

The Packer Collegiate Institute

Pre & Lower School

HANDBOOK 2008-09

Statement of Philosophy

At Packer the foundations and tools for the pursuit of learning are developed in interactive, child-centered, developmentally appropriate settings in which children work individually and in cooperative groups. Quantitative reasoning, the scientific approach, and literacy skills are fostered. Creativity, critical thinking, research skills and an appreciation for the collective knowledge of the human family are also developed.

We at Packer believe that academic growth rests on a solid base of positive social and emotional development. To foster that goal we build classroom community in several ways: through the collaborative development of positively stated classroom community rules, students and teachers create a contract for living and working together; through the consistent implementation of a conflict resolution program, students from Preschool through Fourth Grade learn to negotiate and solve conflicts; and finally, through the use of Morning Meetings, we foster a sense of community by having each student feel recognized and valued, and develop the students' interpersonal skills and respect for others' points of view.

The academic program incorporates three fundamental goals: learning to solve problems, learning to access information, and learning to present information to others. Underlying all these objectives is the notion that active learning best suits the needs of our students. Solving problems is an important part of our students' work in math and science where faculty encourage creative thinking and innovative approaches; solving problems also occurs in the social studies as students participate in a debate or study the lives of others. Accessing information can mean using a picture book, going on a trip, asking good questions in an interview, or going to the library or appropriate sites on the Internet. We care about our students' ability to present to others what they have learned. Attention to those skills occurs as we provide students with the opportunity to participate in activities such as creating a computer presentation, curating a museum exhibit, or creating a book or a script. Finally, active learning occurs as we use simulations and other hands-on activities to stimulate our students' imagination and use of multiple capabilities. They participate in activities such as Colonial Fair and Dutch Day.

Children at Packer grow to be productive members of a pluralistic, cooperative community of learners and are encouraged to appreciate the rich diversity of heritages at Packer. They continue to thrive in the Middle and Upper School at Packer where the developmentally appropriate programs suit the changing intellectual and physical capacities of adolescents and teenagers. As they grow intellectually and personally, our students prepare to move beyond Packer as competent and effective members of their future communities.

Drop-off and Pick-up Procedures

The Threes/Fours start their day at 9:00 a.m. in their classroom. They are picked up from the Garden or their room at 12:00 p.m. or 3.10 p.m.

Early Morning Drop-off

The Fours/Fives through the Fourth Grade may participate in an early morning drop-off program that starts at 8:00 a.m. in the Packer Commons. This service is provided by Packer at no extra cost. Two Packer teachers supervise this program from 8:00 a.m. to 8:30 a.m. Some parents wish to enjoy breakfast with their children at this time.

Unfortunately, we are unable to provide supervision for a breakfast program and so request that you and your child finish breakfast together before you leave for the day. Children are not permitted to eat by themselves in the Commons.

Lower School children who become ill or have had an injury before school must be seen by the School Nurse before being dropped off. A parent or caregiver must accompany the student to the School Nurse's Office for evaluation. If the child is not feeling well, parent or caregivers will be asked to take the student home.

Garden

We believe that morning Garden play is an excellent way to start the day and encourage you to bring your Preschool through Second Grade students here at 8:30 a.m. The classroom assistant teachers pick up their students from the Packer Commons at 8:30 a.m. and take them to the Garden (Preschool through Second Grade) or to the classrooms (Third and Fourth Grade). We offer outdoor play to Third, and Fourth Grade students from 8:10 - 8:30 a.m.

On days when there is inclement weather, all students are taken to the classrooms at 8.30 a.m. If children arrive before 8.30 a.m. they should wait in the Dining Commons.

The Lower School teachers ask that their students arrive by 8:30 a.m. so that their day may start promptly. It is important that all children learn the value of a prompt start to the day. We ask for your cooperation in this matter.

Dismissal

Dismissal is at 3:10 p.m. Please be sure that you give us updated information about who will pick up your child after school on a regular basis and about playdates and special programs. Fours/Fives through Second Graders are picked up in their classrooms or in the Garden as outlined by the classroom teachers. We encourage the Third and Fourth Graders to meet their parents or caregivers in the front hall and they seem to enjoy this special privilege. We will be happy to escort your child to the carpool area at the corner of Livingston and Clinton Streets, and, of course, we escort all bus children to their buses. If you are late in collecting your child, he/she may wait in the office while we try to contact you. If you are delayed for more than a short while, your child will be taken to Packer Playgroup to await pick-up

Packer Plus

Children who have been registered for Packer Plus courses or Packer Playgroup will be escorted to the Dining Commons before 3:20 p.m. Pick-up for those finished with courses will be in the front hall and for the Playgroup will be in the Packer Plus Room.

	Early Morning Drop-off in the Dining Commons	Garden Play	Beginning of school day	Dismissal
3s	—	—	9:00 a.m.	12:00 p.m. / 3:10 p.m.
4s	8:00 a.m.	8:30 a.m.	9:00 a.m.	3:10 p.m.
K/J1	8:00 a.m.	8:30 a.m.	9:00 a.m.	3:10 p.m.
1st	8:00 a.m.	8:30 a.m.	9:00 a.m. *	3:10 p.m.
2nd	8:00 a.m.	8:30 a.m.	8:45am	3:10 p.m.
3rd	8:00 a.m.	8:10 a.m.	8:30 a.m.	3:10 p.m.
4th	8:00 a.m.	8:10 a.m.	8:30 a.m.	3:10 p.m.

* During the spring months, the beginning of the school year will change to 8:45 a.m. for 1st Graders. The teachers will inform parents when this change is about to be made.

On rare occasions we ask that 1st Graders arrive at school at 8:45 a.m. to take part in a whole school assembly. The teachers will share these dates with parents at the beginning of the year.

Food At Packer

Food Service

Third and Fourth Graders are able to choose a hot lunch or a sandwich and salad from our food service. Parents will be billed \$300 with the regular tuition billing and the children charge against this amount. If your child should use more than \$300, you will receive an additional billing.

Teachers encourage nutritious choices from the menu. The children ride the elevator to bring the lunches back to their classrooms.

Packed Lunches

Please send lunches in lunch boxes or waterproof reusable lunch bags, clearly labeled inside and out. The Faculty feels that nutritious food contributes to a child's positive participation in and enjoyment of school activities and therefore asks that you do not send in candy or soda for lunch. We suggest that children help parents plan their lunch menus and pack the lunches. Children like variety in their packed lunches and so we suggest that you vary sandwiches with healthful nibbles.

We actively discourage food trading and bargaining. Sometimes children going to Packer Plus courses like to save food for an after school snack. This is an excellent idea.

In addition to making healthy food choices, children are taught the importance of making choices that are good for the environment. Parents can support these goals by using the following guidelines for packed lunches. Please use:

- *Reusable water bottles
- *Reusable plastic food containers
- *Cloth napkins
- *Lunchboxes instead of paper bags
- *Reusable utensils
- *Thermoses

Please limit the use of tinfoil and plastic bags.

Snacks

The Preschoolers through the Second Graders are given a daily healthy snack. They usually have fruit juice or milk and bread sticks, pretzels, yogurt, vegetables, cheese, or simple cookies and crackers. At least once a

week, fresh fruit is provided.

School Birthday Celebrations

Your child may wish to celebrate his/her birthday with classmates. A single serving treat such as cupcakes is recommended. Because we want each child to enjoy the same simple ritual established in his or her class, additional party paraphernalia is not necessary. School birthday celebrations should be arranged ahead of time with teachers. If your child's birthday falls on the weekend or during school vacations, a make-up school celebration may be scheduled.

Preschoolers and Lower Schoolers love birthday celebrations, their own as well as their friends. We ask that parents be sensitive to the potential of hurt feelings for those not invited to a party. We ask that you carefully follow the following suggestions:

- Don't leave only a few children in a class off the invitation list; invite all children, a few children or up to half the class.
- Unless the whole class is invited, please don't distribute invitations in school or pick up the birthday group at school.
- Please help your child to understand how many children you can comfortably accommodate at a party and how to be sensitive to those not invited.

Helpful School Procedures

Emergency Numbers and Home Information

Each year, parents are asked to provide us with updated work numbers, emergency contact numbers, and doctors' names and numbers. It is extremely important that we be able to reach someone listed within one-half hour and that someone is available to pick up an ill or injured child within one hour. Please be sure to update this information as necessary with your child's teacher and the Lower School Office (e.g. employment changes, cell phone numbers).

Please inform your child's teachers if you will be away for short or long trips, if a caregiver is changed, or of any special home events. All happy and sad occasions affect your child's school experiences, and if we are kept informed, we can work with you to minimize negative reactions.

New York City Metro Cards

Forms can be obtained from the Lower School Office for a free New York City metro card. Please put the metro card in a safe place as replacements are not easily secured, and it can take several weeks to get a replacement. Report loss to the office.

Appointments and Vacations

We ask that you schedule all appointments for your child before or after school whenever possible

Plan to schedule family vacations that coincide with our school vacations as there is truly no way to make up for lost school days

Absence and Lateness

Please email your child's teacher to report an absence due to illness or call the office. If your child is absent five (5) days or more, it is a legal requirement that the school receives a doctor's note when your child returns. Please see the Division Head if you foresee a conflict with this policy.

Please consider aiming toward an 8:30 a.m. arrival to allow for Garden play for First and Second graders. Please be sure that Third and Fourth Grade students are in class at 8:30 a.m. We ask for your cooperation in this matter.

We feel that it is important that all children learn the value of a prompt start to the school day. In addition, the day starts with homework check in, math messages, morning meetings, calendar routines, and other important grounding and skills' building endeavors. Finally children who arrive late disrupt the smooth beginning of a day.

Labeling of Clothing and Belongings

We encourage you to label all your child's belongings including: coats, jackets, hats, gloves, sneakers, lunch boxes, and lunch bags. A Lost and Found area is located next to the entrance to the Garden. Please check there periodically. Labeled items of clothing and personal belongings stand a very good chance of being returned. Unlabeled items can even get "lost" in the classroom coat closet. Mysterious unidentified hats and gloves often remain in closets and cubbies unloved and unclaimed. Please label everything! Indelible markers are a quick way to accomplish this task.

Appropriate Dress

Faculty and students at Packer dress in an appropriate fashion to reflect the seriousness of our academic goals as well as the need to be comfortable with the many endeavors of the day. Clothing appropriate for a beach day or an outing is not appropriate for a day at school.

Sneakers are required for physical education and outdoor play.

Because we take the children out every day except when the weather is extremely severe, please send your child with appropriate clothing. On snowy days, boots, snow pants, hats and gloves make outdoor play a pleasant experience. Warm coats, hats, and mittens make outdoor play possible in colder weather.

Contacting the Office, Teachers and Classroom

Contact teachers by email to arrange for an appointment. To get an important message to the classroom, please speak to someone in the Lower School office. Send playdate and pick up information to the teachers in the morning. If last minute changes occur, be sure to leave the message with a person, not on voicemail. Call the Lower School office (x237) or the security desk (x281).

Reporting and Conferring

The faculty of the Preschool and Lower School recognizes the importance of working with the families of our students. We are available to discuss your child with you in both formal and informal settings. There is a formal Fall Conference arranged by your child's teacher for Conference Days. During the 2008-09 school year, there will be two days devoted to Preschool and Lower School Fall Conferences. In addition to a conference with the classroom teachers who are both available on those days, you may also arrange a conference with specialist teachers. All conferences should be scheduled for those days. If, because of special circumstances, this should prove impossible, please contact the class teacher to arrange an alternate date.

Two written reports are sent home to Preschool and Lower School parents, the first in February and the second in June. If you wish at any time to speak with the classroom teachers or specialist teachers, please leave a message with the Lower School office or on e-mail, and the teachers will contact you to arrange such a meeting.

Sharing Information

From time to time parents may have questions or concerns or wish to offer feedback about their child's experience at school. We strongly encourage parents to bring up any issues with their child's teacher first. As the professional who knows their child best, the Head Teacher should always be the first 'port of call.'

Establishing Suitable Limits and Expectations

In the Packer Preschool and Lower School, we adhere to a positive approach to behavior. We foster a sense of commitment to the classroom community. Each individual is recognized as an equal to be respected for his/her uniqueness. Young children analyze problems as a group and participate in establishing classroom rules or community norms. When conflict occurs, children are encouraged to verbalize and seek help in order that they might differentiate between aggression and misunderstanding, and jointly find a solution. At this time, concepts such as empathy and logical consequences are introduced.

In the event that a child does have difficulty respecting the physical and emotional rights of others, he or she may be removed temporarily from the group for a time of reflection. If an incident involves a child physically injuring another child, his/her parents will be called and may be asked to pick the child up from school. Similarly, parents will be notified when their child is involved in an incident of bias.

It is stressed that the individual has the ability and responsibility to make active choices. It takes a particular strength to control impulses and act in a socially appropriate manner. We are supportive as the child strives to attain that self-control. We endeavor to implement our conflict resolution program as early as possible in the school life of our students.

Parents and teachers work together to establish suitable limits and expectations. Communication is essential in making a successful transition from home to school.

Placement Policy

Each year careful planning is done to reconfigure the grade for the next year in order to maximize the learning environment in each class. When your child is placed in a new class, consideration is given to every aspect of your child's social and academic needs. This class placement is done by a team including the grade level teachers, both head and assistant, learning specialists, and the Division Head. In consultation with this team, the Director of Admissions adds all new students to these groups. Should a parent need to discuss their child's placement they should contact the Division Head.

Homework in the Lower School

Kindergarten and First Grade children bring to school special treasures and curriculum-related items to share with their classmates and teachers. They also enjoy and benefit from their evening read aloud story. Formal homework, however, begins in the Second Grade. At all grade levels, the children benefit from the responsibility of academic work at home. They expand their academic day, as they prepare for or follow up on classroom work and reinforce skills taught in school. Homework is given on Monday through Thursday but not over the weekend. Third Graders begin to tackle longer-range assignments such as book shares and writing in their journals. The Fourth Graders have a math and language assignment in addition to assignments in curriculum related tasks. They continue to work on long range assignments and expand the amount of time spent on homework.

Parents often ask about their role in the homework process. We feel that the parent should see that the child has a comfortable work place and should see that the work is done at a reasonable time, after a snack and some relaxation, but before it is too late for productive work. They should also see that the child packs the homework in his or her backpack in the evening. Finally, we suggest that parents encourage the child to keep the assignment book in their backpack and post sheets with long range assignments in handy places.

Homework should be done by the child. If your child asks you for specific minor help, please feel free to answer the question. If it is clear from the question that there is a major misunderstanding or lack of underlying concept, please tell your child that you will write a note to the teacher regarding this problem. Teachers correct homework and need to know where mistakes are made so that they can help with development of concepts and skills. Sometimes parents are asked to help children study number facts, multiplication tables, or to take children to special exhibits or programs. Classroom teachers will inform parents of their estimate of the time needed for the homework in their class. Please let teachers know if your child is completing the work in a substantially different time frame.

Testing in the Kindergarten and the Lower School

All Kindergarten and Junior First students participate in a one-on-one screening to ascertain their pre-reading/reading skills. The Learning Specialist teacher and another teacher administer this screening, which takes about 30 minutes during April and May.

The CTP-4 is given to all students in Second through Fourth Grade in the spring of the year. The children call this "The Bubble Test." Though we administer these tests for a variety of reasons, they are not used for class placement or for grading purposes. Parents should use the results of these tests to observe learning over a period of years. A single test is seldom a good indication of a child's achievement. Some children take tests easily while others experience anxiety, which makes test-taking more difficult for them and less indicative of their achievement. What is important is day-to-day progress and continued effort. Progress during a given year is more important than the results of one day of testing.

The results of the Stanford tests usually arrive in June, and your child's teacher will be happy to discuss them with you at the fall conference. Fourth Grade parents are sent the scores of the ERB test in the late spring with information regarding interpretations. Parents may also wish to discuss the results with the Fourth Grade teachers.

We use the results of the tests to help create the best classroom program for your children and to ensure that our curriculum develops appropriate concepts and skills. The children benefit from the experience of taking standardized tests in a familiar friendly setting.

Health Policies and the School Nurse's Role

The school nurse will communicate with parents about significant illnesses and injuries that happen during school hours and will contact parents to make arrangements for children to go home when they become ill during the school day. She also works with parents of children who have long-term or temporary medical problems. She will make sure that your child's teachers receive background and updated health information.

Medications

Please contact the School Nurse if your child's physician orders medication administered during the school day. Please give all medicine and information to the School Nurse, who will then arrange with the teacher for administration. Teachers are required to refer medication to the school nurse.

Medications must be provided in the container distributed by the pharmacist. The prescription label contains required information for administration: child's name; physician's name; date of prescription; medication's name; dosage. The school nurse will also want to know the reason the physician ordered the medication. If your child needs medication during a class trip, please contact the school nurse in advance of the field trip day.

Illnesses and Accidents

Our experience suggests that most children accurately diagnose their inability to attend school because of poor health. We request that if your child tells you that he or she doesn't feel well or if you note signs of illness (e.g. fever, general malaise, headache, congestion), please make arrangements for the child to stay home.

On occasion, a student may require transfer to an emergency facility before parents can be alerted to an injury or illness. It is imperative that school personnel be able to contact a parent or guardian quickly, especially for communication about those occasions of serious illnesses or accidents.

Please make sure that contact telephones (i.e. work, home, or cell phones) are submitted to the Lower School Office. Please update numbers when there are changes such as a move or a job change. Please make sure that you provide an accurate telephone number for a practical backup person should you be unavailable. Please inform school personnel, including the school nurse, if you will be away and out of telephone contact and give directions regarding backup plans.

Parents, guardians or backup persons should be able to be reached within 30 minutes. All students should be picked up within 1 hour.

The role of the school nurse never replaces the role of your child's physician. Parents are expected to consult their physicians for advice and follow-up care.

Please contact the School Nurse when your child's physician has diagnosed a communicable health problem such as chicken pox or strep throat. The school nurse must be informed of any illness and injury that will limit the student's activity e.g. sprains, fractures, medical illness. **It is required that a physician's note with diagnosis, treatment and activity level be submitted before the student's return to physical activities at school.**

Please report all accidents occurring on the school premises to the School Nurse.

Head Lice (Pediculosis)

The school nurse maintains Packer's program of head-lice prevention. Pediculosis is a common occurrence in both independent and public schools and is highly communicable among youngsters. The school nurse evaluates all Preschool and Lower School children and advises and works with parents if their children are found to have head lice.

Due to the communicability of head lice, a student found to have head lice must be picked up immediately and treated before returning to school. The student's physician should be contacted for advice. The school nurse will also explain the steps to be taken, both in treating the student and in ridding the home environment of possible head lice. The student may return to school after he or she has been examined by the nurse and is found to be totally nit-free.

Role of the Lower School Learning Specialists

There are two Learning Specialists working with Preschool and Lower School students. Both specialists provide extra support for students, enabling them to progress comfortably in those academic areas where this additional support is needed. They work in the areas of the language arts and math to provide specialized and concentrated attention. The classroom teachers work with the Learning Specialists to identify students who will profit from the program. Generally, children participate as part of a small group formed to address similar needs. Where possible, the work is provided during the time of the day when the homeroom is working in the same subject area. Parents are always notified when we feel their children will benefit from the special attention of the specialists.

The program is carefully coordinated with the classroom program to ensure that the needs of and expectations for the child are constantly being updated and that there is regular reinforcement of the skills addressed. The Learning Specialists also work closely with the School Psychologist, the Division Head and if applicable, the people who provide outside support for the student. This assures continuity and maximum assistance for the children. Comments are written by the Learning Specialists twice a year as part of the Progress Reports and the specialists are available to speak with parents at regular conference times and on an as-needed basis.

The Role of the School Psychologist

The School Psychologist assists faculty and parents in providing a healthy environment for children in the Preschool and the Lower School. Through discussion and pupil assessment, she helps teachers understand learning styles, and the emotional, academic, and social needs of their students. She conducts workshops for teachers and parents about childhood growth and development and works with classroom groups on issues.

The psychologist also advises parents individually and in groups about their role as parents. She is a member of the group which refers students for outside evaluation or therapeutic services. She conducts classroom discussion groups with children about age appropriate issues such as how we make friends. She coordinates and advises the Fourth Grade team in their Air Time program. This endeavor allows Fourth Graders to meet with faculty and the School Psychologist in small groups to discuss issues of importance to this age group, such as friendship, popularity, and teasing. In addition she conducts social skills groups for Second through Fourth Grade students.

Garden Use

In the morning, Preschool through Second Grade children go to the Garden at 8:30 a.m. with their assistant teachers. Those children dropped off after 8:30 a.m. should go to the Garden on nice days or the classroom in inclement weather. Third and Fourth Grade students may go to the garden from 8:10 to 8:30 a.m. during the fall months and are joined by Second Grade students after spring break.

Parents and caregivers going to and from the Garden House area should use the side walkway since ball games take place in the Garden center.

After school, our Garden is a center of activity for Packer Play Group and the Middle School/After School Program. Preschool and Lower School parents or caregivers may use the Garden, but must leave by 4:00 P.M.

Parents and caregivers who remain in the Garden after dismissal must be entirely responsible for their own children.

Because the entire Packer Community uses the Garden, we have established the following rules for the children to ensure the safety of everyone.

- No glass is permitted in the Garden.
- Play where you can see your teachers/parents/ caregivers, and tell your teachers/parents/ caregivers if you must leave the Garden.
- Garden equipment brought from home should be safe, nerf type balls or jump ropes (used for jumping games, only). Please, no Frisbees, skateboards, etc.
- Chalk may be used only for marking hopscotch type games or on the ground.

- The only balls thrown in the Garden are the soft ones provided by your teacher.
- On snowy days, building of all types is the order of the day. Please, no snow balls, even to throw at buildings or trees.
- Preschool and Lower School children generally do not eat in the Garden, but on those special occasions when you have a picnic, carefully clean up your lunch area.
- Either a parent or caregiver must always actively supervise every child while in the Garden during non-school hours.
- Everyone who uses the Garden is respectful of the trees and plantings. If a ball goes into a planted area, only one person should go to retrieve it.
- Please no sticks, no play fighting, no wild chasing and trapping games, and no tackle football.
- Middle and Upper Schoolers have priority for the basketball court at all times. The hoop by the Garden House may be used Lower Schoolers. During the school day the Imagination Station is reserved for Preschoolers and Lower Schoolers except for Middle School morning break time.
- Fire escapes, sheds, fencing, trees and the planted areas are off limits.
- Observe the rules posted on the Imagination Station:
- Please enter with empty hands and full imaginations.
- Trees are part of the station and need your care and respect.
- Enjoy the two slides only, sitting as you go down. Count to five before you follow your friends. Clear the bottom after you land.
- The ladder is for up traffic only.
- The Blue ropes are up only.
- Railings are to guide and protect you on your journey. Hands, never bodies or feet, belong on them.
- The tire tunnel is for down traffic only.
- Sand stays in the sand box.
- Speedy walking will carry you through.
- On wet days the station will be closed for safety's sake.

General Information

Trips and Activity Fee

Trips are an important part of our school program, enriching the curriculum, and providing common experiences for writing and imaginative play. All Preschool and Lower School families are billed for an activity fee. This fee reflects the special nature of each grade's program. The only exception to this activity fee is the Threes/Fours class since appropriate trips at this level are local walks in the neighborhood. Trips for the younger grades, Preschool through Second Grade, reflect bus fees and usually an admission fee into the museum or theater. The cost of the May Day Festival tee shirts or other special props is also part of this, as are curriculum related special projects such as tasting parties to celebrate the culmination and study of a particular culture. For example, one class may sample breads from an Indian restaurant while others have special luncheons with Japanese and African foods.

Trips vary from year to year depending on the availability of a resource, the interests of the students, and variations in the curriculum. The activity fees are based on projections from past years and the number of special events that occur at each grade level and therefore may vary from grade to grade. Fees for Third and Fourth grades take into account the fact that some trips are via public transportation and that the Fourth Grade has a four day residential trip.

Every trip, except neighborhood walks, requires a special permission note, which must be signed and returned before the trip day. Permission for all neighborhood walks is obtained at the beginning of the year along with the dismissal instructions.

Parents who accompany classes on trips both contribute their valuable help, and also experience the excitement of their children as they explore the resources of our city. In order to make trips go smoothly we would like to suggest the following trip procedures for our wonderful chaperones:

- Please discuss with the teachers the plans for the trip and your role and responsibilities.
- Ask the teachers if there will be lunch, snacks or other foods served. Please adhere to the guidelines for food

on the trip.

- Please find out if children will be allowed to make purchases on the trip and support the teachers' policies on this matter.

Remember, you are on the trip to work with the entire class. Though it may be difficult for your child to share you with others, they will be proud of your role as a teacher for the day.

Gift Policy

The giving of gifts at Winter Holiday time and at the end of the year is entirely optional. If class collections are made, please keep the requested amounts under \$15.00 per class and please keep in mind that parents may wish to choose other options. Small gifts often satisfy the child's desire to honor their teachers. If you have any questions, please call your class Parent Association representative.

The Parent Association endorses this policy in the belief that it supports the school's commitment to socio-economic diversity.

Technology Use in Packer's Lower School

Lower School students:

- 1) Use computers respectfully and carefully and follow the rules made by their teachers. They ask if they are not sure of a procedure
- 2) Use only their own password and account on the file server and delete files when they and their teachers agree that they're no longer needed.
- 3) Use only the software that is supplied by Packer.
- 4) Use only the web sites that are approved by their teachers.
- 5) Take turns and share the use of computers as agreed upon by their teachers.
- 6) Use the printers carefully and sparingly.

Parent Association

All parents of children at Packer are members of the Parent Association. The Parent Association works to support the educational efforts of the school and organizes many events throughout the year.

To find out more information or to get involved, parents should consult the website (www.packer.edu/pa).

Communication

We encourage parents to visit their child's classroom to view displays and work but there are many other means of accessing information.

Every class has a website featuring photographs and information about events in the class. Your child's class website can be accessed through the Grade Level Sites link on the Pre and Lower School section of the Packer website (www.packer.edu/lower).

Another feature of this site is 'This Month in the Pre and Lower School' - a collection of images showcasing the range of activities occurring throughout the entire Preschool and Lower School.

The *Pelican Press* is the Lower School's newsletter featuring articles on curriculum initiatives and developments, book reviews, profiles of faculty, important dates and other relevant articles and news. The *Pelican Press* is produced three times a year and can be found on the Pre and Lower School section of the website.

Library

The Hart Library serves the Preschool through Fourth Grade students, parents, and faculty. The hours are 8:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. Preschool and Lower School students visit the library on a regular basis. Parents and caregivers are welcome to borrow additional materials. The library collection is online and can be accessed through the Library site on the Packer website (www.packer.edu-click on libraries). The Library website is a resource that the Packer Community is strongly encouraged to use.

Books circulate for two weeks. In most cases they may be renewed. There are no overdue charges for Lower School Library books, but by returning materials in a timely manner, a larger selection is available for the whole community. If a student has more than two overdue books, he/she will not be permitted to borrow

additional books. Replacement of lost materials is requested. Student, parent, and faculty requests are welcomed and will be honored whenever possible.

Assemblies

Assemblies are occasions for the children to meet together on a regular basis in order to share common goals and values, feel part of a community and get to know each other better. The First through Fourth Graders meet together approximately once a month in the Pratt Theater while smaller gatherings of First and Second Graders and Third and Fourth Graders meet together twice a month in the Lower School Music Room.

Preschool assemblies are also held in the Music Room throughout the year

Assemblies are held on Thursday mornings. If your child is late and the class is already in assembly you should check with the Lower School office where the assembly is being held and take your child directly there.

Special Events, Parent Visits and Participation

Throughout the year there are special class and grade events when parents, family, and special friends are invited to celebrate with the children and their class. In the past, parents have come to the Second Grade's neighborhood breakfast, The Kindergarten's Video Breakfast and writing project, The Junior First's Publishing Breakfast, and the First Grade's Family Breakfast. Third Graders invite their families to their Lenape Village. The Fourth Grade's International Heritage Fair is an event that attracts the entire student body and all the faculty to the second floor gym to see displays of student mapping, written work and projects, and to visit display areas curated by the Fourth Graders. Food from many areas of the world is available.

The Preschool and Lower School and their families gather for two very special traditions, the May Day Festival in the Garden and the Kindergarten and the Lower School gathers, in December, to celebrate the holidays at The Winter Sing. The Threes/Fours and the Fours/Fives have special Sings in fall and spring. After these special events, family and guests return to the classrooms for a party.

Many parents have special areas of interest and/or expertise that support the curriculum through "Guest Teaching." In the past, authors have spoken about their writing techniques, collectors have shown their treasures, bankers have conducted currency exchanges, and editors have talked about the necessity for and use of editing procedures. We welcome parents to our classrooms to share with the children and faculty and encourage you to discuss such visits with your child's teachers.

Packer Plus

(John Lombardo, Coordinator)

In response to requests from working parents for an extended day program, Packer Plus was created to provide a rich array of after school offerings for Lower School students.

Over 200 students enroll in the combined offerings of playgroup and courses. Packer Plus is not just child care, but a structured and stimulating extension of the school day. Supportive, interested adults respond to each child.

Packer Plus has two distinct components: Playgroup and enrichment courses. The two can be combined so a child can be challenged by a course and enjoy the sociability of the Playgroup until 6:00 p.m.

Most of all, the Playgroup provides caring adult attention to each child. Registration for Playgroup takes place only once at the beginning of the school year. Registration forms are mailed in early August to all Preschool and Lower School families. Playgroup fees are based on an hourly rate. Space is limited with priority given to children of parents who register for five days per week. Other children are accommodated on a first come basis as space permits; additional children are wait-listed.

Packer Plus Courses

A variety of courses meet once a week from 3:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. for eight weeks. Sports, clay work, drama, cooking, computer, origami, chess and architecture are among the course offerings. Children will be taken to the lunchroom for supervised wait time until courses begin.

Sports courses include activities designed for two age groups. The younger children, from Pre-kindergarten to First Grade, focus on basic skills, conditioning and having fun. The older children, Second through Fourth Grades, play seasonal sports including soccer, and other yard games.

A Homework Help room is available Monday through Thursday from 3.30 p.m. to 4.30 p.m. for Second through Fourth Graders. A teacher is available to answer basic questions and to offer some guidance in a quiet, structured environment.

Registration and tuition registration for Packer Plus Courses and Playgroup takes place before school begins. A mailing to all Lower School families is made one month prior to each trimester with registration information for new course sign-up.