



Elementary Curriculum



The Banff School provides a challenging, exciting curriculum in a nurturing atmosphere for students in grades Kindergarten through 5th grade. Students enrolled in grades K–5 are taught by one instructor in a self-contained classroom. Specialists teach music, physical education and Spanish.

The Elementary School curriculum is enriched by a Fine Arts program of Visual Art and Music and the inclusion of courses in Spanish, Computer Skills and Physical Fitness, while field trips provide an added dimension to classroom studies.

Special Programs

Elementary Musical Theatre Program

Students take part in two full-scale musical productions each school year in our brand new fine arts complex. While rehearsing for their productions, students learn proper breathing techniques, performance skills, and basic theatre terminology and practices.

Physical Education

A full curriculum is taught that includes skill building, hand/eye coordination and motor skill refinement.

Computer Skills

Students are taught basic computer operations, keyboarding skills and word processing in our new, high-speed internet/computer lab reserved especially for our elementary classes

Kindergarten Curriculum

The Kindergarten reading program is filled with the tools necessary for leading students down the path of literacy. The program combines reading and writing into a creative, positive and successful experience. Understanding the need for, as well as the appreciation of, literature is the primary goal. A balance of freedom and guidance enables students to develop their own cognitive reasoning skills and creative insight.

The Mathematics program uses a variety of manipulatives in order to enhance the learning process. Reproducing, sorting, clarifying, geometric shapes, number operations and extended patterns are some of the many basic themes covered. In order to stimulate interest and excitement, games and other group activities are frequently used.

Exploring science is another important aspect of Kindergarten. The world around us is filled with tremendous wonders, which the students need to explore in order to understand. Experiments and hands-on activities provide great opportunities for discovery.

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Language Arts Grades 1-5

The major objectives of the Language program are literacy appreciation, vocabulary development, critical and creative thinking, reading comprehension, and application of reading and writing skills. Speaking skills are also emphasized at the elementary level. Students enjoy entertaining others with stories, poems and through other dramatic venues.

First and Second Graders begin to use their growing language skills by writing personal narratives, friendly letters, descriptive essays, short stories and poetry. Third Grade Language students focus on improving skills in grammar, reading comprehension and writing. Fourth Graders at The Banff School journey on exciting adventures through reading award-winning stories and novels. They expand their writing skills by practicing comparison and contrast essays, how-to and descriptive paragraphs and research reports. Students will also have the experience of creating a class magazine to learn journalistic writing skills.

In the Fourth and Fifth Grades, students continue to expand their creative writing skills, learn to write expository essays, comparison and contrast essays, and book and research reports. All of our elementary students visit our library frequently and read daily for information and for pleasure.

Mathematics Grades 1-5

The Mathematics program at Banff Elementary explores a variety of concepts including logical reasoning, problem-solving, number sense, geometry, time and money. In the First Grade, students are introduced to basic mathematical concepts through the use of manipulatives, creative games and practicing the fundamentals. Our goal in the Second Grade is to develop numeracy in addition and subtraction in all its varied forms from working solely with numbers to telling time and understanding measurements of distance, weight and volume, leading to multiplication and division. Problem solving is also an important part of the course because it teaches students how to practically apply their mathematical skills. By the Third Grade, students master addition, subtraction, multiplication and division tables. They study weights and measures, time and money and learn to purchase items, stay within a budget and give back correct change. Third Graders also learn to add and subtract decimals and fractions. Fourth Graders enhance the math skills they have attained by practicing more challenging problems. They also increase their knowledge of vocabulary as it relates to mathematics.

By the time our students reach the Fifth Grade, they are using problem-solving skills to solve expressions and equations, practice graphing, probability and statistics, ratio, proportions, percentages, and geometry, all of which reinforce the basic skills they have acquired from previous grades.

Science Grades 1–5

Elementary students begin to learn about the world of science in the First Grade by studying plant life, animals, weather and nutrition. By the Second Grade, our students are ready to learn the scientific method of experimentation and recording data, and they begin to apply this knowledge to plant and animal life, properties of matter, different forms of energy and our solar system. Third Graders continue to build on their understanding of life sciences and our solar system. Health education is a major focus in the Fourth Grade, with an emphasis on the human body and nutrition. Students learn to read product labels and understand what each item means in order to know what food products are good for them and how to fuel their bodies with nutritious food.

By the Fifth Grade, our students are ready for a survey of the major areas of Science, which includes life science, physical science, earth science and the study of the human body. Students learn through reading, class discussion and hands-on activities. Field trips and guest speakers enrich the science curriculum for Banff Elementary Students in every grade.

Social Studies Grades 1–5

Social Studies is an important area of study for all Banff Elementary Students because it provides the children with a greater understanding of the world in which they live. First Graders begin with the basics by gaining an awareness of their families, neighborhoods, and country. They also acquire a broadened perspective by observing the customs of other families in different parts of the world, including their special holidays and celebrations.

In the Second Grade, students explore communities from their local neighborhoods to the wider world and are introduced to topics such as mapping, geography, government and history.

Third Graders study Indian tribes, maps, directions, and the United States government. Every year, our Third Graders particularly enjoy learning about our justice system by conducting their own trial. Learning about each state in the United States is another main area of study in the Third Grade. Students have fun and learn volumes by writing letters to tourist bureaus in various states and then sharing them with their classmates.

Fourth Graders explore the world on local, state and national levels and survey world geography. The state of Texas is the main focus of the Fourth Grade Social Studies curriculum. Every year, our Fourth Graders culminate their studies in a student-made book.

Social Studies (continued)
Grades 1-5

The Fifth Grade Social Studies curriculum covers world geography and United States history and geography. Students develop map and chart skills, practice research reporting and participate in many cross curriculum activities. Fifth Graders follow the National Geographic theme for the year and stay current with world and national news events by subscribing to the weekly Time for Kids magazine.

All Banff Elementary Students supplement their understanding of Social Studies by reading non-fiction books and novels, both as a group in class and individually, that compliment the topics they are studying in class.