

THE PARK SCHOOL *of* BALTIMORE

Faculty Guide



2026—2027

MISSION, PHILOSOPHY, OBJECTIVES, STATEMENT ON DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION, AND ANTI-RACISM ACTION PLAN

The Park School Mission

Devoted to intellectual inquiry, a collaborative spirit of learning, and an appreciation for the diversity of human experience, The Park School of Baltimore is a community founded on positive expectations of our students and respect for individual differences.

We cultivate children's innate curiosity by nurturing their interests and engaging them as active participants in their own education.

We support young people in becoming confident questioners and responsible citizens of the world.

The Park School Mission Statement serves the community alongside Park's other important guiding documents — our Philosophy, Objectives, Strategic Plan, and the School Statement on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.

PHILOSOPHY

School Philosophy Statement

The Park School embodies both in its tradition and in its daily practice three assumptions. First, human beings are capable and desirous of rational self-discipline and of acting towards others with respect, kindness, concern, open-mindedness, and moral conviction. Second, the activity of learning is an expression of positive energies, fulfills natural impulse, and enriches life. Third, authentic learning flourishes when people work, think, and collaborate within a diverse community.

As young people respond to the influence of these ideals, learning to trust and assert their own intellectual and moral powers as they develop, they acquire a sense of confidence in themselves and others, which will inspire a productive adulthood. Since the quality of expectation is most important, the belief that positive expectations produce positive virtues is fundamental to the practice of the school.

The conviction that the child contains inner strength, talents, and powers, which can be liberated and nurtured, allows a variety of educational techniques and methods and is manifested in the school in different ways. Accepting this belief requires recognition of the excesses it may bring: occasional sentimentality, self-indulgence, disorder, and untidiness. Yet it insists that the teacher's authority as an adult and as a scholar should be used not to suppress or constrain, but to provide the skills, opportunities, challenges, and encouragement to bring about the flowering and fulfillment of the individual to think and act in the world with responsible freedom.

The academic process offers young people a dynamic view of the nature of knowledge and the experiences of learning, and supports their efforts to construct life-affirming meaning. In every area of the curriculum the school encourages substantial student commitment to reading, writing, inquiry, and focused discussion in order to secure the factual knowledge and conceptual structures essential for intellectual competence.

Thus considered, school activities become both ends in themselves and means toward more complex, more difficult ends. But however rigorous, school work need not be alienating or painful, nor need success be measured by comparison to others. Rather, achievement is the result of the use by the child, under proper stimulation and challenge, of the natural powers of mind and body, which in their exercise and application provide pleasure and happiness.

To participate in the life of The Park School requires trust in these good prospects, effort to sustain these positive expectations, and confidence that, under their influence, children will grow to adulthood possessing the power to enact in their lives these beliefs about themselves and others.

Objectives

Individual and School

It is the objective of the school to be a place where each person is respected and valued, and plain speaking, honesty, and authenticity govern all relationships. By striving to create and maintain a community of diverse perspectives and experiences, the school encourages its students to question their assumptions, develop empathy, and achieve a richer understanding of the world. Such a community inspires young people to develop the capacity to think carefully and act responsibly.

It is the objective of the school to encourage discipline and student behavior based on reason, on a cooperative sense of community, and on a sympathetic understanding of the rights and needs of others. This approach, rejecting arbitrary authority and prescriptive codes, creates opportunities for moral and social growth and allows each student to acquire internalized discipline, autonomy, and self-control.

It is the objective of the school that students become deeply involved in intellectual endeavors and significant extra-curricular activities. In addition to a stimulating, flexible curriculum and a varied program of activities, this objective is supported by a high degree of teacher involvement in advising and counseling students.

School and Society

It is the objective of the school, through its identity and history as a co-educational, pluralistic community, to prepare students to participate in the public life of a diverse and increasingly interconnected democratic society.

It is the objective of the school that students develop sensitivity to the needs of others, within the school and in the larger community, and that they find personal satisfaction in helping others and addressing social problems.

It is the objective of the school to teach those skills and encourage those traits of character, which enable achievement in a society undergoing constant social and technological change, changes which demand both accommodation and critical scrutiny.

It is the objective of the school to prepare students in the broadest sense, not only for further academic achievement, but also for the continuing process of choosing for themselves from the widest range of possibilities life offers.

It is the objective of the school that these values, reflecting the aspirations and goals of the original founders and benefactors, should be recognized as the central component of its communal life.

Revised 2009-2010

School Statement on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

At The Park School of Baltimore, the work of diversity, equity, and inclusion is the responsibility of every member of the community; the benefits of that work are an enriched society, a thriving community, and a brighter future for each individual.

Park commits to fostering a diverse, equitable, and inclusive environment for learning and living. We seek to ensure that all aspects of school life — including curriculum, admission, retention, hiring practices, and support for students, families, and employees — reflect our commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion, and will be diligently assessed and actively supported.

We recognize that our school exists in an ever-changing world, and that our understanding of, and support for, diversity, equity, and inclusion must grow and evolve. We bring students, families, employees, and guests of different backgrounds and experiences together to engage constructively in the life of the school and society. Learning at Park involves listening to and working with others, considering and embracing different points of view, and empathizing with and understanding multiple perspectives. Through open, honest dialogue and active, ongoing inquiry in an authentically diverse context, all members of our community gain awareness, wisdom, and the capacity to act as responsible, engaged citizens.

Approved by the Board of Trustees • January 2018

The Park School continually works in support of a diverse community of students, families, and employees while engaging in the many issues inherent to sustaining a genuinely equitable and inclusive environment for learning. In 2012, the Board of Trustees made diversity a key area of focus in the Strategic Plan to Launch the School's Second Century, and approved a Board Statement on Diversity.

These steps, shared with the community on the occasion of our Centennial, acknowledged our rich, 100-year history, and communicated clear priorities for the years to come. Further, the Strategic Plan elucidated specific diversity, equity, and inclusion action items involving personnel, hiring practices, professional development, curricular and co-curricular offerings, school culture — and even the creation of the Statement above.

Anti-Racism Action Plan

Created in the summer of 2020, Park's Anti-Racism Action Plan is a recommitment to our values and ideals, specifically through the lens of race.

As students, families, and employees live and learn together at Park School, we all must engage in these efforts — and we must recognize that these efforts are lifelong commitments. We have a duty to prepare our students for the world that we hope for, as well as for the one in which we currently live. A significant part of that preparation must include confronting the legacy of oppression that many in our society, in particular those who are BIPOC — Black, Indigenous, People of Color — continue to face. The principles on which Park School was founded must continue to guide us even as we are challenged to live and practice them more fully by each successive generation. Our mission, objectives, and philosophy provide us with a structure within which we can enrich and transform each other's lives — we must do so equitably, inclusively, and without bias.

The following ideas and approaches have been shaped by student voices, alumni, parents, employees, and the broader Park community; our work will be critically assessed and consistently updated. Through the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) the community will be engaged, updated, and informed regarding existing priorities and progress.

Anti-Racism Work...

- Must be embraced, understood, and practiced by all community members.
- Recognizes the pervasiveness of racism and requires intentional sustained effort at the individual and community level to address and eradicate.
- Embodies the progressive education values of individual and collective responsibility through the lens of anti-racism.
- Enriches all in our community and builds the capacity for all community members to live fuller, more authentic lives.
- Recognizes that anti-racism and anti-bias awareness, knowledge, and skills can be learned and developed.
- Encourages healthy identity development across all racial groups including white racial literacy and identity development.
- Embraces the difficult, often painful work of acknowledging past failures and current tensions, all in service to building our capacity for authentic, healthy community engagement.
- Requires a life-long commitment to personal and collective growth and progress.

Anti-Racism Work Requires a Commitment to our Employees

In Service to our Employees, We Will...

- Provide consistent, ongoing, scaffolded anti-racism professional development and training for all employees, to include:
- [Culturally responsive teaching training for all faculty](#) — to equip faculty members with the tools needed to create authentic, thriving learning communities.
- Restorative justice training for all faculty and academic administrators — to ensure a consistent approach to addressing student conflict and student discipline that centers the work on building, maintaining, and repairing relationships among all members of a school community.

- Implicit bias training for all security personnel — to ensure personnel are a part of the school's overall commitment to anti-racism and anti-bias awareness, to ensure they are more fully integrated into the life of the school, and to have the tools necessary to protect and serve all. We recognize the historic and present tensions that exist between BIPOC and police. We will proactively address community concerns regarding interactions between Park security personnel and BIPOC community members.
- Review, discuss, and recommit to the Park School Statement on DEI, the school's Strategic Plan, and other foundational materials, with all employees on an annual basis.
- Continue to provide and strengthen institutional support for the Employees of Color Council and affinity spaces.
- Continue to prioritize funding and resources to support opportunities for BIPOC employees to gather, connect, and reflect on roles and responsibilities in a predominantly white school.
- Strengthen affinity spaces for white employees to engage in anti-racism work and support one another in taking ownership and responsibility for their role in creating an anti-racist school.

To read the entire Anti-Racism Action Plan, please see the [DEI page of our website](#).

OVERVIEW

Student Body

Enrollment • **786** students

Lower School • **261**

Average Kindergarten class size 14-16

Average Grades 1-5 class sizes 14-16

Middle School • **194**

Average class size 15-18

Upper School • **331**

Average class size 15-18

Students • 786 ; 88 new students from public and independent schools. Reenrollment: 96 percent.

Racial/ethnic diversity • 35.4 percent Arabic, Middle Eastern, Asian, Asian American, Pacific Islander, Black, African American, Caribbean American, Latino/a (Latinx), Multiracial

Religious diversity • Park is non-sectarian. From the time of its founding, Park has welcomed religious diversity. Many religions are represented in our community.

Economic diversity • Full range of incomes, including a sizable middle class population. Fifty-two percent of students receive financial assistance: 41 percent through tuition assistance, and 11 percent through tuition remission.

School Hours, Location, and Facilities

Hours • Formal school hours for students are from 8:30 a.m. - 3:15 p.m. Therefore, faculty are expected to be on campus at least between 8 a.m. - 4 p.m., to prepare for classes, support student activities, attend meetings, and confer with colleagues. All three divisions have weekly faculty meetings after school on Wednesdays until 5 p.m. In addition, there are other after-school meetings faculty may need to attend. It is the school's expectation that faculty will be present throughout the day and will notify the division principal if they need to leave campus during or before the end of the school day.

Location • Old Court Road between Falls Road and Greenspring Avenue (Ruxton Road Exit from I-83 North; Exit 22 from I-695). School bus service area includes Baltimore City, Baltimore County, Harford County, and Howard County.

Facilities • The Park School moved to its present location in 1959. The main building has connecting Lower, Middle, and Upper school wings, with the Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten housed in a

separate building. The main building includes a fully equipped 300-seat theater; two libraries containing 46,000 volumes; and six computer labs. A new Lower School wing was added in spring 1994 as Phase I of a comprehensive Campus Master Plan. The 100-acre wooded campus, which includes a pond and a stream, provides space for an outdoor education initiative course and five playing fields.

Athletic Center • The 42,000-square-foot Athletic Center includes three competition-length basketball courts, a 2,300-square-foot fitness center with aerobic and cardio machines, circuit training, and free weights, an athletic trainer's room with whirlpool and treatment tables, home and visiting team locker rooms with an eight-lane swimming pool and a training pool for summer camp, and two additional competition-length basketball courts in the Blaustein Gymnasiums.

Lucille and Gordon Sugar Campus • In spring 2002, Park gained the use of a 65-acre off-campus site, which provides much needed space for fall and spring interscholastic athletics. The Lucille and Gordon Sugar Campus, located a few minutes from Park on Hillside Road, accommodates four athletic fields, including a regulation baseball field. The property also provides space for nature study and camp activities. Park has been given a 99-year, renewable lease on the property.

Wyman Arts Center • This three-story, 44,500-square-foot center provides facilities to support an expanding, multi-faceted arts program. For performing arts, facilities include a black box theater, a dance studio, music classrooms, nine practice rooms, a keyboarding laboratory, and a recording studio. Visual arts facilities include studios for all divisions, photography and computer graphics laboratories, studios for ceramics, sculpture, and woodworking, an art gallery, and additional exhibition space. Located at the east end of the campus, the new building was situated to incorporate the existing Meyerhoff Theater; it is linked by a bridge to the Lower School.

Kelly Field Turf • Kelly Field opened in fall 2014. The field is lined for field hockey, lacrosse, and soccer competition; the soccer field is scaled at collegiate dimensions. The expansive surface also includes a conditioning track, highlighting the optimal cushioning characteristics, along with the traction and torque release properties of this latest generation in field technologies.

Science and Engineering Wing • The brand-new, state-of-the-art Science and Engineering Wing will provide the Park community with 12,000 additional square feet of programming space. The Wing includes five (5) flexible classrooms spaces, fabrication studios, student collaboration areas, and outdoor elements like an amphitheater, bioretention garden and outdoor classroom aimed at leveraging Park's stunning natural spaces.

Lower School Multipurpose Room • Constructed during the summer of 2024, the Lower School Multipurpose Room serves as the school's designated congregation space for our youngest Bruins, while also providing a flexible space that can be used for after-school activities and larger faculty gatherings. This space also includes a movable, stackable stage and both flexible and built-in seating options in conjunction with a large viewing screen and projector, creating a specially designed space for our Lower Schoolers, that can be used and enjoyed by our entire

community.

The ***Student Support Suite*** offers a comprehensive range of services designed to foster student success and well-being at Park. This cross-divisional space is central to campus and houses: college counseling meeting spaces and offices, our learning support suite, student counseling offices, and the Cardin Writing Center. This redesigned area includes flexible common and meeting spaces that create a welcoming environment for students to engage in meaningful learning, receive guidance, and build essential skills for their academic journeys.

School Governance and Administrative Structures

Accreditation • Park is accredited by the Association of Independent Schools (AIMS). The most recent re-accreditation occurred in May 2025.

Curriculum and Instruction • Please refer to Appendix A.

Professional Activity • Priority is given to curricular review and development through an endowed program (currently estimated at \$7.5 million) that supports Park's faculty each summer on collaborative and individual projects.

Administration • Eleven academic administrators with an average of over 22 years in education. Head of School: Daniel J. Paradis (A.B. Princeton University; M.A.T. Brown University), was appointed in July 2008. Six administrators identify as people of color.

Faculty • 118 teachers • 108 full-time; 10 part-time (20% identify as people of color)
76% of the faculty hold advanced degrees, with 13 Ph.D.'s, 20 M.Ed/Ed.D
Average teaching experience • 18 years
Average years at Park • 10 years

Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees serves as the permanent governing body of the school. The primary functions of the Board are to hold in trust the school's basic principles, to ensure its ongoing financial well-being, to make policy decisions involving allocation of resources and/or setting of priorities, and to appoint and evaluate the head of school.

The Board of Trustees currently has 27 elected members, many of whom are current parents and 48% of whom are alumni. In addition, presidents of the Parents' Association, the Alumni Council, the Upper School Student Government, and a faculty representative serve as *ex officio* voting members. Much of the Board's work is done through committees, such as the Executive Committee; Committee on Trustees; Finance Committee; Investment Committee; The Park Fund Committee; and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee. In addition, trustee task forces are formed as needed to address strategic issues.

Administration

Head of School · **Daniel Paradis**
Associate Head of School · **Priscilla Morales**
Associate Head for Finance and Operations · **Dan Schochor**
Lower School Principal · **Matt Doyle**
Lower School Assistant Principal · **Katrina Holmberg**
Middle School Principal (Interim) · **Priscilla Morales**
Middle School Dean of Students · **Shrijana Puri**
Upper School Principal · **Traci Wright**
Upper School Dean of Students · **Elliott Huntsman**
Director of Arts · **Deborah Hull**
Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion · **Hayes Davis**
DEI Fellow · **Assiatou Diallo**
Director of IT and Information Services · **Andy Scott**
Director of Athletics · **Robin Lowe '84**
Director of Admission and Upper School Admission · **Ruthie Sachs Kalvar '85**
Director of Enrollment Management and Tuition Assistance · **Mennette San-Lee**
Director of Facilities and Operations · **Ian Rausch**
Director of Human Resources · **Paula Sherman**
Director of Accounting · **Lisa Quinting**
Director of Communications and Marketing · **Pete Hilsee**
Director of Development · **Roger Seidenman '85**
Associate Director of Development · **Jamie Altchek '98**
Director of Nursing Services · **Katie Ackley**
Director of Special Events and Parent Program Coordinator · **Jayme Gilden Wood '93**

THE ROLE OF THE TEACHER AT PARK

The Vision

To support the faculty's work with students, the Head of School and Board of Trustees has made several strategic decisions. The school has undertaken several campus improvements over the last 25 years, including a Science and Engineering Wing which opened in the summer of 2023. On the occasion of the school's 75th Anniversary in 1989, trustees created a multi-million dollar endowed program to support summer professional work by faculty. (For details on the Faculty and Curricular Advancement program, see "The Teacher as Professional" later in this chapter.) In the recent Promise of Park Campaign, endowed funds were created to support faculty professional development.

Opportunities and Challenges

Teachers are attracted to Park because of the opportunities the school provides for a fully professional role, with scope for individual talent, initiative, and style. Individual teachers have the autonomy to select materials, assignments, modes of assessment, teaching approaches, and classroom structures to support goals they have defined while operating in the larger context of parameters set by the school's mission and philosophy, by the need for grade level, departmental, and divisional coordination of programs, and by the requirements of evaluation and future study. Openness to new knowledge and new approaches is encouraged and expected; it is the norm at Park for teachers to be involved in an ongoing effort, individually and collaboratively, to review and refine their curriculum and their teaching skills.

Students at Park bring to the classroom experience much talent, energy, curiosity, and a strong set of positive expectations. They are used to thinking of teachers as people they admire and trust, and as people who care about them and take their ideas and needs seriously. They are used to being encouraged to think for themselves and to raise questions; they expect to be asked to analyze problems, consider varying solutions, and apply knowledge to new situations. They are encouraged from the youngest ages to take the risks needed to learn and to make learning their own by connecting it to their own lives. The result is lively, engaged involvement in classroom activities.

Teaching at Park also offers a distinctive set of challenges for the new teacher, or even the experienced teacher who is new to Park. The challenges come in part from the autonomy granted to each teacher and that students assert their individual voices and convictions. At Park, the teacher's authority, individually established, comes from knowledge of the subject and strengths of character rather than deriving automatically from role or external authority.

We cannot offer prescriptive solutions to these challenges because they are rooted in basic aspects of the school's character, which we regard as essential strengths. At the same time, we are committed to making the transition for new faculty as smooth as possible.

New Faculty Support

We are committed to offering support to new faculty both through formal structures and through informal consultation, and we encourage new faculty to call upon faculty and administrative colleagues for practical advice, curricular support, and general information about school practices and routines.

Administrative • Division principals view support of new faculty as integral to their responsibilities. Principals meet with the cohort of new faculty members to review responsibilities and assist with planning. In addition to scheduling class visits and follow-up conversations with all faculty new to Park, principals are available for individual consultation at any time. New faculty should not hesitate to bring issues and questions to principals as they arise, and to seek their guidance on the full range of curricular, student, and parent concerns. The Director of Teaching and Learning is responsible for overall support of new faculty. In addition to periodic individual meetings with new faculty, the associate head welcomes conversations at any time. The associate head seeks not only to offer support as needed, but also to solicit new faculty's perspectives on Park and to identify ways their strengths and prior experiences can enrich Park's practice.

Orientation • The week prior to the school's opening includes orientation sessions and varied group activities designed to introduce new faculty to one another and to the school. Time is allotted for individual meetings with mentors, classroom set-up, and other supportive sessions.

Faculty Mentors • Each new faculty member is assigned a mentor, most typically, from their department or grade level. The mentor provides orientation to the school practices and assistance untied to any supervisory responsibility. Mentors schedule regular weekly conversations with their new faculty partners. They can be particularly helpful on curricular issues, ranging from broad goals to specific choices of texts and assignments, expectations for student performance and workload, and evaluation practices and standards.

Faculty Buddies • In addition to a departmental or grade level mentor, new faculty will sometimes be assigned a faculty buddy. This is a less formal role, with an emphasis on helping new faculty adjust to the culture and expectations at Park. Faculty buddy assignments are made with an eye toward shared interests or career stages rather than shared grade level or department.

The Teacher's Role in Communications with Families

At the beginning of the school year, faculty (LS lead classroom teachers, MS/US advisors) should reach out to families to establish the best ways to communicate throughout the academic year (by email or phone). At Park we have determined that 24-48 hours is a reasonable amount of time for school personnel to respond to parent/caregiver emails or phone calls. Families should note that messages left after 12:45 p.m. on a Friday might not be answered until the following Monday. Texting teachers or advisors is not appropriate unless specific permission is given by the school employee. In an emergency, families should call their division principal or a school counselor if necessary.

The Teacher's Role in Evaluation of Students

Approach to Assessment

Park's educational philosophy and goals influence the kinds of work teachers assign and use to assess student progress. From Pre-K through 12th Grade, we seek to promote particular habits of mind and attitudes that are a necessary part of all intellectual inquiry: open-mindedness and active questioning; confidence and risk-taking in formulating theories and hypotheses; patience, careful attention, and persistence in testing ideas systematically. Skills essential to this method go beyond memorization or information-gathering. Therefore, while modes of teaching and assessment address basic skills and factual content, they also emphasize activities that ask students to find connections, to see patterns, to discriminate among competing explanations, to construct models, and to apply knowledge in solving problems.

The various types of assignments and modes of assessment reflect departmental, grade level, and divisional priorities. New teachers are urged to consult department chairs (Middle and Upper Schools) or grade level colleagues (Lower School) for guidance. Apart from these collective agreements, individual teachers make decisions about what kinds of projects and assignments students should do and how to weigh various elements of performance in assessing progress. Semester and final grades are given only in the Upper School; there are no formal examination periods in any division, although many teachers assign final projects and/or give cumulative tests.

Teachers at all grade levels should make clear to students their expectations and the purposes of work being assigned. In Middle and Upper School courses, it is important for teachers at the beginning of the term to clearly outline criteria for assessment (including, for example, the weight given to daily preparation and class participation, policy on late work, and opportunities for revising assignments or undertaking supplementary work).

In recent years, many faculty have been exploring and evaluating additional modes of assessment. At the heart of this work is an effort to organize curriculum around essential ideas and skills, and to design learning activities and assignments that call upon the student to demonstrate these ideas and skills. Other important components of the approach include: development with students of criteria for high quality work; use of models; opportunities for students to revise their work; opportunities for students to reflect upon their work and assess their own progress.

In the Lower School, all classes in Grades 1-5 use collections of student work as a tool to promote student self-assessment and engagement in their own learning. Portfolios open new modes of reporting to parents, providing a record of progress and basis for discussion. In Grades 2-5, the spring conference involves the student, in which they review the collected work with parents and the teacher. New teachers are urged to consult with the Lower School principal for further information and guidance on structuring of portfolios and parent conferences.

Teachers new to Park should consult mentors, grade-level team members, and department chairs about the range of assessment measures currently in use, as well as additional methods being considered.

Homework

We believe the important question around homework is one of purpose. We believe that homework should support the school's overall emphasis on developing habits of mind and skills essential to learning. Within this context, homework can play a special role in fostering independence and responsibility. It can provide additional practice of skills or challenging extensions of what is learned in the classroom. Homework can provide opportunities to use community resources or to apply concepts to new areas.

Homework should give students a sense of what they can do on their own without direct supervision. To this end, we encourage parents to allow even young children to handle homework themselves; teachers should feel free to reiterate this message to students and parents. At the same time, it is obviously important that homework assignments be ones children can handle independently and that instructions be clear.

Lower School • Members of the Lower School faculty have engaged in thoughtful discussions based upon current research into the value of homework and its place in a progressive school. Following those discussions, we developed the Lower School homework philosophy: *We believe in homework that is meaningful, purposeful, and designed to meet students' needs. In Lower School, when we assign homework, it supports and extends classroom learning, strengthens the home-school relationship, and forges connections between classroom learning and the greater world.* Teachers will communicate their expectations about homework with students and parents at the beginning of each school year.

For all students, the Lower School faculty strongly encourages children to read for pleasure each day to help establish a life-long love and habit of reading. Independent reading, reading aloud to someone else, or being read to by an older sibling or adult all serve to accomplish this goal.

Middle School • Students are often given daily homework, including weekend assignments. The guideline is that students should expect to spend an average of 40-80 minutes of nightly homework. This may include work on longer-term assignments, as well as practice and application of newly learned skills. Students are also expected to read for 30 minutes each day. In Middle School, significant in-school time is also devoted to work on long-term projects. Teachers are expected to post homework assignments on their on-line course pages.

Upper School • Students are given both daily and long-term assignments. Depending on the nature and pace of particular courses, homework varies from two to three hours nightly. The general guideline is that faculty may assign approximately 45 minutes of work for regular courses and one hour for accelerated courses. Students in the Upper School have free periods during the school day; learning to use this time productively is an important part of the Upper School experience. Students should not have more than two substantial obligations (major paper, test, etc.) on a particular day; it is the student's responsibility to work out any conflicts with the help of the advisor.

Modes of Reporting on Progress

Specific procedures for evaluation of students and reporting to parents vary by division, but fundamental purposes and guiding principles are consistent across grade levels. These derive from Park's philosophy: the conviction that positive expectations elicit positive responses, that the child can be stimulated and challenged to exercise powers, which are inherent, and that intellectual growth is a process in which the student over time comes to encompass and apply increasingly sophisticated understandings.

The modes we use to assess and report on student progress are designed to encompass rather than exclude the complexities of the learning process. To this end, reports and one-on-one conferences with parents and students are essential tools because they allow us to describe fully varied aspects of student progress. At all levels, the goal is to make clear how the student is progressing in relation to a variety of skills and measures, to acknowledge strengths and gains, to suggest avenues for improvement, and to portray honestly and accurately where the student is relative to where he or she needs and is able to be.

Tone and balance, whether in formal summary reports or responses to individual pieces of work, are important. Children and young people are involved in a dynamic process of growth, which proceeds by individual timetable and inevitably involves risk and experimentation in the effort to master what has not yet been learned. Our responses must encourage growth, not discourage it: they should provide support in a collaborative sense and should, whenever possible, include concrete suggestions for improvement. At the same time, in our wish to be positive and supportive, we cannot shirk our responsibility to convey concerns honestly and forthrightly. We have expectations tailored to the age and experience of students, and we need to communicate clearly the degree to which students are meeting these expectations.

Division principals, department chairs, grade-level team members, and mentors are available to advise new teachers on writing reports and preparing for parent conferences.

The following is a brief summary of procedures for reporting in the three divisions. For further information, please consult division principals.

LOWER SCHOOL

Reporting is done through individual conferences and written progress reports. No letter or number grades are given.

New faculty are urged to review sample progress reports and to consult with grade level colleagues and mentors about preparation for conferences.

Back-to-School Night • To give parents an overview of plans and goals for the year, a Back-to-School Night is held early each fall. This is an opportunity for teachers to orient parents to their goals and structures for the year's work, and to outline ways parents can support their children's growth. (This is

not an appropriate occasion for conversations about individual children's progress; if parents request such information, a meeting should be scheduled at another time.)

Conferences and Reporting • All Lower School Grades

Get-to-Know-You Conferences • During the first week of school, all Lower School families are encouraged to participate in Get-To-Know-You conferences with each child's homeroom teacher. These sessions are an opportunity for families to share important information about children, strengthen the school-to-home relationship, and support a successful launch to a new school year.

Fall Conferences • Individual parent-teacher conferences are scheduled for all students. The focus is on highlighting aspects of the child's work to date and setting goals for the remainder of the year.

Mid-Year Reports • Written documentation of the conference covers all academic areas, as well as social/emotional development.

Spring Conferences • The second set of conferences for all students is held in late February and early March. Teachers in Grades 2-5 schedule three-way conferences for child, parent(s), and teacher; Pre-Kindergarten, Kindergarten and Grade 1 teachers hold parent/teacher meetings. In both formats, a collected body of student work provides the basis for discussion of progress.

End-of-Year Reports • Written documentation of the conference covers all academic areas, as well as social/emotional development.

Reporting • Special Area Subjects

Reports on students' progress in art, music, science, Spanish, and physical education are included in the mid-year and end-of-year reports.

MIDDLE SCHOOL

Reporting to parents occurs through trimester progress reports in each subject area (using rubrics and narratives) and individual parent/advisor conferences. No letter or number grades are given. Sixth graders and new students also receive six-week transition reports that provide feedback on how well the student has begun to meet the academic, social, and behavioral goals of Middle School.

At the end of the six-week period, quarter, or trimester, advisors read the reports of all of their advisees, and raise questions or make suggestions for revision to teachers as needed. Before reports are emailed home, students meet with their individual advisors to review reports and set goals.

For faculty new to Park, we strongly urge early discussions with department chairs and mentors about assessment practices. Those who have come from schools using letter grades have found Park's reporting system a welcome change, but one which brings its own challenges. In particular, it can be helpful to know the kinds of feedback and evaluation that teachers provide to students on individual tests, papers, homework assignments, and projects.

Back-to-School Night • This is held in the early fall. Parents follow an abbreviated version of their child's daily schedule. The evening is an opportunity for parents to meet all of their child's teachers, and for teachers to provide an overview of course objectives and content, to outline expectations of students, and to suggest appropriate ways that parents can support their children's growth.

Interim Reports/Student Updates • Several methods are used to track and report student progress on a more frequent basis than quarterly or trimester reports provide. Using Park's internal database system ("Behavior Events" through the Veracross system), teachers monitor student progress and share concerns and commendations with each other, advisors, and parents. The learning resource teacher plays a central role in monitoring student progress. This person queries teachers at grade level meetings on a regular basis to identify students whose progress is of concern and brings issues to weekly child life meetings. In addition, particular students may be raised at weekly "student study team" meetings so that a fuller picture of that student's progress can be assessed. (See listing under "Review Structures" later in this chapter for details about child life meetings.)

Parent Conferences • For all students, individual parent conferences with the student's advisor are scheduled twice a year. Advisors, the learning resource teacher, counselor, principal, or parent may schedule additional meetings as needed.

UPPER SCHOOL

Formal reporting on all students occurs four times per year. Students meet with their advisors at the middle and end of terms to assess progress and review teacher reports before they are mailed home.

Letter Marks • The Upper School uses letter marks (A through D and U). Plus and minus grades may be given for letters A through D.

For faculty new to Park, we strongly urge early discussions with department chairs, colleagues, and/or mentors about grading and assessment practices. Current Park faculty can provide detailed information about the kinds of feedback and evaluation Park teachers provide to students, as well as the range of faculty practices regarding time limits for tests, retaking tests and revising work, late assignments, grading homework, etc.

Please consult Upper School materials for policies on D's, U's, and Incompletes. Because some Upper School students are dealing with grades for the first time, it is particularly important to assist students in seeing grades in perspective as only one measure of achievement. In narrative comments and conferences with students, emphasis on the student's individual efforts can help as can a teaching approach that values the process of learning as well as the product and collaborative as well as individual efforts.

Back-to-School Night • This is an early fall event in which parents follow an abbreviated version of their child's daily schedule. It is an opportunity for parents to meet all of their child's teachers and for teachers to provide an overview of the program, including goals of the course and expectations of students. In

conjunction with this event, parents of ninth graders and new students have an opportunity to meet and talk briefly with their children's advisors.

Ninth Grade and New Student Reports • To aid in the transition to Upper School, there is a preliminary "New Student Report" issued after the first six weeks. Advisors review the reports with students before they are mailed home.

Quarterly and Semester Reports • These are issued for all students in each subject area. Quarterly reports often include a checklist and a preliminary grade. In addition, quarterly reports normally include brief narrative comments. (New faculty should consult department chairs for guidance and models.) Semester reports include a grade and a narrative summary. (Approximately three weeks before the end of semester, teachers submit academic updates for students whose work is in the low C, D or U range, noting particularly those who were not in difficulty at the mid-term. Warning notices are mailed to parents.)

Student Updates • Aspects of student performance may at times suggest the need for additional monitoring between quarters. Advisors solicit information from teachers via email or in person. Reports can also be initiated by the dean of students, the principal, a learning resource specialist, the student or, in consultation with the advisor or an administrator, the parent.

Parent Conferences • Individual conferences for parents of ninth graders and new students occur at the end of the first quarter. This is about 10 weeks into the term. There is an additional option for 10th – 12th Grade parents to meet with advisors later in the fall. Thereafter, parent conferences are scheduled on an as-needed basis. A conference can be initiated by a parent, administrator, advisor, or teacher.

Middle and Upper Schools • Reporting procedures in both divisions are designed to ensure that students and parents receive timely and clear progress reports; that problems or learning needs (for additional help or additional outlets for talents) are addressed promptly; and that neither students nor parents are caught by surprise. Teachers should inform advisors and the learning resource teacher whenever problems or learning needs arise rather than waiting until the standard middle or end-of-term reporting periods.

Although in the Middle and Upper Schools the student's advisor takes on primary responsibility for contact with parents, teachers are also free to initiate a conference or phone contact when that seems useful. (Important information from any such meetings or conversations should be shared with the student's advisor.) Parents are also encouraged to contact teachers if they have questions specific to a course and advisors if they have more general concerns. New faculty members are urged to seek guidance from their department chair, dean, principal or faculty coordinator(s) in responding to or initiating parent contacts.

The Teacher's Role in Guidance

At Park, guidance is everyone's responsibility. It occurs in daily interchanges between faculty and students, in classrooms and common spaces, in formal conferences and numerous informal conversations. All of these provide experiences and occasions for reflection, which, over time and with patient guidance from caring, trusting adults, help the student to acquire the self-sufficiency and genuine concern for others needed for productive adult life.

The "Whole Child"

Attention to "the whole child" is fundamental to every teacher's role at Park because of the school's convictions about how learning and growth occur. First is the belief that intellectual and psychological growth are integrally connected, that learning is an active process involving both intellectual and emotional energies. Thus we as teachers must nurture the confidence, ability to take risks, and open-mindedness which are the conditions for growth—and must pay attention to anxieties and stresses which interfere with this process. The second assumption is that learning is an individual process in which the child constructs meaning by selecting from external stimuli those that make sense because they connect to the child's previous experience and knowledge. Therefore, we as teachers must know as much as possible about each child in order to connect our "instruction" to the child's reality. Thirdly, there is an assumption that the process of growth occurs in recognizable stages, with the self gradually evolving towards greater complexity and maturity. For us as teachers, the challenge then is both to affirm the child's current sense of self and to stimulate growth toward a more complex, encompassing self. In supporting these processes of normal healthy growth, all teachers are necessarily involved.

Behavior and Conduct

Park's approach to issues of student behavior derives from its philosophy. It is centered on restorative practices with the aim to provide space for reflection, accountability, and an effort to reestablish trust in the community. It is appropriate, necessary—and expected by students—that teachers will assert their authority to maintain an atmosphere conducive to learning and to mutual respect. Park has a clear expectation, as stated in its philosophy, of behavior grounded in "rational self-discipline" and a capacity to act towards others "with respect, kindness, concern, and moral conviction." Teachers should not hesitate to enforce those standards.

There is a particular need for all faculty to uphold standards of civility and safety in common areas where younger and older students interact and where supervision may be less explicit. Faculty should seek assistance from advisors and/or the division principal if problems do not yield to normal teacher guidance and intervention.

School Rules

Park's emphasis is on setting positive expectations and modeling appropriate behavior, while also agreeing on norms for community living. Within this general framework, approaches vary to meet the needs of students of different ages. To help children to resolve peer conflicts, the Lower School faculty has developed "Conflict Resolution Protocol."

The Middle School shares with students and parents a set of classroom expectations and “The Rule for Community Living.” (See [Middle School Program of Studies](#).) Upper School students, with support from faculty, are expected to internalize standards of consideration and respect for others and to manage some free time without direct adult supervision. [The Upper School Student Handbook](#) includes more detailed guidelines and policies for students.

While serious behavioral problems at Park are rare, the school makes clear to both students and parents that there are some fundamental standards of behavior, necessary to the functioning of the community, which the school views with great seriousness. Violations are cause for immediate disciplinary action and normally involve notification of parents. *Any infractions of the following rules should be reported immediately to the division principal or head of school (as indicated below).*

1. Respect for all members of the community is fundamental to the school’s values. Any incident which reflects disrespect for a fellow student, a faculty, or staff member is a violation of this essential value. Instances of racism, religious bigotry, sexual harassment, or other forms of discrimination should be reported immediately to the head of school.
2. Timely attendance at classes, assemblies, and meetings is required of all students. Once permission is granted, seniors are allowed to leave campus if they have a substantial block of free time during the day; they may also come in time for their first class and leave after their final class. However, they must attend assemblies and other school commitments. This is a privilege which is revoked if it is abused. All other students are required to be on campus throughout the school day.
3. Academic dishonesty (cheating or plagiarism) is regarded as a serious breach of trust. Instances of academic dishonesty must be reported to the division principal or dean, who determines what action should be taken in response to the particular situation. Under some circumstances, the work may be redone; under others, an academic penalty may be assessed. In responding to individual situations, the principal must assess the larger picture, including issues of motivation, self-confidence, and outside pressures. In addition to academic penalties, professional counseling may be indicated. In the most serious and irremediable instances, dismissal may occur.

Maintaining expectations of academic honesty and training students to avoid plagiarism are the responsibility of all faculty members. Teachers assigning any kind of research project should review with students the appropriate use of sources and methods of attribution. This step is particularly important with the proliferation of internet sources. This has proved to be a useful tool for reviewing standards with students.

To avoid any confusion about expectations, teachers need to be explicit about parameters for work done outside of class, including take-home tests and group projects, and to clarify for students what constitutes appropriate attribution in working from secondary sources. Teachers should also monitor in-class tests.

4. Vandalism or theft violates community trust and responsibility. If students are identified engaging in such acts, they should be brought immediately to the division principal.
5. Use of alcohol or other drugs is strictly prohibited on campus at any time, including after-school, evening and weekend events, sports and social functions, and school trips. Coming to school or to a school event under the influence of alcohol or other drugs is similarly prohibited.
6. No smoking (including e-cigarettes and vapes) is allowed on campus at any time, including after-school, evening, and weekend events, sports and social functions, and on school trips.
7. Student driving is a privilege and a responsibility. Speeding and unsafe driving are strictly prohibited. Students and parents sign an explicit agreement regarding driving rules and permissions. Driving privileges are revoked if agreements are violated.

Disciplinary Procedures • To address serious instances of student misconduct, the school has a set of procedures designed to insure both due process and accountability for behavior.

Support Structures and Roles

Although, as noted, all teachers are centrally involved in supporting students as they interact daily with students, there are specific structures to provide support for students and resources for teachers.

Support Personnel

Divisional school counselors serve as resources for the divisions on social, emotional and behavioral issues such as evaluating children's social and emotional needs, and in developing strategies to address them. The counselor's work includes substantial consultation with families as well as with faculty and close coordination with the learning resource teachers. When needed, families are referred to outside professionals. In these instances, the counselor acts as a liaison and monitors the therapeutic process through ongoing contacts. General parent education is an increasingly important component of the counselor's role.

Park Connects is a parent education and networking program to promote student well-being and reduce unhealthy risk behaviors by raising awareness of child and adolescent development, enhancing protective factors and connecting parents with the community. Park Connects comprises parent education seminars facilitated by the school's health team and parent networking groups that are supported by the Parents' Association and parent volunteers. These efforts are coordinated by the Parents' Association and the Health and Wellness department.

Divisional learning resource teachers ensure careful planning for, and ongoing monitoring of, individual students who need special academic support. The role includes serving as a liaison to outside tutors and

evaluators, developing individual learning plans for students, and assisting faculty in implementing classroom approaches to address students' particular learning needs. The Upper School learning resource teacher also serves as liaison to the College Board for testing accommodations.

College counselors work collaboratively on college guidance issues and services designed to provide students and their parents with resources for selecting the colleges that best meet the students' interests, needs, and goals. In terms of individual counseling, each takes responsibility for half of the juniors and seniors. They meet with each family in the spring of the junior year and with small groups of seniors in the fall to offer advice about the interview and application process. They also prepare the school recommendations for students, consulting with advisors and other faculty as needed.

Advisory and Guidance Structures

The **Middle and Upper School Deans** are responsible for organizing and overseeing the advising system, including orientation of new faculty to their role as advisors and ongoing professional development for all faculty in their advisory roles. The dean coordinates the work of student support personnel, including class advisors, the core team, the learning resource teacher, and guidance counselors. The other major facet of the dean's work is coordination and development of co-curricular programs, including support to both faculty advisors and student leaders, and planning of major divisional events. Finally, the dean assists the divisional principal in addressing student behavioral issues.

Faculty Advisors • In the Middle and Upper Schools, where instruction is organized by departments and students move from teacher to teacher, a faculty advisor assumes overall responsibility for monitoring the student's progress and serving as the student's advocate. For all full-time Middle and Upper School teachers, advising students is a key faculty responsibility.

Middle School • Advisors are assigned and advisees are grouped by "houses," which serve as an anchor within the Middle School structure. House groups meet daily to share daily announcements, review reports, conference with individual students and to celebrate individual achievements, and to enjoy a snack. Advisory groups are cross-graded; in most instances advisees remain with their advisors for the three years they are in Middle School.

Upper School • In the Upper School, advisors are assigned to ninth graders and new students. Thereafter, during spring registration, students are free to select their own advisors. Advisors meet individually with their advisees on a regular basis and weekly with their group of advisees. The group meeting serves as a forum for discussion of community and student life issues.

In both divisions, the advisor is responsible for being very familiar with the advisee's academic and social circumstances through conversations with the student, the teachers, the parents, and school records. The advisor facilitates communication with other teachers and sometimes with peers. The advisor assists the student in academic matters, consulting about course choices, reviewing mid-semester and semester reports, and working with the student and at times the parents to determine strategies to address issues. In addition to these formal responsibilities, advisors also consult with students about a range of

social and personal issues, offering a sympathetic but objective perspective to advisees involved in the process of growth towards maturity.

Communication with parents is an important part of advising, and the advisor serves as the most important link among student, parents, and teacher. Advisors of Middle School students and of ninth graders meet with parents of all advisees individually. At upper grade levels, parent conferences occur as needed. At all grade levels, advisors are responsible for ensuring that parents are informed of significant issues and are not caught by surprise.

As is evident, much responsibility is entrusted to faculty advisors, and many students over the years have noted how important the relationship is to them. For most students, the informed and caring perspective of a full-time educator offers what is needed to address issues and support growth. However, there are limits and, in the face of serious problems, student or family needs may well exceed what the advisor can provide. Advisors (and teachers) need to establish and be aware of boundaries and to know when to seek help from others. An advisor or teacher should not hesitate to bring issues to the division principal, the dean of students, or to a school counselor.

Social Emotional Awareness and Learning (SEAL) (Middle School) • SEAL is a required social and emotional learning program for all Middle School students, led by the Health and Wellness department. The focus is on five central developmental needs of the age group: self-awareness, self-management, developing relationships, decision-making, and connecting to the broader community. (For details, please see *Middle School Program of Studies*.)

Class Advisors • In the Upper School, class advisors assist student officers in organizing grade level social and community service activities and monitor the dynamics and well-being of individual grade levels. Class advisors also participate in and help plan grade-level parent events, attend Parents' Association grade representative meetings, and collaborate with the Dean of Students on grade-wide meetings with advisors and teachers.

Wellness and Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Workshops • Diversity, Equity and Inclusion and Wellness workshops are required for developmental learning for upper school students. Full-time educators are asked to assist in the facilitation of Wellness workshops for ninth and tenth graders or DEI sessions for all Upper School students.

Review Structures • Attention to students' psychological growth and emotional well-being has characterized Park's approach since its founding. In all three divisions, current review structures provide opportunities for faculty, administrators, and guidance personnel to pool information and insight, discuss strategies, and consider together what steps can be taken to support growth.

Lower School

Progress Review • Progress Review meetings focus attention on students identified by teachers as needing special support and provide a regular forum to monitor the progress of all new students. Structures vary by grade level. In grades K-5, meetings may focus on individual class groups. Meetings

with special area teachers are held periodically, both to solicit their input on children's progress and to keep them informed about concerns raised by homeroom teachers. The principal, counselor, and learning resource teacher participate in sessions for all grade levels.

Child Study Teams • This structure provides a forum for intensive review of student progress and individual planning to support children's growth. Scheduled as needed throughout the year, child study meetings can be requested by teachers, parents, or administrators and are attended by the principal, classroom teacher of the child, learning resource teacher, counselor, and parents. The learning resource teacher is responsible for writing, implementing, and monitoring progress of the learning plans developed for individual students.

Lower School Playground Committee • In addition to recess supervisors, Lower School teachers participate in supervising recess on a rotating basis. This responsibility includes ensuring the safety of all students but also provides teachers dedicated time to observe children in a less-structured environment with important opportunities for social emotional learning.

The principal, assistant principal, and recess supervisors meet routinely with the Lower School counselor to discuss and respond to children's needs and to issues that arise on the playground.

Middle School

Student Discussion Meetings / Grade Level Team Meetings • Occurring on a weekly schedule, these meetings are run by a grade level facilitator or the learning resource teacher and include faculty who teach at a particular grade level, a counselor, and often the dean or principal. Students for discussion are selected before the meeting, and all teachers who work with those students attend. Other topics at grade level team meetings include curricular decisions, trips, class meetings, etc.

Child Life Team • This structure serves to monitor student progress on an ongoing basis. The principal meets weekly with the learning resource teacher, middle school dean, and guidance counselors to review individual progress and coordinate appropriate responses. Students reviewed include those who have been raised at grade level meetings or at the student discussion meetings, as well as those about whom individual teachers have raised concerns or who have been the subject of many of the online methods of communicating about students.

Student Feedback • After speaking with a student about a specific concern or commendation, a teacher will often follow up with a Behavior Event (using Veracross), which is forwarded to the student's advisor. The advisor then reviews the situation with the student and then shares the information with the parents. All Behavior Events are stored in a secure database that the child life team (the principal, middle school dean, learning resource teacher, and guidance counselors) can review weekly.

Student Study Teams • This structure serves the same purposes as those outlined under Lower School child study teams. In the Middle School, student study team meetings are attended by the principal, middle school dean, learning resource teacher, guidance counselors, the student's advisor and current

teachers, and sometimes by parents. Students may be referred for review by any of the above. Referrals also originate from grade level meetings.

Upper School

Student Study Teams • This structure provides a weekly forum for intensive review of student progress and individual planning to support student's growth. Attended by the principal, dean of students, learning resource teacher, and counselors, the team develops strategies and provides guidance and support to academic advisors. If further consultation or follow up is needed, a member of the team will recommend and schedule a Core Team meeting, family meeting or individual student meeting with the student's advisor and members of the team.

Ninth Grade Pool Meetings • To ensure special attention to students making the transition to Upper School, ninth grade advisors and teachers meet weekly during the first semester and periodically second semester in meetings coordinated by the class advisors. The principal, dean of students, school counselors, and learning resource teacher also attend. Meetings focus both on general issues and on individual students' progress as needed.

Core Team Meetings • A core guidance team meets weekly to insure attention to 10th– 12th Graders whose progress warrants special support. The core team, facilitated by the dean of students, includes the principal, dean of students, school counselors, learning resource teacher, teachers, and 10th– 12th Grade class advisors. Teachers and advisors are solicited weekly for referrals of students about whom they have concerns and are asked to attend as interest or need dictates.

Advisor Snapshots • Faculty advisors write individual summary reports for their advisees at the end of each year.

Student Records and Testing

Student Records • These are kept digitally and are maintained by divisional administrative assistants. Student records include the student's application to Park and/or the transcript from the sending school, academic progress reports, and standardized test results.

Educational and psychological evaluations by outside professionals are kept in a confidential file in each principal's office. Access to these files is limited to those staff members immediately concerned with guidance of the student. The admission office keeps records compiled during the admission process, including teacher recommendations and notes of parent and student interviews, for three years.

Standardized Testing • Park uses selected aptitude and achievement sub-tests of the Comprehensive Testing Program V of the Educational Records Bureau for students in Grades 3-8. Testing across these grade levels occur in the winter. ERB tests have been selected because they provide independent school norms.

All Upper School students take the PSAT test, and most take the SAT Reasoning Test and/or the ACT. No formal SAT or ACT "prep" takes place within the Park curriculum. Students who wish to prepare for these

tests may choose to practice on their own using free resources or participate in a class or work with a tutor. For students who qualify based on their Tuition Assistance level, free group tutoring is provided outside the school day. Students in courses that align with the Advanced Placement curriculum are encouraged to take the AP tests set by the College Board.

We regard standardized test results as one measure that may be useful in providing an additional perspective on student performance. At the same time, we regard testing as a limited measure and one often accorded too much weight by both parents and students. We are careful not to view test scores in isolation and to use them with caution. In interpreting standardized test results, we also must take into account the extent to which particular tests do not correspond with program emphases.

Special Guidance Issues

Tutoring • Teachers at all levels routinely provide extra support to students as needed; the expectation is that the classroom teacher is the first line of support. Students are encouraged to meet with teachers to ask questions, revise work, or to retake tests. Teachers often meet with students before or after school. There are instances, however, when students need more extensive individual help than can reasonably be offered by classroom teachers. In these cases, the school may recommend tutoring. In the Lower, Middle, and Upper School, if a teacher believes a student needs tutorial support, the teacher should notify the divisional learning resource teacher.

Teachers/advisors should *not* give advice on tutoring directly to parents or students, even if asked; recommendations for tutoring appropriately come from the division principal or learning resource teacher after consultation with faculty. Employees may not provide any other services to any student or the parent of any student for compensation, including tutoring, except as part of their employment and compensation through the school, unless approved by the Head of School.

Hiring and paying for tutors is normally a parental responsibility at Park. However, the school does have limited funds to support tutoring for students receiving tuition assistance.

Educational/Psychological Evaluations and Support Services • At times students may encounter difficulties that require specialized assessment and/or ongoing therapeutic support. If a teacher believes a student needs such assistance, the teacher should discuss the matter with the division principal. Teachers should *not* suggest an evaluation or outside services before consulting the principal and/or learning resource teacher, nor should they offer opinions, even if asked, about particular practitioners.

Depending on the nature of the issues, the school counselor or learning resource teacher for the division is involved in formulating appropriate recommendations and often takes part, with the principal and the teacher or advisor, in meeting with parents. Subsequently, the school counselor or learning resource teacher acts as liaison with outside professionals once family and school agree upon a plan for assessment or support.

Placement and Retention Issues • Issues of retention in grade or retention in the school and/or “appropriateness” of this or any other school for a particular student are the responsibility of the division principal and the head of school. Faculty members should *not* discuss such matters with parents in even the most general and cautious terms.

The Lower School principal, counselor, and learning resource teacher coordinate the process of grouping Lower School children in sections as they progress to the next grade level. They review recommendations from the “sending” grade level teachers, who make up the groups based on multiple considerations. The principal then either approves the placements or consults with faculty about necessary changes. In addition, the principal consults with the directors of admission about placement of new students. Faculty members should *not* offer opinions to parents about placement of their child with a particular teacher, even if such opinions are solicited.

In the Middle School, teachers work with the dean of students to devise placement for seventh and eighth graders. The dean of students and learning resource teacher devise placement in sixth grade “mains” based on information from fifth grade teachers, and the Lower School resource teacher and school counselor.

The Teacher’s Role in School Activities

In a school like Park, much that is important to student life goes on beyond the classroom, and in all divisions faculty members are involved in supporting a range of activities. The mode varies from one division to another. In the Lower School, a number of activities connect children across grade levels in collaborative enterprises, ranging from community service projects and partnerships between classes to the annual May Day festival. In the Middle School, teachers offer student activities, as well as lead an Affinity, Alliance, or Advocacy group (AAA Program). In the Upper School, all faculty are expected to play a role in supporting the extensive co-curricular program. In both Middle and Upper Schools, faculty also assist as chaperones for trips, dances, and other student events. Coaching at Park is voluntary, not required, but it is very important for students that a number of teachers are involved in coaching sports at upper elementary through high school levels. Faculty are encouraged to attend school events, ranging from sports competitions to plays and musical performances.

The school’s contractual agreements with faculty include an expectation of faculty involvement in school activities beyond classroom teaching, and these activities are an important element in faculty evaluation. For details, please see Section 3 “Faculty Employment and Evaluation Policies.”

The Teacher's Role with Colleagues

While there is a strong tradition of teacher autonomy at Park, we strive to balance this individual authority with appropriate attention to collaborative efforts. The latter occur through grade level, departmental, and divisional structures, through faculty committees in all three divisions, and through summer curricular projects. The administration seeks to facilitate cooperative ventures that arise from faculty interest and promotes collaborative efforts needed to address issues of general concern and to ensure coherence of program and approaches for students.

Faculty and Curricular Advancement (FACA) Program • This is the major vehicle for collaborative work by faculty. (Please see “The Teacher as Professional” later in this chapter for details.) Since projects often cross departments, grade levels, or divisions, they serve both to coordinate curriculum and to establish ongoing professional and personal connections among faculty.

Faculty Council • This group includes volunteers from each division. The group meets regularly to discuss issues of faculty concern, organizes faculty forums, and meets periodically with the head of school and associate head of school.

Faculty Representative to the Board of Trustees • A faculty member serves as an *ex officio* member of the Board of Trustees. The faculty representative serves a two - three year term.

In relationships with colleagues, faculty are expected to adhere to standards of professional behavior and courtesy. In a school where teacher-student relationships are important and faculty serve as advisors, maintaining these standards requires particular tact, sensitivity, discretion, and respect for confidentiality. If a situation arises in which a faculty member believes that these standards have been violated, they should speak directly with the person involved to establish the facts and then, if the issue is not resolved, take it to the division principal.

The Teacher as a Professional

Becoming a teacher involves choosing a fully professional role. It is such a role in the classroom because, as already discussed, the teacher at Park is entrusted with extensive authority to make decisions about what to teach and how best to teach it, given the individual teacher's particular talents and style, and the needs of a particular group of students.

Beyond that day-to-day responsibility, Park teachers are also actively involved in developing their knowledge of their disciplines, their range of teaching methods, and their understanding of children and young people. While much of this effort goes on through normal modes of individual preparation for teaching and informal interchanges with colleagues, some kinds of efforts require a different degree of engagement, a different time frame, and a different level of institutional support.

Faculty and Curricular Advancement (FACA) Program • Park's FACA program is distinctive among professional development programs nationwide in its conception and scale. Since 1989, the program has made possible over 1000 faculty grants in support of more than 250 projects; approximately 80 percent

of Park's current faculty have been involved in one or more projects during the last five years.

FACA Project Reports • Many reports of work from individual FACA projects include detailed curricular plans developed by departments or grade levels and hence can be a valuable source of information for new faculty. New faculty are encouraged to check with department chairs/grade team colleagues to identify projects important to current curricular work. Copies of reports are available on the Google Drive under FACA Reports (alphabetical order) or by year at the following link:
<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/0ALYYO0OhCAr2Uk9PVA>

FACA Eligibility and Procedures • All faculty are eligible for the FACA program and new faculty are urged to consider applying.

The Kohn Family Fund • This endowed fund was established during the school's Centennial Campaign in recognition of the unique needs of faculty in their first 10 years of teaching. Whether to offset the cost of graduate studies, further enable attendance at professional workshops or conferences, or supplement summer work, the fund is intended to extend professional growth opportunities to early career stage teachers beyond what other sources of funding might provide.

Conferences, Institutes, and Workshops • The school builds funding into the annual operating budget to support faculty attendance at appropriate conferences and workshops during the school year. Individual teachers may request support through division principals and associate head of school, to ensure that useful opportunities are promoted and funds are equitably shared.

Association of Independent Maryland Schools (AIMS) is an active professional association that sponsors annual conferences and a number of workshops and meetings of interest groups during the year.

Professional Days • Professional days have taken on increasing importance in recent years to support divisional and whole school attention to major institutional initiatives. Typically, two - three such days are scheduled. Focus for professional days is defined each year for whole school or divisional work as needs and priorities warrant.

FACULTY EMPLOYMENT, PERSONNEL, AND EVALUATION PROCEDURES

Terms of Employment

Employment statements issued by the head of school, with an accompanying summary of salary and benefits, are offered in late winter/early spring for the following academic year. This represents a commitment of resources on the part of the school. Signing the statement therefore represents a serious commitment on the part of faculty.

Commitments from faculty are essential to the school's ability to plan deployment and teaching assignments and to meet its responsibility for services to students. Thus, faculty should feel a professional responsibility to express in a timely and candid way issues or circumstances that may influence their commitment to the school or their ability to accept further employment. Faculty are asked to bring such issues to the associate head of school as soon as they are known rather than waiting until employment statements are issued. Faculty members should consult with the associate head of school if particular circumstances necessitate adjustments to the normal schedule of commitments.

The current employment period for teaching faculty is 10 months. Depending upon the yearly calendar (especially the timing of Labor Day), faculty meetings and classes may begin in late August. Responsibilities in June, which extend approximately to mid-month, include faculty meetings after students are dismissed, as well as completion of all individual end-of-year tasks (including student progress reports, inventories, and book orders).

For faculty employed during the summer in the Faculty and Curricular Advancement (FACA) program, salary and benefits are provided for the additional period of employment.

Formal school hours for students are from 8:30 a.m.-3:15 p.m. Therefore, faculty are expected to be on campus from at least 8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m., to prepare for classes, support student activities, attend meetings, and confer with colleagues. All three divisions have weekly faculty meetings after school on Wednesdays until 5:00 p.m.. In addition, there are other after-school meetings faculty may need to attend. It is the school's expectation that faculty will be present throughout the day and will notify the division principal if they need to leave campus during or before the end of the school day.

Employee Personnel Policies

Please see the [Employee Handbook](#) (password- bruins21208) for information on general personnel policies including The Family Medical Leave Act, Medical Leave, Parental Leave, Nursing Mothers, Care of Sick Children, and Personal Days. Additional policies pertaining to faculty are listed below:

Outside Employment · The school assumes that full-time employment requires the application of all reasonable energies and industry during the school year to meet the responsibilities of one's job here. Because teaching makes these demands, the school finds it reasonable to assume that normal

responsibilities here cannot be fully met if a teacher is devoting significant time and attention to other employment during the school year. Therefore, **the head of school requires that any faculty member considering significant outside employment must be discussed first.**

Graduate Study or Course Work • Park supports faculty in taking courses pertinent to their teaching assignments through the faculty summer grant program. Most course work is done during the summer. While teachers occasionally take courses during the school year, doing so during the first year or two at Park is inadvisable. Teachers new to Park are urged to delay any course work at least until the second year. The school does not have a formal program to underwrite full costs for multi-year graduate degree study, but the head of school welcomes requests for support of individual courses.

Tutoring • Tutoring of Park students by Park teachers poses potential conflicts of interest. For this reason, **any teacher who tutors Park students must have prior approval from the head of school.**

Absences / Substitutions Employee Handbook

Absence for reasons other than illness should be discussed with the division principal or associate head of school in advance. In the case of illness, the teacher should provide as much notice as possible. It is important that each teacher provide substitute lesson plans or written work for each period missed. When a substitute is needed, contact your divisional administration. Procedures for substitution vary by division as outlined below.

Lower School • The Lower School assistant principal screens substitute teacher candidates prior to each school year and distributes a current list to all faculty at the beginning of the school year. If the need for a substitute is known well in advance, teachers should make arrangements themselves and inform the principal or assistant principal via email or text. In other circumstances, teachers should ask the assistant principal for assistance.

Middle School • For absences of one to two periods in length, faculty are responsible for finding another teacher to cover for them, and details should be provided to the principal's administrative assistant. If a faculty member will be absent for three or more periods in a single day, the teacher must notify the principal by email and copy the principal's administrative assistant, who will arrange for an outside substitute. The principal's administrative assistant will arrange all coverage for field trip-related absences.

Upper School • A faculty member who is ill or will be absent for other reasons should notify the department chair, principal, and the Upper School administrative assistants. Faculty within a department cover for one another in most instances. For absences longer than three days, the school will attempt to hire a substitute.

Deployment and Duties

In all three divisions of the school, the goal is to deploy faculty in a way that makes possible intensive interactions between faculty and students and a reasonable load for each faculty member. What is
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described below are the school's current arrangements; these are not immutable. Alternate structures to support general deployment goals and to meet school needs may evolve in future, and, as in other areas of school life, maintaining flexibility and open-mindedness in considering alternative structures is important.

Currently in the Lower School, classroom teachers are responsible for all academic areas of instruction for a class group, averaging 14 to 18 in size. Special area teachers take responsibility for Spanish, music, art, library, computer, science, and physical education. Kindergarten classes are normally 12 to 22, with two teachers. The learning resource teacher(s) provides an additional resource to teachers in addressing the range of student abilities and needs.

In Lower School, all faculty members share selected duties as needed. Faculty currently rotate responsibility for the following: recess duty, lunch supervision in classrooms or in the cafeteria, and assistance with afternoon carpool. In Middle School, faculty supervise "house" groups of students in the cafeteria, who rotate responsibility for clean-up. In Upper School, faculty and students are assigned to annex duty by advisee group, with responsibility for week-long duty rotating during the year.

Currently in the Middle and Upper Schools, the normal course load is four classes averaging 15 to 18 students in each, with some variations in numbers caused by the elective system and by decisions about grouping. All Middle School faculty are expected to advise 6-12 students per year, and to offer activities each trimester.

Typical additional duties in support of students include advising activities, planning and supervision of both school-day and extended trips, coaching, writing letters of recommendation, chaperoning, and supervision of students in non-classroom situations. In addition, faculty are responsible for meeting with parents, serving on committees, attending evening meetings, and assisting with admission activities. Division principals allocate duties and, to the extent equity and school needs allow, seek to match individual faculty interests and talents with specific assignments.

These responsibilities are considered a normal part of employment and do not carry extra compensation. The extent and nature of these duties vary by division and by individual teacher, but the extent and quality of faculty participation in them are a significant component of faculty evaluation.

Upper school teachers are expected to solicit formal, anonymous feedback from their classes at least once a semester. This feedback should be collected early enough in the course--many teachers do so at the end of the first quarter of the semester--to be able to use that feedback to respond to student interests and learning needs. The teacher will use their experience, pedagogical expertise, content area knowledge, and philosophy of teaching alongside an understanding of and respect for student perspectives and experiences to make decisions about their classes. **Teachers should review the feedback with the class** in an open discussion of what is working well and what improvements could be made. **They should also share and discuss the students' feedback with their department chair;** department chairs should identify a colleague with whom they can share their students' feedback, reflect, and identify ideas for growth. **To support a teacher's growth, the principal may also have access**

to course evaluations. Teachers looking for examples of feedback surveys and modes should work with their faculty mentors, colleagues, department chairs, or US administrators.

Assemblies

Routine weekly assemblies are held by all three divisions in the Meyerhoff Theater, and additional assemblies are scheduled for special programs. Faculty are expected to attend assemblies and to assist in monitoring student behavior. In Lower School, children sit by class; in Middle School by “house” groups; Upper School seating is open, but faculty are asked to distribute themselves among the student audience.

Attendance / Tardiness

Procedures vary among the three divisions. Reporting absent or late students to the division office is handled by classroom teachers in the Lower School, through first period teachers in the Middle School, and from teachers of each academic block in Upper School. For more detailed information about procedures, please consult the administrative assistant in each divisional office.

Maintenance / Room Repair Requests

Each spring teachers are asked to submit requests for repairs, painting, or other major maintenance projects that need to be completed over the summer. During the year, any maintenance needs or problems with cleaning services should be submitted using our work order ticketing system, [FMX](#). All Facilities work orders, whether they be for summer work, or work during the academic year, should be submitted at <https://parkschool.gofmx.com/>. Please see your divisional administrative assistant if you need help in setting up your FMX account or learning to submit a request.

Morning Announcements

The Lower School posts messages on a board in the division office.

In Middle School, announcements are posted online and then shared with students in “house” Monday-Friday. Teachers and students who wish to place announcements should give these to the Middle School administrative assistant by 3 p.m. on the preceding day.

In Upper School, a digital copy is emailed to all Upper School faculty and students; it is read to Upper schoolers in first period classes. Teachers and students who wish to place announcements should give these to the Upper School administrative assistant in writing by 3 p.m. on the preceding day.

Employee Benefits

Refer to the [Employee Handbook](#) (password- bruins21208) for a comprehensive list of employee benefits.

Faculty Evaluation at Park

The Faculty Evaluation Committee was formed in 2010 to create a meaningful and manageable approach

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to teacher evaluation at Park School. The program that was developed is for experienced and successful teachers who have been at the school for a number of years; it is not designed to evaluate either teachers in their first two years at Park or teachers who are struggling to fulfill their obligations, both of whom are already covered by existing programs. The principals' team reviews the process on an annual basis to ensure that we continue to consider both the larger purpose and effectiveness, as well as manageability, for faculty and administrators alike.

Support and Supervision of Faculty New to Park

Procedures are in place to ensure that new faculty receive sufficient support during their first years at Park. These may include "clusters" of visits by principals and/or the associate head of school (all divisions) and department chairs (Middle and Upper Schools), follow-up conversations, and a mid-year conference with a written summary of the discussion. Support and evaluation of faculty in their first two years looks different than the evaluation of longer tenured faculty. Through frequency and style of feedback, administrators work with faculty in their first two years, to determine long-term fit at Park.

Concerns about Teacher Performance and Non-Renewal of Employment Statement

Concerns about a teacher's performance may be brought to the attention of principals by first hand observation, parents, and students. For routine concerns the principal will ask the parent or student to discuss the matter directly with the teacher.

When a series of individual issues becomes more than the normal day-to-day challenges, the initial step is for the principal to discuss the issues with the teacher. The teacher and the principal attempt to clarify the concerns, agree on what the important issues are, and develop a plan of action to address the concerns. The plan of action may include a series of classroom visits, analyses, and discussions. The plan of action may also include other resources and methods of support, for example, discussions with other teachers, observations in other classrooms, feedback from students, reading materials, professional conferences, etc. The divisional principal may follow-up in writing to ensure mutual understanding of the plan of action. The goal is to provide as much support as necessary in order for the desired changes and improvements to occur.

The divisional principal may establish a timeframe in which the teacher will be expected to make these changes and improvements. If the non-renewal of a teacher's employment statement becomes a consideration, the head of school becomes directly involved. If the plan and improvements have not been met, and may follow notifying the teacher that the employment statement may not be issued. When a decision is made not to issue a teachers' employment statement, effort is made to provide sufficient time for the teacher to seek other positions. The head of school makes a final determination based upon discussions with, and recommendations from, the principal.

All of the above procedures are handled as privately and confidentially as possible. The specific concerns and actions taken to support the teacher are not generally communicated to other members of the faculty and administration. During these serious and difficult procedures confidentiality and privacy are

essential to ensure respect for the individuals involved. Privacy allows the individuals to listen and understand the honest, but difficult messages and to have the time to consider ways to make the needed changes.

SCHOOL ORGANIZATIONS AND MAJOR EVENTS

Parent and Alumni Organizations

Parents' Association • Park has traditionally encouraged close involvement on the part of parents in school life. One of the primary means to this end is the Parents' Association, of which every Park School parent is a member.

This long-standing organization has in recent years adapted to new circumstances, including the growing diversity of the parent community and has increasingly focused its efforts on programs designed to inform parents as substantively as possible about Park's philosophy and programs. In its efforts, the association is supported by a parent program coordinator who works closely with academic administrators and association officers in planning parent education programs, and by development staff, who assist with a number of special events and fund raising activities. The Parents' Association mission statement, written in 1991, reflects its current emphases:

The mission of the Parents' Association is to foster the partnership among the Park School's home and school communities by serving as a forum to connect these constituencies. Further, the mission is to support and promote the philosophy of The Park School by providing a vehicle to communicate with, educate, integrate, and involve the Park School family. In order to accomplish this mission, the Parents' Association sees as its priorities the following areas: communication, parent education, community interaction, fundraising, and special projects.

Currently, the Parents' Association is centrally involved in supporting "Park Connects," the school's comprehensive wellness program, which includes partnership with parents as an essential component. Parents of students in Grades 5, 7, 9, and 10 are asked to attend educational seminars; parents at all grade levels are invited to participate in networking groups facilitated by trained parent volunteers.

Parents' Association activities are guided by an elected board. In addition to the board, the structure of the organization includes two to three elected representatives for each grade (two-year terms), and committee chairs. The president of the association serves as an *ex officio* member of the Board of Trustees.

Alumni Council • The role of the council is "to advance the interest of The Park School and to promote a close relationship between the school and its alumni." Longstanding events sponsored by the council as well as the Alumni Office include an Alumni Celebration each spring and alumni athletic and social events. The Alumni Brunch held annually during Alumni Celebration weekend honors our "vintage" alumni, some of whom graduated from Park's Liberty Heights campus (1923-1959).

The Alumni Council is headed by an elected president (Henry Villacorta '12) who serves a two-year term as an *ex officio* member of the Board of Trustees. The Vice President of the Alumni Council will be named in the 2026-27 school year.

Out-of-town “Park Alumni On The Road” reunions are held in New York (our largest alumni base outside of Baltimore) and other cities with substantial alumni representation (in past years we have had “Park Alumni On The Road” events in Washington DC, Boston, Philadelphia, Chicago, Denver, Atlanta, LA, and the Bay Area). A small group of faculty and administrators participate in these events as representatives of today’s Park School.

Alumni aid the school through their participation in volunteer projects and through important fundraising events, particularly The Park Fund and designated reunion gifts. *Cross Currents*, the school’s annual publication, keeps alumni informed about school programs; it includes a section of alumni notes, as well as profiles of alumni. Furthermore, Park uses social media sites to reach out to keep alumni connected, as well as a monthly Park Post Alumni newsletter.

If you are interested in inviting an alum back to campus or to visit your class as a guest speaker please contact our Alumni Director, Josh Lauren ’03 (jlauren@parkschool.net) and Josh can help you to make those connections and arrangements.

School-wide Events

Events are subject to change. Refer to the most current updates from the divisional principal and/or head of school.

Admission Events

In the fall, the Admission Office hosts several different types of events designed to introduce Park to our prospective families. Faculty, administrators, staff, students, parents, trustees, and alumni all collaborate to support these efforts. Events include:

Open House for Grades Pre-K-12 - “Experience Park”

An all-school “Experience Park” Open House features faculty as ‘thought leaders’ and allows prospective families to experience Park teachers at work. Faculty representatives from each grade level and divisions/departments engage with parents/guardians and students, explaining teaching materials, student work, and progressive pedagogy. If this event is on the same day as “Saturday in the Park,” visitors are invited to join these festivities after the Open House.

Tours with Principals

These two in-person Principal/Senior Administrator-led introductions to Park occur on fall mornings so that adult visitors can tour campus and see classes in session.

“Positively Park”

Dan Paradis, our Head of School, hosts an evening panel discussion for prospective parents/guardians in which he and the group highlight Park’s pedagogy, offerings, and institutional priorities.

“Rise and Shine”

Led by our primary level teachers, these are Saturday morning fun-filled activity sessions for prospective children ages 3-5 and their parents/guardians. Two are in the fall and two are in the late spring.

Take a First Look

Held in May, this event mirrors our fall Tours with Principals format and is geared towards families looking ahead to applying in next fall's admission season.

Admission Engagement with Prospective Families

As part of our admission process, the Admission Team regularly engages with prospective families while classes are in session in order to share our programming and our campus.

Group Tours of Campus and Parent Interviews

Led by Admission Directors and/or Principals/Deans/Assistant Principals, group tours for prospective parents include classroom observations in order to provide a sense of school philosophy and practice in action.

Student Visits and Assessments

Students visit the school in sizable numbers. Typically applicants to Pre-K, Kindergarten, and first grade will visit campus on a weekend for assessments, and applicants to grades 2-12 will visit classes and shadow students during the school day.

Tuition Assistance Office

In an online interactive webinar, families learn about Park School tuition assistance policies, deadlines, and scholar programs. Participants learn how the information submitted on the School and Student Services (SSS) application is used by Park to determine a potential tuition grant award.

Throughout the fall, the Tuition Assistance Office will offer virtual office hours. These remote drop-in sessions are designed for parents working on their tuition assistance application to ask a quick question or gain additional insight about the process. For a more extensive tuition affordability planning meeting or to discuss individual family circumstances, parents are encouraged to schedule an appointment with the Director of Enrollment Management and Tuition Assistance.

Academic Year Events

Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Birthday • Park is officially closed on the national holiday that marks his birthday. However, to provide focus and meaning for the day, Park occasionally hosts a voluntary community gathering, which brings together Park faculty, staff, parents, and children. In lieu of a formal community program at Park, the school provides a comprehensive list of celebrations and service opportunities in the larger community.

Grandparents' and Special Friends' Visiting Day • The Development office works with division principals to develop programs for each division, which may include assemblies, classroom visits, and optional educational seminars presented by Park teachers. Attendance is large, especially at younger age

levels, and activities in which grandparents can participate with their grandchildren are particularly welcomed.

Divisional Events

Lower School

Resident Author Program • The Gordon Berman '68 Memorial Lower School Resident Author Program brings a noted children's author or illustrator to the Lower School every other year for a day of storytelling and workshops with classroom groups. The schedule for the visit usually includes an assembly presentation, and smaller group meetings or workshops. The Library sells the author's or illustrators books for signing.

May Day • This long standing Lower School tradition, sponsored by the Parents' Association, focuses on a festival of music involving all Lower School students. It includes a performance of the May Pole dance by graduating fifth graders.

Middle School

Exploratory Learning Week • The week-long series of workshops allows students to explore curricular areas that are not covered within regular courses. Parents and faculty offer workshops in areas of their interest and expertise. The week also accommodates extended rehearsals for a Middle School drama production, with performances at the end of the week.

Advoc8 • Advoc8 is a year-long project designed for students to use research skills and knowledge developed during Middle School to take on roles as advocates for change. During Advoc8, students choose a topic about which they are passionate and, with faculty and peer collaboration, research root causes that impact this issue. The project includes a presentation to the fuller division.

Michael Halle '72 Program • This endowed program supports work done at all three grade levels to get students into the city of Baltimore to explore various aspects of urban life and to develop meaningful partnerships with selected schools in Baltimore.

Middle School Class Trips • These annual trips are an important part of the Middle School experience because of opportunities they offer for interdisciplinary study, first-hand observation, application of knowledge in real settings, and community living. Faculty from various subject areas plan trip activities and accompany students. (For the most up-to-date information about trips, see "Special Programs" in the *Middle School Program of Studies*.)

Upper School

Modern Language Programs • To support its oral proficiency and cultural goals, Park's Modern Language Department sponsors programs abroad for students of all modern languages. Currently, the program includes partnerships with schools in Paris, France; Murcia, Spain; and Beijing, China, in which students live with families for approximately 10 days and, in turn, host students when they visit Park.

Financial assistance for trips is provided if needed to ensure the trips are available to all qualified students.

Immersion Week • Upper School students engage in workshops on topics that lend themselves to immersion and experiential learning. Activities, led jointly by a student and a faculty member, provide an opportunity for intense, sustained engagement. Immersion Week is planned and coordinated by students with the assistance of faculty.

Senior Projects • During six weeks at the end of the second semester, seniors are involved in independent projects, usually at off-campus sites. Projects are the culmination of a carefully supervised process beginning in the fall of the senior year and are followed by formal presentations to an audience of Upper School faculty and students, parents, and project supervisors. The program stresses independence and accountability and permits seniors to experience some of the realities of the working world. The Upper School dean of students and another faculty partner direct the senior project program; faculty advisors serve as on-campus supervisors of individual projects.

Junior Research Presentations • All juniors write extended research papers as a major requirement of their history study. On a voluntary basis, juniors present highlights of their research in sessions for faculty and students.

Visiting Scholar Programs

Resident Scholar • This distinctive program, funded by the Parents' Association, brings distinguished scholars and artists to the school so that Upper School students can explore current ideas relating to various academic disciplines. The format usually includes a lecture for all Upper School students and faculty, followed by seminars for students in the scholar's area of expertise.

Robert L. Weinberg Visiting Journalist Program • A program inaugurated in 1998 brings a noted journalist to Park each year to engage students in discussions of current political, cultural, and journalistic issues.

Peter Baida '68 Writer-in-Residence Program • In honor of graduate Peter Baida '68, an accomplished writer of fiction and non-fiction, a fund has been established to bring a writer-in-residence to Park each year to work with Upper School students.

Diana Lee Fox Artist-in-Residence • This program brings a nationally recognized contemporary artist to Park each year for a lecture and workshops for Upper School students in conjunction with a gallery exhibit. Upper School students work with the resident artist in critiques and small group lectures. Students in all divisions may develop work in many areas of the curriculum that respond to the work of the artist.

Millhauser Graduate Fellows Program • This annual program, founded in 1996 by Louise Millhauser '30, invites back to Park two or three young alumni currently doing graduate study in math, science, or

technology/computers. Acting as mentors, the fellows share their research in an assembly program and work with Park students in science classes.

ADDITIONAL SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Philosophy of Technology

At the Park School we believe in the thoughtful use and integration of technology to enhance student learning. In keeping with the school's mission to support young people in becoming confident questioners and responsible citizens of a rapidly evolving world, technological tools and programs are regularly evaluated, refined and provided with support and learning goals in mind.

We always strive to deliberate and well-informed decisions about the use of technology. Therefore, the school offers a variety of curricular and extra-curricular experiences for students and professional development opportunities for teachers so that they are fully capable of using robust, powerful tools and computational thinking skills for authentic learning and self-discovery.

Library and Archival Resources

The Lower School Library provides many comfortable areas for quiet, independent reading and a story corner for a class storytelling. The Middle/Upper School library includes an array of study spaces, including group study rooms and individual desks. The large study room includes an LCD projector and screen. Teachers are encouraged to contact library staff at librarysupport@parkschool.net to schedule library class visits and arrange for librarian support in their classrooms.

The two libraries house a collection of over 48,000 books, 1500 DVDs, a small collection of audiobooks, and a sizable number of periodicals for the use of students and faculty. Holdings, which are available for searching on the school's website, also include professional collections for teacher use. The library subscribes to numerous online bibliographic databases and full-text reference resources for books, articles, and videos on all curricular areas. User IDs and passwords are listed in the library services folder on the Academic Network on the staff pages on the main website, in All School Resources in Veracross, and by entering "parkschool" under Online Research Services on the library website. They are also available from any of the librarians.

Park's libraries are strongly oriented to student and teacher services. Teachers are strongly urged to familiarize themselves with library resources and to call upon library staff for assistance. The library welcomes faculty suggestions of books and other materials.

Audio-visual equipment is available for classroom use. Each classroom also has a mounted LCD projector with speakers. Contact Technical Support for problems related to projectors by submitting a request for support at www.parkschool.net/IT, calling IT at extension 5711, or sending an email to techsupport@parkschool.net.

All students, faculty, and staff members should use their school ID to sign out library materials. Books may also be signed out by last name. Check-out is self-service, but library staff are always happy to assist.

Faculty may keep out materials as long as needed, but are asked to return them promptly when finished, and, in any case, by the end of the school year.

Portal, Network, Computer, and other Resources

The Veracross Portal • Veracross is the school's web-based unified database system that includes both academic and administrative functions. Access is through a login and password located on the front page of the school's website or at <https://portals.veracross.com/park/>. Faculty use Veracross for keeping grade books, attendance, and writing comments; each division has its own report format. More information can be found in the database interface of Veracross, called Axiom (<https://axiom.veracross.com/park>), including queries, group events, and event calendars.

Veracross also includes faculty and student schedules, directory information, and school calendars. Portal access varies by group depending on function within or relationship to the school. Faculty parents are also granted rights to a parent portal.

The IT Academic Network • Park's wired and wireless academic network extends throughout the school to all classrooms and labs, as well as most offices and common areas. The wireless network covers all areas of the main building.

Every faculty member and Upper School student has an individual network folder as well as an email account. The Technology Department strongly recommends that most files, especially all text-based Google and Microsoft Office documents, be saved to Google Drive files since Google Drive files are backed up daily and documents may be recovered in the event of computer malfunctions. It is also good practice to have a local copy of important upcoming lessons or presentations in case of network connectivity issues. Large multimedia files including picture, audio, and video should be saved to local hard drives and then backed up to CDs, DVDs, or flash drives.

There are a variety of ways to display homework or communicate with students and parents, including Veracross and Google Classroom. New faculty are encouraged to consult the technology coordinator in their division for further information about network resources and procedures for posting materials through Veracross or Google Classroom. Pedagogical and curriculum-specific software tools are available to faculty; please contact your department chair and your divisional tech coordinator with any software-related questions or requests.

If you need any additional equipment or applications for classroom use, or if you would like training and support on any hardware or software, contact your divisional tech coordinator for assistance.

Computers for Faculty • Computers are provided for all faculty, either in their classroom or office work space. Faculty are encouraged to review the Computer and Network Acceptable Use Policy and Agreement in the [Employee Handbook](#) (password- bruins21208).

Park's website is an important source of information about the school. All new faculty are urged to explore it. In addition to general information, it includes pages on each division and on library resources, as well as samples of student work.

The website contains a staff area that includes a number of tools useful to faculty (<https://parkschool.net/employee-resources/> - password: bruins21208). Check there for technology information (instructions for PCs, Macs, Outlook, etc.); Human Resources information (pay dates, health care plans, etc.); Employee Handbook, library access codes, staff documents, and other items.

The Master Calendar module in Veracross is used to request and keep track of all school meetings and events. This calendar generates all of the public calendars featured on the Park School website. (For instructions on how to post an event, please consult with your division administrative assistant.)

Programs of Studies • Published by the Lower, Middle, and Upper Schools, these provide an outline of curricular programs. They are revised annually and include descriptions of individual courses. Print versions are available from division offices or the Admission Office; electronic versions are available on the Park School website.

The Park Listserv • The Park Listserv is a Google Group for the Park School community founded by a group of parents as an easy way to communicate with people affiliated with Park such as parents, employees, and alumni. The Listserv can be used instead of the school's global address list for posting mass non-school- business-related emails. Members use the Listserv in a variety of ways to help one another, seek advice, and discuss issues. Only members can view group content, view the member list, and post to the group. After you register, postings can be seen by logging in to the group or signing up for email notifications of other postings. If you are interested, go to this link to register: <http://groups.google.com/group/parkschool/topics>.

Publications and Archives

Mission Statement and Statement of Philosophy • The school's mission statement and statement philosophy can be found in this guide and online at <http://www.parkschool.net/about/philosophy/>. It is recommended reading for all new faculty.

Admission Material • General admission materials are available from the Admission Office.

Annual Report • This Development Office publication, which is published in conjunction with *Cross Currents* magazine, summarizes current institutional and annual fundraising progress.

Cross Currents • A seasonal magazine for Park alumni, students, parents, faculty, and staff.
<http://www.parkschool.net/news/cross-currents/>

Student Publications • Upper School student publications include *Postscript* (Upper School newspaper), *Brownie* (yearbook), and *The Park Journal* (a curated collection of work done for Upper School classes).

The Park School of Baltimore: The First Seventy-Five Years • Published in 1988, this historical account was researched and written by Jean Thompson Sharpless, long-time editor of *Cross Currents*. It provides an introduction to educational theories and circumstances central to Park's founding, as well as a detailed history of the school by eras. (Available in the school library.)

100: The Park School of Baltimore 1912-2012 • Published on the occasion of our Centennial in 2012, this publication illustrates Park School's history with a selection of 100 ideas and documents, objects, photos, and memories that chronicle who we were and who we are.

School Archives • Detailed records of Park's history are contained in the school archives. The archives are located in the basement of the Arts Center. For information contact the archivist, Charlene Prem.

Park also maintains a social media presence on Facebook (www.facebook.com/parkschool/), Instagram (<https://www.instagram.com/theparkschool/>), and Twitter (<https://twitter.com/theparkschool>).

Appendices

A. Curriculum and Instruction

1. Curriculum and Instruction: Responsibilities

- i. Associate Head of School
- ii. Division Principals and Department Heads
 - Student Discipline
 - 1. Academic Honesty
 - 2. Disciplinary Process and Procedures for Serious Infractions (Upper School)
 - 3. General Principles of Conduct (Middle School)
 - 4. Conflict Protocol Resolution
 - Faculty Evaluation
 - 1. Support and Supervision of Faculty New to Park
 - 2. Faculty Evaluation at Park School

CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

Responsibilities

Associate Head of School

I. Coordinate Curriculum Development K-12

- A.** Coordinate and integrate departmental, divisional, and school-wide curriculum development efforts and FACA Projects.
 - 1. Annually, review with head of school a comprehensive list of curriculum development efforts to assess progress and set future goals. List should be placed in the context of multi-year plans.
 - 2. During the year, meet regularly with head of school, division principals, and curriculum coordinators to develop and monitor curricular initiatives.
 - 3. Provide assistance to head of school, principals, curriculum coordinators, department chairs, and teachers as they implement the curriculum development plans.
- B.** Request and assist in the development of assessment procedures for curriculum development goals and plans.
- C.** Facilitate cross-divisional coordination of curriculum.
 - 1. Identify specific curriculum areas for review.
 - 2. Organize and schedule cross-divisional meetings of teachers, department heads, and principals to address issues.
- D.** Chair Curriculum/Program Development Task Forces as assigned

II. FACA Program

- A.** Solicit and encourage project proposals
- B.** Consult with principals about curriculum priorities

III. Supervise Implementation of FACA Projects

- A.** Meet with project chairs to develop implementation plans
- B.** In consultation with principals and department chairs, coordinate implementation plans with division plans for curriculum meetings and other faculty obligations and responsibilities.
- C.** Meet with project chairs and teacher teams during the year to assess progress of implementation plans.
- D.** Develop implementation plans that coordinate efforts over a multi-year period.
- E.** Include in implementation plans opportunities for teachers not involved in the summer projects to learn the important components of the project goals.
- F.** Coordinate FACA plans with school-wide program development goals.

IV. Personnel — Recruitment and Hiring

- A.** Supervise recruitment and hiring of new teachers.
- B.** Publish vacancies to appropriate sources; develop candidate pool; screen applications.
- C.** Schedule interviews and school visits with principals, department heads, and teachers.
- D.** Organize discussion of final selection with appropriate administrators.

V. Personnel — Support and Supervision of New Teachers

- A. Direct and coordinate new teacher support program.
- B. With principals, organize and schedule observations and supervision of new teachers during the first three years of their employment at Park.
- C. Meet with teacher mentors to support mentor program.
- D. Identify difficulties and consult with principals.
- E. Organize annual review of new teacher performance with principals and head of school.

VI. Board Committee — Staff Support

- A. Serve on Board committees as assigned.

CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

Responsibilities

Division Principals and Department Heads

I. Principals

- A.** Principals have primary responsibility for supporting the professional growth of teachers and the evaluation of teachers.
 - 1. Support the continued professional development of faculty considering both their individual professional needs and growth, as well as the divisional curriculum and program initiatives.
 - 2. Formally evaluate new teachers during each of their first two-three years.
 - a. Identify areas for growth and improvement for new teachers and provide opportunities for professional development.
 - 3. Make recommendations concerning contract renewal to the head of school.
- B.** Principals have final responsibility for the assignment of faculty to teaching responsibilities and other student responsibilities.
- C.** Principals have primary responsibility within their division for initiating curriculum review projects.
 - 1. Principals will consult with department chairs and the faculty to assess curriculum needs in their division.
 - 2. Principals will participate actively in the FACA process and the FACA Advisory Committee.
 - 3. Principals will work with the associate head of school to implement FACA project work during the school year.
 - 4. Principals will support the efforts to communicate across divisions to facilitate collaborative efforts.
- D.** Principals have primary responsibility for responding to questions and concerns from parents and/or students about the instructional program or specific teachers and

classes.

II. Department Chairs (See your division principal for additional information.)

A. In consultation with division principals, curriculum coordinators, associate head of school, and faculty, department chairs develop the course of study for the division.

1. The development of the course of study includes sequence of courses, course options, research and independent study options, course content, skills and attitudes.

B. Department chairs convene regular meetings of the departmental faculty to discuss the content of courses, goals and expectations for students, course requirements, the selection and use of texts and other instructional materials, and teaching skills and instructional methods. In addition, they manage the departmental budget, coordinate book orders and technology needs, and, in Middle and Upper Schools, are responsible for the department's section of the Program of Studies.

C. Department chairs, working with departmental faculty and consulting with principals and the associate head of school, will develop specific curriculum goals and/or curriculum review efforts.

1. These curriculum review efforts may include FACA projects, ideas generated by faculty members and administrators.
2. Department chairs working with the departmental faculty are responsible for implementing curriculum review efforts, with the active support of the principal, associate head, and head of school.
3. Resources needed for the curriculum review efforts are to be provided by the principal, associate head, and head of school, as appropriate.

D. Department chairs meet with individual faculty to discuss curriculum and instructional issues.

1. Department chairs offer comments, observations, and reflections; at times, they may observe classes. These individual discussions and observations are
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not part of the principal's evaluation process.

2. Department chairs encourage and support individual faculty initiatives for professional growth.

3. In the Upper School, department chairs organize student course evaluations and discuss summaries with individual teachers. Summaries are then submitted to the Upper School principal.

E. Department chairs meet with parents and/or students to respond to questions and concerns about the instructional program and specific teachers. We wish to encourage direct contact between parent and teacher and student and teacher as often as possible.

F. Department chairs assist in recruitment and evaluation of new teacher candidates.

1. Provide support and curriculum orientation for new teachers.

2. Participate in evaluation of new teachers.

Support and Supervision of Faculty New to Park

FIRST YEAR

Fall

Department chairs in Middle and Upper school will observe new faculty for consecutive classes, preceded and followed by conversations. The emphasis is on what new teachers would find useful and helpful. Principals will visit new faculty classes once in the fall, preceded and followed by conversations.

Winter

Principal (and department chairs in Middle and Upper schools) and each new faculty member will meet to review the first semester and set goals for the second semester.

Principals will create a written record of the conversation, which is shared with the new faculty member, department chair, and associate head. (In Middle and Upper schools, the department chair creates an initial draft for review by the principal.)

Spring

Department chairs in Middle and Upper schools observe new teachers for consecutive classes, preceded and followed by conversations.

Principals will observe new faculty, preceded and followed by conversations.

Associate head meets with all new teachers to review the year and ask for feedback regarding support structures.

Summer

Principal and department chair meet with each new teacher to review the year and set goals for the second year.

Principals draft a letter to each new faculty member, summarizing the first year and looking ahead to the second year.

SECOND YEAR

Fall

Department chairs visit new faculty for consecutive classes, with conversations before and after.
Principal observes new teachers, with conversations before and after.

Winter

In January, principal and department chair hold joint meeting with new faculty members to review the initial period at Park and identify accomplishments, areas of growth, and needs for ongoing support.
Head of school meets with each new faculty member prior to contract time.

Spring

Principal and department chairs offer individual modes of support as needed with goal setting for the third year.

THIRD YEAR

New faculty join the regular rotation of observation and faculty evaluation.

Please note, the exact process may vary according to divisional priorities

Faculty Evaluation at Park School

Introduction and Rationale

The Faculty Evaluation Committee was formed in 2010 to create a meaningful, practical, and workable method for teacher evaluation at Park School. The program we developed is for experienced and successful teachers who have been at the school for a number of years; it is not designed to evaluate either teachers in their first two years at Park or teachers who are struggling to fulfill their obligations, both of whom are already covered by existing programs. During the 2013-2014 school year, the Committee met to assess the first two years of the pilot. After surveying faculty about their experiences, the Committee made revisions to the process, which are reflected in this document.

There are two reasons for this program. First, as an independent school, Park must demonstrate to AIMS that it is living up to its mission and philosophy. It is, of course, the work of teachers that ultimately fulfills the school's mission and translates its philosophy into practice. Until now our school has lacked a formal method for evaluating experienced teachers, and such a method now enables us to demonstrate how each teacher contributes to that mission and philosophy. We are, collectively, accountable to our accrediting agency, and we all must contribute individually to that accreditation effort. Additionally, just as we believe that opportunities for reflection and feedback support student growth, we hold that similar experiences will foster our professional development as teachers. It was both our assigned task and our intention to create a procedure that goes beyond merely meeting a goal set by AIMS; we hope the program provides the means for affirming the work of experienced and successful teachers and for helping them grow.

As we created our own program, we drew on the best practices of peer schools. Our criteria for faculty evaluation were culled from NAIS, from other schools, and from conversations in division meetings among teachers here. The evaluation process itself developed from a clear understanding of the reflective and self-motivated faculty culture at Park. We hope this program provides meaningful, practical, and sustainable evaluation that allows each teacher to show his or her contribution to the mission and objectives of Park School.

Faculty Evaluation Criteria

Knowledge of Content

- The teacher has a thorough and evolving understanding of the discipline to be taught.
- The teacher connects the discipline to the wider world.

Curriculum Development and Implementation

- The teacher plans, selects, and organizes the material in order to build on, engage, and sustain student interest, teaching how, not what, to think.
- The teacher draws upon a variety of instructional techniques.
- The teacher, reflecting upon classroom experience and considering feedback from students, continually evaluates curriculum and, when appropriate, revises it.
- The teacher collaborates with colleagues and administrators in the creation, implementation, and evaluation of curriculum.
- The teacher creates curricula that prepare students for life in a diverse and rapidly changing world.

Learning Environment

- The teacher puts "the belief that positive expectations produce positive virtues" into practice.
- The teacher engages a wide variety of learners by using different pedagogical techniques.
- The teacher creates and maintains a healthy rapport with students.
- The teacher helps to create and maintain healthy and safe relationships among students in the class.
- The teacher creates and maintains a classroom where all students and families are affirmed and students of diverse backgrounds can see themselves and their families reflected in the curriculum.

Assessment of Student Learning

- The teacher uses a variety of assessment techniques tailored to the range of learners in the classroom in an effort to provide students with constructive feedback.
- The teacher consistently checks student understanding and uses assessment to inform instruction.
- The teacher provides students with opportunities to reflect upon their learning.

Professionalism and Collegiality

- The teacher performs professional duties in a timely and thorough manner.

- The teacher participates in the life of the community beyond the classroom.
- The teacher develops and maintains constructive relationships with colleagues.
- The teacher communicates and works effectively with parents.

Professional Growth

- Professional growth may take place in any of the other six evaluation categories.
- The teacher pursues lifelong learning by seeking a variety of opportunities for growth, both vocational and avocational.
- The teacher integrates professional growth into practice.

Support of School Values

- The teacher demonstrates support of school values as expressed in the school philosophy and objectives.
- The teacher demonstrates support of school values as reflected in the current strategic plan and other ongoing school-wide initiatives.

Logistics and Implementation

After completing two years of teaching at Park, each faculty member will begin a five-year Administrative Evaluation cycle. Administrators will observe and document visits to each faculty member's class twice a year, using the Faculty Evaluation Criteria as a guide. Written documentation will be archived; in the fifth year, the administrator will review the collected documentation and, following a meeting with the teacher, will draft a letter outlining highlights and areas for growth. The letter will become a part of a teacher's file.

As we implement this revised plan, a goal is to have a consistent number of faculty undergo the "fifth year" review each year. To launch this, principals will create a system for the division that divides faculty into five cohorts, each assigned one of five consecutive years for the "fifth year" review. A significant number of faculty will have their initial in-depth review with an administrator in years one through four; once the cycle is established, the rotation period is five years.

Administrative Evaluation

Definition and Purpose:

The Administrative Evaluation process builds upon regular classroom observations of teachers.

This cycle begins after the initial two year evaluative process for new teachers is successfully completed. Using the document Faculty Evaluation Criteria as a basis, this evaluation provides the opportunity for the administrator—in most cases the division principal (or assistant principal) – and the teacher to acknowledge and affirm the work of teachers, and to create a written record of the teacher's work and growth and the experience he or she is providing for the students. This evaluation also provides an institutional record of the teacher's work to date and makes clear the direction and goals for further growth. The Administrative Evaluation builds logically upon regular classroom observations on the part of the principal.

Please note that this process is different from the evaluative process for newly hired teachers or when there are concerns about a teacher's performance, as noted in the Faculty Handbook, Section 8.