

virginiaacademy



Elementary School Program Guide
2026-27

This Program Guide provides an overview of Virginia Academy's Lower School program, serving students in Kindergarten through 5th Grade. For detailed information regarding school policies and procedures, please refer to the Parent/Student Handbook. If you have questions or would like additional information about any aspect of the Lower School program, please contact the Lower School Principal.

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Accreditation

Virginia Academy holds multiple accreditations. Our national accreditation through ACSI: Association of Christian Schools International).

ACSI & Cognia

We are accredited through the Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI). Accreditation is primarily focused on school improvement. Throughout the process, the school demonstrates the effectiveness with which it meets established educational standards of quality, establishes goals for improvement, and creates a plan to fulfill those goals. In Christian schools, these standards genuinely align with the school's mission and philosophy. Accreditation and school improvement help schools continuously challenge themselves and manage growth in an orderly, systematic way. This brings a vigorous dynamic into the school by engaging every constituent in a process of organizational review and goal setting. Being involved in an ongoing cycle of accreditation fosters a growth mindset and helps a school examine how it is remaining true to its own foundational statements. This provides accountability and validation to its community. ACSI uses the Flourishing Schools Model and the Inspire Standards:

- Purpose Domain
- Relationship Domain
- Teaching and Learning Domain
- Expertise Domain
- Resources Domain
- Well-Being Domain

To learn more about this accrediting body, please visit the website: <https://www.acsi.org/>

We are also accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges & Schools (Cognia). The mission of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools is the improvement of education in the South through accreditation. School leaders engaged in Cognia Accreditation will:

- Take stock of themselves in relation to a set of research based quality standards
- Establish a vision, assess their current reality, implement and improvement plan, monitor progress and evaluate results
- Enhance the school's best thinking with the insights and perspectives of an external review team

Mission and Vision

Mission

Virginia Academy is a college preparatory Christian school serving families with children age 2 through 12th grade. Virginia Academy exists to prepare students for their best life through...

Faith

A confidence in God

Scholarship

A passion for knowledge

Purpose

A life with a clear mission

Vision

We see Virginia Academy graduates making a positive impact in every arena of life!

Academic Overview

Virginia Academy Lower School is a diverse and supportive learning community where students are developing a life-long love of learning and being prepared for their best futures. Smaller class sizes, favorable ratios, and teachers focused on individual student success help everyone receive the attention and support needed to excel at their highest level.

Christian character development and mentoring help students to become the best versions of themselves - poised not only for success in higher education but also in life. Music, performing arts, STEM, and art enrichment help to provide for a well-rounded education and a life-long love of learning. Extended hours provide parents with the flexibility of schedule & peace of mind to know their child is in safe care.

We use a blended approach to develop our lower school curriculum. Listed more specifically below, these curriculums are used as tools and resources for our teachers. The lower school teachers at Virginia Academy seek to provide a structured environment where children can learn more about God's world from a Biblical perspective. Students learn about God's wonderful world and how they can use their understanding to bless Him and others. The following provides the core of our lower school academic programming.

Lower School Subjects

BIBLE - Deep Roots (K - 5th)

Deep Roots Curriculum aims to further students' biblical understanding by using practical activities and lessons to teach students how to apply their faith to everyday living and help develop their core values. They will learn a Biblical Worldview by viewing life through a Biblical perspective. Many online resources allow parents to learn and grow alongside each student! There are ready and available online tools, study guides, and videos to facilitate learning at home.

LANGUAGE ARTS - Phonics, Reading, and Grammar - BJU (K - 5th)

BJU Language Arts K–5 provides a comprehensive, Christian approach to developing strong foundational literacy skills in reading, writing, grammar, spelling, handwriting, listening, and communication. Through a carefully sequenced progression of skills, students develop the ability to read with accuracy and understanding, communicate ideas clearly, and use the conventions of the English language effectively. In the primary grades, students build essential literacy foundations through phonics, word recognition, vocabulary development, reading fluency, comprehension, spelling, handwriting, and sentence construction. As students progress through the elementary grades, instruction

increasingly emphasizes reading comprehension, literary response, grammar and mechanics, vocabulary, research and study skills, and the writing process. Students engage with a variety of genres and learn to communicate through narrative, informational, opinion, and expository writing.

The curriculum emphasizes the application of language skills rather than isolated skill memorization. Students regularly analyze sentences, practice grammar and mechanics, proofread their work, develop and revise written compositions, and communicate through both oral and written language. Reading instruction exposes students to a variety of genres and develops comprehension, vocabulary, critical thinking, and appreciation for literature.

MATHEMATICS - BJU (K-5)

BJU Mathematics K–5 provides a comprehensive, Christian approach to developing strong mathematical understanding, computational fluency, logical reasoning, and problem-solving skills. Through a carefully sequenced progression of concepts, students move from hands-on, concrete experiences to pictorial representations and abstract mathematical thinking. The curriculum emphasizes not only how to solve mathematical problems, but also why mathematical procedures work and how mathematics can be applied to everyday life.

In the primary grades, students develop foundational number sense through counting, place value, operations, measurement, geometry, patterns, data, and early algebraic thinking. As students progress through the elementary grades, instruction expands to include multi-digit computation, multiplication and division, fractions, decimals, geometry, measurement, probability, statistics, and increasingly complex problem-solving. Regular review and practice build computational fluency while allowing students to retain and apply previously learned skills.

Problem solving is a central component of the program. Students encounter mathematical concepts through real-world situations and learn to analyze problems, identify relevant information, select appropriate strategies, communicate their reasoning, and evaluate solutions. Students also participate in STEM and engineering experiences that encourage them to apply mathematics through design, coding, investigation, and authentic problem-solving tasks.

SCIENCE - BJU (K-5)

BJU Science K–5 provides a comprehensive, Christian approach to developing scientific knowledge, inquiry skills, critical thinking, and an understanding of the natural world. Through hands-on investigations, observation, experimentation, scientific models, and real-world applications, students develop the skills necessary to explore

scientific questions, analyze evidence, communicate findings, and apply scientific understanding to everyday life.

In the primary grades, students are introduced to foundational scientific concepts through exploration of living things, plants, animals, the human body, matter, energy, weather, seasons, the earth, and the environment. As students progress through the elementary grades, instruction expands across the major disciplines of life science, physical science, and earth science. Students increasingly investigate scientific relationships, interpret data, use models, conduct experiments, and apply scientific principles to real-world situations.

Scientific inquiry is an essential component of the program. Students learn to observe, classify, measure, predict, infer, communicate, and follow the scientific method. They interact with scientific tools and models and participate in hands-on activities that allow them to test ideas and investigate phenomena. Collaborative STEM and engineering experiences challenge students to identify problems, design solutions, test their ideas, and refine their solutions based on evidence.

Supplemental: Vestals - According to the Virginia Standards of Learning, 4th Grade level BJU does not fully align cooperatively with what is taught. To supplement and align the curriculum, we use Vestals to bridge the gap.

HISTORY/GEOGRAPHY - BJU (K-5)

BJU History K–5 provides a comprehensive, Christian approach to developing students' understanding of history, geography, government, economics, culture, and the people and events that have shaped the world. Through a chronological and increasingly analytical study of history, students develop the knowledge and skills necessary to understand the past, recognize connections between historical events, evaluate evidence, and apply historical thinking to the world around them.

In the primary grades, students are introduced to foundational concepts of history and social studies through the study of families, communities, citizenship, American symbols, important historical figures, and significant events. Students develop an understanding of time, sequence, location, and the ways people and communities interact with one another and their environment. Geography is incorporated throughout instruction to help students understand places, regions, maps, and the relationship between people and their physical surroundings.

As students progress through the elementary grades, instruction expands into a broader chronological study of American and world history. Students encounter major civilizations, explorers, indigenous peoples, the founding and development of the United

States, important conflicts and movements, influential leaders, and significant developments in government, economics, technology, and culture. Students increasingly examine historical cause and effect, change and continuity, multiple perspectives, and the connections between events and ideas.

Historical inquiry is an important component of the program. Students learn to examine maps, timelines, photographs, documents, artifacts, biographies, and other historical sources to develop a deeper understanding of the past. They practice identifying important information, organizing events chronologically, comparing perspectives, drawing conclusions from evidence, and communicating historical understanding through discussion and written work.

Supplemental: Vestals - According to the Virginia Standards of Learning, 3rd Grade level BJU and 5th Grade level BJU do not fully align cooperatively with what is taught. To supplement and align the curriculum, we use Vestals to bridge the gap.

Academic Enrichment

Virginia Academy offers a variety of enrichment courses designed to complement the core curriculum and provide students with a well-rounded education. Each week, students receive specialized instruction from teachers in Spanish, Visual Arts, Music and Performing Arts, Computer and Technology Education, and Physical Education. These enrichment opportunities help students develop their academic, creative, physical, and practical skills while encouraging them to explore and cultivate their God-given talents and interests.

VISUAL ARTS

The Lower School Art program is designed to develop students' artistic skills and creative confidence through hands-on visual art experiences. Students learn to apply the elements and principles of design, explore basic color theory, study and critique notable works of art, and engage in activities that encourage creative expression and problem-solving.

Throughout the school year, students explore a variety of artistic techniques, materials, and mediums, including watercolor, tempera, and acrylic painting; clay modeling; crayons; markers; colored pencils; oil pastels; and mixed-media creations. Through these experiences, students develop foundational art skills while learning to appreciate, create, and thoughtfully respond to visual art.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Virginia Academy's Health and Physical Education program is designed to cultivate a desire in students to honor the Lord by being good stewards of their physical bodies through lifelong fitness, healthy habits, and overall well-being. Instruction is aligned with the Virginia Standards of Learning for Physical Education and provides students with opportunities to develop physical, cognitive, and psychosocial skills.

Students learn the rules, strategies, and techniques associated with a variety of sports, games, and functional movements while developing fundamental motor skills, coordination, teamwork, and sportsmanship. Students also explore essential fitness concepts and gain an understanding of how proper nutrition, exercise, and healthy lifestyle choices affect the body's physiological well-being. Through these experiences, students are equipped with the knowledge, skills, and habits necessary to pursue a healthy and active lifestyle both now and throughout their lives.

MUSIC & PERFORMING ARTS (K5 -1st)

The goal of Virginia Academy's music program is to provide students with meaningful, engaging experiences that develop musical understanding through the whole body. In the younger grades, one of the primary curricula used is Feierabend's *First Steps in Music*, which is designed to help children become increasingly tuneful, beatful, and artful.

Students experience music through a variety of activities, including movement, singing, instrument playing, storytelling, listening, and creative expression. Along the way, students develop foundational music concepts and vocabulary while building beginning vocal and instrumental skills.

Students also have opportunities to apply and showcase their developing musical abilities through special performances and events, including the Christmas Program and Kindergarten Graduation. These experiences encourage confidence, creativity, collaboration, and a lifelong appreciation for music.

MUSIC & PERFORMING ARTS (2nd - Sem. 1 4th Grade)

This music course builds upon students' foundational musical knowledge by introducing the principles of basic music theory and music literacy. Students develop an understanding of note values, rhythm, and the treble clef while learning to read and interpret basic musical notation.

Students then apply these skills through hands-on instrumental experiences with a variety of instruments, including bucket drums, Boomwhackers, recorders, and ukuleles. Through these experiences, students develop rhythm, coordination, ensemble skills, and confidence as young musicians. Each grade level has at least one performance opportunity during the school year, allowing students to apply their skills, gain experience performing as instrumentalists, and grow in confidence on stage.

MUSIC & PERFORMING ARTS (Sem. 2 4th - 5th Grade)

This music program introduces students to the world of theater while building a foundation for future performance experiences. At the end of fourth grade, students are introduced to the fundamentals of three major types of theater and explore essential theater concepts, including terminology, audience etiquette, vocal classifications, and the importance of backstage roles and responsibilities. Students also view and discuss a variety of performance examples to develop an appreciation for the different forms of theatrical expression.

These experiences help prepare students for the fifth-grade musical while encouraging an interest in the Upper School performing arts program. In fifth grade, students build upon this foundation through more advanced vocal techniques and increased performance opportunities. Students apply their developing skills through performances such as Veterans Day Chapel, the fifth-grade musical, and fifth-grade promotion, gaining confidence and experience as young performers.

SPANISH

Virginia Academy's Spanish program introduces students to conversational Spanish through an interactive, engaging approach that develops foundational language skills while fostering an appreciation for the cultures and traditions of Spanish-speaking countries. Students are encouraged to use Spanish throughout the school day, creating opportunities to practice conversational skills beyond the classroom and incorporate the language into everyday interactions.

Students explore Spanish-speaking cultures through stories, music, poetry, art, and other creative experiences. Lessons may include collaborative activities, cultural exploration, artistic expression, and musical experiences that make language learning engaging and meaningful. Through these experiences, students develop confidence in using Spanish while gaining a broader understanding and appreciation of the diverse cultures of the Spanish-speaking world.

COMPUTER & TECHNOLOGY

Virginia Academy's Computer and Technology Education program focuses on digital learning experiences that use technology to enhance and strengthen students' academic development. Students learn to use technology as a tool for creativity, communication, problem-solving, research, and productivity while developing the skills necessary to become responsible and effective digital citizens.

Throughout the program, students engage in hands-on learning experiences that may include coding, keyboarding, presentation design, digital art, photo editing, spreadsheets, word processing, and collaborative digital tools. Students will work with programs and platforms such as Microsoft Word, Excel, and PowerPoint, as well as Google Docs, Google Slides, and other Google Workspace applications. Through these experiences, students build practical technology skills that support their academic success and prepare them to navigate an increasingly digital world with confidence, creativity, and responsibility.

CHAPEL

Virginia Academy provides a weekly Chapel experience designed to support students' spiritual growth and Christian character development. Lower School Chapel is held weekly for all students in Kindergarten through fifth grade and provides a dedicated time for students to worship, learn from God's Word, and grow in their faith.

Chapel begins with engaging praise and worship, followed by a Bible lesson led by members of the Virginia Academy staff. Lessons are typically presented in age-appropriate series that help students understand and apply biblical truths to their everyday lives. Throughout the year, Chapel also includes interactive activities such as games, awards, and grade-level performances that encourage student participation and community.

The goal of Lower School Chapel is to cultivate a genuine love for the Lord, encourage students to grow in their relationship with Christ, and help them develop Christlike character that extends beyond the classroom and into their daily lives.

Additional Academic Services

ACADEMIC SUPPORT CENTER (ASC)

Virginia Academy recognizes that each student is uniquely created and may have individual academic strengths, needs, and learning differences. The school is committed to supporting students by providing appropriate academic accommodations and individualized support whenever possible.

On a case-by-case basis, Virginia Academy may provide academic support for students with documented learning differences through accommodations and support strategies outlined in an Individualized Education Program (IEP) or private educational evaluation. Each student's documentation will be carefully reviewed to identify academic needs and determine the types of accommodations and support Virginia Academy is able to provide.

When appropriate, the school may develop a Virginia Academy Academic Support Plan outlining the specific accommodations, strategies, and resources available to help the student access the curriculum and experience academic success.

Report Card

At the end of each grading quarter, parents and students will receive a comprehensive report card evaluating performance in all academic areas and conduct.

BASIC GRADING SCALES

Kindergarten, 1st Grade & Enrichment Courses:

Letter	Grade
O+	96 - 100
O	90 - 95
O -	87 - 89
S +	84 - 86
S	80 - 83
S -	75 - 79
NI	74 and Below

1st - 5th Grade Core Subjects:

Letter	Grade
A+	97-100
A	94 - 96
A -	90 - 93
B	87 - 89
B	84 - 86
B	80 - 83
C +	77 - 79
C	74 - 76
C -	70 - 73
D +	67 - 69
D	64 - 66
D -	60 - 63
F	59 and Below

PARENT/TEACHER CONFERENCES

Lower School teachers are available for parent-teacher conferences by appointment throughout the school year. In addition, Virginia Academy provides extended conference hours during the week following the release of first-quarter report cards, with teachers available for scheduled conferences until 5:00 p.m.

Teachers may also request a conference with parents when additional support or collaboration is needed for a student. These opportunities may occur at any point during the school year and are intended to promote open communication and shared support for student success.

Virginia Academy believes that strong partnerships between families and teachers are essential to a student's academic, social, and spiritual growth. Parents are encouraged to contact their child's teacher whenever questions or concerns arise. We look forward to partnering with you throughout your child's educational journey!

Benchmark Testing

IXL Level UP (K-4) & MAP (5th)

At Virginia Academy, we use IXL Level Up Benchmark assessments to help us better understand what your child is ready to learn next. Rather than simply measuring what a student can or cannot do, Level Up looks at a student's overall readiness and helps teachers identify the skills and content that will provide the right level of challenge. We capture these scores three points throughout the year.

Our goal is not to put students into a box or assign them a label. Our goal is to meet each student where they are and help them take their next step forward.

GRADE 5: While IXL is a valuable tool for skill practice, reinforcement, and intervention, we believe MAP Growth provides a meaningful measure of student achievement and growth over time. MAP Growth offers secure, adaptive benchmark assessments with nationally normed data, allowing us to better understand each student's progress, readiness, and instructional needs. By using MAP Growth as our primary benchmark assessment and IXL as a supplemental practice resource, we can reduce unnecessary testing while providing teachers with dependable data to guide instruction and support individual student growth. Most importantly, this approach helps us focus on where each student is in 5th grade, how they are growing, and what they need next during their 6th grade year.

Extracurricular Programming

FIELD TRIPS

In addition to our enriching curriculum and engaging classes, Virginia Academy students benefit from unique “out-of-the-classroom” learning opportunities. Throughout the school year, students participate in approximately 3–4 field trips and guest presentations designed to extend classroom learning and provide meaningful, hands-on experiences. These opportunities complement our well-rounded curriculum and encourage students to connect what they learn in the classroom to the world around them.

STUDENT LIFE

Leadership & Service Opportunities

At Virginia Academy, we desire to prepare students not only for academic success, but also for a life of purpose, leadership, and service. In addition to academic rigor, chapel services, and meaningful learning experiences outside the classroom, our upper elementary students have opportunities to develop leadership skills through Safety Patrol, Student Council Association (SCA), and the National Elementary Honor Society (NEHS). These experiences encourage students to serve others, take responsibility, and grow as confident leaders who are prepared to make a positive impact in their communities and the world around them.

Student Council Association (SCA)

Students participate in an annual election to select SCA officers and class representatives. SCA leaders meet with the Lower School Principal to share student perspectives and discuss topics such as student life, service opportunities, and school activities. SCA leadership is composed of elected fifth-grade students who have demonstrated a commitment to leadership, responsibility, and service.

National Elementary Honor Society (NEHS)

Eligible fourth- and fifth-grade students may apply for membership in the National Elementary Honor Society. A faculty committee reviews applications, and new members are formally inducted during an annual ceremony each fall. NEHS members are challenged to lead by example and uphold the organization’s four pillars: leadership, scholarship, service, and responsibility. Students must maintain a minimum 3.5 GPA and demonstrate a strong conduct record to be eligible to apply.

Student Behavior and Discipline

Positive Behavior Intervention and Support

Positive Behavior & School Culture

Virginia Academy is committed to creating a positive, supportive school climate through a research-based approach to discipline called Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS). PBIS focuses on proactively teaching students appropriate behaviors, providing the support they need to be successful, and reinforcing positive choices. By establishing clear and consistent expectations across all school settings, PBIS helps reduce challenging behaviors while promoting academic achievement, social competence, and a strong sense of belonging. At Virginia Academy, our TEAM ORANGE values are intentionally taught, modeled, reinforced, and celebrated by both students and staff.

Our Lower School students are encouraged to live out these values each day as they contribute to the mission and vision of Virginia Academy:

- **T — Time with God:** We begin with our relationship with God, recognizing that we rely on the Holy Spirit's power to guide our choices, attitudes, and actions.
- **E — Empowering Others:** We encourage students to build others up, speak positively, and demonstrate Christ-like character in the way they treat those around them.
- **A — Accountability:** We teach students to take responsibility for their choices, character, and behavior in every area of life.
- **M — Mission First:** We believe every student has been created with a unique purpose. Students are encouraged to pursue their God-given mission and strive to become the person God created them to be.

Through TEAM ORANGE, students are given a consistent framework for making positive choices, developing character, and learning what it means to live with purpose and responsibility.

Extended Care Programs

BEFORE & AFTER CARE

Morning Care

Morning Care is provided at no cost to Upper School students, while a monthly fee applies for Lower School students. Care begins at 7:00 a.m. and provides students with

a welcoming start to their school day. Students may spend time with their peers, complete homework or other schoolwork, or participate in supervised group activities. Breakfast is provided for students enrolled in Morning Care.

Aftercare

Virginia Academy's Aftercare program provides a safe, engaging, and nurturing environment where students can experience God's love through meaningful relationships and intentional interactions. Our goal is to create a space where students can grow academically, socially, and spiritually through targeted programming and enriching activities.

Aftercare is available daily from 3:30–6:30 p.m. and includes a snack, dedicated homework time, and a variety of age-appropriate activities. Aftercare is provided at no cost to Upper School students, while a monthly fee applies for Lower School students.

AFTER SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

Virginia Academy teachers bring their talents and expertise beyond the school day by leading a variety of specialized after-school classes throughout the year. Offerings may include art, STEM, cooking, soccer, basketball, and many other exciting enrichment opportunities.

Each class runs for six weeks and requires an additional fee. Enrollment is available on a first-come, first-served basis, and space is limited. After-School Specials are open to all Lower School students, regardless of whether they are enrolled in Aftercare, providing every student with an opportunity to explore new interests, develop skills, and discover new passions.

WINTER, SPRING & SUMMER CAMP

Virginia Academy's camp program provides a safe, engaging, and nurturing environment where students can experience God's love through meaningful relationships, intentional interactions, and Christ-centered programming. Our camps are designed to enrich students academically, socially, and spiritually while providing opportunities to learn, grow, explore, and have fun in a supportive community.

Our Goal: To share the value of a Christ-centered community with families throughout Northern Virginia while showcasing the exceptional staff, students, and programs that make Virginia Academy a special place to learn and grow.