

LOWER SCHOOL



**BLACK PINE
CIRCLE SCHOOL**

A SCHOOL OF THOUGHT

Where kids learn to ask better questions.



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...an amazing community of devoted teachers, dedicated staff, curious students, and engaged families. Students are treated with respect and encouraged to take risks, make mistakes, and discover. BPC offers a supportive environment, helps our kids find their own voices and turns each learning moment into a memorable experience.—BPC Parent



We Nurture Innate Curiosity



Our most essential duty as educators is to protect, nurture, and inspire the curiosity that is inherent in young children.

We do this by encouraging them to make careful observations, to ask thoughtful questions, and to make connections to their world.

Differentiated learning and Responsive Classroom practices are elements of this environment where a child's natural drive to ask more and better questions is refined with the guidance of expert teachers who support and enhance each student's sense of wonder.



Curiosity and the willingness to try, fail, and learn from mistakes is viewed as an essential starting point for learning.

Kids Thrive in Our Community



Enrolling in a K-8 school provides wonderful opportunities for students to expand their sense of family and feel connected to a variety of students of different ages, ethnicities, cultures, family structures, and personalities.

In the Black Pine Circle School community, students learn to engage with diverse viewpoints from a place of humility and self-reflection. Cultivating empathy and active listening supports academic as well as social and emotional growth.

All facets of school life reflect our understanding that we are one interconnected family, and we succeed together. In a community that sees and values each individual, students build connections that may last a lifetime.

Academic excellence comes naturally to students who feel a sense of belonging in a joyful, safe, and engaging learning community.



Our faculty and staff are dedicated to fostering a warm and supportive environment in which children safely address challenges and grow in their understanding of themselves and others.

Our faculty uses Responsive Classroom, an evidence-based approach to education that focuses on the strong relationship between academic success and social and emotional learning. Key elements include daily morning meetings, positive teacher language, and opportunities for students to make proactive choices in their learning.



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Words cannot express how much of a difference my son's teachers have made in his life. ...I have watched him bloom into a confident, outspoken, friendly boy who has learned how to speak to new people, and to look after those who are younger than him.
—BPC Parent



We Cultivate an Inquiring Mind



In the Socratic classroom, we begin with the premise that there is always more to learn. Through regular inquiry, our students develop deep understanding and exceptional critical-thinking skills.

The youngest children begin to learn about and practice the tenets of a Socratic classroom by learning how to focus on the speaker and listen with their whole body, to take turns, and to ask one another good questions.

Our relatively small population and our low student-to-teacher ratio allow us to nurture a relationship with each student that keeps them engaged and challenged.



Our faculty partners every day with students to help them find what Vygotsky called the “Zone of Proximal Development,” that vibrant state when the learner is at the exhilarating and sometimes uncomfortable edge of their abilities.



...[my daughter] has blossomed as a person and student under the guidance of great teachers. Her relationships with her teachers have motivated her, given her strength, and taught her how to learn. ...I have been so happy to see her confidence and ability to self-advocate grow by leaps and bounds, and those things have happened because she was cared for and nurtured along the way. —BPC Parent

Our goal is to create vibrant, independent thinkers who will never lose their passion for learning, their delight in research, and their involvement in cultural pursuits.

Their Unique Voice Will Emerge



Whatever your child's passion, their interest will find a home at Black Pine Circle School!

Our program is designed to create a safe space in which students are encouraged to explore, create, and experiment while learning how to communicate and collaborate effectively.

There are many opportunities for self-expression. Our exceptional arts program is just one of the many paths our students follow to discover and explore their own creative strengths.



Our students develop individual passions
and learn how to share that love with
their communities.



Students are treated with respect and encouraged to take risks, make mistakes, and discover. BPC offers a supportive environment, helps our kids find their own voices and turns each learning moment into a memorable experience.

—BPC Parent

Every day, our teachers weave together arts, academics, and social & emotional learning.

Each of our lower school (K-5) classrooms has a head teacher and a teaching assistant. Lower school students also enjoy the coaching and mentoring of our specialist faculty who teach music, Spanish, art, science, instrumental and vocal music, gardening, and physical education.

Our teachers engage students in powerful, interdisciplinary learning opportunities, requiring students to apply and demonstrate their understanding. We believe teachers, parents, and students should be encouraged to understand the power in emotional and intellectual risk-taking.



What is Socratic Learning?

As students analyze works together—such as books, paintings, songs, historical artifacts, or mathematical formulae—they improve their close reading, critical thinking, and oral communication skills. Because they are in a conversation, they practice civility and listen to diverse points of view. Even the youngest children can engage in a way that acknowledges the richness of questions instead of quickly answering them.

As a facilitator and co-learner, teachers model genuine curiosity, ask clarifying questions, keep the discussion focused on the text, and ensure that all students have the opportunity to participate. A learning environment like this, in which scholarly conversation is central to the culture, nurtures both the intellectual as well as the social and emotional life of the child.



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For example, first graders take an integrated, hands-on, and fun approach to learning about marine mammals. They study how these animals have adapted to and survive in their environment. In science class, they create layers of blubber and test how long they can immerse their hands in ice-cold water. During writers workshop, they create stories about a chosen marine mammal. Math games, measuring animals with Unifix cubes, shadow puppets, a mini-lecture from the head of school, who is a marine mammal scientist, and a field trip to a local environmental education program are all part of this exciting unit.



As a K–8 school, we have insight
into each student that allows
us to partner with families in a
remarkably powerful manner.



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Join our learning community.

INFORMATION & APPLICATION

blackpinecircle.org

QUESTIONS?

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