Curiosity, Courage, and Compassion
A STORY OF OUR SCHOOL
Curiosity
Courage
Compassion
Compassion

seek wisdom

surprise yourself

make connections
Can you imagine a school that prepares its students for a lifetime of success? A school that inspires young people to grow up socially and emotionally, as well as intellectually? A place where inspiration, support, and commitment are alive and present every single day? A space where a child can share questions and answers in a diverse, dynamic, and engaging environment? We can!
A successful student is an inquisitive one

Every child comes into this world with wonder and awe and astonishment. Our curriculum is designed to nurture curiosity and keep wonder alive in ever-changing minds.

A successful student thrives on challenges

What would life be if we had no courage to try anything? We believe intellectual, athletic, artistic, social, even emotional challenges help young people discover what drives and defines them – and develop their strengths and talents to the highest levels.

A successful student has heart

A collective whole that fosters respect for oneself and one’s neighbors – that is an empathic environment. Our students are taught to lead and think with compassion, in the service to the greater good – they are changing their world one connection at a time.
“At Sewickley Academy, our roots provide the stable foundation from which students branch out, stretching themselves to their very limits. A thoughtful understanding of self and a robust exploration of the world of knowledge are central to the growth, maturation, and development of each student’s full potential. Our teachers seek to inspire this dynamic process that will lead each of their students to the fulfillment of their promise.”

Kolia O’Connor
Head of School
AN INTRODUCTION...

Founded in 1838, Sewickley Academy is the oldest independent school in Pittsburgh.

- College-preparatory, co-educational day school for grades PK-12
- 800 students from 52 school districts in Pennsylvania, Ohio, and West Virginia
- Average class size is 15
- Student to faculty ratio is 9:1
- Experienced, caring teachers, 56% with advanced degrees
- 100% college placement
- 17 Advanced Placement courses
- Award winning student publications
- Inclusive athletic program and championship sports teams
- Extensive programs in theater, music, and visual arts
- 500 computers supported by campus-wide wireless network
- Foreign language classes begin in Pre-Kindergarten
- 1.5 million dollars in financial aid to assist qualified students

THE SCHOOL DAY

The day begins at 8:10 a.m. and concludes at 3:10 p.m. The Lower School, Middle School, and Senior School have morning announcements on designated days during the week. This provides students with the opportunity to enjoy a morning assembly, communicate with one another, share news of the week, and discuss major world events. Throughout the day, students may schedule appointments to meet with a teacher to seek extra help outside of the classrooms or to ask additional questions that may arise after class has adjourned. After school, many students remain on campus to participate in athletics, arts, and other extracurricular activities. The Hansen Memorial Library is open until 6 p.m. on school days.
“When I think about what Sewickley Academy has done for me, it is impossible for me not to think of the teachers who have helped shape my life. As a shy and somewhat reluctant newcomer to the Academy, my second grade teacher, Ms. Morine, encouraged me to participate, while still allowing me the space I needed to adjust. As a fifth grader, Mr. Smith pushed my academic skills to new levels. During the difficult middle school years, Mrs. Rose’s classroom provided a haven where I began to truly appreciate the beauty of words. In high school, Mrs. Polinko patiently reviewed draft after draft of my papers until I became so comfortable with writing that writing papers of any length was a breeze for me throughout college. And then there was Mr. Melodia, without whose training and encouragement I would never have had the poise or confidence to deliver a lecture to 250 medical professionals, or teach courses to hospital CEO’s and physicians.”

- Emily ’00
CURRICULUM: CHILD-CENTERED AND MISSION-DRIVEN

Sewickley Academy’s curriculum is both supportive and demanding. Respect for one’s self and peers, a commitment to learning, and participation in activities that inspire students to reach their full potential, are what makes a Sewickley Academy education so exceptional.

LOWER SCHOOL: PREPARING FOR LIFETIME LEARNING

In the Lower School, the emphasis is on developing a joy for learning in a safe environment while students become proficient in basic skills, establish good citizenship habits, learn respect for themselves and others, and take pride in their accomplishments both in and outside of the classroom. The curriculum encourages students to work both independently and cooperatively in groups.

Beginning in Pre-Kindergarten, students are guided by caring and nurturing teachers through a comprehensive core curriculum stressing language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, foreign language, and computer skills.

Extended Day Program

Before-school and after-school care is available for students in Pre-K through grade five. Children that participate in these programs may arrive as early as 7:30 a.m.

After dismissal, the after-school program runs until 6:00 p.m. and includes activities like arts and crafts and athletics. Time is also set aside for homework, computer use, and relaxation.

MIDDLE SCHOOL: ACTIVE LEARNING AND PERSONAL GROWTH

The Sewickley Academy Middle School focuses on the child by creating a caring and understanding space to encourage physical growth, social/mental maturity, and abstract thinking. Middle school is the link between the dependence of childhood and the independence of imminent young adulthood. This three-year program is designed to captivate pre-adolescents by providing daily opportunities for success in academics, the arts, and athletics.

The core curriculum of English, social studies, mathematics, laboratory science, technology, and a second language is complemented by classes in health and wellness and a variety of extracurricular activities.

SENIOR SCHOOL: PROMOTING INDEPENDENCE AND SELF-KNOWLEDGE

In the Senior School, students concentrate on preparing themselves for the intellectual demands of college. Each student selects a faculty advisor who provides support and guidance in scholastic and personal matters through these last four years at the Academy. The Senior School curriculum requires that students take responsibility for planning their course of study, become involved in the school and community, and manage time wisely. Expectations are high, and teachers are committed to helping students succeed.

In addition to a core curriculum, a wide variety of elective courses reflects the diverse interests of Senior School students and the depth of experience and wisdom of the faculty. These courses include astronomy, environmental science, psychology, contemporary world issues, African issues, the American Presidency, Industrial Pittsburgh, and Asian History to name a few.

Modeled after a Masters Thesis project at most universities, the Sewickley Academy Guild provides juniors and seniors with the opportunity to distinguish themselves through serious, focused, and deep academic engagement in a particular subject matter.

College Guidance

In their junior year, families begin meeting regularly with their student’s assigned college guidance counselor to begin exploring collegiate choices. Great care is given to each student during this process, so she may identify the colleges and universities that best match her interests and strengths. Representatives from more than 150 colleges and universities visit the campus each year and juniors and seniors are encouraged to visit campuses during summer and vacation weeks. 100% of graduating seniors continue their education at a four-year college or university.
CURIOSITY

What kind of bridge can you build with blocks? What would Newton’s notebook look like? Are Dante’s words different in Italian?

Just one of these questions could spark a hundred different answers—and that’s what we want! Opinions, questions, debates: these are the greatest contributions that students can make to a learning community.

Clubs (a sampling)

Senior School Clubs are initiated and established by students. The list below is a reflection of students’ interests and willingness to explore and learn from others.

African-American Awareness Club
Amnesty International
Biology Club
Book Club
Christian Fellowship Club
Environmental Club
Façade
Forensics Club
French Club
Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA)
Gay-Straight Alliance
German Club
Head of School’s Council
Indian Awareness Club
International Thespian Society
Irish Club
Italian Club
Jewish Cultural Club
Key Club
Knowledge Bowl
Math League
Mock Trial
Model UN
Origami Club
Outdoors Club
Peer Counseling
Photography Club
Physics Olympics
Poets in Person
Science Bowl
Sewickley Asian Youth
Spanish Club
Student Council
Students Against Destructive Decisions (SADD)
Teen Leadership Council
Tour Guides
Women’s Issues Group
Young Republicans

“One of the best things about Sewickley Academy is the safe and caring environment that we provide for all of our community members. Even though we all may not all share the same common views, everyone knows that Sewickley Academy is a place that fosters respect and values diversity... Here, we all have a voice.”

—Ken Goleski, Dean of Students

Michael Fincke ’85

NASA Astronaut Lt. Colonel Michael Fincke made his dream of flying into space a reality during his mission aboard the International Space Station (ISS), Expedition 9. After his flight, he was promoted to Chief of the Safety Branch at NASA and led the preparation and certification of the July 2006 launching of the Space Shuttle Discovery, the first U.S. space flight since the loss of Shuttle Columbia.

The stars have always been in focus for this graduate, from watching the first Apollo moonwalks on television at three years old to setting a deliberate and rigorous course of academics here at the Academy and beyond. After graduating from the Academy, Fincke attended the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) and graduated in 1989 with a bachelor of science in Aeronautics and Astronautics, as well as a bachelor of science in Earth, Atmospheric and Planetary Sciences. He then received a master of science from Stanford University in 1990 and the University of Houston in 2001. Though fluent in Japanese and Russian, and a graduate of MIT and Stanford, he still attributes his accomplishments to the teachers and individuals that supported him: “My dream was to become an astronaut, and the Academy helped me achieve that dream. My teachers watered and fertilized me and allowed me to grow.”
COURAGE

To dismantle pre-conceived notions, like limitation and fear, is what’s at the core of courage. Sewickley Academy provides a nurturing environment comprising different voices and different minds to help students explore their full potential as individual learners and members of a broader community.

Global Awareness

Sewickley Academy challenges students to look beyond themselves and their immediate environment so as to become informed and conscientious citizens of the world. Extended study of a foreign language, in conjunction with opportunities to travel and learn in foreign countries, is encouraged. Opportunities to travel include trips to France, Germany, Spain, Switzerland, Costa Rica, and Australia. The Academy also participates in a student/teacher exchange program with Wuhan School #3 in China. Semester programs are also available on the Maine Coast and in the Rocky Mountains.

“Intellectual risk and courage lie at the heart of education. We educate students to lead and live examined, ethical lives - lives which have both a public and private purpose. The capacity to take intellectual risks... lies at the heart of great teaching, visionary leading, and real learning. None of what we attempt in school means anything if it doesn’t move us to action, and action requires courage, well-developed conscience, and will.”

—Claudia Gallant, Dean of Academic Affairs
She began as a Washington Star photographer, but now the lens is on her. Torie Clarke has already lived many lives: Press Secretary for President George H. Bush’s re-election campaign, Assistant Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs, aide to Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld on September 11, 2001, and author of Lipstick on a Pig just to name a few. It was Ms. Clarke who devised the plan to “embed” journalists with military units during Operation Iraqi Freedom and she is a regular guest on programs ranging from 60-minutes to the Daily Show with Jon Stewart. As one of America’s best-known political commentators and communication strategists, Torie Clarke is one of the nation’s most innovative communicators.

—Brad, senior
(on his Swiss semester abroad)
COMPASSION

Some students are amazed to realize that in one place, the strength of the collective whole lies in their differences and respective opinions; that a place where people aren’t afraid to share their experiences and to lead through example is possible. A curriculum that focuses on respect for the collective conscience inspires students to humbly lead and to be exemplary in their service to others.

It is true, expectations are high, but we are committed to helping students succeed. Between classes, during free periods, after school – you will always find teachers and students huddled in classrooms, hallways, reading rooms or libraries working through a math problem, conjugating a verb, or discussing a poem read in class that day. The relationship between a student and teacher is sacred and powerful.

Student Support

At Sewickley Academy, there is a group of 6 adults dedicated to helping students and families discover their child’s individual strengths in order to promote the skills which will allow them to grow in confidence, motivation, and proficiency.

The Department of Support Services includes specialists who are available to students and parents. These qualified individuals are able to offer academic, emotional, and social enrichment and support Kindergarten-12th grade. The focus of the department is to provide students with strategies which foster their individual strengths and allow them to reach their full potential. Members of the Department consult and collaborate with faculty in an effort to facilitate differentiated instruction.

“On my first day, I was surrounded by students of various ethnic, social, and financial backgrounds. I had never been around students from such a wide range of upbringings… it was a symphony of varied opinions… I learned to appreciate the cultural variety, but also, every aspect of that diversity as well.

—Blake, senior
(on his first day at his new school)
As an Academy “lifer,” Robert James felt that he was well-equipped to make his mark in the nation’s capital. A graduate of Boston College, Georgetown University, and the University of Pittsburgh, James has an extensive professional background in law, serving as a law firm associate, in-house corporate counsel, government agency counsel, and executive in charge of a family-operated business. Currently, he is Deputy General Counsel for the Office of the Chief Financial Officer in Washington D.C. Among his greatest accomplishments, however, is his dedication to the community. Together with his wife, Natasha Lopez, Robert has served on ten non-profit boards, including the African Leadership Family, formed the Latitudes Group which sponsors activities aimed at fostering inter-cultural awareness and bridge-building, and stays active in politics. He attributes his success to a strong academic foundation and the wise guidance of his parents who inspired him to explore his life’s passions and dreams.
ATHLETICS

Sportsmanship and the ability to win or lose with grace and humility are at the core of the teachings of the athletic program. Participation on the field, court, course, and in the pool offers students a way to meld academic pursuits with those that open doors to friendships, leadership, consensus-building, and teamwork. Teachers, coaches, and advisors support students as they learn to prioritize commitments and organize their time.

Sewickley Academy has a variety of interscholastic sports teams, as well as non-competitive physical activities that promote health and wellness:

- Aerobics
- Baseball
- Basketball
- Cross country
- Field hockey
- Golf
- High/Low Impact Fitness/Circuit Training
- Ice hockey
- Indoor soccer
- 4th and 5th grade Intramurals
- Lacrosse
- Soccer
- Softball
- Swimming
- Tennis
- Touch football
- Track & Field
- Volleyball
- Wrestling
- Yoga
“It was the first time I had truly been a part of something great... My experiences during that season changed me as a person, and the growth that I went through was tremendous. I am no longer put off by a challenge, or by pain or by doubt. I know now that I can overcome any obstacle if I push hard enough... The difference between a successful person and others is not a lack of strength, not a lack of knowledge, but a lack of will.”

—Katie, junior (on her varsity soccer experience)
**THE ARTS**

Classes in dance, theater, studio art, and music are vital components of our Pre-K—12 curriculum. Whether it’s drawing self-portraits, working as tech for the spring play, or learning an etude on a new instrument, all students make an artistic contribution during their time here. Listed below is a sample of art electives offered in the Senior School.

- Music Composition
- Vocal Performance Workshop
- Chorus
- Concert Band
- Jazz Ensemble
- String Ensemble
- Chamber Music
- Spring Musical
- Senior School Recital
- PMEA Honors Band, Orchestra, or Chorus

- Dance
- Drama
- Technical Theater
- Production
- Stage Craft
- Fall Play
- Spring Play
- Studio Art
- Art History
- Drawing

- Painting
- Printmaking
- Design
- Ceramics
- Pottery
- 3-Dimensional Art
- Digital Design
- Photography

**PUBLICATIONS**

Our publications encourage students to participate at all levels of production, from layout to editing, so there’s a wide range of opportunity for everyone to participate. Many of the publications listed here receive regular state and national awards:

- *The Seventh Pillar*—newspaper
- *Ephemera*—literary magazine
- *Kaleidoscope*—yearbook
- *History Journal*
“I realized that it didn’t matter how I performed as long as I tried and had fun. The hardiest congratulations I received post-show were from my classmates who had witnessed my transformation into an actor who finally was not afraid of failure.”

—Hannah, senior
(on her role in The King and I)
THE CONNECTION

People are one of the main reasons why the Academy has such exceptional programs and curricula. Without the involvement and knowledge of the faculty, and the dedication of the parents, our vision would not be possible. Teachers put their students’ learning and progress first and foremost. They have shown that experience, mastery in their field, and compassion are the best tools to help young, creative minds develop into individuals of character and determination.

Parents play an extraordinary role at the Academy by becoming involved in a variety of programs that promote the education of their children. There are many different ways that parents contribute to the community, whether it’s helping in the classroom for activities like organizing Art Can Travel, serving on the committee for the Annual Auction, or joining the Home and School Association—a charitable 501 (c) (3) devoted to furthering the school’s mission by fostering a close relationship between faculty, administration, and parents.
“It has been a privilege to be involved in so many Academy activities. Through volunteering, I have been able to make a connection with so many wonderful people that have the same mission in mind: the best education for our children. The biggest reward is being inspired each and every day by the dedication and devotion that the faculty, administrators, and staff have to this school.”

—Mary, parent volunteer
A COMMUNITY OF RESPECT

Sewickley Academy is dedicated to maintaining an environment that’s respectful of others’ rights and opinions. We are a community that listens to one another, helps each other exceed academic and personal expectations, and contributes confidently and positively to society.

Dress Code

The dress code ensures that all students come to school ready to learn and enjoy their Academy experience by arriving in appropriate apparel that won’t distract or offend members of the Academy. In keeping with the Community of Respect, all students in grades 1-12 are asked to dress modestly and in accordance with the code as outlined in the handbook. Apparel such as flip-flops, clothing with logos or insignias, denim, and hats are considered unacceptable. By maintaining a neat and well-kept presence, everyone at Sewickley Academy is given the opportunity to enjoy a safe and mutually-respectful school environment.
The Campus

Sewickley Academy is located approximately 12 miles northwest of Pittsburgh. All grades are located on a single 16-acre campus, with an additional 14 acres nearby containing athletic fields and tennis courts. A separate Early Childhood building and play area are adjacent to the Lower School with its own library, art and music rooms, computer and science laboratories, and dining hall. The Middle and Senior Schools buildings are connected by an award-winning library including a media center, computer laboratory, reading rooms, and instructional classrooms. The science building has fully-equipped laboratories, lecture rooms, a greenhouse, and astronomical observatory. An outstanding arts center includes visual art studios, a dance studio, and rehearsal rooms. An auditorium, art gallery, and intimate "blackbox" theater, a Middle and Senior School dining hall, two gymnasiums, a large playground, and two athletic fields complete the campus.

Directions

We welcome you to campus!
Please visit www.sewickley.org for a complete set of directions and maps to visit our school.
APPLYING FOR ADMISSION

Sewickley Academy seeks students who have a positive attitude and high level of personal motivation. We look forward to creating a school with diverse, talented, and dedicated students who have high expectations and want to broaden their perspective. Interested students are evaluated on the basis of their previous school records, teacher recommendations, an entrance examination, and a personal interview. Our website, www.sewickley.org, has additional information regarding application, including requirements and contact information. The best way to know Sewickley Academy is to schedule a visit to our campus. We encourage visitors to audit classes and meet with other students during the decision-making process.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Transportation

Students who live in districts within ten miles of the Sewickley Academy campus are eligible under Pennsylvania law for transportation provided at no charge by their districts. For a separate fee, Sewickley Academy operates buses to areas where there is sufficient demand. These areas range from Beaver, to Butler, to Upper St. Clair, the East End, and points beyond and in between.

Financial Aid

A strong, need-based, financial aid program supports the Academy’s commitment to a diverse student body. Qualified, motivated students are encouraged to apply for admission irrespective of financial need. Aid is available at all grade levels; however priority is given to Middle and Senior School students. Nineteen percent of students receive tuition assistance representing approximately $1.5 million available annually.

Supporting an Academy Education

Tuition and fees cover approximately 85% of the cost of a Sewickley Academy education. Like all independent schools, Sewickley Academy relies on a combination of tuition revenues, endowment funds, and private support to make possible the many aspects of a Sewickley Academy education.

The Fund for Sewickley Academy is the school’s annual fund and most important source of revenue other than student tuition. Each year we strive to reach 100% participation by asking every member of our community to contribute, regardless of the size of gift.

“This community comprises scholars of all ages, interests, nationalities, and religions. Together we achieve and learn in ways that would not be possible without the support of a community that inspires scholarship and provides a cultural education because of its diversity. Our desire for knowledge comes from teachers who show passion for their subjects and who encourage students to develop their talents in many areas. We are held to the highest standards of citizenship by our mentors so that we will hold each other to that standard. Within the walls of this school, students grow from children into citizens who are ready to change the world for the better when they enter it.

…your experience here at Sewickley Academy is unlike any other…”

—David, senior
Mission Statement

Sewickley Academy inspires and educates students to engage their hearts, minds, and hands to cultivate their full individual and collective potential in the service of a greater good.

Core Values

CHARACTER
Sewickley Academy upholds the highest ideals of honor, integrity, responsibility, respect, empathy, and kindness and the actions that flow from them.

EDUCATIONAL VIGOR
Sewickley Academy is committed to the highest standards and expectations in academics, while recognizing the essential combination of athletics and the arts, and the maintenance of an appropriate balance among the three.

DIVERSITY
Sewickley Academy is dedicated to being a community that represents and celebrates different backgrounds, talents, interests, and divergent yet informed opinions.

COMMUNITY
Sewickley Academy seeks to foster a deep understanding and appreciation of our connections with one another and those beyond our borders, as well as our obligation and responsibility to serve and lead inherent in these bonds.
“Sewickley Academy was the foundation that created the invisible ladder to everything.”

—Jake ’02