

Lower School

2026-2027 CURRICULUM GUIDE

LOWER SCHOOL

Overview

The Lower School includes Kindergarten through Class IV and is committed to educating the whole child and fostering a love of learning. The Lower School program is designed to foster cognitive, social, and emotional growth, and is responsive to variations in rates of development and styles of learning, both of which influence when and how students learn. Teachers encourage creativity, independence, and self-reliance, as well as intellectual discipline and the ability to work and play effectively in a group. The curriculum begins with concrete manipulations with steady growth towards more abstract inferential thinking as students acquire and put to use the symbols of our society. Homeroom teachers in each grade teach reading, English, mathematics, history, current events, and geography, and incorporate technology to reinforce the curriculum. Other Lower School faculty members, specialists in their fields, teach science, modern languages, music, art, library, technology, and physical education.

Classroom teachers use many materials to stimulate each student's imagination, to encourage social and intellectual growth, and to foster the development of a positive self-image. While supporting each child's individual development and learning, we also encourage students to work collaboratively and to become effective group members. Daily class meetings encourage self-expression, builds a sense of community, and fosters discussion skills. Our goal is to help each child delight in exploring reading, writing, mathematics, science, history, and geography in an academic setting. Emphasis on perseverance, concentration, independence, and evaluation of her own work helps each child to develop an effective approach to learning.

Throughout the Lower School program, there is a commitment to diversity, equity, and social justice work reflected in every classroom. Lower School faculty want students to learn how to think independently, to ask questions, to reason inductively and deductively, and to synthesize their learning. Teachers encourage students to take risks and to use mistakes constructively. Warmth, understanding, and respect are central to our program, which is based on Jean Piaget's concepts of child development. The curriculum is designed to teach basic skills systematically; content is a vehicle to address those skills rather than an end in itself. This approach accommodates developmental differences and variations in learning styles, enabling each child to move at her own appropriate pace within the framework of class expectations.

ENGLISH & READING

Nightingale encourages a love of reading and writing. The English and Reading program is designed to prepare students to become fluent readers and writers, good listeners, and confident speakers. Students read a varied selection of literature throughout their time in Lower School, including but not limited to decodable texts, fiction and nonfiction, biography, poetry, folktales, and plays. English and reading are taught daily. The English curriculum, anchored by The Writing Revolution, provides regular practice of oral and written communication skills. Each student has opportunities to perform and practice public speaking through poetry, recitation, and drama. Students work on creative and expository writing assignments, poetry, and journal writing throughout the Lower School. They are explicitly taught and guided through each step of the writing process, beginning with brainstorming and ending with publication. Reading, spelling, and handwriting is taught using multisensory techniques. Reading is approached through phonetic and sight word work using PAF and Fundations as a base, with other programs and material woven into instruction. Daily lessons include spelling, handwriting, vocabulary, grammar, and word processing. Dictation is a part of each reading lesson and approaches accurate spelling through phonetic patterns. Students work in small groups designed to accommodate various learning needs and styles. Reading is part of each child's daily homework.

KINDERGARTEN

Reading readiness is taught in small groups. Students participate in oral language, listening, and writing activities intended to help them build the skills needed to become developing readers and writers. Various activities are designed to reinforce efficient and automatic sound/symbol correspondence that will eventually lead to accurate phonetic analysis. Students keep a journal throughout the year to encourage their creativity and independent thought. Handwriting is taught, using PAF motor patterns, emphasizing correct letter formation and sound symbol relationships. Regular story time exposes students to a rich program of literature.

CLASS I

The reading program in Class I fosters a confident attitude towards reading and an enjoyment of books. Reading skills are taught through phonics instruction, dictation, and sight vocabulary. The program emphasizes oral reading and comprehension skills, focusing on fluency and expression. Listening skills, handwriting, vocabulary, creative expression, journal writing, and spelling are integral parts of the program. Students use and are exposed to graphic organizers and editing marks to assist them in the writing process. Utilizing elements of The Writing Revolution, students learn to expand short declarative sentences by providing details and answers to question words (who, what, when, where, and why). Students share their work with their peers throughout the year.

CLASS II

The goal in Class II is to increase and expand reading fluency with an emphasis on non-fiction, poetry, and novels. Daily dictations help build a basic sense of sentence structure and provide practice in spelling rules and phonics. Vocabulary is studied in context. Creative and expository writing experiences encourage students to write freely and to further develop as readers and writers. Through The Writing Revolution exercises and activities, students learn to use graphic organizers to write more complex sentences and basic paragraphs. There are many opportunities for students to share their achievements with others.

CLASS III

In Class III, students focus on strengthening their oral reading and deepening their comprehension skills while continuing to develop their love of literature. They learn strategies to encode and decode multisyllabic words by recognizing rules and patterns. Using the novels read in class, students practice reading habits such as summarization, identifying explicit and implicit ideas, and tracking character changes across the novel. Students also learn nonfiction reading skills, such as identifying the main idea and note-taking. These skills are interdisciplinarily applied to research in both reading and social studies classes. The focus in English class is the solidification of basic grammatical skills in the context of longer, multi-paragraph written pieces. The students engage in the multiple steps of the writing process, which include planning, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing. They develop their skills by writing compositions in a variety of genres, including personal narrative, nonfiction, opinion, poetry, and correspondence.

CLASS IV

Class IV follows an ELA model for learning with the goal of fostering a love of reading and writing, helping students to see these two disciplines as intrinsically intertwined, and preparing them for Middle School. Expository and creative writing assignments, including poetry, are a regular part of the ELA program. Students learn to write and edit different kinds of paragraphs incorporating topic and concluding sentences. Students explore various types of figurative language to enhance their writing. They also continue their study of the writing process in which they learn how to collect ideas, plan, draft, revise, and edit a final draft. Classes across ELA use various novels to address the concepts of plot, setting, character development, figurative and symbolic language, and theme. The students build fluency along with comprehension skills. Students are pushed to develop their own claims about the novels, reinforced by textual evidence, leading to healthy debates and conversations around a text. Students in Class IV are also encouraged to build an independent reading practice through the use of nightly reading assignments. ELA classes address the explicit instruction of vocabulary, spelling, and grammar. Within our integrated ELA programming, students make use of the rich cultural offerings of New York City. Trips to the Metropolitan Museum, the Cooper Hewitt and Museum of the City of New York help bring our reading and writing to life in a variety of ways.

MATHEMATICS

Nightingale's mathematics program develops conceptual understanding of key mathematical ideas using a rigorous and coherent model of progression from Kindergarten through Class IV. Students are encouraged to take risks and try new strategies as their understanding of mathematical relationships develops. Readily available manipulative materials broaden logical and creative thinking skills. Abstract concepts are given concrete meaning through a variety of tools. Through a blend of the Bridges in Mathematics curriculum, problem solving, and math in context, Nightingale's math program allows each Lower School student to access material through various entry points. Math is taught each day and it provides many opportunities to explore, investigate, and solidify an understanding of numbers and operations, geometry, and measurement while continuing to provide healthy cognitive challenges through in-class discussions and collaborative group assignments.

KINDERGARTEN

With an emphasis on process and strategy, the Kindergarten mathematics program is designed to foster logical thinking and problem-solving skills, to establish number sense, and to instill the idea that there are many ways to solve a problem. Students study patterns, attributes, addition and subtraction, and use a variety of manipulatives to reinforce their understanding of numeration. Students develop an understanding of addition and subtraction facts to 10 and learn to count to 100 by 1s, 2s, 5s and 10s. Students create a calendar each month, reinforcing temporal concepts of past, present, and future; numeral formation; and sequence, especially with respect to the days of the week and months of the year. Tangrams, pattern blocks, and block building develop spatial awareness and elementary geometric concepts.

CLASS I

Students continue to hone their recall of addition and subtraction facts to 10 while developing strategies to build fluency of facts to 20. Using strategies that emerge from the use of number racks, ten frames, number bonds, and number lines, students become proficient in their understanding of mathematical operations and their functions. As they add and subtract two-digit quantities, their efficient use of strategies deepens their understanding of numbers to 120. In addition, place value concepts are investigated through the use of sticks and bundles, dimes, nickels, and pennies, and other manipulatives. A variety of tools and models are used to explore two- and three-dimensional shapes and fractions (halves, thirds, and fourths). Telling time to the hour and half-hour and determining elapsed time is also introduced.

CLASS II

Number racks, open number lines, and base ten area pieces (hundreds, tens, and ones) further the development and mastery of addition and subtraction concepts. Addition and subtraction fact fluency to 20 is emphasized. Students also develop strategies for solving word problems. Place-value materials are used to model numbers to 1,000. Flexible and efficient strategies for problem solving are derived from student- and teacher-created models as problems increase in sophistication and numeric complexity. Careful attention is given to solidifying number sense and developing a conceptual understanding of multi-digit addition and subtraction. A variety of manipulatives further an understanding of geometry and fraction concepts. Metric and customary measurement are explored through student-centered projects and activities. Routine opportunities to play games reinforce many of the skills and strategies of the math program.

CLASS III

The Class III math program continues to solidify the basic operations of addition and subtraction while extending students' understanding of place value, multi-digit addition and subtraction, and problem solving. The standard algorithms for adding and subtracting multi-digit numbers are introduced after demonstrating mastery of these concepts. Students develop mastery of multiplication and division facts and related problem-solving strategies. Models—including equal groups, arrays, the number line, and ratio tables—complement contexts as students explore the relationship between multiplication and division. Measurement of time, mass, and volume is followed by the study of fractions and geometry.

CLASS IV

Reasoning skills continue to develop as multi-digit multiplication and division situations are presented. Mastery of multiplication and division segues into the study of fraction and decimal equivalence and, subsequently, the addition and subtraction of fractions and decimals. Investigations provide real-life contexts through which students begin to generate strategies for problem solving. Exposure to a variety of tools—including geoboards, number lines, and base ten pieces—assist students as they model, compare, compose, and decompose fractions and decimals. A formal introduction of angles, lines, and reflective symmetry comprises the geometry content of the math program. A variety of resources provide instances for students to describe and represent patterns and functions, prove relations, and solve for unknowns.

SOCIAL STUDIES AND GEOGRAPHY

The social studies and geography curriculum provides an introduction to ideas and information from the social sciences. Students are encouraged to discuss current events. Our youngest students gain a broader understanding of themselves in relation to their environment and the world around them, while older students explore different cultures and environments, emphasizing geography, climate, and animal and human adaptation. Basic research techniques are taught, and students work on interdisciplinary cultural projects. Museum trips supplement the program, and visits to community organizations and historic sites are an integral part of the curriculum. The program draws upon materials designed to provide experiences with authentic artifacts and activities.

KINDERGARTEN

The focus of the Kindergarten Social Studies curriculum is on building an awareness of students' immediate environments, including identity, family, community, school, and traditions relating to different cultures. It is broken down into three seasons. In the fall, the focus is on identity and family, including an in-depth study on skin color. In the winter, students learn about the holidays of light with an emphasis on identifying the similarities and differences seen across cultures. Finally, in the spring, celebratory months of Black History (February), Women's History (March), and APIDA/Jewish History (May) are explored. Topics vary from year to year according to student interests. Museum trips and visits to other New York City points of interest broaden the scope of classroom activities. The Kindergarteners engage in a capstone project with a focus on recyclable materials and the environment. Many events throughout the year, including two visits from the Materials Classroom, a trip to the Museum of Art and Design, and a plant sale emphasized the importance of engaging with reusable materials to improve global warming and benefit our environment.

CLASS I

Class I studies and explores the different types of communities within and outside of the Schoolhouse. They begin the year with a study of the classroom community. Students discuss what it means to be a good classroom citizen as they make connections and learn to respect their similarities and differences. Students then study the fundamental needs of all humanity: food, clothing, and shelter. Class I learns how the environment and culture influence how people meet these basic needs. The students participate in both independent and cooperative group projects. Guest speakers and field trips supplement the

curriculum, including a visit from two costume designers and a field trip to experience the Urasenke Tea Ceremony.

CLASS II

Class II studies the geography and people of New York City, focusing on how the city has changed over time. The students start with basic map reading skills, learning to locate the five boroughs, major waterways, and city landmarks. They also learn about the city's beginnings in Mannahatta and New Amsterdam. Through a study of immigrant life in the early 1900s, students come to understand how New York City's population has grown and changed. The continuing transformation of the built environment is explored through study of subways, skyscrapers, and bridges. The curriculum is brought to life with field trips, hands-on projects, books, photos, and online media.

CLASS III

Through lessons and activities across the curriculum, Class III students learn to effectively, empathetically, and critically look at current events and history through multiple lenses, understanding the rights and responsibilities of people in a democratic society—whether it be the classroom or the world. Some of the themes of our study include geography, the study of culture, the United Nations and the rights of the child, conservation and design thinking, and global citizenship.

CLASS IV

Class IV Social Studies explores United States history and geography with an emphasis on social justice movements and the power of individuals to affect positive change. In addition, students study the 50 states and their capitals. Students use the Super 3 research process (Plan, Do, Review) to execute an exploration of US states. The students then explore the history of social justice movements in the United States. Emphasis is placed on the Civil Rights movement, but other movements studied include Women's Rights and Suffrage, LGBTQIA+ Rights, Workers' Rights among others. After exposure to a range of changemakers and social justice movements, the students identify influential individuals they are interested in researching. They utilize the library collection and digital resources to gather information about their chosen individual and the movement that they were a part of. Students practice note-taking skills and write an outline to craft a research paper. In addition, the students work with mentor teachers from across the school to create unique projects about their changemaker. Students may create dances, songs, picture books, or a myriad of other options. It's a wonderful way to end their Lower School experience. This research project is scaffolded to build independence and critical research skills, ending with a multimodal final project that requires students to analyze, evaluate, and create content using information gathered from print and online sources. The interdisciplinary approach includes trips, projects, novels, and discussions of current events.

SCIENCE

The Lower School science curriculum emphasizes the scientific principles governing biology, chemistry, physics, and the earth sciences. Students work to identify structured patterns of matter, order in space, and the interactions of living things. Science is approached as both an organized body of knowledge and as a process encouraging active observation and participation. In the Lower School science laboratory, students study a different strand of science each trimester (physical science, earth science, life science). Scientific inquiry plays a vital role in the classroom, as each student will be expected to keep a science notebook, which promotes formulating hypotheses, conducting and organizing research and experiments, participating in field study, and recording and comparing data. Mathematics, technology, and engineering principles are incorporated into the science curriculum each year and students will be expected to complete various in-class projects.

KINDERGARTEN

Kindergarten students study scientific skills, climate studies, simple machines, and botany. The laboratory program focuses on observations, experiments, demonstrations, and recording. The students work on many hands-on activities as individuals and in small groups to develop organized and analytical thinking as well as problem-solving skills.

CLASS I

Students investigate the rock cycle, states of matter, and entomology. They begin recording their observations using more in-depth methods—such as illustrating, diagramming, tables, and graphs. Emphasis is placed on hands-on activities and learning how to utilize scientific terminology when articulating their observations.

CLASS II

Students explore magnetism, electricity, and hydrology concepts. Students refine their observation techniques as they continue to develop an understanding of the scientific process through hands-on experiments. Students begin formulating deeper questions and hypotheses from data gathered—either from previous experiments or past experiences.

CLASS III

Students focus on the growth, development and needs of plants and animals, the physics of forces involved in motion and the technological design of vehicles, the interconnectivity of natural ecosystems, and the power of conducting genuine research in the field. The methodology behind field study and the skills needed to conduct research in the field is heavily emphasized this year. Students regularly leave the Schoolhouse and head into Central Park to make real world observations and conduct meaningful field experiments. Much of Class III science involves asking questions and developing ways to seek out the answers. Throughout the year, students are asked to use their observation and recording skills, develop and analyze data, use appropriate tools, create models, and apply scientific understanding.

CLASS IV

Students study the interactions between the Earth, the Sun, and the Moon ,how these interactions affect life on Earth, how motion energy can move and change in a collision, and how animals use their senses to communicate. Class IV students are regularly asked to answer scientific questions by making claims that they can support with evidence in the form of scientific data and observations. Students have the opportunity to create and carry out scientific investigations and develop explanations about the world based on evidence discovered from their own work. Developing scientific understanding can be messy. It is in the sorting out of these messes that students take control and work towards finding greater meaning in the universe.

SPANISH

The Lower School Spanish Program is designed to build a foundation to inspire lifelong language learners. Language concepts are explored through a combination of engaging experiences inclusive of a variety of diverse learning styles which encourage active participation and risk taking. An emphasis on the study of the people and places where Spanish is spoken in the world are integral to the curriculum. Each year of study is centered around a particular country or region. Students are provided with multiple opportunities to enhance their reading, writing, listening and pronunciation skills during each class session, while learning about significant, authentic cultural themes and traditions.

In addition to their weekly Spanish classes, students also participate in a SING period as a whole grade, which is done in collaboration with the music department and offers additional exposure to music and the sounds of Spanish. Outside of the classroom, students use their language skills to connect with native speakers, both through a local partnership with the Carter Burden Senior Center in East Harlem, as well as with Lower Students at a school in Santiago, Chile. After several years of study, students become comfortable using their language skills to ask questions, present information on a variety of topics, and connect with others in the context of real world situations.

KINDERGARTEN

The Kindergarten Spanish program is designed to develop students' language skills in the context of authentic situations that encourage active participation, personal interactions and multiple opportunities for oral expression. The Kindergarten year-long country of focus is Mexico, and language skills are presented through a thematic based exploration of the various traditions, celebrations and notable citizens which represent this vibrant country. Curricular collaborations with teachers of other subjects allow concepts to be presented and practiced in a familiar context and provide enhanced opportunities for language exposure. By the end of Kindergarten Spanish, students will be able to express basic needs and ask questions using familiar phrases, greet others using a selection of short phrases, describe personal preferences and identify objects using a variety of adjectives. Instilling a love of learning world languages in students and a lifelong curiosity about other cultures are foundational elements of the Lower School Spanish program.

CLASS I

The Class I Spanish program is designed to develop students' language skills in the context of authentic situations which encourage active participation, personal interactions and multiple opportunities for oral expression. The Class I Spanish curriculum is aligned closely with the Class I social studies curriculum, allowing for language concepts to be acquired in a meaningful context. The year-long Class I country of focus is Spain, and language skills are presented through a thematic based exploration of the various traditions, celebrations and notable citizens which represent this vibrant country. Curricular collaborations with teachers of other subjects allow concepts to be presented and practiced in a familiar context and provide enhanced opportunities for language exposure. By the end of Class I Spanish, students will be able to express basic needs and ask questions using familiar phrases, interview and greet others using a variety of complete sentences, describe daily facts and weather observations independently, express personal preferences, and identify objects using a variety of adjectives in both oral and written form. Instilling a love of learning world languages in students and a lifelong curiosity about other cultures are foundational elements of the Lower School Spanish program.

CLASS II

The Class II Spanish program is designed to develop students' language skills in the context of authentic situations which encourage active participation, personal interactions and multiple opportunities for oral expression. The Class II Spanish curriculum is aligned closely with the Class II social studies curriculum, allowing for language concepts to be acquired in a meaningful context. The year-long Class II region of focus is the Caribbean, and language skills are presented through a thematic based exploration of the various traditions, celebrations, and notable citizens which represent this vibrant part of the world. Curricular collaborations with teachers of other subjects allow concepts to be presented and practiced in a familiar context and provide enhanced opportunities for language exposure. By the end of Class II Spanish, students will be able to express basic needs and ask questions using familiar phrases, use connecting words to extend ideas into longer sentences, describe daily facts and weather observations independently, express personal opinions and preferences, and identify objects using a variety of adjectives in both oral and written form. Instilling a love of learning world languages in students and a lifelong curiosity about other cultures are foundational elements of the Lower School Spanish program.

CLASS III

The Class III Spanish program is designed to develop students' language skills in the context of authentic situations which encourage active participation, personal interactions, and multiple opportunities for oral expression. The Class III Spanish curriculum aligns closely with the social studies curriculum, allowing for language concepts

to be acquired in a meaningful context. The year-long Class III region of focus is South America, and language skills are presented through a thematic based exploration of the various traditions, celebrations, and notable citizens which represent this vibrant part of the world. Curricular collaborations with teachers of other subjects allow concepts to be presented and practiced in a familiar context and provide enhanced opportunities for language exposure. By the end of Class III Spanish, students will be able to express a multitude of needs and ask various questions using familiar phrases, use connecting words to extend ideas into longer sentences and paragraphs, describe elements of personal identity utilizing verbs and descriptive language, express personal opinions and preferences, and identify objects using a variety of adjectives in both oral and written form.

CLASS IV

The Class IV Spanish program is designed to build upon the learning established in previous years of study, as well as prepare students to use their language skills to engage in real world experiences and develop meaningful relationships. While students explore various features of Chile, they learn poetry and write poems emphasizing the style of Chilean poet Pablo Neruda. Students have the opportunity to present their poems formally, as well as apply their language learning in a real context when visiting a local Senior Center. Additionally, Class IV students connect with Spanish speaking students from a Lower School located in Santiago, Chile. Multiple opportunities for speaking, reading, writing and presenting are offered to deepen their overall language development. Emphasis is placed on oral expression, while introductory grammar concepts are established to prepare students for continued study of the mechanics of language. Instilling a love of learning world languages in students and a lifelong interest in other cultures are both foundational elements of the Lower School Spanish program.

TECHNOLOGY

Our students use technology extensively in the Lower School. All classrooms are equipped with interactive whiteboards and Apple TVs, which enhance interaction with the material as well as collaboration among students; a 1:1 device program begins in Class III. The curriculum teaches students to use the computer as an academic tool as they gain confidence in their ability to explore and create with state-of-the-art technology. Students engage in creative, open-ended problem solving and project-based learning that supports the classroom curriculum, and are taught robotics and programming throughout Lower School, beginning with the use of BeeBots in Kindergarten and continuing through to programming with Scratch and LEGO Robotics. By the end of Lower School, students will have acquired skills in keyboarding, word processing, multimedia software, programming, robotics, design, engineering, web based research, and digital citizenship skills.

VISUAL ARTS

In Lower School Art, students learn to use different materials, processes, and techniques to express their thoughts, feelings, and perceptions. These explorations lead to meaningful connections to their personal interests and experiences and foster creative responses to new ideas. Inventive work with art materials is accompanied by direct observation of works of art and design. Through the study of a diverse range of artworks and artists, the development of art vocabulary, the application of new techniques, and experimenting with various materials, students learn to produce and interpret visual imagery with confidence and fluency. Projects encourage students to embrace mistakes and take creative risks, empowering them to discover their own solutions as they brainstorm, manipulate, and create work. Imagination, storytelling, and collaboration are fostered throughout the creative process.

KINDERGARTEN

Kindergarten students work with a variety of materials including paints, watercolors, crayons, collage, clay, and yarn. Creativity, imagination, and exploration of media are encouraged. The extensive classroom art program, wherein students are introduced to such crafts as sewing, stamp- and print-making, and mixed-media pictures, is enhanced and supported by work in the art studio.

CLASS I

Class I students create art in a setting that promotes inventiveness and sharing. Projects are designed to teach basic art concepts and to introduce a variety of media and techniques. Students explore painting, printmaking, collage, and mixed-media sculpture. Observational skills are stressed, and subjects are drawn from the students' own imagination and life experiences.

CLASS II

In Class II, Students are encouraged to express themselves by developing an understanding of art concepts and materials. Thoughtful use of color and composition are emphasized while students build three dimensional objects with moving parts using a variety of tools. Students work individually and in groups, drawing inspiration from direct observation and imaginative invention. Project themes are developed from a child's life experiences and imagination.

CLASS III

The Class III studio curriculum builds upon techniques and concepts introduced in previous grades while providing a wide spectrum of unique expression. Projects become multifaceted and use inventive combinations of art materials; three-dimensional objects are planned and built using a variety of sculptural materials and tools. Proportion, composition, and color theory are emphasized in the execution of these projects.

CLASS IV

Students develop skills and art vocabulary learned in previous grades. They directly observe art through the study

of reproductions and museum visits. Students combine shapes to construct different sculptural objects; this activity reinforces their knowledge of three-dimensional form. They draw and paint to explore compositional and spatial relationships. Students review simple color theory, practice mixing colors, and explore a variety of brushstrokes and painting techniques.

PERFORMING ARTS

DRAMA

Children develop a variety of communication skills through drama and develop ways to participate as both members of a group and as leaders. An emphasis on ensemble work within the classroom encourages students to become responsible members of a cohesive group. Acting in drama class serves many purposes: it is a means by which students develop social, emotional, physical, and intellectual capacities; in addition, it serves to create and preserve friendships, build problem-solving skills, and establish how to work together in a collaborative way.

CLASS III

A trimester course in Class III introduces students to drama skills. The primary purpose is to foster personality growth and facilitate learning to explore drama as an art form and use it as an approach to learning in other areas. In class, students use creative drama techniques to bring stories and characters to life. Students learn to work together by writing their own short plays, using storyboards, and presenting them at the end of the course.

MUSIC

Music instruction in the Lower School centers on active music-making; students sing, dance, and play instruments in every class. Through playfully scaffolded exploration, Lower School musicians learn to take risks, listen intently, collaborate, and trust their inherent musical instincts. Music literacy and performance skills are taught sequentially using materials from all over the world, fostering global awareness in the classroom and developing the skills to meaningfully engage with both familiar and unfamiliar music. In addition to biweekly small-group music classes, each Lower School student participates in a SING period, where the entire grade comes together in the Black Box theater space. This class is used for whole-group singing and dancing, playing music games, sharing student work, integrating Spanish instruction, and developing performance repertoire outside of dedicated music class time. We welcome guest artists throughout the year at assemblies and in workshops with smaller groups of students. Recent guests have included Grupo Ribeiro, a Brazilian drum and dance ensemble, Flor de Toloache, New York's first all-female Mariachi band, Isaac Sawyer, beatmaker and hip hop artist and the House of Oricci, a Vogue freestyle dance house. Lower School students perform in concerts and special assemblies throughout the year, including the Lower School Winter Concert, Grandparents and Special Friends Visiting Day, and grade-level spring concerts. Students have the opportunity to study piano, violin, guitar or voice as part of our robust after school private lesson program.

KINDERGARTEN

In Kindergarten, music class centers on developing the essential musical skills of matching pitch and keeping a steady beat. Singing, movement, instrument playing, and dramatic play are incorporated into every class. As with learning any language, students become fluent musicians through exposure to a wide and plentiful variety of music. The students hone careful listening skills, using terminology related to 'musical opposites' to differentiate sounds that are fast/slow, high/low, long/short, speaking/singing, etc.

CLASS I

Class I musicians explore a range of pitched and unpitched percussion instruments from around the world, drawing connections based on instrument material and technique. They develop ensemble skills by singing rounds and playing instrumental ensembles in multiple parts. In the fall, Class I students learn to read and compose with rhythms containing quarter notes, eighth notes, and quarter rests. In the spring, they learn the beginnings of staff notation through reading and simple three-note melodies and playing them on the xylophone.

CLASS II

Class II students expand their musical experiences through instrumental and vocal ensembles. Students continue to explore unpitched percussion in three-part drum ensembles and begin their unit of samba music. Class II students develop their melodic awareness through the immersion of games, songs, reading, and writing activities based on the five note pentatonic scale, while using solfège syllables and Curwen hand signs; they also learn how to read and identify half notes. Musical independence is developed through part-singing and playing increasingly complex arrangements for voice and Orff instruments (xylophones, glockenspiels, etc.).

CLASS III

In Class III, students study the fully expanded pentatonic scale, exploring major and minor modal qualities, and demonstrate their knowledge of these concepts through singing, movement exploration, and playing barred instruments with multiple parts. Class III students continue their studies of playing in a multi-part percussion ensemble, learn how to identify sixteenth notes, sing and play in triple meter, and learn how to play basic samba rhythms in an ensemble.

CLASS IV

In this capstone year, the music literacy curriculum that was started in Kindergarten reaches a meaningful endpoint in the study of the half-steps and whole-steps of the major diatonic scale. Students spend the year composing melodies and performing complex instrumental arrangements using all the pitches of the scale. As experienced Spanish speakers, they learn to play salsa, samba and cumbia rhythms and sing in both Spanish and English. Additionally, Class IV students receive a formal introduction to the three "tracks" offered to Middle School musicians—Music Composition, Strings (violin/viola/cello), and Guitar.

DANCE

Designed to enhance each student's ability to enjoy and appreciate dancing, the Lower School dance curriculum includes proper warm-up techniques, fundamental movement components, rhythm, motor skills, and creative movement concepts. Through the study of classical, jazz, tap, modern, and contemporary dance techniques, the teachers focus on developing body awareness, coordination, and an appreciation of dance. Students learn that dance can be a meaningful, enriching part of their lives.

KINDERGARTEN

Kindergarten students explore a variety of activities aimed at introducing young children to the world of dance. Through warm-up exercises and technical practice, students learn the fundamentals of ballet, jazz, and tap. This course emphasizes creative movement and self expression.

CLASS I

Class I students study the basics of tap dance, with a particular focus on rhythm, coordination, and musicality. In addition to developing technique and vocabulary, students gain flexibility, balance, and coordination. To encourage expression and creativity, students explore improvisation by developing their own rhythms and steps within a structured framework.

CLASS II

Class II students focus on beginning classical ballet technique, repertory, history, and culture through guided exercises, pantomimes, improvisations, and viewings. Students practice elementary ballet French language skills. Yearly repertory includes, but is not limited to, the Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky/Marius Petipa/Lev Ivanov collaborations: Nutcracker (1892), Swan Lake (1895), and Sleeping Beauty (1890).

CLASS III

Students study the life and repertory of Isadora Duncan, one of the founders of American Modern Dance. Students practice exercises from her class material and learn dances from the early 20th century. There is a special focus on Duncan's masterwork The Many Faces of Love (1910-1912). In addition to learning choreography, students improvise and create their own dance phrases in response to Duncan's.

CLASS IV

Students develop their modern dance practice with a focus on the life and work of Martha Graham. Students explore guided exercises, improvisations, viewings, readings, and discussion. Special attention is paid to collaboration, movement quality, musicality, gesture, and expressiveness. Yearly repertory includes Graham's Lamentation (1910), Appalachian Spring (1944), and Maple Leaf Rag (1990).

HEALTH

The Lower School Health program empowers Nightingale's youngest students to take good care of their minds, bodies, and relationships. Our Lower School classes introduce students to multiple dimensions of health; physical, social, and mental/emotional. Students develop health knowledge while learning and practicing the skills necessary to manage their personal health as they move through childhood. Through picture books, thoughtful discussions, games, and hands-on activities, students build confidence to keep themselves healthy and safe inside and outside of the Blue Doors.

KINDERGARTEN

Social and emotional well-being is fostered throughout students' days in the Schoolhouse. In Kindergarten, students become acquainted with the nurses' office, basic hygiene including preventing the spread of germs, and trusted adults who can be resources within the school community. Students are encouraged to try new foods at lunch, and the importance of a colorful plate is emphasized.

CLASS I

Class I focuses on the mind and body. Mindfulness is introduced and practiced throughout the semester. Students learn about the brain and body, naming body parts and understanding their basic functions while identifying best practices in hygiene, self-care and safety. Students take part in food and nutrition education, learning about food groups and eating a colorful plate. Students explore body diversity and appreciation, learn to communicate body boundaries, and identify and practice strategies for caring for their bodies in a variety of circumstances.

CLASS II

Class II focuses on physical, social, and mental/emotional health. Mindful thinking and behavior are reviewed and practiced throughout the semester. Class II students work on decision-making skills and identifying trusted adults, and they practice these skills with real-life health scenarios. Topics addressed include adopting a range of healthy behaviors, using medicine safely, human development, and family diversity.

CLASS III

Class III health builds upon decision-making skills practiced in Class II. Students identify and analyze influences on decisions, including the role of peers, role models, and advertisements, building media literacy skills along the way. With a focus on physical, social, and mental health, students learn about topics including sleep, nutrition, puberty, and personal hygiene.

CLASS IV

Class IV health focuses on multiple aspects of health; physical, social, and mental/emotional. Topics include healthy communication in peer relationships, food and nutrition, identifying, managing, and communicating emotions in healthy ways, and nicotine/tobacco use prevention. Students learn about puberty and reproduction with plenty of time devoted to understanding periods and self-care during menstruation, maintaining a positive body image during puberty, and navigating friendships changes and challenges. Students take a personal safety course during which they develop skills to establish and communicate body boundaries and access support from trusted adults.

LEARNING RESOURCES

The Learning Resources Department provides services and resources so that students grow into confident problem solvers, learners, self-advocates, and engaged community members. Across the K–XII arc, we aim to create strategies designed to promote the success of neurodiverse learners within a rigorous environment, while building students' independence and self-awareness. In Lower School, this is done by developing foundational literacy skills through research-based, structured programming in reading and writing, as well as helping students understand themselves as learners. This is accomplished by assessing students throughout the year to create reading groups and pinpoint skills, collaborating with teachers to offer differentiation when needed, creating learning profiles from evaluations to share with teachers, and creating learning plans and strategies for individual students. The Learning Specialists work with small groups of students for explicit remediation support in the areas of reading readiness, reading fluency, comprehension, and writing. In honoring accommodations recommended by formal evaluations, the learning resources department implements formal accommodations such as extended time and informal recommendations, including, but not limited to, the use of fidgets, audiobooks, and preferential seating. As needed, learning specialists work closely with students and classroom teachers as well as parents and outside service providers.

LIBRARY

The Lower School Library program seeks to ignite imagination and a sense of wonder, laying the foundation for a lifelong love of reading and research. In the library, students are encouraged to explore and be inspired while cultivating critical information-literacy skills. Students experience stories through print books, ebooks, poetry, creative play, art, and song. The Lower School program is designed to develop the individual reading interests of each student, support the curriculum, and teach research and information practices. The library is open to students throughout the day. Students visit the library individually and in small groups to choose books suited to their reading levels and interests. Kindergarten, Class I, and Class II students come to the library for class. Class III and IV students visit the library on a flexible schedule based on research and reading group needs. Through a wide range of resources, the library connects students with stories and information representative of the diversity of the Nightingale community, New York City, and beyond. Interwoven with the Lower School curriculum and in collaboration with classroom teachers, the library designs and supports research projects using an inquiry-based model. In each successive year, the library curriculum builds upon previous learning to prepare students with the information literacy skills they will need as they move into Middle School.

VISUAL EDUCATION

The program in visual education incorporates works of art into the teaching of subject areas such as English, social studies, geography, math, modern languages, technology, and art. Students learn to observe and analyze visual images and discuss them with reference to formal qualities as well as historical and cultural context. Through studying these images, students develop the ability to express and support their interpretations while learning to value the ideas of others. Students combine visits to local museums and cultural institutions with classroom work in the form of discussions, writing, and artmaking activities.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Community service has been a cornerstone of a Nightingale education since the school's founding over 100 years ago. In the Lower School, the students participate in group projects, which have the goal of instilling a love of giving to others and improving the community. Service is closely tied to the curriculum. The Lower School has had a long partnership with the All Souls Friday Lunch where students help to organize food drives supported by the entire school. Class IV students visit the Carter Burden Center to share poetry and Spanish with the elders in their community center. Other Lower School projects have included designing, creating, and utilizing tools to clean up trash in Central Park, participating in the Upper School "Pillows for Paws" program, crafting enrichment items for animals in NYC shelters, and packing lunches at God's Love We Deliver.

HOBBYHORSE

Hobbyhorse is Nightingale's extended day after school program. Twelve to fifteen courses are offered at an additional fee each trimester. Classes may include: Chess; Coding; Cooking; DramaZone; Musical Theater; Ice Skating; Jump Rope; Knitting; Lacrosse; Make + Wonder Art; Outdoor Sports; Painting; Photography; Recycled Art; Robotics; Roller Skating; Sewing; Sketching and Drawing; The Craft Studio; Video; Yoga.