



## Lower School - Senior Kindergarten Overview

The St. George senior kindergarten experience promotes the emotional, spiritual, and academic growth of each child. Students learn about themselves and the world around them through meaningful play, storytelling, hands-on activities, movement, games, and engaging discussion. Our goal is to instill a love of learning that will build a strong foundation for each child.

**Language Development:** The senior kindergarten language arts curriculum utilizes an integrated instructional approach to teach letters, rhyming, explicit phonics, listening comprehension, concepts of print, decodable words and sight words. Small group reading allows for analysis, discussion, and a meaningful introduction of strategies for reading comprehension. Leveled readers are sent home weekly. In addition, a self-selected reading program provides practice, enrichment, and motivation for outside reading. Handwriting is taught using the *D'Nealian* style. Children in senior kindergarten are provided opportunities to become writers through the use of writer's workshop techniques.

**Math:** Senior kindergarten uses *Bridges in Mathematics* and *Number Corner* math curricula. These programs focus on a variety of skills and methods of instruction. The students learn how to use patterns and classify objects, identify numbers 1-100, recognize number sense, probability, money, computation (addition and subtraction), measurement, geometry, and calendar concepts. These skills are taught during whole group activities, learning centers and one-on-one teacher activities. The math curriculum uses various manipulatives, hands-on activities, and a take home program of games and activities. Daily math lessons help incorporate new skills and maintenance of previously learned skills. Lessons also offer opportunities for linking math to other disciplines and promote the development of higher order problem-solving and thinking skills.

**Science:** The science curriculum offers students a chance to explore with hands-on experiments, opportunities to observe independently, and teacher demonstration. Through STEM challenges, students investigate properties of objects, life cycles of plants, animals, and insects. Lessons are presented in whole group and small group activities. In addition, students conduct experiments in the science lab on a regular basis utilizing the scientific process to further solidify concepts. Students are encouraged to ask questions and discuss their findings in each lab experience.

**Social Studies:** The social studies curriculum is wide ranging and includes the establishment of classroom rules and procedures, reinforcement of positive social skills and peer relationships. Emphasis is placed on awareness of the world around us. In the *Core Knowledge History and Geography* curriculum, students learn what maps and globes represent and how they are used. They also learn to identify the seven continents of the world. Students learn American symbols and are introduced to the US presidents. The thematic units in the social studies curriculum are taught using large and small group lessons as well as center based activities. The senior kindergarten curriculum also emphasizes holidays and current events.

**Social and Emotional Development:** The St. George social and emotional curriculum is based on the *Responsive Classroom* model. This program takes a proactive approach that focuses on creating a loving and respectful classroom community where each child feels valued and known by his or her teachers and peers. Every day begins with a morning meeting where students are greeted by name and invited to share about their lives. Throughout the year, teachers introduce a variety of social skills including: identifying feelings of self and others, resolving conflict, showing kindness, listening and responding, regulating emotions, practicing empathy, being a good citizen, and standing up for what is right. These skills are then discussed and modeled frequently by children and teachers alike. This approach provides each student with the tools to grow his or her own emotional intelligence, while also creating an environment of connectivity and care.

**Discovery Area:** Senior kindergarten students visit an outdoor discovery area two to three times each week where they engage in a variety of sensory-based learning and play activities. Sensory play builds nerve connections within the developing brain's neural pathways. This, in turn, triggers a child's inclination for and ability to complete more complex learning tasks. Sensory play also supports language development, cognitive growth, motor skills, problem solving skills, and social interaction.

**Co-Curricular Classes:** Students attend the following co-curricular classes: physical education three times a week; art, music and Discovery Area two times a week; library, Spanish, science lab, and STEAM once a week; and recess daily. Students also attend a developmentally appropriate chapel daily.