

NORTHERN SCHOOLHOUSE

Parent Guide



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WELCOME

Spring 2026

Dear Families,

This journey that we are on together is more than just an elementary education. We are walking alongside each other, raising our families, one of the most important undertakings of our entire lives.

The world our children are inheriting is changing rapidly. And while none of us can predict exactly what their futures will hold, we can be certain of this: they will soon grow into adult humans (physical, spiritual, intellectual, emotional beings) who will belong to a community, contribute to it, provide for it, and help shape it for the generations to come. This is our compass.

What we teach them now needs to serve the *certainties* of their future reality. The qualities they will need (like empathy, compassion, grit, creativity, adaptability, optimism, and great forbearance, among many others) are not new. They are timeless. And they are within reach of every child who is given the right soil in which to grow.

At the Schoolhouse, our starting point is helping children tap into their innate humaneness, an awareness of the deep lineage of humanity across cultures, the need to provide for others and to seek companionship, the urge to be inspired by beauty and creation, the drive to ceaselessly seek knowledge and craft for its own sake, and most importantly, the quest to respond to a calling from deep within, a calling toward their true nature and true purpose in life.

The particularities of their paths ahead cannot be seen by any one of us, but only uncovered *by them*, with our careful help and guidance. This is the task we shoulder together; we must give them the courage and clarity to chart their path with wisdom, and I am truly honored to be alongside you as we undertake this work together.

Yours along the journey,
Katherine Fitzgerald

QUICK REFERENCE

This Quick Reference is a summary of the most essential practical information for Schoolhouse families. For the full context, philosophy, and detail behind each of these points, please read the complete Parent Guide.

CONTACT & BASICS

Address	42 Jason Place, Middletown, NY 10940
Phone	(845) 779-0808
Email	admissions@northernschoolhouse.org
Website	northernschoolhouse.org
Tuition	\$24,900 per student for 2026–27
Class Size	Maximum 12 students per class, with lead & assistant teacher
Ages	Early Elementary (ages 6–8) & Upper Elementary (ages 8–11)
Accreditation	MSA-CESS (Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools)

DAILY SCHEDULE

Drop-off	8:15 am — lessons begin 8:30 am
Pick-up	3:30 pm (regular days & Friday Faires)
Clubs pick-up	4:30 pm (when enrolled in Afterschool Clubs)
Summit	2:30 – 4:30 pm, parent/guest attendance required
Lunch	11:30 am–12:30 pm — outdoors daily (weather permitting)
Friday Faire	Hiking in the morning; workshops in the afternoon

CALENDAR OVERVIEW

Tour	Dates	Key Events
Tour I – Autumn	Aug 24 – Nov 19	Literature Faire Oct 2 • Challenge Week Nov 9–13 • Summit I Nov 19
Thanksgiving Adjournment	Nov 20–29	—
Tour II – Winter	Nov 30 – Mar 4	Science Faire Jan 29 • Challenge Week Feb 22–26 • Summit II Mar 4
Winter Adjournment	Dec 18 – Jan 3	—
Spring Adjournment	Mar 5–14	—
Tour III – Spring	Mar 15 – Jun 3	Arts Faire Apr 30 • Challenge Week May 24–28 • Summit III Jun 3
Summer Adjournment	Jun 5 – Aug 15	Northern Explorers Camp: Jul 5–23

DRESS CODE

Boys

- ❖ Collared shirt, button-down, polo, or classical sweater
- ❖ Slacks, corduroys, chinos, or jeans in good condition (shorts permitted)

Girls

- ❖ Blouse or dress required — no casual t-shirts
- ❖ Dress pants, jeans, or skirt; leggings must be worn under dresses/skirts

All Students

- ❖ No words, messages, images, or graphics on clothing
- ❖ No camouflage, athletic wear, sweatpants, or hoodies
- ❖ Shorts and skirts to fall just above the knee or longer
- ❖ Dress for the weather — we go outside in all conditions

LUNCH & SNACKS

- ❖ Send a **wholesome snack**, a **proper lunch**, and a **refillable water bottle** daily
- ❖ No candy, soda, juice, chocolate milk, sugary snacks
- ❖ No disposable plastic bottles – water and unsweetened tea only
- ❖ **Cafeteria lunch** is available by sign-up at the start of the year (additional fee per day)
- ❖ Food allergies must be disclosed on your Parent Consent Form and to the Principal

BUSING

Families may be able to arrange bus service through their local school district. Contact the district's transportation office directly – not the Schoolhouse – and submit a written request well before the school year begins. The Schoolhouse has no involvement in bussing arrangements but is happy to provide school information for district paperwork.

REQUIRED ATTENDANCE

These dates require your presence. Please plan around them from the start of the year.

Date	Event	Notes
Aug 14	Family Welcome Night	4:00–6:00 pm (recommended)
Oct 2	Family Literature Faire	Family member attendance
Nov 19	Summit I	At least one family guest in attendance
Nov 20	Parent-Teacher Conferences	Sign up in advance
Jan 29	Family Science Faire	Family preparation & attendance
Mar 4	Summit II	At least one family guest in attendance
Apr 16	Parent-Teacher Conferences	Sign up in advance
Apr 30	Family Arts Faire	At least one family guest in attendance
Jun 3	Summit III	At least one family guest in attendance

HOW WE COMMUNICATE

Email	Primary channel for announcements and updates
Online Community Board	Link provided at enrollment
Direct contact	Email, phone, or text to teachers or admin
In person	Always welcome — schedule a conversation anytime
Absences	Notify an Administrator by email or text
Late pick-up	Notify an administrator as early as possible if you will be late

DISCIPLINARY STRUCTURE

- ❖ A child who cannot behave appropriately is asked to **step out and return when ready**
- ❖ Persistent difficulty leads to a **meeting with the Principal**
- ❖ Serious or physical incidents may result in **suspension of up to one week** (or school community service)
- ❖ More than one suspension may lead to a **probation contract** signed by parents, child, and administrator
- ❖ Violation of a probation contract may result in **expulsion**

A FEW THINGS TO NOTE

- ❖ **No homework** in the strict sense — 5th & 6th graders receive weekly Extended Study
- ❖ **No report cards** — your child receives a Character Map at the end of each Tour
- ❖ **No screens** — we are tech-free
- ❖ **Cancellations** follow the Middletown City School District — no remote learning
- ❖ **Summits and Parent-Teacher Conferences** are required attendance for all families
- ❖ **Tuition Assistance** is available — apply early, as awards are processed in order received
- ❖ **International** — Northern is authorized to issue F-1 student visas through SEVIS

We are honored to be on this journey with you. The full Parent Guide contains the context, philosophy, and warmth behind everything listed here — please take time to read it in full.

I. MISSION & VALUES

*“The Dao of great learning lies in making bright virtue brilliant;
in making the people new; and coming to rest at the highest excellence.”*

~ Confucius, “The Great Learning” (Book of Rites, XXXIX)

*“There is a perfection which all knowledge ought to reach, and which our pupils ought also to attain,
and not to fall short of.”*

~ Socrates, The Republic, On Harmony & Education

OUR MISSION

To inspire goodness and beauty in the hearts of children.

WHY NORTHERN SCHOOLHOUSE

We believe that a true education consists of two parts: first, building a compass for the heart through the blending of knowledge and virtue; and second, inspiring an educated imagination rooted in classical literature, nature, and the arts.

We are building an original model of education, one inspired by the best forms of learning across history: vivid storytelling, direct experience of the natural world, logical exploration, the richness of the arts, and the enduring wisdom of classical traditions from both East and West.

Our promise to you is simple. We bring you peace of mind that your child will learn in a warm, wholesome atmosphere. We bring you confidence that your child is on a path of growing character and intellect: becoming a leader, an adventurer, and a fearless contributor. We are honored to welcome your family into this journey.

THE FIVE SHIPS

The most important thing we can give our children is a superb education: to help them dispel ignorance and take their first steps on the path toward wisdom, becoming leaders, adventurers, and fearless contributors to the world.

The **Five Ships** are our guiding principles, shared across the Schoolhouse and the Academy, for helping our students sail toward excellence:

- 1. Noble Spirit** — Embracing virtue and spirituality as essential to being human, and conducting oneself with integrity amid freedom.
- 2. Intellectual Excellence** — Sharpening one's power of memory, reasoning, clarity, and rhetoric to an exemplary level.
- 3. Beauty & Dignity** — Refining one's taste and style toward greater sophistication, poise, and confidence.
- 4. Life of Purpose** — Fulfilling one's purpose by setting sincere intentions and meeting hardship with courage.
- 5. Timeless Traditions** — Applying the best of the past to create a flourishing future society.

These Five Ships form the backbone of Northern's entire educational philosophy, from the earliest years of the Schoolhouse through graduation from the Academy.

THE THREE PATHS OF ATTENTION

Your child's character is shaped by what they pay attention to. At Northern Schoolhouse, we guide children to cultivate three essential habits of attention, what we call the **Three Paths of Attention: Knowledge, Genius, and Heart**.

By attending to **Knowledge**, they steadily progress in their academic studies, developing number literacy, word literacy, nature study, and the arts.

By attending to **Genius**, they strengthen their ability to think and create: developing insight, wonder, finishing power, and the courage to take creative risks.

By attending to **Heart**, they become kind people who contribute meaningfully to their families and communities: cultivating warmth, dignity, honesty, and a spirit of teamwork.

While we continually present children with high-level classical content, we value a warm and positive environment every step of the way. We believe these are lofty goals, yet fully attainable ones. You will love the growth and happiness you see in your child.

INSPIRED EDUCATION

Northern Schoolhouse draws from a rich tradition of educational thought that spans cultures and centuries. The wisdom of **Socrates** and **Confucius** — separated by thousands of miles yet united in their conviction that virtue and knowledge are inseparable — forms the philosophical backbone of our approach. Both believed that true education is not the filling of a vessel, but the kindling of a flame; not the accumulation of facts, but the formation of character.

To this classical foundation we add the enduring influence of **Charlotte Mason**, the nineteenth-century British educator whose six-volume work *Home Education* is among the most humane treatments of childhood learning. Mason believed that children are not empty vessels to be filled, nor blank slates to be written upon, but full persons deserving of a rich and living education. Her insistence on living books, direct observation of nature, the cultivation of good habits, and the unhurried space for children to think and absorb (what the ancient Greeks called *scholé*) resonates deeply with everything we do at the Schoolhouse.

These voices from across time and culture — Greek, Chinese, Victorian — arrive at the same essential truth: that the purpose of education is to help a child become more fully and beautifully human.

II. OUR APPROACH

*"Education is an atmosphere, a discipline, a life."
~ Charlotte Mason*

THE ONE-ROOM SCHOOLHOUSE

The model we have chosen for Northern Schoolhouse is not a new one. It is, in fact, among the oldest and most enduring forms of education in human history: the one-room schoolhouse. For millennia, children of varying ages learned together in a single space, guided by a teacher who knew each child personally and attended to their individual growth. This model was not born of limitation. It was born of wisdom.

At Northern, we have reclaimed and refined this model, blending it with the educational philosophies of Socrates and Confucius (both of whom taught in intimate, mixed settings, in direct relationship with their students) and with Charlotte Mason's conviction that children deserve a rich, living, unhurried education rather than a standardized, mechanical one.

The result is something genuinely original: a warm, rigorous, classical learning environment where every child is known, every subject is alive, and every day is full of meaning.

OUR CAMPUS JOURNEY

The campus that Northern Schoolhouse calls home has a history as remarkable as the institution it now houses. What are now our classrooms, hallways, and gathering spaces were originally built in 1874 as homeopathic medical grounds, a sprawling complex of distinguished buildings that served their purpose for generations before falling into abandonment and disrepair.

In 2016, the Northern initiative saw something in those neglected buildings that others had overlooked: the bones of a place worthy of a great school. Rather than building anew on empty land, we chose the harder and more meaningful path: to restore, to renew, and to breathe life back into structures that had once stood for healing and learning. We got our hands dirty. We tore out what was beyond saving and rebuilt what could be reclaimed, room by room and hallway by hallway.

That work continues. Our campus today is a testament to what patient, principled effort can accomplish, and a daily reminder to our students that beautiful things are worth restoring. In the years ahead, we envision continued growth: additional college facilities, a high school building with a full recreation center, and new student residences. Each step forward is taken in the same spirit as the first, with the conviction that beauty in a learning environment is not a luxury but a necessity.

We are grateful to be on this journey, and we are glad you are part of it.

MIXED AGES

Rather than separating children into rigid grade levels, we divide our students into two cohorts: an early elementary unit of roughly ages 6–8, and an upper elementary unit of roughly ages 8–11. This is a natural choice. Nowhere else in life are people sorted exclusively by the year of their birth.

The mixed-age model carries profound advantages. Younger children are inspired and challenged by the example of older peers. Older children deepen their own understanding by serving as mentors and models. Accountability increases naturally, as does social ease and genuine community. The older student who helps a younger one with a difficult passage, or who leads by example in the morning routine, is receiving one of the finest educations available: learning to be of genuine use to others.

This is, as Confucius understood, the heart of learning: *that knowledge finds its fullest expression in service to those around us.*

TECH-FREE

Charlotte Mason warned, in her own time, against the dulling of children's natural curiosity by passive, second-hand experience. Her concern was with the penny dreadful and the sensational novel: forms of passive and indulgent reading entertainment. Our concern, in this generation, is with the screen.

The case for a technology-free childhood has never been more urgent, or more well-supported. Contemporary researchers and educators are arriving at what the Schoolhouse has always held: that the analog childhood (full of books, outdoor play, real

conversation, and genuine creative boredom) is not a nostalgic preference but a developmental necessity. The research on excessive technology use, particularly in educational settings, grows more alarming with each passing year. Our commitment to a tech-free classroom is not a limitation we impose on children. It is a gift we give them.

At the Schoolhouse, our children enjoy a learning environment free from digital distraction. No screens, no devices, no passive consumption. In their place: books, nature, conversation, music, art, and the full presence of teacher and peer. We have witnessed directly the difference this makes in children's personalities, their social ease, their capacity for sustained attention, and their delight in learning.

We strongly encourage our families to carry this spirit into the home as well. The research is clear and the effects are visible: limiting screen exposure during the school week gives children the conditions they need to flourish. We ask that you consider saving screens for a weekend activity, and that screen time, when it does occur, be social rather than solitary.

FAMILY CENTERED

Northern Schoolhouse is not an institution that educates children in isolation from their families. We are a family school. Confucius placed the family at the very center of a well-ordered life and society. Mason insisted that the atmosphere of the home was among the most powerful educational forces a child would ever encounter.

Our promise to our families is fourfold:

We will provide full transparency about our curriculum and methods, so that you are never in the dark about what your child is learning and why.

We will respect each family's faith and spiritual orientation, honoring the diversity of our community.

We will encourage students to bring their deepest and most sensitive questions home — to you — rather than treating school as the sole arbiter of life's great matters.

And we will remain mindful of the precious time that families share in the evenings, on weekends, and during school breaks, protecting that time wherever we can.

Your involvement in the life of this school is not merely welcome — it is essential. The Schoolhouse is strongest when its families are present, engaged, and connected to one another.

OUR VIEW OF THE CHILD

Perhaps the most important thing we can say about our approach is this: We see your child as a full person. Not a project, not a product, not a test score. A full human being, possessed of curiosity, dignity, creativity, and an innate drive toward goodness, what the Confucian tradition calls *rén*, and what the classical Western tradition calls virtue, or the Greek *arete*.

Our task is not to carve children into standardized shapes, but to cultivate the conditions in which each child's particular genius can emerge. As Mason put it, drawing on the Latin root of the word itself, education is *educere*: to draw upward. We are gardeners, not carpenters. We provide the soil, the light, and the care. The growth upward belongs to the child.

THE LOVE OF THE WORK ITSELF

Modern schooling has become a system oriented entirely toward product — the grade, the score, the credential, the career, the promise of “success.” Children are trained from an early age to work for external rewards, and in doing so, they gradually lose touch with something far more valuable: the intrinsic joy of learning, creating, and striving for its own sake.

At the Schoolhouse, we believe the process is *at least* as important as the product, and in the early years of a child's formation, it may be more so.

Aristotle observed that what truly shapes a person, and by extension, a society, is not the labor they perform, but *how they use their freedom*. A person trained only for productive work, who then uses their hard-earned leisure to indulge and consume, has not been fully educated. They have been half-educated. The ancient Greeks understood that *skholē* (free time, leisure, the space to think and create and connect) was not a reward for work completed. It was the highest form of human activity. It was, in fact, the very purpose that work was meant to serve.

This is why we do not want our children to be motivated primarily by grades, by gold stars, or by the promise of future payoffs. We want them to love the work itself, to find genuine satisfaction in a problem solved, a passage memorized, a drawing rendered with care, a song

sung well. We want them to grow into adults who reach instinctively for a book, a project, an instrument, a garden — not because someone is watching or rewarding them, but because they have been formed to find meaning and delight in the pursuit of excellent things.

Charlotte Mason called this the cultivation of *living ideas*: knowledge that takes root in a child's heart and presses outward into their life, their play, their conversation, their dreams. Confucius described the cultivated person as one who pursues self-improvement not for recognition, but as a natural expression of their deepest nature. Both understood that the goal of education is not a credentialed product, but a fully alive human being.

This is what we are building together at Northern Schoolhouse: capable students and people who know *how to be free*.

III. ENROLLMENT & TUITION

*"The man who moves a mountain begins by carrying away small stones."
~ Confucius*

GETTING TO KNOW US

We believe that choosing the right school for your child is one of the most important decisions a family can make. We never want that decision to feel rushed or uninformed. Before applying, we warmly encourage you to take whatever time you need to get acquainted with who we are: read through this guide, explore our website at schoolhouse.northernacademy.org, attend an open house, or schedule a private campus tour. Our team is always happy to answer questions and help you determine whether Northern Schoolhouse is the right fit for your family.

ACCREDITATION & AUTHORIZATION

Northern is accredited by the Commissions on Elementary and Secondary Schools of the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools (MSA-CESS), one of the oldest and most respected accrediting bodies in the United States, recognizing schools across all 50 states and in 117 countries worldwide. Middle States accreditation is a rigorous, ongoing process of self-study and peer review that holds schools to high standards of educational quality, institutional integrity, and continuous improvement. It is the same regional accreditation body that oversees many of the finest independent schools on the Eastern Seaboard.

Northern is also authorized by the United States Department of Homeland Security through SEVIS — the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System — to issue I-20 documents and enroll international students on F-1 student visas. Families seeking enrollment for students from outside the United States are welcome to contact our admissions office for guidance through the international student application process.

THE APPLICATION PROCESS

When you are ready to apply, the process is straightforward:

Step 1 – Submit Your Application. Complete the application form on our website, along with a non-refundable \$80 application fee.

Step 2 – Family Interview. Once we receive your completed application, we will reach out to schedule a family interview. This is an opportunity for us to walk you through our program in greater depth, answer any remaining questions, and get to know your family personally.

Step 3 – Admission Decision. We finalize our roster in late April, at which point families will be notified of their admission or waiting list status. Upon admission, you will receive an Enrollment Contract and Tuition Agreement to be signed and returned.

Step 4 – Medical & Consent Documents. Finally, complete the Parent Consent and Medical Documents form, which includes uploading medical records. New York State requires that all students be up to date on vaccinations prior to the start of school.

We consider all applications without regard to race, religion, ethnicity, or nationality.

CLASS PLACEMENT

We give careful thought to the composition of each classroom. In placing your child, we consider age, gender balance, and the overall dynamic of the group, always with the goal of maintaining a low student-to-teacher ratio and a warm, productive learning environment. Our maximum class size is twelve students, with a lead teacher and assistant teacher in every classroom.

Our upper elementary classes are separated by gender. Through experience, we have found that this arrangement creates a calmer, lower-stress learning environment, which is beneficial for reserved personalities as well as more boisterous ones, and allows our teachers to more naturally tailor their approach to the temperaments of their students.

In the event that a new classroom opens mid-year as our school grows, some students may be moved in order to maintain balance across classrooms. We will always communicate such changes with care and in advance.

TUITION

Annual tuition for Northern Schoolhouse for the 2026–27 school year is **\$24,900 per student**.

We believe that a Northern Schoolhouse education should be accessible to families who are genuinely committed to this journey. To that end, **Tuition Assistance** is available on a limited basis through our internal assistance program. This program does not involve a federal application or federal funds. Families may apply for assistance within the General Application, or request the form separately at any time. All assistance inquiries are handled with complete confidentiality.

Tuition Assistance applications are processed in the order in which they are received. Timeliness is a meaningful factor in the assistance award process. Families who apply early are in the strongest position to receive the fullest potential award. Late applicants may receive reduced assistance or none at all, depending on availability. We encourage families with financial need to apply as early as possible.

Please review our **Tuition Policy**, found within the application, for full details regarding additional credits, payment schedules, late fees, and withdrawal procedures.

A NOTE ON COMMITMENT

Enrolling at Northern Schoolhouse is more than a logistical decision. It is a commitment to a shared journey. We ask that families come prepared to be present, engaged, and invested in the life of the school. Attendance at Summits and Parent Meetings is required, as these are essential moments of community and connection.

Throughout the year, we may also call upon parents to volunteer their time and talents, whether helping to lead or assist with Friday Faire workshops, supporting afterschool clubs, or lending a hand at family gatherings and events. Our school is enriched immeasurably by the particular gifts that each family brings, and we warmly welcome your participation in whatever form it takes.

Later in this guide, we will go into greater detail about our specific expectations for families, including punctuality at drop-off and pick-up, supporting your child with Extended Study at home, and the many ways you can be an active and valued member of our community.

Beyond those expectations, we simply ask that you be present for your child, for our community, and for the vision we are building together. We are honored by your trust, and we do not take it lightly.

IV. ACADEMIC CALENDAR

"Rhythm and harmony permeate the innermost element of the soul, affect it more powerfully than anything else, and bring it grace."

~ Socrates, The Republic (Book III), On Ideal Education

CALENDAR OVERVIEW

We have designed our academic calendar with great intentionality. Our calendar is built to give predictable rhythm to learning and lesson planning, honor the natural turning of the seasons, welcome families into the Schoolhouse regularly, encourage our community to form deep bonds, and protect the precious time that families share together.

The school year is organized into three **Tours**, each following the arc of a natural season — Autumn, Winter, and Spring. This structure is not merely organizational. It reflects our conviction that human beings — and especially children — learn and live best when their rhythms are aligned with the rhythms of the natural world.

To bring closure to each Tour's revolving lesson topics, we undergo a **Wrap-Up & Challenge Week** just before the final week of the Tour. During this week, children receive classical challenges in each of their main lesson classes (History, Literature, Nature Study), as well as in Wordsmith (spelling, grammar, cursive). The Challenges are carefully designed to give opportunities to every learner to expound upon what they discovered and practiced throughout the Tour.

Each Tour concludes with a **Summit**, a celebration of each child's work and growth during that period. The Summits are followed by the natural breaks of the year — Thanksgiving, Spring Break, and Summer — providing the rest and restoration that families and teachers need before the next season of learning begins.

Finally, **Parent & Teacher Meetings** are formally held twice during the year—your attendance is required. Our close community and open lines of communication allow for additional meetings throughout the year, if desired.

Please note that the Schoolhouse calendar occasionally differs from the Academy calendar. While the two calendars largely align, families with children at both campuses should refer to each school's calendar separately for specific dates.

Northern Schoolhouse 2026–27 Academic Calendar

AUGUST							SEPTEMBER					OCTOBER								
1/2	3	4	5	6	7	8			1	2	3	4	5					1	2	3
9	10	11	12	13	14	15	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
16	17	18	19	20	21	22	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
23	24	25	26	27	28	29	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
30	31						27	28	29	30				25	26	27	28	29	30	31
NOVEMBER							DECEMBER					JANUARY								
1	2	3	4	5	6	7			1	2	3	4	5						1	2
8	9	10	11	12	13	14	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
15	16	17	18	19	20	21	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
22	23	24	25	26	27	28	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	17	18	19	20	21	22	23
29	30						27	28	29	30	31			24	25	26	27	28	29	30/31
FEBRUARY						MARCH						APRIL								
	1	2	3	4	5	6		1	2	3	4	5	6					1	2	3
7	8	9	10	11	12	13	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
21	22	23	24	25	26	27/28	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
							28	29	30	31				25	26	27	28	29	30	
MAY							JUNE					JULY								
1/2	3	4	5	6	7	8			1	2	3	4	5					1	2	3
9	10	11	12	13	14	15	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
16	17	18	19	20	21	22	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
23	24	25	26	27	28	29	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
30	31						27	28	29	30				25	26	27	28	29	30	31
<i>Tour Begins</i>			<i>Friday Faire</i>				<i>Wrap-up & Challenge Week</i>			<i>Summit</i>			<i>No School</i>			<i>Events</i>		<i>Northern Explorers</i>		

Aug 14: Family Welcome Night

Aug 17–21: Welcome Week

Aug 24: Tour I Begins

Sep 7: Labor Day

Oct 2: Family Book Faire

Oct 30: Harvest Campfire

Nov 9–13: Challenge Week

Nov 19: Summit I

Nov 20: Parent Teacher Meetings

Nov 20–29: Thanksgiving

Nov 30: Tour II Begins

Dec 17: Winter Farewell (optional)

Dec 18 – Jan 3: Winter Break

Jan 29: Family Science Faire

Feb 1–5: Mid-Winter Revival

Feb 12: Valentine's Cookie Swap

February 22–26: Challenge Week

Mar 4: Summit II

Mar 5–14: Spring Break

Mar 15: Tour III Begins

Mar 26: Easter Weekend

Apr 16: Parent Teacher Meetings

Apr 30: Family Arts Faire

May 14: Falun Dafa Day Parade

May 24–28: Challenge Week

May 31: Memorial Day

Jun 3: Summit III

Jun 4: Summer Farewell (optional)

Jun 5 – Aug 15: Summer Break

Jul 5–23: Northern Explorers

PARENT ATTENDANCE DATES

AUGUST — Aug 14: Family Welcome Night

OCTOBER — Oct 2: Family Literature Faire

NOVEMBER — Nov 19: Summit I / Nov 20: Parent-Teacher Conferences

JANUARY — Jan 29: Family Science Faire

MARCH — Mar 4: Summit II

APRIL — Apr 16: Parent-Teacher Conferences / Apr 30: Family Arts Faire

JUNE — Jun 3: Summit III

THE THREE TOURS

	Tour I — Autumn	Tour II — Winter	Tour III — Spring
Begins	Aug 24	Nov 30	Mar 15
Family Faire	Book Faire — Oct 2	Science Faire — Jan 29	Arts Faire — Apr 30
Challenge Week	Nov 9–13	Feb 22–26	May 24–28
Summit	Nov 19	Mar 4	Jun 3
Break	Thanksgiving	Spring Break	Summer

FAMILY FAIRES

Each Tour is marked at its heart by a **Family Faire** — a celebratory gathering built around one of our three pillars of study: the classics, nature, and the arts. The Family Faires bring our community together in a spirit of discovery and delight.

Tour I — The Literature Faire (*Classical*) A celebration of literature and the written word, as well as the opportunity to add to your Home Library. Families attend with their child to browse, discover, and delight in books — classical and living alike.

Tour II — The Science Faire (*Nature*) A celebration of the natural world and the spirit of inquiry. Students work with a parent to develop and present their own nature observations, experiments, or research discoveries to our community.

Tour III — The Arts Faire (*Arts*) A celebration of creativity and classical beauty. Students share their artistic work across music, visual art, and dance — a joyful culmination of a year spent in pursuit of artistic excellence.

We ask that you arrange for at least one family member to attend the Family Faires.

COMMUNITY GATHERINGS

This year we are formalizing several **Community Gatherings** that were trialed with great enthusiasm this past year. Each Gathering meets once per Tour — three times throughout the school year — and is open to all Schoolhouse families. Specific dates will be announced each season. Additional Gatherings may be organized and added throughout the year by the Schoolhouse Parent Team.

These Gatherings are an extension of our family-centered philosophy, offering meaningful ways to connect, grow, and contribute beyond the school day:

Schoolhouse Parent Team — All parents are welcome to join this core group who help support outings, clubs, and events.

Campfire Cookouts — A few times per year we gather around our campus campfire for delicious potluck eating and the relaxed company of families and teachers.

Family Book Club — Community-wide classical literature selections to enjoy with your family, followed by a tea party to discuss and delight in what we've read.

Parenting Seminars (*Online*) — Themed online seminars exploring topics relevant to raising children with intention, virtue, and joy.

Charlotte Mason Reading & Discussion Group (*Online*) — A guided exploration of Mason's foundational work, connecting her ideas directly to our parenting and teaching practices.

Schoolhouse Beauty Committee — A grassroots group dedicated to enhancing the beauty, warmth, and aesthetic of our campus spaces.

Foodie Swap Market — A community gathering celebrating food, culture, and the joy of sharing. Families bring homemade and artisan goods to swap and enjoy together.

Field Day — An afternoon of parent and teacher led outdoor experiences on the last Friday Faire of the school year.

A NOTE ON THE CALENDAR

Our students complete the full 180 instructional days required by New York State, within a calendar that feels rhythmic and connected to the natural world. The three seasonal Tours give the year a graceful shape — a beginning, a deepening, and a flowering. Challenge Weeks bring each arc of learning to a meaningful close. And the Summits give every child a moment to stand before their community and be seen.

We ask that families plan travel and appointments around our key dates wherever possible. Required attendance dates are indicated above and represent the moments when our community comes together in its fullest form. Calendars and schedules are always available by request, and on the online Schoolhouse Families community board.

V. DAILY SCHEDULES

"Give me a firm place to stand, and I will move the world."

— Archimedes

THE RHYTHM OF THE DAY

Charlotte Mason believed deeply in the power of habit — that a well-ordered daily rhythm is not a constraint on a child's freedom, but the foundation of it. When the structure of a day is predictable and purposeful, children settle into their work with ease and confidence. They know what is coming, and they are ready for it.

At the Schoolhouse, our daily schedule reflects this conviction. The morning is devoted to academic study — when minds are freshest and attention is sharpest. The afternoon turns toward the arts, culture, and communing. Throughout the day, children are taken outside — for lunch, exploration, and the simple and profound benefit of fresh air and natural light.

DAILY SCHEDULE OVERVIEW

	Regular Day	Friday Faire	Summit Day
8:15	Drop-off	Drop-off	Drop-off
8:30–11:30	Morning Lessons	Hiking / Missions	Rehearsal
11:30–12:30	Lunch Outdoors	Lunch Outdoors	Lunch Outdoors
12:30–3:30	Afternoon Lessons	Workshops	Rehearsal
2:30	—	—	Summit Begins
3:30	Pick-up	Pick-up	—
3:30–4:30	Afterschool Clubs <i>(optional)</i>	Afterschool Clubs <i>(optional)</i>	NO CLUBS
4:15 / 4:30	Clubs Pick-up	Clubs Pick-up	End of Summit

THE REGULAR DAY

The regular school day runs from **8:30 am to 3:30 pm**.

The morning hours are devoted to core academic lessons – Wordsmith, Mathematics, History, Literature, Science, Shakespeare, Research, and Composition – in addition to Athletics twice per week. Lessons are conducted in a creative yet directed atmosphere, with children often working in collaboration.

Following a full lunch hour outdoors, the afternoon is given over to Arts and Culture – Classical Read-Aloud, Music, Art, Foreign Language, Poetry Teatime, Library, and Reading Buddies. Children are ready to be collected at 3:30.

TIME	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
8:15	ARRIVAL				
8:25	GREETINGS				
8:30 - 9:00	Athletics	Wordsmith	Athletics	Math Studio	FRIDAY FAIRE HIKE / MISSION
9:00 - 9:50	Wordsmith	Math Studio	Wordsmith	Adjournment Shakespeare Composition Research	
9:50	Adjournment			Shakespeare Composition Research	
10:10 - 11:30	History Literature Nature Study	History Literature Nature Study	History Literature Nature Study	Shakespeare Composition Research	
11:30	LUNCH				
12:25	GREETINGS				
12:30 - 1:00	Classical Read-Aloud	Classical Read-Aloud	Classical Read-Aloud	Reading Buddies	FRIDAY FAIRE WORKSHOPS
1:00 - 1:40	Math Studio	Art Music Poetry Teatime	Math Studio	Art Music Library	
1:40	Adjournment				
1:50 - 2:30	Foreign Language	Art Music Poetry Teatime	Foreign Language	Art Music Library	
2:30	Adjournment				
2:40 - 3:20	Wordsmith	Art Music Poetry Teatime	Wordsmith	Art Music Library	
3:20	CLEAN-UP & FAREWELL				
3:30	DEPARTURE				
3:45 - 4:30	CLUBS				

FRIDAY FAIRE

On Fridays, our usual academic schedule gives way to a day of exploration and creation — the **Friday Faire**. The morning takes children outdoors on the weekly hike. The afternoon brings them back to the Schoolhouse for a rich lineup of workshops in everything from archery and woodworking to calligraphy, baking, theater, chess, and seasonal crafts.

Workshops are led by our teaching staff, parent volunteers, and community partners. We warmly invite any parent with a skill, hobby, or area of passion to consider hosting a workshop. Speak with our Instructional Coordinator to get on the schedule — your particular gifts enrich our children and our culture in ways that cannot be replicated.

SUMMIT DAYS

Summit Days follow a special schedule. The morning and early afternoon are devoted to final rehearsals, with families arriving at **2:30 pm** for the presentations and performances. Plan for the celebration to conclude around **4:30 pm**.

Summits are *required attendance for all families*. They represent the culmination of each Tour — a moment for every child to stand before their community and share what they have learned, created, and become. Please mark these dates carefully on your calendar.

AFTERSCHOOL CLUBS

Afterschool Clubs are offered select days following the regular school day, running from **3:30 to 4:30 pm**. The specific clubs offered each Tour will be announced at the beginning of the season and updated as new offerings become available. Enrollment in clubs is optional and may include a small additional fee.

Past clubs have included Cross Country, Soccer, Wild Explorers, Classical Ensemble, Ballet, Foreign Language, Calligraphy, and Meditation.

In addition Northern Learning Center offers a menu of afterschool classes and programs.

VI. SPECIAL DAYS & EVENTS

"Is it not delightful to have friends coming from distant quarters?"
— Confucius, The Analects

OVERVIEW

The special days and events of the Schoolhouse year are the moments that recharge and reward the effort that the children put forth. They are the moments when our community gathers, when children shine before their families, when the culture of the Schoolhouse becomes most visible and most alive. We design these occasions with the same care and intention that we bring to our daily lessons, and we ask that families embrace them with the same spirit.

A note on attendance: some events are **required** and some are **optional**. Required events are those at which your child's presence and your family's participation are essential to the life of the community (see "Parent Attendance Dates" in "Academic Calendar"). Optional events are warmly encouraged — we find that the families who attend many gatherings tend to get the most out of their Schoolhouse experience.

FAMILY WELCOME NIGHT — *Friday, August 14*

The Friday before school begins, we open the Schoolhouse for our annual **Family Welcome Night**. This is the first gathering of our community for the new school year — a chance for families to meet or reconnect with one another, connect with teachers, explore the classrooms, ask questions, and settle any first-day nerves in a warm and unhurried setting.

The evening includes a brief orientation from our teaching team, a question and answer session, and time to mingle and get acquainted. Light refreshments will be provided.

Family Welcome Night runs from **4:00 to 6:00 pm**. We look forward to welcoming every family through our doors.

WELCOME WEEK — *Aug 17–21*

The week before Tour I formally begins is our **Welcome Week** — a gentle, unhurried introduction to the Schoolhouse year. New students get their bearings, returning students reconnect with friends and teachers, and the whole community eases back into the rhythm of school days together. Each day typically begins with group or team activities, projects, or missions. Teachers host intro sessions to each class throughout the week. Full lessons do not begin until Tour I opens on August 24.

HARVEST CAMPFIRE — *October 30*

As autumn deepens, we gather at our campus campfire for an evening of warmth, food, and community. Families are invited to join students and teachers for a relaxed outdoor cookout as we mark the turning of the season together. This Campfire is offered as an alternative to mainstream Halloween celebrations—please, no costumes or candy. The Harvest Campfire runs from **4:00 to 6:00 pm.**

SUMMITS — *Nov 19, Mar 4, Jun 3*

The **Summit** is the crowning event of each Tour — the moment when children present the fruits of their learning to their families and community. Throughout each Tour, students build a portfolio of their academic work and practice a range of performances and presentations: memorized poems and passages, theatrical reenactments, musical and dance performances, group demonstrations, and more.

On Summit Day, families arrive at **2:30 pm** to review their child's portfolio and attend the presentations. The celebration concludes around **4:30 pm**. *Attendance is required* — these are the moments your child has been working toward, and your presence is the reward they are working for.

PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES — *November 20, April 16*

Twice each year, we hold a day of individual conferences between parents and teachers. Using the Character Map as our guide, we review each child's growth across the Three Paths of Attention — Knowledge, Genius, and Heart — and set intentions for the Tour ahead. In addition to the Character Map, a narrative feedback collected from the entire teaching team is built for each child. You will also have the opportunity to review and discuss your child's portfolio of work.

These conversations are among the most valuable of the year. They are an opportunity to speak candidly with your child's lead teacher, celebrate progress, identify areas for growth, and deepen the partnership between home and school that lies at the heart of what we do.

Sign-up schedules will be distributed via email in the weeks preceding each conference day. Every family is expected to reserve a slot with their child's lead teacher.

MID-WINTER REVIVAL — *February 1–5*

The heart of winter can be a long stretch. The **Revival** is our answer — a week of special activities, excursions, and community warmth designed to re-energize students and teachers alike as Tour II reaches its midpoint. Think of it as a collective reprieve from the demands of the cold and a drawing of breath before the final push toward Summit II.

VALENTINE'S COOKIE SWAP — *February 12*

Each year on or near Valentine's Day we hold our beloved **Cookie Swap**. Families are invited to send a batch of cookies to school — preferably homemade — for sharing. Each child receives a container and makes their own selections to bring home.

On this day we usually play host to a transfer of over 1,000 cookies! We also read about the history of Valentine's Day and discuss friendship, generosity, and the courage of kindness. We kindly ask that families do not send Valentine's notes or cards to school with their child.

FALUN DAFA DAY PARADE — *May 14*

Each year, a portion of our school community attends the Falun Dafa Day Parade in Manhattan — a celebration of the spiritual practice of Falun Dafa and its values of truthfulness, compassion, and forbearance. This is a meaningful tradition to many families at Northern, as the lives of many within our community have been impacted by the ongoing persecution of Falun Dafa in China, and many still have family members coping with religious suppression under the communist regime. Taking this day off reflects our deep respect for the spirituality of human life, our humanitarian awareness of the suffering of fellow families, and our commitment to honoring the traditions of both East and West.

WINTER & SUMMER FAREWELLS — *December 17 & June 4*

Before each major break, we keep the Schoolhouse open and running for a special optional attendance day. The morning begins with a community deep-clean of our space — children and teachers caring for their environment together — followed by a day of games, group activities, and relaxed adventures. These days are a chance to celebrate the season and send everyone off into the break with full hearts, fond memories, and a sense of closure.

NORTHERN EXPLORERS SUMMER CAMP — *July 5–23*

Our summer camp program, Northern Explorers, runs for three weeks in July on our campus. It is an extension of the Schoolhouse spirit — adventurous, nature-based, arts-rich, and full of the warmth and culture that define our school year. Information and registration details are available at summer.northernacademy.org.

VII. ATTENDANCE & ARRIVALS

"We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then, is not an act, but a habit."

— Aristotle, Nicomachean Ethics

THE IMPORTANCE OF PRESENCE

Charlotte Mason wrote that the atmosphere of a place is one of its most powerful educational forces — an atmosphere is built, day by day, by the people who inhabit it. Every child who walks through our doors each morning contributes to the culture of the Schoolhouse. Their presence matters — not merely for their own learning, but for the community they are part of.

We do not issue penalties for absences or late arrivals. We are not a school that measures commitment through enforcement. We are a school that trusts families to understand, as we do, that consistent presence is one of the greatest gifts you can give a child. Routine, rhythm, ritual, and continuity of experience are the clockwork of a Schoolhouse education.

DROP-OFF & PICK-UP

Drop-off begins at **8:15 am**. We ask that families aim to have their children at the Schoolhouse and ready to begin no later than **8:30 am**, when the morning lessons commence. Punctuality is a habit we cultivate in our students, and it begins at the door.

Arriving on time — prepared, settled, and ready — is itself a form of respect: for one's teachers, for one's peers, and for the work of the day ahead. We ask that families make every effort to model and reinforce this habit.

Pick-up is at **3:30 pm**. On days when your child is enrolled in Afterschool Clubs, pick-up is at **4:30 pm**. Please make every effort to arrive on time, as late pick-up disrupts the end of day for both children and staff. If you anticipate a late arrival, please notify an administrator as early as possible.

If someone other than a parent or known guardian will be picking up your child, please notify the Principal in advance to ensure that the person is known to our staff. We will not release a child to an unfamiliar adult without prior authorization from the family.

BUSSING

Families who wish to arrange bus transportation for their child to Northern Schoolhouse may be able to do so through their local public school district – at no cost to the family. While New York State law requires non-city school districts to provide transportation to students attending nonpublic schools within a fifteen-mile radius, city school districts – including Middletown – are not required to do so by law.

To arrange bussing, families should contact their local school district's transportation office directly – not the Schoolhouse. The request should be submitted in writing, and New York State guidelines recommend doing so by April 1st before the start of the school year, or within 30 days of establishing residence in the district. If a district denies a transportation request, families have the right to appeal to the New York State Commissioner of Education within 30 days of the denial.

Northern Schoolhouse has no direct involvement in bussing arrangements and is not a point of contact for transportation inquiries. We are happy to confirm our address and school information to families who need it for their district's paperwork. In addition, we request that you keep us up to date on your child's bus schedule so that we can support smooth drop-off and pick-up.

ABSENCES

It is the right of every family to miss all or part of a school day for any reason – illness, travel, appointments, or other circumstances. No penalty is issued for absences, and no formal justification is required.

That said, we ask that families notify the Principal via email or text whenever their child will be absent or will arrive late or depart early. This courtesy allows our teaching team to plan accordingly and ensures that no child is unaccounted for during the school day.

We also gently ask families to be mindful of the cumulative effect of frequent absences. A child who misses school excessively misses the continuity of experience that makes learning so rich.

PLANNED ABSENCES & TRAVEL

We understand that family travel and special occasions are among life's great pleasures, and we would never wish to diminish them. If you are planning an extended absence, we simply ask that you give us as much advance notice as possible, and that you speak with your child's lead teacher about how to best support continuity of learning.

We do ask that families avoid scheduling travel during Summits and Parent-Teacher Conferences, at which attendance is required. These dates are known well in advance and are among the most important days of the school year for your child.

CANCELLATIONS

In the event that school must be canceled due to weather or other unforeseen circumstances, families will be notified via text message and email as promptly as possible. We generally follow the Middletown City School District in making cancellation decisions.

Canceled days are treated as days off — we do not use remote or digital learning as a substitute. In the event that multiple cancellations bring us below the state-required minimum, we will adjust the schedule accordingly and communicate any changes to families with as much notice as possible.

PUNCTUAL CULTURE

We want to say one more word about punctuality — not as a rule, but as a value. Confucius observed that the cultivation of the self begins with the smallest acts: the way one enters a room, the care with which one prepares, the respect one shows for time — one's own and others'. These are not trivial matters. They are the daily practice of dignity.

When a child arrives on time, settled and ready, they begin their day with confidence. When a family is consistent in its rhythms — reliable drop-offs, prompt pick-ups, advance notice of absences — it sends a quiet but powerful message to the child: this place matters, this community matters, and you are someone who honors your commitments.

VIII. DRESS CODE

"Respectfulness, without the rules of ritual, becomes laborious bustle."
— Confucius, The Analects

WE DRESS WITH INTENTION

One of the Schoolhouse's central commitments is to the cultivation of beauty — in our classical curriculum, in the gradual development of our campus, and in the way we present ourselves to the world. We believe that how a child is dressed is not a trivial matter. Clothing shapes atmosphere. It communicates values. It affects the way a child carries themselves, the way they are perceived by others, and the way they perceive themselves.

Charlotte Mason understood that the environment a child inhabits — including the aesthetic of that environment — is one of the most quietly powerful forces in their formation. A clean, classical dress code is part of the atmosphere we cultivate at the Schoolhouse. It reduces the distraction of self-conscious display, creates a sense of dignity and belonging, and invites children into a standard of self-presentation and care that serves them well beyond the school day.

Our teaching staff will be dressed professionally, and we ask the children to attempt to dress themselves professionally as well. Uniforms take the thinking out of the thoughtful process of dressing oneself for the occasion. We ask that families approach our dress code not as a burden, but as a shared expression of the values we hold in common.

DAILY DRESS CODE

The following standards apply on all regular school days and Friday Faires:

Boys

- ❖ A collared shirt, button-down, polo, or classical sweater is required
- ❖ Slacks, corduroys, chinos, or jeans in good condition are required
- ❖ Shorts of similar material are permitted
- ❖ No camouflage, athletic wear, sweatpants, or hoodies
- ❖ Tops must have sleeves, or be worn with a sleeved undershirt

Girls

- ❖ A blouse or dress is required — no casual t-shirts
- ❖ Dress pants, corduroys, chinos, or jeans in good condition are permitted
- ❖ Leggings, shorts, or tights must be worn under dresses and skirts at all times
- ❖ Leggings alone are NOT pants, and must be worn with a dress or skirt
- ❖ No athletic wear, sweatpants, or hoodies
- ❖ Tops must have sleeves, or be worn with a sleeved undershirt
- ❖ Tops that are sheer or have an exposed back must be worn with an undershirt

All Students

- ❖ Clothing must be free from all words, messages, images, and graphics
- ❖ Shorts and skirts must fall just above the knee or longer
- ❖ Activewear is not permitted outside of dance class
- ❖ Hoodies are not permitted
- ❖ Shoes and clothing must be weather appropriate at all times

WEATHER & OUTDOOR DRESS

Our children spend a great deal of time outdoors — during lessons, at lunch, on Friday Faires, and throughout the day. We aim to be outside in all weather, and we ask that families dress their children with this in mind.

Layering is strongly recommended on unpredictable days. For rainy days, please send your child with a rain poncho and a pair of galoshes. For snowy or cold days, snow boots, snow suits, and warm layers are essential. A child who is dressed for the weather is a child who can be fully present in it — comfortable, capable, and free to engage with the world.

We recommend keeping a clean spare set of clothing in your child's bag for days when messes happen — as they sometimes do.

PICTURE DAY DRESS

Picture Day calls for a step up into crisp business casual. We ask families to dress their children with a little extra care and a classic sensibility:

Boys may wear slacks or jeans with a button-down, polo, or sweater. Adding a tie, vest, or blazer is recommended but optional. Jeans should be clean, in excellent condition, and free of tears, fading, or fraying.

Girls may wear dress pants, jeans, or a skirt with a blouse — or opt for a dress with tights or leggings. Jeans should be clean and in excellent condition.

For all students, avoid bright colors and flashy details. A timeless, classic look photographs beautifully and ages well. Hair should be tidy, worn up or down. Photos are taken outdoors. The specific date will be announced once coordinated with our photographer.

DRESS CODE COMPLIANCE

We understand that mornings can be complicated, and we approach dress code matters with kindness and common sense. If a child arrives dressed outside of our guidelines, we will reach out to the family to request that appropriate attire be brought to school. Repeated dress code concerns will be addressed in conversation with the family.

We ask that families review the dress code together with their children at the start of the year and revisit it as seasons change. Making thoughtful clothing choices each morning is itself a small but meaningful practice — a daily opportunity to approach the day with intention and care.

IX. LUNCH & SNACKS

"Let food be thy medicine and medicine be thy food."

— Hippocrates

NOURISHMENT AS A VALUE

At the Schoolhouse we believe that the care of the body and the care of the mind are not separate concerns. A child who is hungry, sluggish, or running on sugar cannot bring their full attention to a poem, a mathematical problem, or a conversation with a friend. What we eat shapes how we think, how we feel, and how we engage with the world around us. Encouraging healthy, wholesome eating habits in your child is one of the most enduring gifts you can give them.

We ask that families approach lunch and snack preparation with the same thoughtfulness and intention they bring to every other aspect of their child's Schoolhouse experience.

WHAT TO SEND

Families are responsible for providing their child with a snack, a lunch, and a refillable (not disposable) water bottle each day. We ask that all food and drink sent to school be wholesome, hearty, and nourishing — children are engaged in significant physical and intellectual activity throughout the day and need genuine fuel to sustain it.

A few specific guidelines:

- ❖ **Snacks** should be healthy and substantial enough to carry a child through the morning lessons. Fruit, vegetables, nuts, cheese, and similar whole foods make excellent snack choices. Please avoid excessive junk food, as this draws a child's appetite away from nourishing foods and leaves them feeling empty and unsatisfied.
- ❖ **Lunch** should be a proper meal — not a collection of packaged snacks. Children have a full hour to eat and enjoy the outdoors, and they benefit from a lunch that genuinely restores their energy for the afternoon.
- ❖ **Water bottles** should be filled and sent every day. We do have a filtered water refill station. Please, no disposable plastic bottles. Water is the primary beverage of the school day, with unsweetened tea also being permitted.

- ❖ **Sugar** — candy, soda, chocolate milk, sugary gum, sugary snacks (even sugary yogurt), and similar items should not be sent to school. Sugar intake is counterproductive to your child's clarity, focus, growth, and overall wellbeing. We do not permit this unnecessary disruption at the Schoolhouse. Even a child's social life can suffer from the presence of sugar. This does not mean the occasional small cookie after lunch is unwelcome — we trust families to exercise good judgment.

Children have access to their snacks between the morning lessons — we know it is difficult to learn on a hungry stomach, and we want every child to sustain their energy and keep their attention intact. The Schoolhouse may occasionally supplement snacks with a small celebratory offering of its own, and families are welcome to do the same.

CAFETERIA LUNCH

For families who prefer a hot lunch option, Northern Schoolhouse offers a daily cafeteria lunch delivery service. Lunch is prepared and delivered to the Schoolhouse — children do not visit the cafeteria. Families may sign up at the beginning of the school year for whichever days they choose, whether that is one or two days per week or the full five. There is an additional fee per day. Details and sign-up are available through the school administrators at the start of each Tour.

LUNCH OUT OF DOORS

Children enjoy a full hour for lunch each day. This time is spent eating together outdoors — as often as weather permits — followed by free play, exploration, fresh air, and the simple pleasure of being outside. We regard this hour as an essential part of the school day, not a pause from it. The benefits of outdoor time for children's physical health, emotional regulation, and cognitive function are well documented.

FOOD ALLERGIES & DIETARY NEEDS

The safety and wellbeing of every child in our community is our highest priority. If your child has a food allergy, dietary restriction, or medical condition related to food, please

indicate so on your Parent Consent Form. In addition, please notify the Principal to ensure that we can make our entire team aware of any needs and prepare to accommodate them.

We ask that families also be mindful of the broader community when packing lunches and snacks. Specific allergy guidelines will be communicated to families at the start of the year based on the needs of current students.

FOOD CULTURE

Confucius observed that the rituals of daily life — including the sharing of meals — are among the most powerful expressions of human community and culture. At Northern Schoolhouse, lunchtime is not merely a logistical intermission. It is a daily practice of togetherness — children eating side by side, conversation flowing naturally, the rhythms of the day briefly softened into something more relaxed and human.

We encourage families to bring this same intentionality to mealtimes at home. Eating together, without screens, with conversation and presence, is one of the oldest and most nourishing of human traditions. We encourage you to build your own family rituals around mealtime, such as lighting candles, speaking a prayer or poem, or serving one another.

X. CHARACTER MAPS

"If you treat an individual as he is, he will remain how he is. But if you treat him as if he were what he ought to be and could be, he will become what he ought to be and could be."

— Goethe

A DIFFERENT KIND OF ASSESSMENT

At Northern Schoolhouse we do not issue report cards in the conventional sense. We do not reduce your child's growth to a row of letter grades or a column of percentages. We do not measure them against a universal standard that every child must reach in the same way and at the same pace. Such instruments, however familiar, tell only a narrow slice of the story — and often not the most important slice.

Instead, we offer something we call a **Character Map**.

A Character Map is a portrait of your child's growth across the Three Paths of Attention — Knowledge, Genius, and Heart. It is produced not by a single teacher marking a stack of papers alone, but by our entire teaching team coming together to share their observations, experiences, and reflections on each child. This collective process tends to produce a richer, more accurate, and more human picture of a child's development than any standardized instrument can offer.

Charlotte Mason cautioned against treating children as objects to be measured and sorted. Confucius spoke of the cultivation of the whole person — not the acquisition of isolated skills. Aristotle reminded us that virtue is not a score but a habit, grown slowly through practice and reflection. The Character Map is our attempt to honor these convictions.

THE THREE PATHS OF ATTENTION

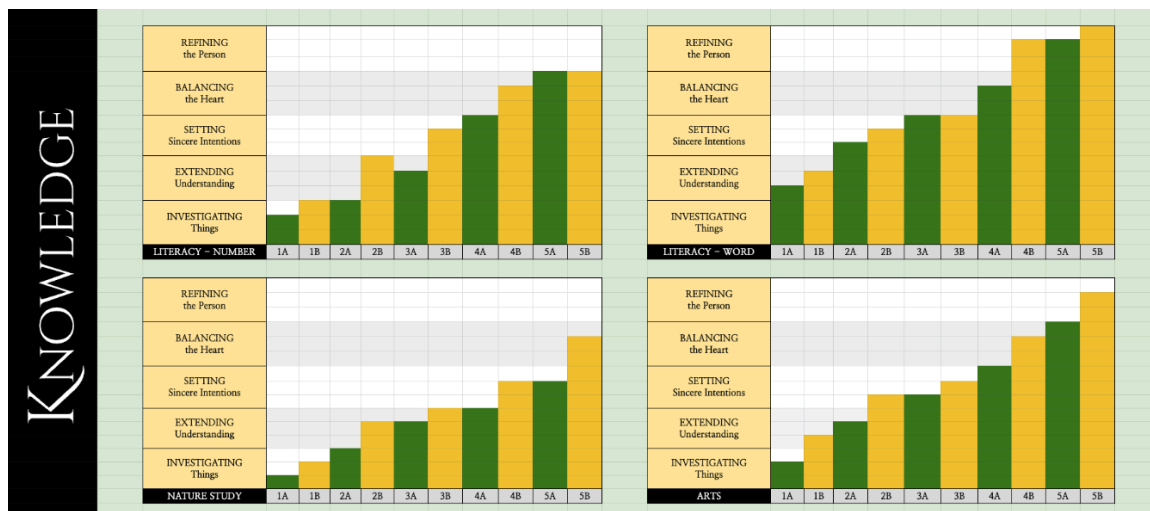
Your child's character is shaped by what they pay attention to. The Three Paths of Attention — **Knowledge, Genius, and Heart** — are the three domains in which we observe and assess your child's growth. Each Path is subdivided into four **Virtuous Habits**, which give us a finer and more specific lens through which to understand each child's development.

KNOWLEDGE *The ability to attend to scholastic work and duty*

Knowledge refers to your child's engagement with their academic studies – their diligence, their follow-through, and their steadiness as a learner. It manifests across four areas:

- ❖ **Number Literacy** – recognition, writing, composition, measurement
- ❖ **Word Literacy** – reading, composition, grammar, spelling, language
- ❖ **Nature Study** – nature knowledge, observation, prediction, hands-on study
- ❖ **The Arts** – music, dance, painting, drawing, craft

Think of Knowledge as your child's ability to show up for their schoolwork with care and dutifulness – not brilliance, but faithful, steady effort.



GENIUS *The ability to attend to ideas and experiences in creative ways*

Genius refers to your child's capacity to think deeply, make unexpected connections, take creative risks, and bring their full imaginative power to bear on the world around them. It manifests across four areas:

- ❖ **Insight** – conceptual thinking, connecting metaphors and patterns, taking creative risks, memory
- ❖ **Wonder** – curiosity, positivity, enthusiasm, assimilation of new ideas
- ❖ **Finishing Power** – grit and will power, learning from experience, revising mistakes and starting over
- ❖ **Delivery** – sharing, articulation, expression of style, narration

Think of Genius as your child's ability to think – not just to know, but to wonder, to create, and to express.

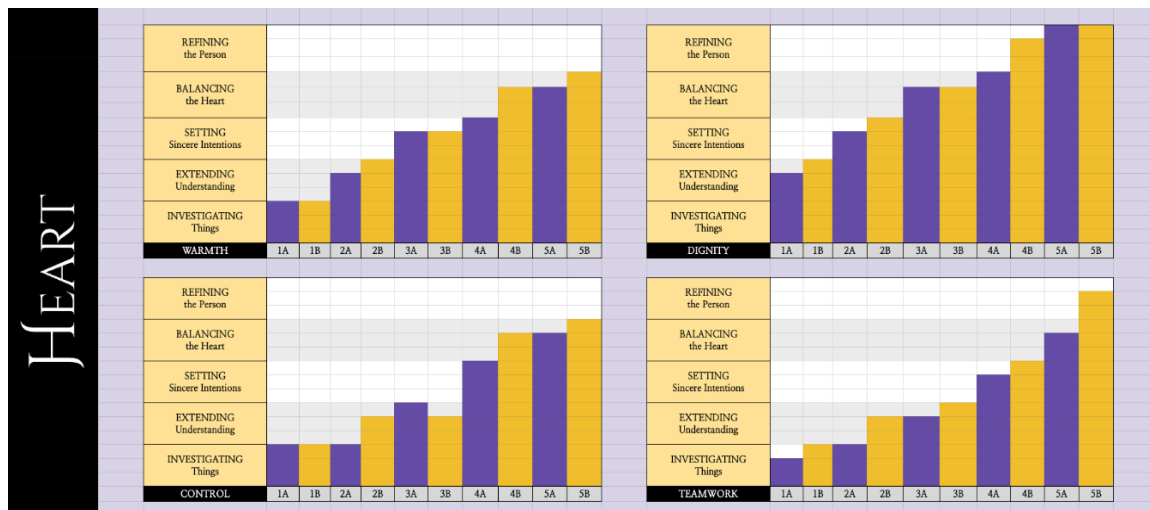


HEART *The ability to attend to the welfare of people, place, and community*

Heart refers to your child's capacity to be a good person in a fundamental and daily way — kind, honest, dignified, and genuinely contributing to the life of those around them. It manifests across four areas:

- ❖ **Warmth** — gladness, positivity, generosity, kindness
- ❖ **Dignity** — self-worth, tidiness, integrity, personal responsibility
- ❖ **Control** — patience, anger management, responsiveness, focus
- ❖ **Teamwork** — cooperation, contributing to the whole, conflict resolution, healthy competition

Think of Heart as your child's ability to be fully present to their community — not merely well-behaved, but genuinely good.



HOW CHARACTER MAPS ARE PRODUCED

At the close of each Tour, our full teaching team gathers to discuss every child across every area of the Character Map. Each teacher brings their observations and experiences — from morning lessons, afternoon arts, Friday Faires, outdoor time, and the countless small moments of the day that reveal character most honestly.

The result is a nuanced, collective portrait of growth — where they have flourished, where they are stretching, and where they might benefit from particular encouragement or support. This portrait is shared with families at Parent-Teacher Conferences, where it forms the basis of a rich and candid conversation about your child's journey.

We assess growth — not arrival. What we are looking for is not a fixed standard that every child must meet, but the upward movement from one marking period to the next. As the Latin root of the word reminds us, education is *educere* — to draw upward. The Character Map is our instrument for tracking that upward movement, one Tour at a time.

WHAT TO DO WITH YOUR CHILD'S CHARACTER MAP

When you receive your child's Character Map, we encourage you to sit with it thoughtfully before discussing it with your child. Each map is accompanied by a detailed narrative feedback compiled by our entire teaching team. Look for patterns of growth. Notice where your child is thriving and where they might need gentle encouragement. Come to your Parent-Teacher Conference with questions and observations of your own — the best conferences are conversations, not presentations.

When sharing the Character Map with your child, try framing it in the spirit in which it is given — not as a judgment, but as a mirror. Help your child see themselves clearly and kindly, with an eye toward growth rather than perfection. The goal is not a “perfect map” — this is not a GPA. The goal is a child who is genuinely becoming more fully themselves — more knowledgeable, more creative, more compassionate — one Tour at a time.

XI. CURRICULUM & INSTRUCTION

"When you know a thing, to hold that you know it; and when you do not know a thing, to allow that you do not know it — this is knowledge"

— Confucius

DISCOVERY THROUGH FORM & STUDY

At the Schoolhouse, we describe our program simply: an open-ended experience rooted in classical literature, nature, and the arts. Every subject we teach, every book we read, every song we sing and every trail we walk is an expression of this conviction — that the richest education is one that connects children to the full inheritance of human culture, in all its beauty and depth.

We divide our approach into two parts:

Form — The style and intention with which we teach.

Study — The actual content of what we teach.

Together, they constitute something genuinely original: a classical education for the whole child, delivered in the spirit of the one-room schoolhouse, animated by the wisdom of Socrates, Confucius, and Charlotte Mason.

This is the education of *Discovering Scholarship* — of awakening in every child the sense that the world is vast, rich, and endlessly worth knowing.

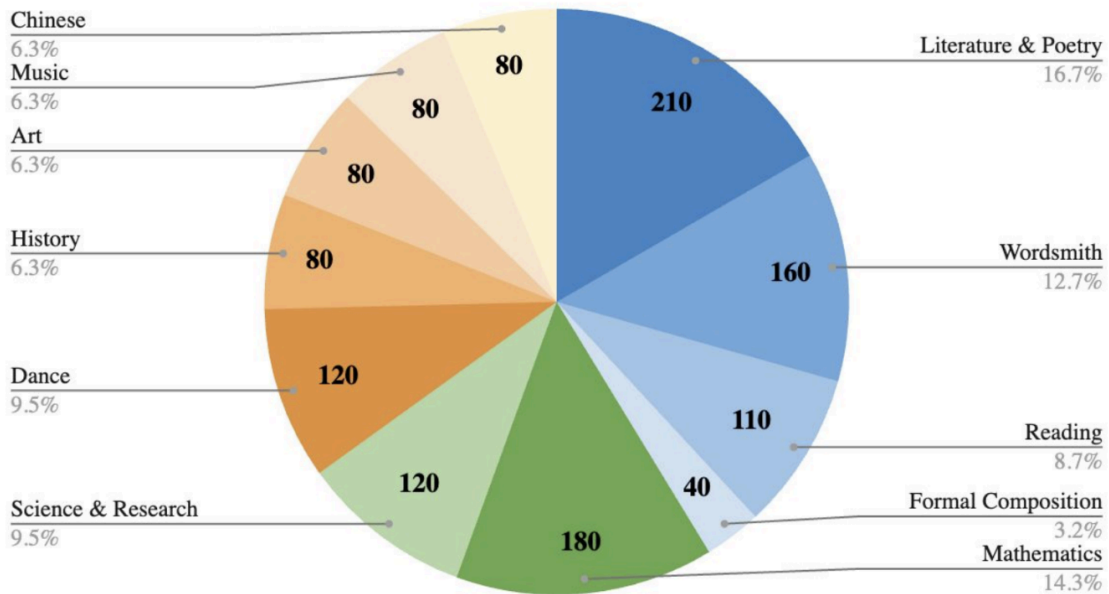
HOW WE SPEND THE TIME

At the Schoolhouse, Monday through Thursday is devoted to Academic Lessons. In those four days, children are present for 28 hours, of which 21 hours are spent in direct instruction. The way we allocate those 21 hours reflects our deepest convictions about what matters most in the formation of a child.

We are, at our core, a Logo-Centric and Culture-Centric school. We spend 41% of our lesson time directly studying the English language in all its dimensions — reading, writing,

speaking, listening, and the deep grammatical and rhetorical traditions that undergird it. We spend another 35% of our lesson time directly studying and experiencing human culture — history, literature, poetry, music, art, dance, and foreign language. Mathematics receives the greatest dedicated lesson time of any single subject. Science is rooted in the direct observation of the natural world.

How We Spend the Time: 21 Hours of Academic Instruction (4 Days)



This is not an arbitrary distribution. It is the result of careful thought about what children most need in their formative years — and it stands in striking contrast to the narrow, test-driven curricula that dominate modern schooling.

ON ENGLISH LANGUAGE INSTRUCTION

Modern schools typically group all language-related instruction under the heading of "ELA" — English Language Arts — and teach it in two to four hours per week. At Northern Schoolhouse, we regard this as one of the most significant failures of contemporary

education. Language is not one subject among many. It is the medium through which all thought is formed and expressed.

We break language instruction into its essential components and give each the dedicated time it deserves:

Subject	Weekly Time
Literature Class	80 minutes
Classical Read-Aloud	90 minutes
Poetry Teatime	40 minutes
Shakespeare	40 minutes
Reading Buddies	30 minutes
Library & Book Boss	40 minutes
Narration (<i>ongoing in all academic classes</i>)	—
Classical Composition	40 minutes
Wordsmith (<i>cursive, copywork, dictation, reading, spelling, grammar</i>)	160 minutes
Total	8 hrs, 40 mins

This is more than twice the language instruction time typical of modern schools — and every minute of it is purposeful, classical, and alive.

OUR FORM

Form refers to the way we teach — the atmosphere, the intention, and the structure within which all learning takes place. Our Form is characterized by the following principles:

Open-ended and Personalized — Learning is tailored to meet each child where they are. Advanced learners are challenged to go further and deeper. Progressing learners are given the time, support, and encouragement they need to catch up and build confidence.

Mixed Ages — Our Early Elementary encompasses roughly ages 6–8 and our Upper Elementary ages 8–11. Children learn alongside peers of different ages, in a natural and mutually enriching social environment. During Main Lesson hours, the Upper Elementary is divided into a boys’ class and a girls’ class, as we have found through practice that this significantly improves the learning quality for this age group.

Tech-Free — Our classrooms are entirely free from digital technology. In place of screens, we offer books, nature, conversation, music, art, and the full presence of engaged teachers and curious peers. Projectors are used with discretion for group picture study, map work, or similar situations in which a very large image is required.

Family-Centered — The family is the primary community of every child’s life, and we never lose sight of that. Our curriculum is transparent, our communication is open, and our calendar is designed with family life in mind.

Character Map & the Three Paths of Attention — Everything we do in the classroom is in service of growth across Knowledge, Genius, and Heart. Our Form is not merely academic — it is formative.

OUR STUDY

Study refers to the content of what we teach — the subjects, texts, and experiences that fill our days. We divide our Study into two parts: **Academic Lessons**, devoted to academic work, and **Arts & Culture**, devoted to creative and cultural expression.

HISTORY

We believe that history is among the most important subjects a child can study — and that it should be taught not as a list of dates and facts to be memorized, but as a living story to be inhabited and understood.

Our present human civilization has at least 7,000 years of recorded history. We revisit ancient civilizations each year, working our way around the globe and through time. By their final year at the Schoolhouse, children will have encountered the great civilizations of the ancient world, the classical periods of Greece and Rome, the flowering of Eastern cultures, and the richness of the Medieval and

Renaissance periods. History is presented primarily through storytelling, enriched with literature, timelines, maps, and biographies of remarkable individuals.

United States History begins around 1000 AD, with the first European contact with North America. We trace the arc of exploration and discovery, the lives and cultures of the indigenous peoples of North America, the migration of European nations to the New World, the founding of the United States, and the early years of the republic through the presidency of Theodore Roosevelt. All history lessons are drawn from classical living books.

Charlotte Mason believed that history taught through living books — rich, narrative texts written by authors who cared deeply about their subjects — was infinitely more powerful than the dry, impersonal textbook. Our children do not read about history. They hear it told, they feel it, and they make it their own through the practice of narration.

LITERATURE & POETRY

Each year our children are read to from the great works of the Western classical tradition — Shakespeare, Dickens, Homer, Virgil, Chaucer, Ruskin, Irving, Hawthorne, Kingsley, and many others. Poetry is studied and recited every week during **Poetry Teatime** — a cherished Schoolhouse tradition in which children gather to hear, share, and memorize poems from the classical canon.

Literature and poetry are not merely subjects at the Schoolhouse. They are the primary medium through which children encounter the full range of human experience — joy and sorrow, courage and doubt, beauty and loss — in a safe, guided, and deeply enriching way. Mason called these encounters with great literature among the most formative experiences of a child's education.

Children practice narrating what they have heard — first verbally, then in increasingly sophisticated forms as they develop: artistic narration, theatrical narration, and eventually written narration and composition. Narration is not a test. It is a practice of deep listening, careful thinking, and original expression.

NATURE STUDY & RESEARCH

We use Nature Study as our primary vehicle for the discovery of Science. Following Charlotte Mason's conviction that children learn science best through direct, unhurried observation of the natural world, we open the window to the wonders of creation with lessons that encourage children to explore, to observe, to record, to wonder, and to ask questions.

Nature study topics revolve between geology, botany, astronomy, meteorology, entomology, ornithology, chemistry, and more. Children keep personal nature journals in which they record their observations and discoveries — building a personal record of their growing knowledge of the natural world.

We supplement direct observation with classical handbooks of nature study, biographies of classical scientists and philosophers, and with focused projects in a dedicated **Research** class, during which small groups of students investigate a topic in depth and present their findings to the community.

WORDSMITH

Wordsmith is our own original language arts program, built on the time-tested classical practices of copywork, dictation, recitation, and narration. It is among the most distinctive and carefully crafted elements of our curriculum.

Through **copywork**, children practice cursive handwriting using carefully selected passages from classical literature — chosen not only for its linguistic quality but for its moral and cultural content. Through **dictation**, they develop spelling, grammar, and listening skills simultaneously. Through **recitation**, they build memory, confidence, and rhetorical presence. Through **narration**, they learn to listen attentively, think carefully, and express their original ideas with clarity and grace. **Reading** fluency is developed steadily through patient attention to written word.

Composition is practiced through narration and the analysis of classical works, and refined through our Classical Composition class, which draws on the ancient Greek methods of rhetorical training known as the *Progymnasmata*.

Wordsmith is not a grammar workbook. It is a complete, living language education.

POETRY TEATIME, LIBRARY, & READING BUDDIES

Every afternoon begins with a school-wide **Classical Story Hour** — a gathering of great storytelling in which children across all ages settle together to hear a narrator bring a classical tale to life. It is a gentle transition from the outdoor lunch hour into the focused work of the afternoon.

Every week, children gather for **Poetry Teatime** — one of the favorite traditions of the Schoolhouse week. Over tea (and sometimes a treat), poems are read aloud, memorized, discussed, and celebrated. We draw from the classical canon of English, American, and world poetry, building in each child a repertoire of beautiful language that will stay with them for life. Feel free to occasionally supply your child with a simple snack for their class on Poetry Teatime days.

Each week children spend dedicated time in the **Library** and also participate in **Reading Buddies** — a cross-age reading program in which older and younger students read together, strengthening both the reading skills and the community bonds of our mixed-age model.

We encourage every child to read across three levels simultaneously — below level for confidence and fluency, at level for steady practice, and above level for stretch and challenge. This approach produces readers who are not only capable but genuinely adventurous — children who reach for difficult books without fear.

We also surround our children with great stories at every turn — read aloud by teachers, encountered in literature lessons, celebrated in Poetry Teatime, and carried home in the books we recommend to families. At the Schoolhouse, reading is not a subject. It is a way of life.

MATHEMATICS

We use a classical mathematics curriculum originally developed in the early 1800s and thoughtfully updated for modern students. It is a program of remarkable depth and rigor — one that allows us to bring children all the way to seventh-grade proficiency within the elementary years, for those who are ready.

In our originally designed **Math Studio**, children are assessed and placed at their individual level in mathematics, then grouped into small **Math Pods** of three to

eight students at similar levels. Instruction is highly personalized. We enrich the foundational curriculum with hands-on manipulatives, mathematical games, speed drills, projects, and activities such as Math Scribe — because mathematics, taught well, is not a chore but a delight.

We want our children to understand mathematics, not merely perform it. We want them to feel the elegance of a well-solved problem and the satisfaction of genuine numerical fluency. This is mathematics in the classical tradition — rigorous, joyful, and deeply human.

ATHLETICS

Our Athletics program is grounded in classical traditions. Specific Athletics classes vary depending upon the coaches — past areas of study have included Ballet, Classical Chinese Dance, Martial Arts, Traditional Lion and Dragon Dance, Baseball, Badminton, and Physical Conditioning — with the aim of developing physical strength, coordination, grace, and discipline in equal measure. The goal is to develop a body that is strong, capable, and beautifully controlled.

Boys and girls are separated during Athletics classes, in order to cater to the temperaments and strengths of each child and to allow them to push themselves without the pressures of co-ed athletics.

MUSIC & ART

In Music class we seek to develop each child's natural musicality — their sense of pitch, rhythm, and vocal expression. We draw on classical pieces and folk music from around the world to build a rich repertoire of songs. Children learn to sing together and in parts, developing their voices as instruments of beauty and community. We also present classical composer biographies and the study of great works, including opera — because music, like all the arts, is best understood in its full historical and human context.

In Art we focus on the direct observation of the world around us. We develop the mechanical skills needed to replicate what we see — through painting, drawing, and modeling — using classical teaching materials to build a solid foundation in the fundamentals of color, line, and dimension. We also use picture study and artist

biographies to develop an appreciation for the great tradition of classical art, and we incorporate other cultural art forms — ink drawing, textiles, and more — to broaden our children's aesthetic horizons.

FOREIGN LANGUAGE

Foreign Language classes vary depending upon instructor availability. We currently offer **Mandarin Chinese** as our primary foreign language. Chinese is the second most widely spoken language on Earth, and its study opens doors to one of the world's oldest and most profound civilizations. Past language classes have included French, as well as Introduction to Latin and Greek — the twin roots of the Western intellectual tradition and the foundation of a vast portion of the English language.

Our goal in language instruction is not necessarily fluency, but breadth — the opening of minds and the building of capacities that will serve our students for the rest of their lives. A child who has studied other languages carries with them a remarkable set of intellectual tools and a genuinely enlarged sense of the world.

XII. EXTENDED STUDY

"The roots of education are bitter, but the fruit is sweet."

— Aristotle

OUR PHILOSOPHY OF HOMEWORK

At the Schoolhouse we approach the question of homework with the same care and intentionality we bring to everything else. We do not issue homework as a matter of routine. We do not believe that a child's evening should be spent replicating the work of the school day at the kitchen table, under pressure, in diminishing returns.

What we believe instead is this: the best homework is a child who comes home full of ideas, burning to share what they have discovered, reaching instinctively for a book or a sketchpad or a handful of seeds to plant. When learning presses outward into a child's life — into their play, their conversation, their dreams — it has done something far more important than fill a worksheet. It has taken root.

This is *scholé* — the ancient Greek idea that true learning is not confined to the classroom but spills naturally into the free hours of a child's life. Confucius described it as the natural overflow of a cultivated mind. We call it the highest form of homework that exists at the elementary age.

EXTENDED STUDY

For children in the 5th and 6th grades, we assign weekly Extended Study — a modest but meaningful set of assignments that extend and deepen their in-class work. Extended Study is our version of homework for our oldest elementary students, and it is designed to help them begin developing the habits of independent scholarship that will serve them throughout the Academy years and beyond.

Extended Study is assigned every Thursday and is generally expected to be completed before the following Monday, or before the next class meeting in each subject. Assignments begin small and grow gradually as each child finds their footing and — as we consistently find — begins to ask for more.

There is no penalty for incomplete work, other than the natural sense of incompleteness and the possibility of falling behind one's peers. We are far more interested in the intrinsic rewards of completed work — the quiet satisfaction of scholarship, the ownership of one's own learning, the growing confidence of a student who knows they can do hard things.

We ask families to encourage and support their child in completing Extended Study with a warm and positive attitude. The goal is not mere compliance — it is the cultivation of a lifelong and joyful relationship with self-directed learning.

SCHOOLWIDE ASSIGNMENTS

For children across all grades and ages, we arrange themed activities that can be completed or worked on at home anytime — star maps for locating constellations, solving particular riddles, practicing songs for music class, reciting multiplication tables, completing Book Boss challenges, memorizing the school-wide recitation piece, or spending time with their Wordsmith spelling lists. These are not typically assigned outright. They are extensions of the living ideas your child is already carrying home from the Schoolhouse. Supporting materials for these study subjects can be found on the online Schoolhouse Families community board

TRUE HOMEWORK: TRAINING THE FREE HOURS

Aristotle observed that what truly shapes a person — and by extension, a society — is not the labor they perform, but *how they use their freedom*. A child who is kept busy at school all day and then handed a screen or other indulgences at home has not been given rest. They have been given pacification. And a childhood built on pacification produces adults who do not know what to do with themselves when no one is telling them what to do.

This is one of the quiet crises of our time — and it is one that Schoolhouse families are uniquely positioned to address.

We believe that the most important homework we can assign is not academic at all. It is the deliberate, loving cultivation of how your child spends their free time. Not structured enrichment classes or tutoring sessions — but the slow, patient formation of habits that will serve them for the rest of their lives. The habit of reaching for a book when bored. The habit of contributing to the household without being asked. The habit of speaking respectfully to a stranger, writing a letter to a grandparent, or sitting quietly with their own thoughts.

These are not supplementary activities. They are the substance of a rich and fully human childhood. And they are, in the deepest sense, the true work of the home.

What follows are our most heartfelt practical suggestions for families — organized around three pillars of true home education.

PILLAR ONE: HABITS OF STUDY

The joyful, open-ended pursuit of knowledge, skill, and craft

Aristotle's vision of the well-lived life was one in which free time is spent not in indulgence, but in the joyful pursuit of excellent things — reading, thinking, creating, exploring, wondering. This is the habit we most want to cultivate in our children. Not the ability to complete assignments, but the instinct to reach for something meaningful when left to their own devices.

Here are some practical ways to cultivate this habit at home:

Build a home library and use it. Gradually assemble a collection of classical and living books — we will offer recommendations later in this guide. Read aloud together as a family as often as you can. Let your child see you reading for pleasure. A home full of books is one of the most powerful educational environments a child can inhabit.

Let your child be bored. Boredom is not a problem to be solved with indulgence. It is the cradle of creativity, the first condition of genuine play, and the beginning of independent thought. When a child says "I'm bored," resist the urge to entertain them. Tell them to go outside, find something to do, and trust them. They will surprise you.

Send your child outside without a plan. Unstructured outdoor time — wandering, exploring, building, pondering, sitting under a tree — is among the most developmentally rich experiences available to a child. It requires nothing, costs nothing, and produces everything: physical health, emotional regulation, creative thinking, and a deep and lasting love of the natural world.

Encourage a personal project or hobby. Help your child identify something they want to learn or make — a skill, a craft, a collection, a garden, a recipe, an instrument. Support their interest without taking it over. Check in with curiosity

rather than pressure. A child with a personal project is a child who is learning to be self-directed — one of the most valuable qualities a human being can possess.

Make music a part of daily life. Play classical music, folk music, and music from around the world in your home. Sing together. Encourage your child to practice their instrument or their voice — not as a chore, but as a pleasure. Music in the home is one of the oldest and most nourishing of human traditions.

PILLAR TWO: CONTRIBUTING TO THE HOME

The formation of selflessness, diligence, and genuine self-worth

Confucius placed the family at the center of a well-ordered life and society. He understood that a child who learns to serve their household well is learning, in miniature, to serve the world. We could not agree more.

Household contribution is not merely a practical matter. It is a moral and psychological one. A child who has real responsibilities — tasks that the whole family depends on — develops a deep and lasting sense of worth that no gold star or report card can provide. They know they are needed. They know they can be counted on. This knowledge, absorbed quietly over years of daily practice, becomes the foundation of genuine character.

Here are some practical ways to cultivate this habit at home:

Give your child a real job. Not tidying their own room — a task that benefits only themselves — but something that contributes to the wellbeing of the whole family. Setting the table every night. Feeding the animals. Taking out the trash. Folding the laundry. Preparing a simple meal once a week. The job should matter to everyone.

Do not nag. Assign the responsibility, explain its importance, and then step back. Give them the chance to take the lead. If the job goes undone, the whole family will feel the effect — and the child will come, in time, to their own understanding of why their contribution matters. Natural consequences are among the most powerful teachers available to a parent.

Work alongside your child. Cooking together, gardening together, repairing something together — these are not merely practical tasks. They are some of the most intimate and formative experiences of childhood. A child who has learned to

cook a meal, grow a vegetable, or fix a broken thing has been given something that no curriculum can fully replicate.

Celebrate diligence, not just results. Praise your child for their effort, their persistence, and their care — not only for their achievements. A child who learns to take pride in doing a job well, regardless of whether anyone notices, is developing one of the rarest and most valuable of human qualities.

PILLAR THREE: SOCIALIZING NORMALLY IN SOCIETY

The cultivation of courtesy, confidence, and genuine community

One of the quiet losses of modern childhood is the loss of normal, intergenerational, real-world social experience. Children today spend the vast majority of their time with age-peers, supervised by adults, in institutional environments. They rarely interact with adult strangers, navigate unfamiliar social situations, or take on genuine responsibility in the wider world.

At the Schoolhouse we believe that learning to move through society with confidence, courtesy, and care is one of the most important things a child can learn. Here are some practical ways to cultivate this habit at home:

Let your child interact with adult strangers in public. When you are at a shop, a restaurant, or a service counter, encourage your child to place their own order, ask their own questions, and say thank you to the person serving them. These small interactions — repeated over years — build the social confidence and natural courtesy that no classroom can fully teach.

Give your child increasing responsibility when out and about. Let them carry the grocery list, find items on the shelf, hand money to the cashier, or ask a store employee for help locating something. Gradually increase their independence in public spaces. A child who is trusted with real responsibility in the real world rises to meet it.

Invest in your neighborhood. Encourage your child to know their neighbors — to greet them by name, to offer help when it is needed, to be a visible and friendly presence on your street. Bring a meal to a neighbor who is unwell. Help an elderly neighbor with their garden. These are not grand gestures — they are the daily practice of genuine community, and they are increasingly rare.

Write letters. Encourage your child to correspond with grandparents, cousins, and family friends by letter — handwritten, in cursive, on good paper. The discipline of letter writing develops language, empathy, and the art of considered expression. It also strengthens family bonds across distance in a way that no text message can replicate.

Reach out to extended family. Make regular contact with grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins a family priority. These relationships — often neglected in the busy modern family — are among the most enriching and stabilizing forces in a child's life. They connect children to their own story and to a community of people who love them.

THE UNPLUGGED FAMILY

We want to speak plainly about screens and technology, because we believe this is one of the most important things we can say to our families as this phenomena continues to expand its influence on our culture and daily life.

We strongly urge you to remove screens from your child's daily life altogether — not as a punishment, but as a gift. The evidence is clear and the effects are visible: children who live without screens are more curious, more creatively productive, more socially at ease, more physically active, and more capable of sustained attention than their screen-saturated peers. They are also, by every measure we have observed, happier.

We recommend reserving screens entirely for the weekend, and even then, limiting their use to shared family viewing — a deliberate, together activity rather than a solitary, passive one. A family movie night, chosen with care, watched together on a sofa, is a fundamentally different experience from a child alone in a room with a device. It is communal, it is bounded, and it can be genuinely enriching. Later in this guide we will offer our recommendations for family films worthy of your evenings together.

For the rest of the week — nothing. No devices, no streaming, no scrolling. Fill their hours with the things we have described above: books, outdoor play, household work, music, conversation, letters, and the company of people who love them. You will be astonished at what emerges. The hours your child spends away from screens are not empty hours. They are the hours in which your child actually becomes themselves.

Beyond the question of your child's screen use, we want to encourage something broader and more deliberate: the practice of unplugged family time.

Set aside at least one dedicated block of time each week — an evening, an afternoon, a Sunday morning — that belongs entirely to your family and to no device. Not just your child's devices. Yours too. All devices quieted, out of sight, and out of reach.

Fill this time with something simple and wholesome: a walk in nature, a game night, a shared meal cooked together, an ice cream outing, a bonfire, a board game, a long conversation. It does not need to be elaborate or planned. It needs only to be present — fully, deliberately, without distraction.

In a world of constant connectivity, this kind of deliberate togetherness has become genuinely countercultural. It is also, we believe, one of the most radical and powerful things a family can do. The children who grow up in homes where there is a time to put away the tech and look at each other are children who know, in their bones, that they are worth more to their family than the rest of the world on the other side of the screen.

This is the culture we are building together — one evening, one walk, one shared meal at a time.

XIII. COMMUNITY AND COMMUNICATION

"If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together."

— African Proverb

OUR COMMUNITY

Northern Schoolhouse is not simply a place where children come to learn. It is a community — a gathering of families who share a common vision of what childhood can be and what education is for. The relationships formed here — between children, between parents, between families and teachers — are among the most valuable things this school has to offer. We take them seriously, and we invest in them deliberately.

Confucius understood that the health of a society begins with the health of its smallest communities — the family, the neighborhood, and beyond. Charlotte Mason believed that the atmosphere of a learning community is one of its most powerful educational forces. The culture of the Schoolhouse is not built by its curriculum alone. *It is built by the people in it* — by the way we greet one another in the morning, the way we are present for each other's children, the way we gather around campfires and share meals and sit together at Summits.

This community is yours as much as ours. We ask you to tend it with care.

HOW WE COMMUNICATE WITH FAMILIES

We are committed to keeping our families informed, involved, and at ease. The following are the primary channels through which we communicate:

Email — our primary mode of official communication. Important announcements, calendar updates, event reminders, and administrative information will be sent to the email addresses on file for your family. Please ensure that your contact information is current and that our emails are not going to your spam folder. We ask that families check their email regularly during the school week.

Trello — the platform for our Schoolhouse Families Community Board, accessible via a link shared with you. Here you will find the Academic Calendar, Daily Schedules, Community Directory, Extended Study, Club Schedules, Photos, Events, and more.

Direct Contact — For day-to-day matters, questions, or concerns, families are welcome to reach out to any member of our administration or their child's lead teacher directly by email, phone, or text. We ask that non-urgent matters be communicated during school hours or reasonable evening hours, and that families allow up to 24 hours for a response.

In-Person Conversations — We value face-to-face communication above all others. Parent-Teacher Meetings, Welcome Night, Summits, and Community Gatherings are all opportunities to connect directly with our team. If you have a concern or question that would be better addressed in person, please do not hesitate to reach out to schedule a conversation. We are happy to make time for you.

COMMUNICATING WITH CARE

We ask that all communication within our community — between families and staff, and between families themselves — be conducted with the warmth, dignity, and respect that we seek to model for our children. The Schoolhouse is a small and intimate community, and the way we speak to and about one another shapes the culture our children inhabit.

If you have a concern about your child's experience, we ask that you bring it directly to the relevant teacher or to the Principal — promptly, openly, and in a spirit of genuine partnership. We will strive to listen carefully, respond thoughtfully, and work with you toward a resolution. Bringing your concern directly to the source prevents unnecessary confusion and tension within our community.

We are all on the same side. We are all here for the children.

We will strive to communicate with you honestly, promptly, and with genuine care for your family. We will keep you informed about your child's progress, welcome your questions and concerns, and treat every interaction with the respect that our community deserves.

Together, we are building something rare and beautiful. Let us tend it well.

XIV. DISCIPLINE & CONDUCT

"The first and best victory is to conquer self."

— Plato

OUR PHILOSOPHY

Discipline at Northern Schoolhouse is not primarily about punishment — it is about formation. We believe that children are in the long and puzzling process of learning self-governance, and that the role of the school is to accompany them in that process with patience, consistency, and genuine care.

Our approach is built on three convictions. First, that a child who has made a mistake and genuinely corrected it deserves full forgiveness — not a lingering record of wrongdoing, not a suspended sentence waiting to be invoked. When a child has made amends, the matter is closed. This teaches them that accountability is liberating, not merely corrective. Second, that children learn best when they are offered clear choices rather than issued commands. When a child's behavior becomes disruptive, we strive not to lecture or punish — but rather present choices, patiently and consistently, until the child is ready to make the right one. Third, that consequences must be real and proportionate. We are not a permissive school. We hold our students to a high standard of conduct, and when behavior is harmful — to other students, to the community, or to the learning environment — we respond with clarity and without hesitation.

We correct undesirable behavior with this spirit: *You are always able to correct your mistake. We are always ready to receive you when you do.*

IN THE CLASSROOM

The primary tool of classroom discipline at the Schoolhouse is simple and consistent: a child who is unable to participate appropriately is asked to step outside the classroom and return when they are ready. This is not a punishment — it is an invitation. The child is not shamed or berated. They are simply given time and space to collect themselves and choose to return. Teachers pursue this approach with patience, repeating the invitation if necessary.

When this approach is not sufficient – when a child is persistently unable or unwilling to regulate their behavior – they will meet with the Principal. This conversation is not necessarily a disciplinary hearing, but a genuine exchange: the Principal listens, the child is heard, and together they identify what the child needs in order to succeed in the community.

ESCALATION

In cases of physical aggression, profane or seriously harmful language, or persistent or extreme disruptive behavior, the school reserves the right to act swiftly and decisively. A single serious incident may result in an immediate suspension of up to one week. In-school suspension may also be exercised, depending on the nature of the incident and the child's needs.

If a child receives more than one suspension, the Principal may choose to initiate a probation contract. This is a written agreement signed by the parents, the child, and a school administrator. It sets out clearly what is expected, what supports will be in place, and what the consequences of further violations will be. It is not a document of condemnation – it is a commitment, made together, to give the child and the community every reasonable opportunity to succeed.

Violation of a probation contract may result in expulsion from Northern Schoolhouse.

TRUST

We will always be honest when something arises involving your child. We strive to not minimize serious incidents, and not dramatize minor ones. We report to parents what we have witnessed, what action we took, what choices were offered to the child, and what the child chose. We focus on how to help the child overcome their difficulty – not merely on cataloguing their mistakes.

A child who knows that both their school and their home are safe places to fail – and to try again – is a child with the courage to grow.

XV. AT HOME WITH NORTHERN

"The soul that sees beauty may sometimes walk alone."

— Goethe

The recommendations in this section are an extension of Schoolhouse family values — brought into your living room, your bookshelves, and your family's shared life at home. They are offered in the spirit of *scholé*: the enrichment of free time with things worthy of our attention, our imagination, and our hearts.

These are not exhaustive lists, and they are not obligations. They are invitations — to explore, to discover, and to build a home culture that reflects the values you have chosen in sending your child to Northern Schoolhouse.

FAMILY FILM NIGHTS

There is a long and noble tradition of gathering around a story together — of sharing in laughter, wonder, sorrow, and triumph as a family. A well-chosen film, watched together with full attention and without distraction, is a genuine cultural experience. It opens conversations, stirs the imagination, and leaves something lasting in the mind and heart.

The films we recommend below have been recommended and selected with great care. They are worthy of your family's evenings.

A few things to keep in mind as you explore this list. Older films are often slower-paced and more nuanced than most modern productions — sometimes in black and white, always patient in their storytelling. These films ask more of their audience, and they give more in return. They develop sensitivity to character, attention to subtlety, and an appreciation for the craft of genuine storytelling. Many are considered masterpieces of cinema.

These are not entertainment candy for a quick thrill. They are stories that anyone at any age can love — stories about the dignity of the human spirit, the rewards of courage and virtue, the beauty of faith, and the richness of history. They are worthy of our full attention.

We recommend that parents screen any film personally before watching it with their children, as each family has its own tastes, sensibilities, and boundaries.

CLASSICAL FILMS

The classic films listed below offer a glimpse of life in more straightforward times — when family, hard work, and honor remained a focal point for communities and individuals, or when the magic of childhood was clean and clear. Not only are some of these films quite funny, but all of them offer thought-provoking reflections on the dignity of the human spirit, while upholding culture, tradition, and enduring human values.

- ❖ The Gold Rush — Charlie Chaplin (1925)
- ❖ The Circus — Charlie Chaplin (1928)
- ❖ Mutiny on the Bounty (1935)
- ❖ The Story of Louis Pasteur (1936)
- ❖ Modern Times — Charlie Chaplin (1936)
- ❖ Captains Courageous (1937)
- ❖ Heidi (1937)
- ❖ Boys Town (1938)
- ❖ A Little Princess (1939)
- ❖ The Hunchback of Notre Dame (1939)
- ❖ The Wizard of Oz (1939)
- ❖ Young Mr. Lincoln (1939)
- ❖ Knute Rockne, All American (1940)
- ❖ Sergeant York (1941)
- ❖ Casablanca (1942)
- ❖ Lassie Come Home (1943)
- ❖ The Song of Bernadette (1943)
- ❖ Going My Way (1944)
- ❖ Meet Me in St. Louis (1944)
- ❖ National Velvet (1944)
- ❖ The Bells of Saint Mary's (1945)
- ❖ The Yearling (1946)
- ❖ It's a Wonderful Life (1946)
- ❖ Miracle on 34th Street (1947)
- ❖ Come to the Stable (1949)
- ❖ Treasure Island (1950)
- ❖ The African Queen (1951)
- ❖ A Christmas Carol (1951)
- ❖ The Miracle of Our Lady of Fatima (1952)
- ❖ Robin Hood (1952)
- ❖ A Man Called Peter (1955)
- ❖ Davy Crockett: King of the Wild Frontier (1955)
- ❖ Around the World in 80 Days (1956)
- ❖ Davy Crockett and the River Pirates (1956)
- ❖ The Inn of the Sixth Happiness (1958)
- ❖ The Diary of Anne Frank (1959)
- ❖ The Nun's Story (1959)
- ❖ Ben Hur (1959)
- ❖ Pollyanna (1960)
- ❖ Swiss Family Robinson (1960)
- ❖ The Absent-Minded Professor (1961)
- ❖ Francis of Assisi (1961)
- ❖ The Reluctant Saint (1962)
- ❖ To Kill a Mockingbird (1962)
- ❖ The Incredible Journey (1963)
- ❖ Lilies of the Field (1963)
- ❖ Mary Poppins (1964)
- ❖ My Fair Lady (1964)
- ❖ The Sound of Music (1965)
- ❖ A Man for All Seasons (1966)
- ❖ Chitty Chitty Bang Bang (1968)
- ❖ The Apple Dumpling Gang (1975)
- ❖ The Greatest Adventure: Stories from the Bible (1985)
- ❖ The Prince of Egypt (1998)

WESTERN ADVENTURES

We have included a selection of classic western adventures because — while some contain moments of intensity or action — invaluable qualities are always front and center: fearless heroism and unstoppable courage, confident leadership and teamwork, a clear distinction between good and evil, the rewards of overcoming hardship, and the simplicity of older, more rugged times.

The clear distinction between good and evil deserves particular mention. One of the challenges with some modern stories is that the line between good and evil becomes blurred — sometimes deliberately so. Children benefit enormously from stories in which good is rewarded and bad is punished, where virtue is visible and vice has consequences. This lays a foundation of moral clarity that will serve them well as they grow and encounter more complex and nuanced narratives. We want to give children the gift of a sturdy ethical imagination before asking them to navigate moral ambiguity.

Classic westerns serve this purpose beautifully. Even when depicting violence, there is almost no blood — intensity is brief and straightforward. And even when a character has a checkered past, they are invariably people of fundamental righteousness who stand up for the vulnerable and oppose evil. The virtuous women in these stories, too, represent courtesy, simple beauty, courage, and elegance amid a rugged and dangerous world.

- ❖ Stagecoach (1939)
- ❖ My Darling Clementine (1946)
- ❖ The Treasure of the Sierra Madre (1948)
- ❖ Fort Apache (1948)
- ❖ Red River (1948)
- ❖ She Wore a Yellow Ribbon (1949)
- ❖ Rio Grande (1950)
- ❖ Winchester '73 (1950)
- ❖ The Gunfighter (1950)
- ❖ High Noon (1952)
- ❖ Shane (1953)
- ❖ Davy Crockett: King of the Wild Frontier (1955)
- ❖ Davy Crockett and the River Pirates (1956)
- ❖ Rio Bravo (1959)
- ❖ The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance (1962)
- ❖ True Grit (1969)
- ❖ Support Your Local Sheriff (1969)

THE NORTHERN SCHOOLHOUSE HOME LIBRARY

Classical Literature Recommendations for the Home

A NOTE TO FAMILIES

The books listed here are our recommendations for building a home library of classical and living literature — what Charlotte Mason called “living books”: texts written by authors who care deeply about their subjects, full of ideas that take root in a child’s heart and press outward into their life, their play, and their imagination.

You do not need to acquire all of these titles! Select books based on your family’s and child’s interests and tastes, and build your library gradually and joyfully over the years. A home library is a living thing — it grows with your family.

This list is organized loosely by age and stage of development, but do not let that restrict you. We encourage you to treat these groupings as guidelines rather than rules. A curious six-year-old may delight in a book listed for older readers; a twelve-year-old may return with fresh appreciation to a book they loved at five. Make books from all brackets freely available. Follow your child’s interest and your family’s taste. And read everything aloud together whenever the opportunity arises — the shared experience of a great story read aloud is one of the most nourishing things a family can do together.

A word on the great authors.. These authors are listed at the end of this section, under *The Great Authors*, with the recommendation that they be woven into family life throughout childhood and beyond — not saved for some future moment when the child is “ready,” but begun early, read aloud, and returned to again and again.

A note on editions and illustrations. Where possible, seek out nineteenth-century editions or quality facsimile reproductions of the classic illustrated editions. Book illustration reached its perfection in the nineteenth century in the work of Randolph Caldecott, Kate Greenaway, Walter Crane, Gustav Doré, George Cruikshank, Beatrix Potter, Sir John Tenniel, Arthur Rackham, Howard Pyle, N.C. Wyeth, and many others. These illustrations are not merely decorative — they are part of the imaginative experience of the book, and they introduce children to the great tradition of classical art at the same time. Dover Facsimile editions offer many of these at reasonable prices.

STORY COLLECTIONS

These timeless collections are worth returning to again and again throughout childhood and beyond. They form the imaginative soil from which all deeper reading grows.

- ❖ Aesop — *Fables* (the translation by Robert L'Estrange is the classic)
- ❖ Baldwin, James
 - Fifty Famous Stories Retold*
 - Thirty More Famous Stories Retold*
- ❖ Bennett, William J.
 - The Children's Book of Virtues*
 - The Children's Book of Heroes*
 - The Children's Book of Home and Family*
 - The Children's Book of America*
- ❖ Bulfinch, Thomas
 - The Age of Fable* (1867)
 - The Age of Chivalry* (1858)
 - Legends of Charlemagne* (1863)
- ❖ D'Aulaire, Ingri & Edgar — any title
- ❖ Gatty, Margaret — *Parables from Nature* (1855)
- ❖ *Gesta Romanorum* (translated by Swann; scholarly facsimiles)
- ❖ Grimm — *Household Stories* (illustrated by Walter Crane, Dover Facsimiles)
- ❖ Harris, Joel Chandler — *Uncle Remus* (1880) (retelling by Julius Lester)
- ❖ Hawthorne, Nathaniel
 - A Wonder Book for Boys and Girls* (1851)
 - Tanglewood Tales* (1853)
- ❖ Herriot, James — *James Herriot's Treasury for Children* (1992)
- ❖ Jacobs, Joseph — *English Fairy Tales* (1890)
- ❖ Lamb, Charles & Mary — *Tales from Shakespeare* (1807)
- ❖ Lang, Andrew — *The Fairy Books*, any or all colors; best illustrated by H.J. Ford, Dover facsimile editions (1889–1910)
- ❖ Nesbit, Edith — *Beautiful Stories from Shakespeare* (1907)
- ❖ Stoutenburg, Adrien — *American Tall Tales* (1966)
- ❖ Yonge, Charlotte — *A Book of Golden Deeds* (1864)

POETRY

Poetry should be a daily presence in the home — read aloud, memorized, and celebrated. We have separated it here because many families may not immediately recognize which titles are poetry collections. Build a small poetry shelf and return to it often. This list is just a launching point — poetry is personal, and we encourage you to spend time discovering what you love.

- ❖ Browning, Robert — *The Pied Piper of Hamelin* (1842), illustrated by Kate Greenaway, Warne
- ❖ de la Mare, Walter
 - Come Hither* (1923) — the finest anthology of poetry for children of all ages
 - Songs of Childhood* (1902)
- ❖ Fujikawa, Gyo — *A Child's Book of Poems* (1969)
- ❖ Longfellow, Henry Wadsworth
 - Evangeline* (1847)
 - Hiawatha* (1855)
- ❖ Milne, A.A.
 - When We Were Very Young* (1924)
 - Now We Are Six* (1927)
- ❖ Stevenson, Robert Louis — *A Child's Garden of Verses* (1885), Scribner's edition
- ❖ Any classical anthology or collection from your favorite poets

NURSERY & EARLY ELEMENTARY (Ages 0–8)

Literary experience begins for very young children with someone reading aloud while they look at the pictures. The books in this section are for lap reading, bedtime, and earliest independent reading — but they are also wonderful for older children and for adults returning to them with fresh eyes. All of them are family books.

- ❖ Anderson, C.W. — *Billy and Blaze* series (1936)
- ❖ Andersen, Hans Christian — *Fairy Tales* (1835)
- ❖ *Arabian Nights* — expurgated edition for children, translated by Edward Lane
- ❖ Atwater, R. & F. — *Mr. Popper's Penguins* (1938)
- ❖ Belloc, Hilaire — *The Bad Child's Book of Beasts* (1896)
- ❖ Bulla, Clyde Robert — any title
- ❖ Caldecott, Randolph — *Picture Books*, 16 little vols., published by Frederick Warne (1878–1885)
- ❖ Carroll, Lewis — *Alice in Wonderland* (1865) & *Through the Looking Glass* (1871), illustrated by Tenniel
- ❖ Collodi, Carlo — *Pinocchio* (1883)
- ❖ Dalglish, Alice — *The Bears on Hemlock Mountain* (1952) & *The Courage of Sarah Noble* (1954)
- ❖ Edgeworth, Maria — *Moral Tales* (1801) & *The Parent's Assistant* (1796)
- ❖ Ewing, Juliana — *Jackanapes* (1883)
- ❖ George, Jean Craighead — *My Side of the Mountain* (1959)
- ❖ Grahame, Kenneth — *Wind in the Willows* (1908)
- ❖ Greenaway, Kate — any title, preferably published by Frederick Warne
- ❖ Irving, Washington — *Sketch Book* (1820)
- ❖ Kipling, Rudyard — *The Jungle Book* (1894), illustrated by Kipling [look for a version that includes his short stories, such as *Rikki-Tikki-Tavi* (1893)] & *Just So Stories* (1902)
- ❖ MacLachlan, Patricia — *Sarah, Plain and Tall* (1985)
- ❖ Perrault, Charles — *Fairy Tales* (1697), illustrated by Doré, Dover
- ❖ Porter, Eleanor H. — *Pollyanna* (1913)
- ❖ Potter, Beatrix — *The Complete Tales*, 23 little vols., all illustrated by Potter (1901–1930)
- ❖ Ruskin, John — *King of the Golden River* (1851)
- ❖ Stevenson, Robert Louis — *A Child's Garden of Verses* (1885), Scribner's
- ❖ Sydney, Margaret — *Five Little Peppers and How They Grew* (1880)
- ❖ Uspenskii — *Uncle Fedya, His Dog, and His Cat* (1974)
- ❖ White, E.B. — *Charlotte's Web* (1952)
- ❖ Wiggin, Kate Douglass — *Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm* (1903)
- ❖ Williams, Margery — *The Velveteen Rabbit* (1922)

NURSERY & EARLY ELEMENTARY — *Series*

- ❖ Caudill, Rebecca — *Fairchild Family*, 4 books (1949–1966)
- ❖ Lewis, C.S. — *The Chronicles of Narnia*, 7 books (1950–1956)
- ❖ Lindgren, Astrid — *Pippi Longstocking*, 3 books (1945); *The Children of Noisy Village*, 3 books (1947); & *Ronia the Robber's Daughter* (1981)
- ❖ Lofting, Hugh — *The Story of Doctor Dolittle*, 13 books (1920–1952)
- ❖ Milne, A.A. — *Winnie-the-Pooh* & *The House at Pooh Corner* (1926–1928)
- ❖ Travers, P.L. — *Mary Poppins*, 8 books (1934–1988)
- ❖ Wilder, Laura Ingalls — *Little House*, 9 books (1932–1943)

UPPER ELEMENTARY (Ages 8–12)

These titles represent the heart of the classical reading life for older elementary and early middle school children, although several titles are perfectly accessible for younger readers. Again, these titles can be enjoyed read aloud as a family first, then revisited independently. Make books from the Nursery & Early Elementary bracket freely available alongside these — children will always find their own level.

- ❖ Adams, Andy
 - Log of a Cowboy* (1903), illustrated by N.C. Wyeth
 - Cattle Brands* (1906)
- ❖ Alcott, Louisa May
 - Little Women* (1868)
 - Little Men* (1871)
 - Jo's Boys* (1886)
 - An Old-Fashioned Girl* (1870)
 - Eight Cousins* (1875)
- ❖ Alexander, Lloyd — *The Remarkable Journey of Prince Jen* (1991)
- ❖ Bishop, Claire Huchet — *Twenty and Ten* (1952)
- ❖ Brink, Carol Ryrie — *Caddie Woodlawn* (1935)
- ❖ Bulla, Clyde Robert — any title
- ❖ Burnett, Frances Hodgson
 - Little Lord Fauntleroy* (1886)
 - A Little Princess* (1905)
 - The Secret Garden* (1911)
- ❖ Burnford, Sheila — *The Incredible Journey* (1960)
- ❖ Caudill, Rebecca — *Tree of Freedom* (1949)
- ❖ Cooper, James Fenimore

- The Pioneers* (1823)
The Last of the Mohicans (1826)
The Pathfinder (1840)
The Deerslayer (1841)
- ❖ Dana, Richard Henry — *Two Years Before the Mast* (1840)
 - ❖ de Angeli, Marguerite — *The Door in the Wall* (1949)
 - ❖ DeJong, Meindert
 - A Horse Came Running* (1970)
 - Along Came a Dog* (1958)
 - House of Sixty Fathers* (1956)
 - The Wheel on the School* (1954)
 - Journey from Peppermint Street* (1968)
 - ❖ Defoe, Daniel — *Robinson Crusoe* (1719)
 - ❖ Dodge, Mary Mapes — *Hans Brinker* (1865)
 - ❖ du Bois, William Pene — *Twenty-One Balloons* (1947)
 - ❖ Edmonds, Walter D. — *The Matchlock Gun* (1941)
 - ❖ Enright, Elizabeth — *Thimble Summer* (1938)
 - ❖ Fisher, Dorothy Canfield — *Understood Betsy* (1916)
 - ❖ Forbes, Esther — *Johnny Tremain* (1943)
 - ❖ Frankel, Emily — *Aeneas* (2006)
 - ❖ Goudge, Elizabeth — *The Little White Horse* (1946)
 - ❖ Hale, Lucretia P. — *The Peterkin Papers* (1880)
 - ❖ Hawthorne, Nathaniel — *Tanglewood Tales* (1853)
 - ❖ Hemingway, Ernest — *The Old Man and the Sea* (1952)
 - ❖ Henty, G.A. — a hundred “Boys’ Books” (1871–1906)
 - ❖ Homer — *The Iliad & The Odyssey*, retellings
 - ❖ Hughes, Thomas — *Tom Brown’s School Days* (1857)
 - ❖ Kingsley, Charles
 - The Heroes* (1856)
 - Westward Ho* (1855)
 - The Water Babies* (1863)
 - ❖ Kipling, Rudyard
 - Captains Courageous* (1897)
 - Kim* (1901)
 - Puck of Pook’s Hill* (1906)
 - ❖ Knight, Eric — *Lassie Come-Home* (1940)
 - ❖ MacDonald, George
 - At the Back of the North Wind* (1871)
 - The Princess and the Goblin* (1872)
 - The Princess and Curdie* (1883)

- ❖ Major, Charles — *The Bears of Blue River* (1901)
- ❖ Marryat, Frederick
 - Masterman Ready* (1841)
 - Children of the New Forest* (1847)
- ❖ Morey, Walt — *Gentle Ben* (1965)
- ❖ Pyle, Howard
 - The Merry Adventures of Robin Hood* (1883)
 - Otto of the Silver Hand* (1888)
 - Men of Iron* (1891)
 - The Story of King Arthur and His Knights* (1903)
- ❖ Savery, Constance — *The Reb and the Redcoats* (1961)
- ❖ Sereby, Kate
 - The Good Master* (1935)
 - The Singing Tree* (1939)
 - any title
- ❖ Serrailier, Ian — *Beowulf the Warrior* (1954)
- ❖ Sewall, Anna — *Black Beauty* (1877)
- ❖ Speare, Elizabeth George
 - Calico Captive* (1957)
 - The Sign of the Beaver* (1983)
- ❖ Spyri, Johanna — *Heidi* (1880)
- ❖ Stein, Evaleen — *Gabriel and the Hour Book* (1906)
- ❖ Stevenson, Robert Louis
 - Treasure Island* (1882), illustrated by Wyeth
 - Kidnapped* (1886), illustrated by Wyeth
- ❖ Stowe, Harriet Beecher — *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1852)
- ❖ Swift, Jonathan — *Gulliver's Travels* (1726)
- ❖ Terhune, Albert Payson — *Lad: A Dog* (1919)
- ❖ Tolkien, J.R.R. — *The Hobbit* (1937)
- ❖ Twain, Mark
 - The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* (1876)
 - The Prince and the Pauper* (1881)
 - The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (1884)
- ❖ Verne, Jules
 - Journey into the Interior of the Earth* (1864)
 - 20,000 Leagues Under the Sea* (1870)
 - Around the World in 80 Days* (1872)
 - The Mysterious Island* (1874)
- ❖ Wyss, Johann — *Swiss Family Robinson* (1812)
- ❖ Yates, Elizabeth — *Amos Fortune, Free Man* (1950)

UPPER ELEMENTARY — *Series*

- ❖ Enright, Elizabeth — *Melendy Quartet*, 4 books (1941–1944) & *Gone-Away Lake*, 2 books (1957–1961)
- ❖ Fitzgerald, John D. — *The Great Brain*, 8 books (1967–1982)
- ❖ Henry, Marguerite — *Misty of Chincoteague*, 4 books (1947–1955)
- ❖ Jacques, Brian — *Redwall*, 22 books (1986–2011), & *Castaways of the Flying Dutchman*, 3 books (2001–2006)
- ❖ Lawson, Robert — *Rabbit Hill*, 2 books (1944–1953)
- ❖ McCloskey, Robert — *Homer Price*, 2 books (1943–1948)
- ❖ Montgomery, L.M. — *Anne of Green Gables*, 8 books (1908–1939)
- ❖ Moody, Ralph — *Little Britches*, 8 books (1950–1968)
- ❖ Norton, Mary — *The Borrowers*, 6 books (1952–1982)
- ❖ O'Brian, Patrick — *Master and Commander*, 21 books (1969–2000)
- ❖ Selden, George — *Cricket in Times Square*, 7 books (1960–1983)
- ❖ Sharp, Margery — *The Rescuers*, 9 books (1959–1978)

THE GREAT AUTHORS

If a parent reads nothing else aloud to their child, let it be Shakespeare. And alongside Shakespeare, the great novels of Charles Dickens, Victor Hugo, Leo Tolstoy, and Jane Austen — and the three great classical novels of Chinese literature, which belong in every home that wishes to understand the civilization whose language our students are learning.

These authors stand apart — not merely as entertainment, nor even as excellent literature, but as the imaginative inheritance of Western civilization and of the wider human family. A child who grows up hearing their stories read aloud carries something no curriculum can fully give: a deep, instinctive sense of what it means to be human, to suffer nobly, to love rightly, and to recognize good and evil when they appear.

Do not wait until your child seems “ready.” Begin early. Read aloud. Read in short segments, or long segments when it’s right. Return to them again and again throughout childhood and beyond. The list below is offered not as a complete canon but as a beginning — an incomplete map of a country worth spending a lifetime exploring.

Shakespeare, William (1564–1616)

Begin with the comedies — they are the natural entry point for family reading — before moving into the histories and tragedies as your children grow.

- ❖ *All’s Well That Ends Well* (1604)
- ❖ *As You Like It* (1599)
- ❖ *The Comedy of Errors* (1594)
- ❖ *Cymbeline* (1610)
- ❖ *Hamlet* (1603)
- ❖ *Henry IV, Part I* (1596)
- ❖ *Henry IV, Part II* (1598)
- ❖ *Henry V* (1599)
- ❖ *King Lear* (1606)
- ❖ *The Merchant of Venice* (1600)
- ❖ *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* (1600)
- ❖ *Much Ado About Nothing* (1600)
- ❖ *Pericles, Prince of Tyre* (1608)
- ❖ *Romeo and Juliet* (1597)
- ❖ *The Taming of the Shrew* (1592)
- ❖ *The Tempest* (1611)
- ❖ *Timon of Athens* (1606)
- ❖ *Twelfth Night* (1601)
- ❖ *Two Gentlemen of Verona* (1593)
- ❖ *The Winter’s Tale* (1610)
- ❖ *The Complete Works*

Dickens, Charles (1812–1870)

Begin with *A Christmas Carol* — there is no better introduction to Dickens, and no better family tradition than reading it aloud each December.

- ❖ *A Christmas Carol* (1843)
- ❖ *Cricket on the Hearth* (1845)
- ❖ *The Pickwick Papers* (1837)
- ❖ *Oliver Twist* (1837)
- ❖ *Nicholas Nickleby* (1839)
- ❖ *The Old Curiosity Shop* (1841)
- ❖ *David Copperfield* (1850)
- ❖ *Bleak House* (1853)
- ❖ *A Tale of Two Cities* (1859)
- ❖ *Great Expectations* (1861)

Hugo, Victor (1802–1885)

- ❖ *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* (1831)
- ❖ *Les Misérables* (1862)

Tolstoy, Leo (1828–1910)

- ❖ *Fables for Children* (1872)
- ❖ *Childhood, Boyhood, Youth* (1852–1857)
- ❖ *The Cossacks* (1863)
- ❖ *War and Peace* (1869)
- ❖ *The Death of Ivan Ilyich and Other Stories* (1886)
- ❖ *Master and Man* (1895)

Austen, Jane (1775–1817)

- ❖ *Northanger Abbey* (1817)
- ❖ *Sense and Sensibility* (1811)
- ❖ *Pride and Prejudice* (1813)
- ❖ *Mansfield Park* (1814)
- ❖ *Emma* (1815)
- ❖ *Persuasion* (1817)

The Three Great Classical Novels of China

China's literary tradition is among the richest in the world. These three novels — each considered among the Four Great Classical Novels of Chinese literature — are works of extraordinary imagination, moral depth, and narrative power. They are particularly fitting for Northern Schoolhouse families, whose children are learning Mandarin Chinese and growing in their understanding of Chinese civilization and culture. Seek out a well-regarded abridged or retelling edition for family reading; complete scholarly translations are available for older readers.

- ❖ Luo Guanzhong — *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* (14th century)
 - ❖ Shi Nai'an — *Water Margin* (14th century)
 - ❖ Wu Cheng'en — *Journey to the West* (16th century)
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