

# Is The Sycamore School right for you?

## PROSPECTIVE STUDENTS

- Display curiosity
- Ready to be challenged
- Seek inspiration and engagement
- May feel disengaged at current school
- Do not want to be defined by standardized test scores
- Have aspirations beyond college

## PROSPECTIVE PARENTS

- Seeking a safe, nurturing, and inclusive school environment
- Tired of struggling with your child over attendance and homework
- Value after-school time that is dedicated to enriching the interests of your child, versus time spent completing homework
- Welcome a focus on evaluating student growth rather than letter grades
- Support a competency-based model of learning that cultivates transferable life skills

## OUR MISSION

To provide a dynamic, nurturing and personalized education that inspires a passion for learning, self-discovery and connection to the community.

## OUR VISION

To cultivate engaged, independent lifelong learners who can think critically and apply their knowledge to real-world experiences to achieve personal success and contribute positively to their community.



## CONVENTIONAL SCHOOLS

Large, teacher-centered classes

Teachers impart knowledge to students

Standardized test-based curriculum

Common instruction for entire class

All teaching happens in the classroom

## SYCAMORE SCHOOL



→ Small student-centered classes with a 1:10 teacher/student ratio

→ Student and teacher collaboration

→ Dynamic, mastery-based curriculum with real-world application

→ Students help shape individualized instruction

→ Learning happens everywhere—in the classroom and the community



## Learning Rediscovered

5TH-12TH GRADE

1550 Wilson Blvd.  
Suite 300  
Arlington, VA 22209  
703-717-5360

[thesycamoreschoolva.org](http://thesycamoreschoolva.org)

## The Sycamore School

Personalized experiential learning.

### WE BELIEVE:

- Young people are curious, resilient, and capable of creating innovative solutions to real-world problems.
- Learning should be meaningful, challenging and engaging.
- Students reach their individual potential when they are allowed to master a skill at their own pace versus a fixed time frame.
- Intelligence and ability are not fixed but can be developed.
- Learning is messy not linear. It's a process of trying, making changes, and moving forward.
- Authentic assessment captures student learning in real-time rather than relying on standardized tests, which are rigid and may not accurately reflect students' cumulative growth and performance.

“ The Sycamore School is a godsend. It has helped my child enjoy school again and find her curiosity.”

-Sycamore Parent



# Our Curriculum: 3 Roots

The Sycamore School's mastery-based learning approach integrates **academic development**, **social-emotional growth** and **civic engagement**.

Our curriculum is grounded in evidence-based models. Before completion of middle school and high school, students are expected to master a set of developmentally appropriate learning strands that include cognitive, social-emotional, and civic skills.

- Students make choices based on interests and influence how they learn content and demonstrate mastery.
- Teachers build relationships with students and personalize instruction.
- Teachers create a dynamic learning environment to support every student's development as a whole person.
- Students learn in a living classroom, making use of local resources through field studies and community service.
- Our community embraces tolerance for diverse viewpoints and acceptance of differences; we encourage each student to find and use their unique voice.

## 1. Academic Development

Helping students master the content knowledge, specific skills, and literacies needed to succeed in work and life. We develop critical thinkers who can make connections, solve problems, and communicate clearly. We achieve this through:



| APPROACHES   | OUTCOMES   |
|--|--|
| Experiential & Problem Based Learning                | Critical thinking and problem-solving                    |
| Personalized Instruction with Student Choice         | Self-sufficiency and confidence                          |
| Integrated Curriculum and Transdisciplinary Approach | Increased retention of skills and depth of understanding |
| Focus on student-readiness                           | Strong Executive Functioning Skills                      |



## 2. Social and Emotional Growth

Helping students develop mindfulness by increasing self, social, and cultural awareness. We produce productive, responsible leaders and collaborators. We achieve this through:



| APPROACHES                          | OUTCOMES                    |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Regular Mindfulness Practice        | Self-Management             |
| Social Problem Solving in Real Time | Self & Social Awareness     |
| Advisory & Mentoring Groups         | Responsible Decision Making |
| Cooperative Learning Experiences    | Effective Communication     |



## 3. Civic Engagement

Helping students explore environmental, economic, and political systems, developing strengths and aptitudes to improve the quality of life in our community. We achieve this through:



| APPROACHES                    | OUTCOMES                        |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Living Classroom              | Meaningful Learning Experiences |
| Field Studies                 | Career Exploration              |
| Exploring Community Resources | Civic Literacy                  |
| Service Learning              | Community Involvement           |



“ The small size of TSS allows all students to feel like they are part of a warm and accepting community.

-Sycamore Parent

“ The school offers student choice and self-paced learning that allows my child to thrive. They have field trips connected to student learning that bring the real world into the classroom.

-Sycamore Parent



Serving  
5th-12th grades

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