



## Welcome to Kindergarten!

UPDATED: JULY 13, 2021

It is often said that play is the work of the young child. In Kindergarten opportunities abound for students to explore and learn through play. They are also introduced to the structures and routines that bridge the early childhood and elementary programs.

Reading Workshop and Writing Workshop are on the daily schedule. Our approach to literacy balances an appreciation for good literature and the ability to speak clearly, listen carefully and write with purpose. Literacy instruction includes phonics and spelling; units of study in narrative, persuasive and informational reading and writing; and lots of time reading, listening to and talking about many different types of texts. Students learn and work independently, in small groups and as a class.

In Kindergarten there is an emphasis on story. We nurture early literacy development while allowing students to connect literacy to play, thus protecting the kindergartners special place in early childhood.

Kindergartners are already writers, filled with stories to tell and ideas to express. All they need to grow is a teacher who recognizes what they can do and can help them with what they are ready to learn next. Kindergarten writing includes talking, planning and drawing, as well as formal print work. They learn about print –upper and lower case letters, formation of letters and more, through the Handwriting Without Tears curriculum.

We also focus on nurturing a writing identity and building the confidence to share ideas using oral language, words, and pictures. We want our young writers to develop a sense of pride and ownership in this work. Writing units of study are grounded in Teachers College Reading and Writing Units of Study and include units in narrative, information and opinion writing.

Mathematics focuses on comparing whole numbers, initially with sets of objects and describing shapes and space. Students use numbers to represent quantities, count objects in a set and compare sets. They model joining and separating situations with sets of objects or eventually represent their process with equations such as  $5 + 2 = 7$  and  $7 - 2 = 5$ . Our emphasis is on building students' experiences, language and number sense as they construct their mathematical understandings. Units of study include comparing sets and numbers to 20; addition and subtraction; shape, pattern and size; numbers to 100; time and money.

Social studies begins with a study of ourselves and others in our classroom. Students learn what others bring to the community, what we have in common with one another, as well as how we are different. Students learn to articulate and ask questions, listen to one another, and build upon the ideas of others. In the spring, students incorporate all they have learned as readers and writers into their study of animals and zoos. Students select an animal, and with support from teachers, research and share what they learn.

Spanish instruction is based on stories, folktales and fables. Students have hands-on opportunities to learn Spanish words, phrases, songs and games and gain facility listening to and speaking Spanish. We also host many cultural celebrations where we sing Spanish songs and Spanish learn vocabulary that is important for daily life.

Kindergartners are natural scientists. They discover relationships of change and growth and cause and effect. Kindergarten students visit the science room once a week and learn about classroom animals and how to care for them, the environment around our school, and how to observe and describe scientific phenomena.



# Dwight-Englewood School

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Formal art instruction takes place in the classroom. Students learn about elements of color, line and shape while exploring basic concepts of drawing, painting, collage, sculpture, arrangement and related vocabulary. Students create collections of work to demonstrate their understanding of the medium and concepts explored.

The music program provides opportunities for students to perform, create, and respond to music. Through singing, playing instruments, moving to and creating music, and dramatic play, students acquire musical skills and knowledge by doing. They learn to match pitch, move to a beat, repeat a rhythm with their bodies and use small percussion instruments.

Kindergarten is a magical time. We work hard to protect the kindergartners' special place in early childhood while introducing the skills, routines and structures that will shape their social and academic experience as they move through the Lower School.