



BLACK PINE CIRCLE SCHOOL

A SCHOOL OF THOUGHT

Where students
learn to ask better
questions and find
their unique
voices



Kindergarten—Grade 8
Since 1973

Our VALUES



intellectual CURIOSITY

At Black Pine Circle School, we prioritize creative thinking, deep understanding, and problem solving. Our students' innate curiosity is fostered through the mentorship of dedicated teachers who inspire and nurture each child's sense of wonder.

We encourage our students to observe carefully, ask insightful questions, and connect with the world around them. Our curriculum emphasizes exploration, experiential learning, and inquiry over mere facts and answers. We are committed to creating a supportive learning environment where students can grow in their understanding of themselves and others.

Ours is a community that values individuality, where students can be their authentic selves and pursue different paths of belonging, which allows them to flourish. We believe that learning should be both challenging and joyous.

Within the Black Pine Circle School community, students engage courageously with diverse perspectives which promotes cultural understanding and self-reflection. We cultivate empathy and active listening, supporting our students' academic, social, and emotional growth.

Our low student-to-teacher ratio allows us to 'see' and understand each student deeply, enabling us to partner with families in meaningful ways.

joyful COMMUNITY



academic INQUIRY

Through regular inquiry, our students develop profound understanding and exceptional critical-thinking skills. Each day, our teachers differentiate in the classroom to help students reach what Vygotsky referred to as the "Zone of Proximal Development," a dynamic state where learners stretch academically and push the boundaries of their abilities.

As a 'school of thought,' we teach students to reflect on their thinking and encourage a growth mindset, both key elements for supporting all learners in achieving their highest potential.

No matter your passion, you'll find a place for it at Black Pine Circle School!

We offer numerous pathways for self-expression, allowing students to discover and develop their creative strengths.

Our outstanding arts and music program is just one avenue through which students gain confidence, as well as collaboration and communication skills. By graduation, they have honed their individual passions and learned to share that enthusiasm with their communities.

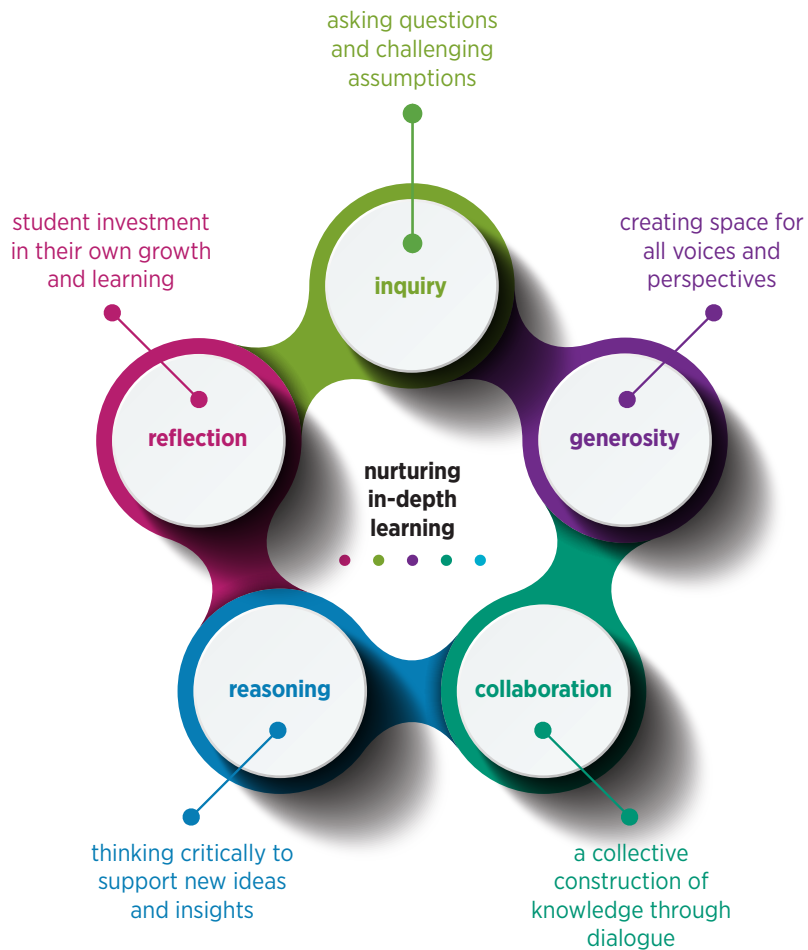
Students strive for mastery in all subjects which prepares them well for entering high school with academic self-assurance and intellectual engagement.

authentic VOICE

Black Pine Circle School's **MISSION** is to create a learning community that encourages humanity, empathy, moral depth, cultural understanding, and freedom in intellectual pursuits. Socially, it is our goal to instill mutual respect, compassion, and a sense of belonging among all of our students.

What is SOCRATIC practice?

At Black Pine Circle, we embrace Socratic learning as the foundation of our educational philosophy. Inquiry, generosity, reasoning, collaboration, and reflection lie at the heart of Socratic Practice.



The Socratic Seminar is a cornerstone of Socratic Practice, K-8th, allowing students to:

- ask insightful questions
- develop the awareness and ability to create space for all voices in the room
- know that their voice is valued, heard, and respected
- build skills to think critically about the topics we engage with, the texts we read, the origins of their thinking, and the world around them
- reflect on their growth as partners in their learning

Our teachers act as facilitators and co-learners, modeling genuine curiosity and ensuring every student has a chance to contribute.



How will my child **THRIVE** at Black Pine Circle?



As you decide if Black Pine Circle is the best fit for your child, ask these essential questions:

How will my child be challenged **ACADEMICALLY?**

Black Pine Circle offers an academically rich and engaging educational experience, K-8th, with a focus on differentiated instruction in small group settings. Visual and performing arts are incorporated into the core curriculum, K-8th, with a special emphasis on music, including singing, Orff, strings, band, orchestra, recorder, ukulele, guitar, and steel pans.

At BPC, we foster a lifelong love of learning, where the whole child is nurtured. Our robust Outdoor Education Program enables our students to take their learning outside the classroom, where they can connect with nature and cultures firsthand. Students develop age-appropriate agency with their own learning, choosing Flex Time classes in K-5th, such as environmental science, robotics, and creative writing, and Mini Term in grades 6th-8th, such as crafting art history, math in art, and the science of survival. 8th grade culminates with a Capstone Masterworks Project: 40+ hours of self-guided work on an in-depth project of the student's choice. Projects have included novels, musical compositions, photography exhibits, cookbooks, and hand-sewn couture. We believe that joy is essential to deep learning and the confidence to take intellectual risks.

How will my child be **KNOWN?**

Our small school size and low student-to-teacher ratio allow students to feel deeply seen and known. Their sense of belonging means they feel safe to be their authentic selves—to explore who they truly are and what they are truly passionate about. Diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging are essential to the K-8 curriculum; our community equips students with the skills necessary to build cultural competency and become empathetic, engaged citizens of the world.



How will my child **FIT IN?**

Black Pine Circle offers diverse and unique pathways for self-expression and creativity, from our award-winning math and band programs, Maker Space, and Performances of Understanding to our after-school sports and clubs such as basketball, ultimate-frisbee, engineering, coding, cartooning, robotics, and textiles. The intimacy of our community and student voice are celebrated at BPC in myriad ways, which in turn elevates engagement and a sense of joy. Our students are kind and thoughtful: they care about each other and the world.

How will my child **GROW** socially & emotionally?

Responsive Classroom, Kimochis, and Middle School Advisory Groups are the foundation of BPC's social and emotional learning program. Cross-grade Buddy Groups, Affinity Groups, K-8 Houses, and community gatherings, in addition to advisory groups, help students connect, build meaningful relationships with peers, and promote self-awareness and personal growth. The development of strong social and emotional skills allows our students to navigate the world successfully and thrive academically.



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The many Black Pine Circle graduates who attend our high school are standouts in our community. They are deeply curious critical thinkers who ask questions of themselves and others. They are comfortable in their skin and care about being part of something bigger than themselves. They are big-time joiners—in clubs, the arts, and service. We are so appreciative of the foundation for success provided by BPC to its students.”

East Bay Independent High School Admissions Director

Join Our Community

Sign up for a visit today and see how Black Pine Circle School empowers students through an academically rich and joyful learning environment, rooted in our unique Socratic approach.

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LEARN MORE



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