offers a structured curriculum that integrates academic support, peer bonding and team building, multicultural programs, community involvement, and activities designed to enhance higher-level thinking and communication skills.

Advisory classes are led by teachers who serve as students' mentors, advocates, and primary links between home and school. The small group setting encourages the development of supportive relationships with peers and adults who students grow to know well and can trust. Advisory becomes a safe space where kids try out new ideas and explore their own identities. In the process, they cultivate a sense of self—academically, emotionally, and socially.

With a focus on relationships and exchange of ideas, one of the primary objectives of Advisory is to provide students with a comfortable place to engage in thoughtful—and often lively—discussions about national and world events. Guided by their advisor, students learn to share their thoughts, listen to others' opinions, analyze sources, and respect differing points of view.

Part of the Advisory curriculum focuses on learning about and participating in local community involvement projects, both on campus and at local social-service agencies. Projects are age appropriate and selected to demonstrate to students what they can give and gain as they become aware of a range of community needs in human services and environmental stewardship.

Athletics

Wildwood's elementary athletics program offers fifth-grade students an exciting introduction to team sports and athletic competition. Through co-ed basketball, volleyball, and soccer clinics, students build foundational skills while experiencing the camaraderie, challenge, and joy that come from being part of a team.

Our athletics program is grounded in the belief that sports are about more than winning. Students learn the importance of sportsmanship, perseverance, teamwork, and leadership while developing confidence as athletes. Every student who wishes to

participate has a place on the field or court, and coaches work to create an environment where all students feel supported, challenged, and successful.

For many students, elementary athletics serves as a first step into Wildwood's broader athletic program, fostering a lifelong appreciation for movement, teamwork, and healthy competition while preparing them for future opportunities in middle and upper school athletics.

Enrichment

Wildwood's After School Enrichment program extends the joy of learning beyond the school day by offering students opportunities to explore new interests, develop skills, and pursue passions through a wide range of engaging experiences. Each trimester, Pod-8th grade students can choose from classes designed to inspire curiosity, creativity, and exploration across a variety of disciplines, including physical activities, visual and performing arts, science, technology, language, and literature.

Enrichment classes are led by Wildwood faculty, alumni, and trusted outside educators and organizations who bring their expertise and enthusiasm to each experience. Through these opportunities, students have the chance to try something new, deepen existing interests, and connect with peers in a different learning environment.

New offerings are shared three times each year—fall, winter, and spring—and registration is completed online. Most enrichment classes meet once a week for one hour and run for eight sessions. A fee is associated with each course.

Health & Wellness: The Wildwood Wellness Wheel

At Wildwood, we believe that well-being is foundational to learning, relationships, and personal growth. When children understand themselves, care for their bodies, and develop the skills to navigate the world around them, they are better equipped to learn, connect, and contribute as members of their communities.

The Wildwood Health & Wellness program supports students in developing the knowledge, habits, and skills needed to care for their physical, emotional, social, and digital well-being. Rather than viewing wellness as a single subject, we intentionally weave it throughout the school experience through classroom conversations, movement and fitness activities, guided reflection, and age-appropriate lessons. Students learn to understand themselves, navigate challenges, build healthy relationships, and make thoughtful choices that support their overall well-being.

Our Wellness Wheel is organized around three interconnected areas:

Physical Wellness

Physical wellness helps students understand how their bodies grow, move, and function while exploring the habits that support lifelong health and well-being. Through classroom learning and Physical Education experiences, students develop an understanding of how movement, nutrition, rest, mindfulness, and daily choices contribute to their physical and emotional health.

Students learn that caring for their bodies is an ongoing practice and develop the knowledge and skills to make choices that support energy, growth, focus, and overall well-being.

Key areas of learning include:

- How the body works – understanding movement, strength, endurance, physical development, and the ways bodies grow and change
- Healthy daily habits – exploring the importance of sleep, nutrition, hydration, and movement
- Mind-body connection – developing awareness of emotions, stress, mindfulness, and strategies for regulation and focus
- Healthy lifestyle choices – understanding how routines and decisions influence overall health and well-being

Body Safety, Development & Self-Advocacy

Through discussions, stories, role-playing, and guided activities, students practice communicating their needs, recognizing situations that may feel uncomfortable, and identifying trusted adults who can provide care and support. These lessons build confidence, self-awareness, and the ability to make informed choices as students grow.

Key areas of learning include:

- Body boundaries and consent – understanding personal space, body autonomy, safe and unsafe touch, and the importance of communicating boundaries
- Trusted adults and support systems – identifying caring adults and understanding how and when to ask for help

- Recognizing safe and unsafe situations – developing awareness of feelings, instincts, and external signals that support personal safety
- Self-advocacy and communication – practicing how to express needs, ask questions, report concerns, and support others
- Human development and growth – learning about how bodies grow and change over time in ways that promote respect, privacy, and self-understanding

Digital Health

Digital health supports students in becoming safe, responsible, and thoughtful participants in an increasingly digital world. Through age-appropriate lessons in Futures Lab and across the curriculum, students learn how to navigate technology with awareness, integrity, and care for themselves and others.

Students explore how digital choices influence their relationships, learning, privacy, and well-being while developing the skills needed to engage positively in online spaces.

Key areas of learning include:

- Digital safety and privacy – protecting personal information, understanding online boundaries, and making safe choices
- Media balance and screen use – reflecting on how technology use affects attention, emotions, habits, and relationships
- Digital citizenship and communication – practicing respectful, responsible, and kind participation in online communities
- Media literacy and critical thinking – evaluating online information, recognizing bias and misinformation, and understanding digital content