



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 2026–2027 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: Ms. Marlee Wright moves up from 1st grade to teach 3rd grade for the 2026-27 school year. We are thankful that she will continue to instruct and nurture our students while exemplifying patience and joy.

Library: Mrs. Stephanie Saurenman will oversee the school library (K-12). Lower school students enjoy visiting the library to check out books and can look forward to book fairs that Mrs. Stephanie will host throughout the year.

Performing Arts: Madilyn Canterbury ('21) joins our faculty as the K–12 Theatre and Performing Arts teacher. A Harding alumna, she recently graduated from Harding University with a Bachelor of Arts in Theatre Education. She brings experience working with several theatre companies along with teaching middle school drama and English at a private Christian school in Kentucky. Madilyn will lead lower school performing arts, teach theatre courses in the middle and upper school, and serve on our production team for K–12 performances. We are excited to welcome her back to Harding and look forward to the creativity, energy, and passion she will bring to our stage and classrooms.

Physical Fitness: The P.E. team has several changes for this school year. We would like to welcome Morgan (Threatt) Phillips back to Harding Academy to lead SK-2 physical education. A Harding alumna ('15), Mrs. Morgan played soccer during her time at Harding Academy. She graduated with a degree in Political Science from Harding University and has worked in the private sector for several years. She is eager to lead our youngest lions in daily activity! Also an alum, Coach Reid Swolensky ('20) will assist Mrs. Morgan with SK-2 physical education. Coach Reid works in the Athletic Department and is a football coach. Coach Chris Miller will continue to lead 3rd-5th grade physical education with the assistance of Coach Herbert Kendall.

Thrive Extension: Mrs. Claire brings her classroom experience to invest in students during Thrive Extension. She will provide extension experiences for those lower school students in grades 2-5 who are identified as well as continue to teach Visual Arts to all lower school students.

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.

Dismissal and 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.

Families that have students in different levels at Harding should prepare to have older students dismiss at carline with their lower school siblings. Older students in middle or high school should come to the lower school classroom of their sibling and wait to be dismissed through lower school carline with CarRider Pro. Permission from the principal is needed if circumstances necessitate a change to this plan for dismissal.

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 options 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 that new uniform guideline items still fit and are the appropriate length. Visit the Den or view [here](#) for uniform needs. Also, 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 complete the Handbook receipt form found in the FACTS portal.

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 Monday, August 3, around 3:30 p.m.

Come See Us!

We can't wait until the first day of school, August 10, to see you! Your family is invited to attend the Lower School Meet and Greet on Friday, August 7, from 5:00-6:00 p.m. Stop in to meet your child's teacher and drop off school supplies before the first day of school. Then, enjoy the food trucks and pep rally later that evening. If your student needs a Bible, chair bag, or Art sketchbook, purchase [here](#) through FACTS and the item will be delivered to your child's classroom.

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.....	Kelvina Hunt
Learning Specialist.....	Rebecca Semler
Lower School Counselor.....	Melissa Canterbury
Lower School Physical Fitness (SK-2nd).....	Morgan Phillips
Lower School Physical Fitness (3rd-5th).....	Chris Miller
Lower School Physical Fitness Assist. (3rd-5th).....	Herbert Kendall
Lower School Physical Fitness Assist. (SK-2nd).....	Reid Swolensky
Performing Arts (SK-5th).....	Maddie Canterbury
Library.....	Stephanie Saurenman
Visual Arts/Thrive Extension.....	Claire Turner
Spanish (SK-5th).....	Val Meza
SK.....	Denise Aguirre
SK.....	Paige Essary
SK.....	Heather Kubitz
1.....	Jamie Henry
1.....	Megan Wilson
2.....	Jessica Jones
2.....	Rachel Woods
3.....	Meagan Holt
3.....	Marlee Wright
4.....	Kelly Henry
4.....	Kennedy Williamson
5.....	Brett Gooch
5.....	Cheryl McBride
Apprentice Teacher/Full Time Sub.....	Rosalind Evans
Teacher Aide.....	Heidi Leyshon
Teacher Aide.....	Hitomi Kurzinsky
Teacher Aide.....	Jackie Williams
Administrative Assistant.....	Velvetta Clay