

UPPER SCHOOL



**BLACK PINE
CIRCLE SCHOOL**

A SCHOOL OF THOUGHT

Where students find their unique voices.



Inspired by Caine Munroe's Cardboard Arcade, teams of seventh graders use their creativity and emerging programming skills as they repurpose discarded materials in inventive ways. They develop an idea for an arcade game, write code, design electrical circuits, learn to solder, and realize their vision. The result is an arcade for the entire BPC community to enjoy.



We Nurture Innate Curiosity



At Black Pine Circle School we value creative thinking, deep understanding, and problem solving.

A student's drive to ask more and better questions is refined with the guidance of expert teachers who support and enhance each student's intrinsic ability.

Our teachers create classroom environments where questions and strategies for understanding outweigh facts and answers.

We nurture our students' natural curiosity, encouraging them to make careful observations, to ask thoughtful questions, and to make connections in their world.

Students leverage their own developmental maturation with an intellectual and emotional growth that comes from being part of a safe, caring, and intelligent community of learners.



Students Thrive in Our Community



What happens at the intersection of goodness and knowledge?

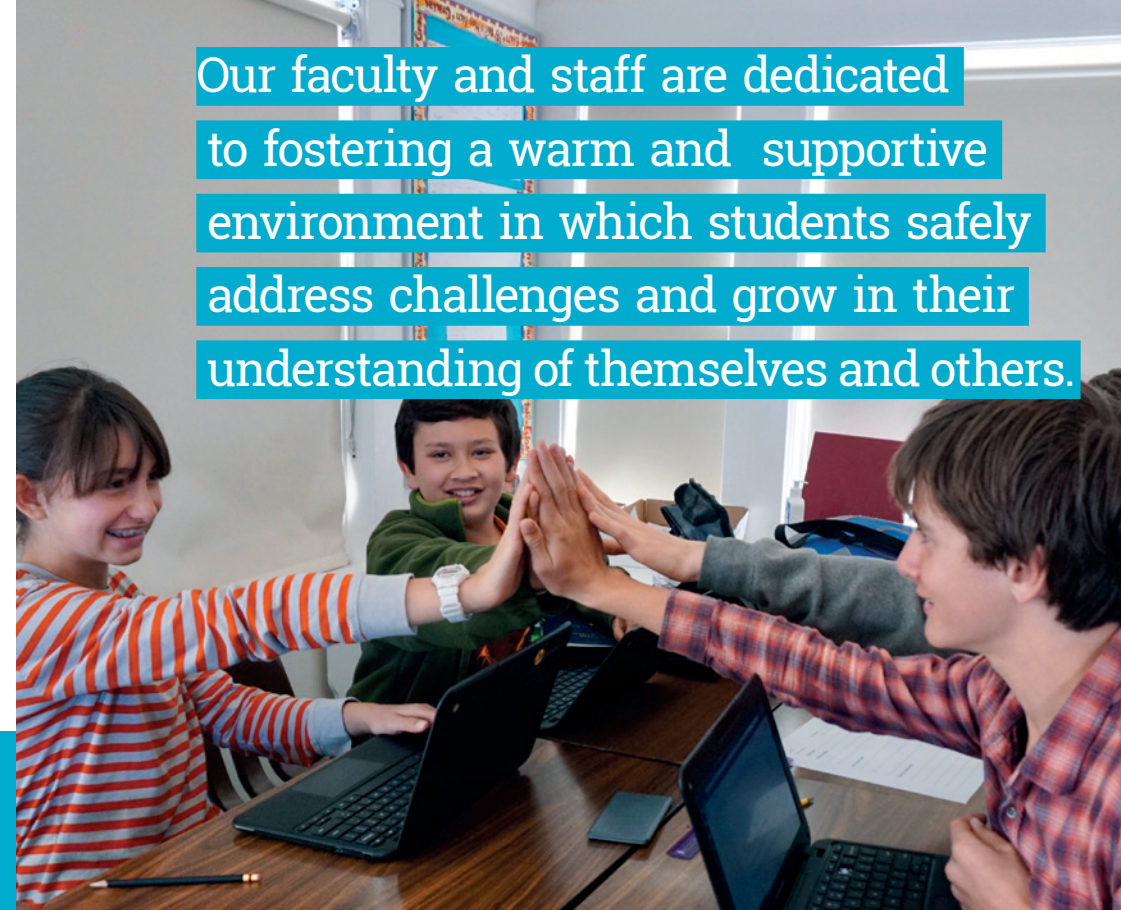
In the Black Pine Circle School community, students learn to engage with diverse viewpoints from a place of humility and self-reflection. Cultivating empathy and active listening supports academic as well as social and emotional growth.

Our low student-to-teacher ratio gives us insight into each student, allowing us to partner with families in a remarkably powerful way.

In a community that sees and values each individual, students build connections that last a lifetime.



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



To strengthen their social bonds, our sixth grade class lives in the Marin Headlands for four days in October, combining team-building with natural science education in a dramatic setting. The sixth grade English teacher accompanies the class, guiding students to write about their memories of their time at the Headlands as an introduction to their study of memoir.



We Cultivate an Inquiring Mind



Through regular inquiry, our students develop deep understanding and exceptional critical-thinking skills.

Through differentiation, we are able to understand the strengths and challenges of each student, discerning where and how they can grow both academically and emotionally. Through this partnership, students feel safe taking risks and practicing intellectual generosity.

As a “school of thought,” one of our guiding principles is teaching students to think deeply about their thinking, and to support all students to do their best possible learning at all times.



The capstone experience of the Upper School is the MasterWorks Project, a 40-hour interdisciplinary project undertaken under the supervision of a faculty advisor over many months. Students conceive, research, and develop a project proposal. Past MasterWorks Projects have included novels, musical compositions, photography exhibits, a tunic of chain mail, and hand-sewn couture. Students share their projects with peers and parents at our MasterWorks Project Presentation event.



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.



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.

Their Unique Voices Emerge



Whatever your passion, your interest will find a home at Black Pine Circle School! We provide opportunities for students to discover and explore their own creative strengths through following many different paths of self-expression.

Our exceptional arts program is just one way that our students learn confidence, collaboration, and communication skills. By graduation, they have developed individual passions and learned how to share that love with their communities.

Students pursue mastery in the arts, in math, in our award-winning maker program, and in countless other areas that prepare them to enter high school with academic confidence and intellectual enthusiasm.



Tools for Navigating an Evolving Sense of Self

In the Upper School, social and emotional learning is woven into everyday school life, since we know that the most valuable lessons occur both inside and outside of the classroom.

We also schedule an advisory meeting three times per week, where a teacher assumes the role of mentor, advisor, and advocate to small groups of students.

The faculty advisor oversees each child's academic, social, and emotional growth and encourages students to set goals and reflect on their progress.

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

We are keenly aware of the need to create a student body that is literate and well-versed in the sciences, mathematics, philosophy, technology, world languages, and the arts.

We are a partnership of students, families, and faculty united around our vision of creating a community of passionate, lifelong learners.

We believe that literacy in the arts is not optional but an integral, critical element of our curriculum. Our students are enriched by music instruction, visual arts, and theater arts.

Creativity, kindness, entrepreneurial spirit, and achievement combine to equip and empower our students to make the most of today, and break trail for tomorrow.



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 engage with diverse points of view.

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.



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My parents, recognizing my early enthusiasm for and interest in the arts, chose Black Pine Circle not only for its outstanding academic instruction, but for its additional emphasis on creative expression. They couldn't have made a better decision! Throughout my elementary and middle school years, I was exposed to a plethora of creative disciplines—music, dance, theater, visual arts, poetry—that were all seamlessly integrated into the daily curriculum.

—Nick Rio, BPC Alum, Columbia University



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 student.



Our students emerge as citizens of the world,
equipped academically and with a love for the arts.



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Join our learning community.

INFORMATION & APPLICATION

blackpinecircle.org

QUESTIONS?

admissions@blackpinecircle.org, 510-529-2719

2027 7th Street, Berkeley, CA 94710

(between University & Addison)