

Ninth Through Twelfth Grade

Mastery, independence and leadership

In Friend Select's exemplary college preparation program, students master core academic content. The courses—English, history, mathematics, science and world languages—require ever-increasing levels of independence, critical thinking and leadership. Students are taught to excel as researchers, writers and public speakers. Just as important, they develop a sense of ownership about both process and product.

Philadelphia acts as an extraordinary resource—where students connect with a wide range of cultural arts, professional disciplines and intellectual pursuits. Here, students explore interests beyond the core curriculum. Ninth and tenth graders engage in a variety of community service projects, while juniors and seniors enjoy internships or independent study on or off campus. In this way, Friends Select consistently rewards intellectual inquiry with scholarly opportunities, and produces graduates with a life-long love of learning.

Class Groupings – Schedule

Small classes in a rotating schedule

Class size ranges from five to 18 students, and major courses meet five times in a six-day cycle, including a double period for each course.

Advisory System

Grade deans, faculty advisors and advisory groups

Faculty advisors counsel students on academic and social issues. A grade dean, a faculty member who monitors student progress and oversees the grade's advisory structure, remains with the class through graduation. Advisories, groups of eight to 10 students, also stay together through twelfth grade.

Upper School Curriculum

English and History

Comprehensive studies in human culture

The Interdisciplinary Sequence (IDS), begun in middle school, continues through ninth and tenth grade English and history courses. IDS traces human culture from 3000 B.C. to the present, integrating literature, history, philosophy, religion and the arts.

English

Literary analysis, composition and choice electives

English, required every year, introduces ninth graders to further genres in literature, and extended composition skills. Tenth graders refine literary analysis and research abilities, while juniors focus on American literature and take an elective second semester. Seniors choose electives, such as Shakespeare, American Road Trip, or World Literature: Central and South America, among others.

History

Global and US history in yearly courses and electives

Students must take history through their junior year. In ninth grade, students study Asia, Islam, and Medieval and Renaissance Europe, while tenth grade examines Europe and western civilization. Juniors explore American History and, along with seniors, may select electives such as History of U.S. Cities, Comparative Government, Modern China, and others.

Intersession

International studies in-depth

Students are immersed in international studies for five days between semesters. Each year, essential questions focus on a particular region of the world. Intersession culminates with student presentations around specific research topics. Intersession 2011: Middle East.

Mathematics

Two tracks, intriguing electives

Three years of mathematics are required beyond Algebra I. Students may take Geometry, Algebra II, Pre-Calculus and Calculus as one sequence, or Algebra I, Geometry, Algebra II and Pre-Calculus. Electives include Advanced Calculus, Probability and Statistics, Advanced Probability and Statistics, and Number Theory.

Science

From Chemistry to Cosmology

Three years of science are required: All students take Chemistry and Biology, and then select from electives including Physics, Advanced Biology, Advanced Chemistry, Computer Science, Electronics and Robotics, Astronomy/Cosmology, Great Debates in Science, and Environmental Science.

World Languages

Five languages in classes and electives

Friends Select offers courses in four languages, and most students complete three or four years in one of them. Language options for 2011-2012 are Mandarin Chinese, Spanish and Latin. Juniors and seniors may take Italian as an elective.

Religious Thought

Spiritual, religious and moral values

This ninth to tenth grade course studies religions, including the Religious Society of Friends, and connects to community service projects. Tenth graders visit the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C., to explore spiritual resilience under oppression. Juniors and seniors may elect Religion and Politics.

Fine Arts

Opportunities in performing and visual arts

Students complete at least two fine arts courses: In the performing arts, courses include Choir, Instrumental Ensemble, and Percussion Ensemble. Visual art classes feature Art Foundations, Drawing and Painting, Photography, Metalsmithing, and a series of semester-long electives.

Physical Education

Basics and electives

Ninth and tenth graders complete a sequence of skills-focused physical education courses. Juniors and seniors may then select semester electives. This requirement is waived if students participate in team sports. A related course, Health, must be taken each year.

Upper School Co-Curricular Activities

Fulfilling personal interests and talents

The highly involved students at Friends Select choose among two theater productions each year. Student government, Black Student Union, Jewish Student Union, student newspaper and literary journal, Worship & Ministry, and Speech and Debate Club are just a few examples of the many student clubs available. Ninth and tenth graders must participate in one after-school sports season, or one theatrical production. Eleventh and twelfth graders must participate in one after-school sport, one theatrical production, or one other significant school activity. Friends Select competes in the Friends Schools League and the Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic Association against other independent, public and parochial schools.

Girls' Sports

Fall: field hockey, soccer, cross country

Winter: basketball, swimming

Spring: softball, crew

Boys' Sports

Fall: soccer, cross country

Winter: basketball, wrestling, swimming

Spring: baseball, crew

Co-ed Sport

Spring: tennis

Colleges and universities where Friends Select alumni/ae recently have competed or are currently competing in Division I, II, or III sports:

Amherst College
Arcadia University
Boston University
Delaware Valley College
Georgetown University
Goucher College
Guilford College
Haverford College
Immaculata University
Lafayette College
Macalaster College
Oberlin College
Occidental College
Penn State University
Princeton University
Sarah Lawrence College
Smith College
Suffolk University
Swarthmore College
University of Pennsylvania
Ursinus College

Upper School Distinctive Programs

Creating outstanding students

Philadelphia Museum of Art Research Project

On-site research and public presentation

In year two of the Interdisciplinary Sequence, ninth graders select a Medieval or Renaissance artwork to study at the Philadelphia Museum of Art. This project culminates in the student giving a comprehensive description of the work one afternoon to parents, friends, faculty and museum-goers.

Philadelphia Research Project

Urban research and analysis

In tenth grade, students explore current issues affecting the city by combining research and interviews with local elected officials and professionals.

U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum Study

Spiritual resilience and its legacy

As part of the Religious Thought class, tenth graders study peace and social justice. This project leads to a trip to the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C. Prior to attending, students adopt a Holocaust victim's name, and write letters from that person's viewpoint. The visit celebrates the human spirit in the face of oppression.

Community Service

Advocacy beyond handouts

Community Service in the upper school is administered through the Religious Thought Program. Each year, the incoming ninth grade class is asked to choose a social issue to focus on in-depth for the next four years. For example, if the Class of 2015 chooses to examine homelessness, all community service work (ninth through twelfth grades) will be built around homelessness.

Washington Research Project

Speaking with the nation's leaders

Juniors travel to Washington, D.C., to interview elected officials and policy makers on contemporary issues ranging from education and welfare reform to tobacco regulation and the death penalty. This two-day expedition complements library and online research on topics of current interest to the American public.

Junior Research Project

Historical research and oral presentation

During their first semester, juniors complete a major research paper as part of their U.S. history course. Their work culminates in students presenting their research findings to an audience of upper school students and faculty.

Junior Internship Option

Investigating professional interests

Juniors may intern in Philadelphia workplaces, supervised by an on-site mentor and internship advisor from school. The internship, planned to occur during a school break, is a rare opportunity to explore professional interests within corporations, research labs, government or social service agencies, media organizations and professional practices.

Senior Internship/Senior Independent Project Option

Working in the real world

Seniors spend three weeks in Philadelphia workplaces supervised by an on-site mentor and internship advisor from school. Students have made documentaries, worked in theater, assisted doctors and lawyers, and created murals. This graduation requirement, which receives a pass/fail grade, concludes with an oral summary of the experience.

Math/Science Symposium

Young mathematicians and scientists present work

After completing independent research projects in mathematics or science, students present their work to parents and peers. Some students also enter their work in regional and national competitions.

International Exchange Programs

Trips and Cyber-Exchanges

Friends Select goes to great lengths to connect students with peers and places of interest around the globe, through trips and cyber-exchanges. Examples over the past few years include student exchanges to Italy, Spain, France, Mexico and Asia. Currently Friends Select is in the process of planning future curricular exchanges to be folded under the International Studies Program.

General Academic Programs

Summer Reading Program

Reading as a habit—and pleasure

To encourage students to develop a lifelong habit of reading, Friends Select requires seventh through twelfth graders to read three books each summer. Students read a common book and then select a pair from a faculty-generated list. Each fall, works are discussed in seminars and integrated into the next year's curriculum.

English as a Second Language (ESL)

Mastering English and supporting academics

ESL is a mandatory course for international students who have yet to master reading, writing, listening and speaking in English. Classes are small and structured to give ESL instruction, refine academic reading and writing skills, and support students' ongoing work in their core classes.

Technology

Integrating tools that facilitate study

Friends Select features a sequential technology program integrated into all grade levels. Our fully networked school features extensive computer resources including smart boards and an online learning center that includes online forums, labs and web-links. After agreeing to an Acceptable Use Policy, students receive their own e-mail addresses.

Standardized Testing

Traditional exams administered

Friends Select administers Comprehensive Testing Program exams each fall to fourth, sixth and eighth grades. Ninth graders take the Educational Records Bureau (ERB) test, tenth and eleventh graders the Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test (PSAT), and eleventh and twelfth graders the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT).

Scholastic Aptitude Test Skills Workshops (Optional)

Test-taking skills and practice

The school also offers free Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) skills workshops to juniors and seniors each school semester. Six consecutive classes, held on Saturday afternoons, cover the SAT test's critical reading, writing and mathematics sections, related skills and practice tests. Students must attend all the classes, which are limited to 40 students per session.

Advanced Placement

Tests to gain advanced academic standing

Students may sit for Advanced Placement examinations in English, history, world languages, mathematics, science and computer science.