



Dear Harding Academy Lower School Families,

I hope you all are having a great summer! Mrs. Hubbard and I have been busy making plans, meeting with teachers, and getting ready for another wonderful year in the lower school. Before the 2023–2024 school year begins, I wanted to share some important information with you.

### **Harding's Amazing Faculty and Staff**

We are fortunate to have a group of dedicated Christians serving at Harding Academy. Each year, they pour love, prayer, knowledge, time, and attention into the students at our school. They work hard to build enduring relationships with your children and your family. God has brought outstanding and experienced teachers to begin their journey with us at Harding Academy!

**1st Grade:** We want to welcome Megan Wilson, a graduate of the Harding Academy class of 2002, back to teach first grade. Mrs. Megan comes to us with fourteen years of teaching experience and joins Mrs. Jamie and Ms. Marlee on our established first grade team.

**2nd Grade:** In order to accommodate an additional section of second grade, we welcome Meagan Holt to Harding Academy. Mrs. Holt has over ten years of teaching experience and is looking forward to working with Mrs. Jones and Mrs. Woods in second grade.

**Learning Specialist:** Maddie Reed is passionate about helping students succeed and comes to us with over four years of varied experience. She has extensive training in different techniques and approaches in reading and will be a valuable asset for us at Harding Academy.

**Lion Care:** Saleama Ruvalcaba joins us full time as the coordinator of Lion Care and LEAP programming. “Mrs. Ru,” as she is known, began in this role in July. She is excited to plan enriching experiences for our students as Care Coordinator.

**Math Interventionist:** We are excited to welcome Brandon Thomas to the lower school. In addition to working as an interventionist in the upper school, Brandon will spend time alongside teachers in 3rd-5th grade math classes as well.

**P.E.:** We have two familiar faces leading P.E. in lower school this year. Coach Chris Miller will teach 3rd-5th grades, and Coach Omar Ruvalcaba will teach SK-2nd grades. Coach Rafa will still assist our students in this exciting special area.

**Performing Arts:** We want to welcome new faces teaching performing arts classes this year. Andrea Campbell, a graduate of the class of 2016, comes back to Harding Academy to teach SK-3rd grade Performing Arts. Rob Brannon, the current middle school chorus director, will add performing arts classes for 4th and 5th grades to his schedule.

**STEM/Library:** In addition to teaching math in the upper school, Mrs. Donna Pinkerton will teach STEM and library specialty classes in the lower school. Mrs. Donna is excited about teaching our youngest lions.

The lower school faculty and staff roster for next year is attached at the end of this letter. Please join me in praying for these precious educators as they prepare for another wonderful school year.

### **Car Line**

We will continue to use the CarRider Pro system to manage dismissal. This system uses digital car tags and a remote reading station to communicate with multiple devices in the school. This allows us to call children for pick up more quickly and efficiently. In order for this program to be successful, we need parent partnership with a few points. Each **new** family will receive two CarRider Pro tags free of charge. Returning families can still use their tags from last year. Additional tags will be \$10 each. Every person who will be picking up a child needs to have the tag displayed in their car. If more than two people will be picking up your child, please send in money for additional tags, and make sure each pick-up person has a tag in their car. It really slows things down when someone comes through the line without a tag, and we often have to ask these folks to park and wait until their child can be called manually. Let's work together to make car line fast and fun! Teachers will still be out in car line to see everyone and put our precious students into cars.

### **SK Dress Code Reminder**

We can't wait for our senior kindergarten students to join us! There will be many exciting and fun changes as our SK friends transition from preschool. One of the biggest changes is the lower school's dress code. All students in grades SK–12 follow Harding's uniform policy. Please check out the handbook and our website [here](#) to learn about uniform guidelines for our youngest lower school students.

### **General Dress Code Reminder**

We haven't been in school since May, and everyone grows and changes so much over the summer! Please check to be sure uniform items still fit and are the appropriate length. Please take a look at our hair requirements [here](#) to make sure they are being followed before the first day of school.

### **Handbook Revisions**

The Student Handbook is one of the most important documents we publish each year. It is a living document that can be revised at any time, but we closely examine it each summer to make sure it is as clear and concise as possible. The link to the lower school handbook can be found on our website [here](#). Please be sure to print off the Handbook receipt found [here](#) and return it by Friday, August 25.

### **Digital Back-to-School Information**

Please visit our website [here](#) to access all our Back-to-School resources including summer reading, supply lists, handbook access, and more! Also, be on the lookout for an email from your child's new teacher on Tuesday, August 1, around 3:30 p.m.

### **Come See Us!**

We can't wait until the first day of school to see you! Your family is invited to attend the Lower School Meet and Greet on Friday, August 4 from 5:00-6:00 p.m. Stop in to meet your child's teacher, drop off school supplies, and pick up your CarRider Pro tags before grabbing a bite to eat beginning at 5:30 p.m. We hope you will stick around to enjoy the pep rally at 7:00 p.m., too. It's going to be amazing!

I pray that your family enjoys every minute of the rest of the summer. Feel free to contact me if you have any questions. See you soon!

Sincerely,

*Lori Underwood*

Lori Underwood, Lower School Principal  
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**Harding Academy Lower  
School  
1100 Cherry Road  
Memphis, TN 38117  
901.767.5344**

Principal.....	Lori Underwood
Assistant Principal.....	Rosie Hubbard
Care Coordinator.....	Saleama Ruvalcaba
Learning Specialist.....	Maddie Reed
Learning Specialist.....	Rebecca Semler
Math Interventionist.....	Brandon Thomas
Lower School Counselor.....	Melissa Canterbury
Lower School Physical Fitness (3rd-5th).....	Chris Miller
Lower School Physical Fitness (SK-2nd).....	Omar Ruvalcaba
Lower School Physical Fitness Assistant.....	Rafa Rodriguez
Performing Arts (4th-5th).....	Rob Brannon
Performing Arts (SK-3rd).....	Andrea Campbell
Spanish (2nd-5th).....	Alicia Henager
STEM/Library.....	Donna Pinkerton
Visual Arts/Library.....	Claire Turner
SK.....	Paige Essary
SK.....	Heather Kubitz
SK.....	Denise Viner
1.....	Jamie Henry
1.....	Megan Wilson
1.....	Marlee Wright
2.....	Meagan Holt
2.....	Jessica Jones
2.....	Rachel Woods
3.....	Rachel Pope
3.....	Debbie Powell
4.....	Kelly Henry
4.....	Danerry Miller
5.....	Brett Gooch
5.....	Cheryl McBride
Apprentice Teacher/Full Time Sub.....	Rosalind Evans
Teacher Aide.....	Lindsay Cloer
Teacher Aide.....	Hitomi Kurzinsky
Teacher Aide/Spanish (SK-1) .....	Val Meza
Administrative Assistant.....	Velvetta Clay

Revised 6/21/23

Revised 7/9/21