



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. Psalm 43:3 states, "Send me your light and your faithful care, let them lead me." Thank you in advance for partnering with us in prayer for this upcoming school year.

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 or continue their journey with us at Harding Academy!

3rd Grade: We want to welcome Kristen Williamson, a graduate of the Harding Academy, back to teach third grade. Mrs. Williamson is the wife of Trent Williamson, our Head of School, and comes to us with 17 years of teaching experience at various levels from Junior Kindergarten to adults. Seven of those years were spent teaching in various capacities within Harding's elementary. She enjoys all things creative and joins Mrs. Pope on our established third grade team. Welcome, Kristen!

Learning Specialist: Kaitlyn Frizzell joins our established team of lower school learning specialists. She will be working with Thrive in lower school by providing extension experiences to those students who have been identified. Most recently, Mrs. Frizzell taught in the Germantown Municipal School District where she was an RTI coach. She has also served in the role of Women's Minister with the Highland Church of Christ. She is married to John Frizzell, a Harding graduate who will be teaching in the upper school. Kaitlyn and John have two daughters, Darcy and Hadley, who attend Little Harding. Welcome, Kaitlyn!

Lower School Aide: We want to welcome Heidi Leyshon to our staff as a lower school aide. Heidi is no stranger to us, as she has been volunteering in the work room on Fridays and subbing periodically in lower school. Mrs. Leyshon and her husband, Wes, have three girls at Harding: Esther (10th), Thessa (5th) and Tilly (1st). Heidi has a bachelor's degree in Ministry Arts from the University of Memphis. Recently, Heidi has taught ballet, worked in children's ministry at her church and volunteered as a Student Program Leader with Bible Study Fellowship. Heidi is excited about the opportunity to support the lower school teachers and students at Harding this year. Welcome, Heidi!

P.E.: We have familiar faces leading this exciting special area in lower school this year. Coach Chris Miller and Coach Rafa Rodriguez will continue to teach 3rd-5th grades. We want to welcome Coach Herb Kendall, Harding's Varsity Football Head Coach, who will work with Coach Rafa in teaching grades SK-2.

School Nurse: This is an exciting addition to our school! We will be served in this capacity this year by Megan Bolling and Ashley Frizzell. Please find more information about new procedures by reading Student Medication Rules and Directions on our website [here](#).

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 30.

Thrive

Thrive is our academic differentiation program for all students in K–12. In lower school, Thrive time is built into the school day, and students receive extra supports or challenges based on their individual needs. Three learning specialists focused on reading/English and math may help with assignments or provide alternative instruction and practice. With the addition of Mrs. Frizzell to our staff, we are looking forward to expanding our existing Thrive program by providing regular challenges for those students who are identified.

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 Thursday, August 1, around 3:30 p.m.

Come See Us!

We can't wait until the first day of school, August 7, to see you! Your family is invited to attend the Lower School Meet and Greet on Tuesday, August 6, from 4:30-5:30 p.m. Stop in to meet your child's teacher and drop off school supplies before the first day of school. If you need a Bible or chair bag, those will be available for purchase (cash or check only) in the Lower School Office.

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

**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.....	Kaitlyn Frizzell
Learning Specialist.....	Maddie Reed
Learning Specialist.....	Rebecca Semler
Lower School Counselor.....	Melissa Canterbury
Lower School Physical Fitness (SK-2nd).....	Herb Kendall
Lower School Physical Fitness (3rd-5th).....	Chris Miller
Lower School Physical Fitness Assistant.....	Rafa Rodriguez
Performing Arts (4th-5th).....	Rob Brannon
Performing Arts (SK-3rd).....	Andrea Campbell
Spanish (2nd-5th).....	Alicia Henager
Visual Arts/Library.....	Claire Turner
SK.....	Denise Aguirre
SK.....	Paige Essary
SK.....	Heather Kubitz
1.....	Jamie Henry
1.....	Megan Wilson
1.....	Marlee Wright
2.....	Meagan Holt
2.....	Jessica Jones
2.....	Rachel Woods
3.....	Rachel Pope
3.....	Kristen Williamson
4.....	Kelly Henry
4.....	Danerry Miller
5.....	Brett Gooch
5.....	Cheryl McBride
Apprentice Teacher/Full Time Sub.....	Rosalind Evans
Teacher Aide.....	Heidi Leyshon
Teacher Aide.....	Hitomi Kurzinsky
Teacher Aide/Spanish (SK-1)	Val Meza
Administrative Assistant.....	Velvetta Clay

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