

A group of children are sitting on a paved surface, painting a large, colorful world map. The map is drawn with thick, vibrant strokes of blue, green, yellow, and purple. The children are focused on their work, with some using their hands to apply the paint. The scene is brightly lit, suggesting an outdoor setting during the day.

YOUR CHILD • THE WORLD

lesley ellis school

## OUR MISSION

Lesley Ellis School's outstanding and innovative academic program emphasizes critical thinking skills. We value what makes our children unique, and we encourage them to apply their talents and passions to their learning. Our community is centered on the values of mutual respect and global citizenship.



"Every day, I see kids who are happy and excited to come to school, and it's all because of the learning environments our teachers create in their classrooms. Lesley Ellis is a great place to be."

— DEANNE BENSON, *Head of School*

## LESLEY ELLIS AT A GLANCE

### HISTORY:

An independent school with more than 60 years of innovation in education

### ENROLLMENT:

180 students; 35% identify as students of color

### GRADES:

Preschool (age 2.9) through sixth grade; adding seventh grade in 2014; adding eighth grade in 2015

### STUDENT/TEACHER RATIOS:

Early childhood classes 8:1  
Elementary classes 11:1

### FACULTY AND STAFF:

40 teachers & staff; 75% of teachers hold advanced degrees

### PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS:

Developmental approach in all grades with two teachers in each classroom; multi-grade elementary classrooms; award-winning anti-bias curriculum

### SPECIALISTS:

Art, library, music, physical education, science, and Spanish

### AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAM:

Available daily until 5:30 p.m.

### FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE:

15-20% of students receive need-based tuition grants

### COMMUNITIES SERVED:

Arlington, Belmont, Cambridge, Charlestown, Lexington, Medford, Somerville, Winchester, and surrounding communities

### ACCREDITATION:

Association of Independent Schools in New England (AISNE); member, National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS)

### APPLICATION DEADLINE:

January 15

WELCOME TO

# lesley ellis school



IN A CORNER OF THEIR CLASSROOM, preschoolers beam with delight as they watch sponges expand in the water table during a sink-and-float game. ✨ Down the hall, first and second graders learn the value of pennies, quarters, and dollars as they take on the roles of customers and waiters in a make-believe restaurant. ✨ While they collaborate to build a compass in science class, fifth and sixth graders spontaneously sing a song they learned in chorus.

Lesley Ellis students know that from the moment they arrive at school in the morning until they leave in the afternoon, they will participate in an exciting learning adventure. From welcoming classrooms and a spacious art studio to the sun-filled library, our school is a place of discovery where new challenges and triumphs await, and where curiosity and exploration are encouraged and respected. At Lesley Ellis, learning and creativity exist in harmony in an environment where students, teachers, and parents support and enrich one another.

Lesley Ellis recognizes and celebrates individuality. Our curriculum reflects each child's interests, stage of development, and learning style. Most of all, we encourage children to take pride in their success, courageously pursue their passions and dreams, and develop a joy of learning that will last a lifetime.

Two students learn the value of collaboration while working together to solve math problems.

Students work individually, in pairs, and in small groups on a variety of math activities while teachers provide the encouragement and individual instruction that allow them to progress at their own developmental level.



“All of the teachers at Lesley Ellis make an extra effort to help children recognize their strengths, and the results are amazing.”

—LAURA DOUGLASS, parent of third grader

# HEART • MIND

Preschool children watch ants in the playground, and then together create an “ant colony” from wooden blocks in their classroom. ✨ Third and fourth graders use LEGOS to construct and program their own robotic creatures—and learn engineering concepts in the process. ✨ Fifth and sixth graders adapt their favorite story for the stage and create sets, backdrops, and costumes for an all-school assembly presentation.

The Lesley Ellis classroom environment is a lively hub of activity that sparks curiosity, fosters exploration, and nurtures confidence. Students are free to explore their passions—and to have fun while they learn. Our developmental approach reflects the needs, abilities, and spirit of each child while providing a strong academic foundation in literacy, mathematics, science, and social studies.

Students in our early childhood program explore subjects from botany to poetry through play, games, stories, and art. Older children undertake more complex hands-on projects, discovering new interests in history, astronomy, and other subjects that pique their curiosity. Students refine their technology skills in our state-of-the-art computer lab, and every classroom is equipped with interactive whiteboards.

As they progress through Lesley Ellis, students work, play, and learn together. Our students celebrate one another’s efforts and successes on their way to becoming creative problem solvers and effective communicators.

● The warm bond between teachers and students allows children to take academic risks and confidently share their ideas.



A preschool child is given ample time to explore and experiment as she discovers the properties of water.



A teacher helps his third grade student learn to program her LEGO vehicle to move across the room.

## ANTI-BIAS CURRICULUM

*Lesley Ellis’s award-winning anti-bias curriculum helps children acquire knowledge, skills, and attitudes that enable them to develop and thrive in a diverse community. Throughout the school day, students and teachers have age-appropriate discussions about subjects ranging from religion and adoption to discrimination and gender bias. Teachers guide students through these topics so they can discover how to end the cycle of bias and treat others with acceptance and respect.*

“During rehearsal for the first and second grade musical, one of my students missed his cue. His parents told me that when he got home he said, ‘I’m OK with it. My teacher is proud of us for trying hard no matter what we do.’”

—MAIJA ALKSINITIS, first and second grade teacher



# INTELLECT • IMAGINATION



Prekindergartners press their hands into clay and set the molds on the shelf to dry. Then they study woodland animal tracks and compare them with their own handprints. ✨ While studying noun/adjective agreement in Spanish class, first and second graders draw a person made entirely of fruit. “*La cabeza es una manzana grande, los ojos son uvas pequeñas,*” their teacher explains. “*The head is a big apple, and the eyes are small grapes.*” ✨ Members of the Lesley Ellis School Senior Chorus learn about global music traditions, then entertain residents of a local senior center with songs from around the world.

At Lesley Ellis, the arts are a pathway into traditional academic subjects—and vice versa. Students develop critical thinking skills by evaluating their paintings, collages, and sculptures in relation to the works of celebrated artists.

## ARTISTS IN THE CLASSROOM

*Lesley Ellis’s art and music specialists work with teachers and students to incorporate imaginative arts activities into the curriculum. Professional musicians and visual artists in their own right, our specialists provide students with engaging perspectives on creative techniques and traditions from across the globe and guide them in developing a lifelong appreciation of the arts.*

Early childhood students explore their world through a variety of creative materials and processes. In the elementary grades, drawing and journal-writing complement lessons in math, language, and science. In the weekly arts block, older students collaborate on larger projects that may include composing music and performing in the Lesley Ellis Rock Band, producing a news program for Lesley Ellis TV, or creating ceramic pieces for a student exhibition.

Throughout the day, our hallways echo with music—voices of students rehearsing with one of the school’s two choruses, or the beat of African drums played by children after school. Musicals, plays, and all-school assemblies give students many opportunities to become comfortable in front of an audience.





A prekindergartner explores famous artists' painting techniques.



Fifth and sixth graders take turns conducting a band of classmates playing homemade instruments in preparation for Spring Visiting Day.



Every child has a part to play in a Lesley Ellis performance. Students not only act and sing, but also design sets, paint scenery, and create props and costumes.

● A kindergarten teacher confers with one of his students, taking time to listen to the details of her story and guide her in the next step of the writing process.



● During Writing Workshop, children work independently on their creative stories. Teachers provide encouragement and instruction based on each child's developmental writing stage.

# TEACHERS • STUDENTS

In preparation for the annual KinderGarden party, teachers help students write invitations, gather ingredients for cookies and lemonade, and create a job chart for hosting the school community in the garden. ✨ Third and fourth graders design a model of the human heart, and when several children express an interest in writing, their teacher suggests they compose an essay about how the human heart functions. ✨ Fifth and sixth graders become teachers for a day during a unit focused on the mammals of New England, preparing diligently for the lesson and sharing their expertise with the rest of the class.

Lesley Ellis teachers are passionate about education and create a classroom atmosphere that inspires delight in learning. Talented and innovative, they play a key role in the evolution and growth of the school.

Our team-teaching model places two teachers in each classroom, resulting in a rich exchange of ideas and diversity of teaching techniques. Two grades share each elementary classroom, reinforcing the learning process, providing a sense of continuity, and giving older students the chance to serve as role models for their younger classmates.

The low student/teacher ratio ensures an exceptional level of attention to student needs and a focus on personal guidance and support. Teachers at all levels keep parents informed of classroom activities through conferences, detailed progress reports, and weekly newsletters, and work closely with families to appropriately tailor the curriculum for each child.



A preschool teacher reads a story about construction at the building table.



First and second grade partners work with their teacher to classify rocks and minerals.



“I’m impressed with how quickly my daughter’s teachers came to know her and how deeply they understand her. Right away, I felt they appreciated her strengths, her challenges, and her individuality.”

—LILA HAMILL, parent of kindergartner

# YEAR BY YEAR BY YEAR

The Lesley Ellis curriculum is carefully designed to ensure that students build upon their classroom experiences incrementally as they progress through school. In every class and at every grade level, teachers present topics that reflect each child's individual learning stage and incorporate hands-on projects that allow students to express their creativity and unique interests. With each passing year, our students grow as learners, leaders, friends, and citizens, taking pride in their contributions to the Lesley Ellis community.



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## PRESCHOOL

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Preschool is a time of discovery. Children begin their Lesley Ellis journey in a warm and stimulating preschool classroom environment, where they form strong bonds with teachers and make new friends. Through creative, play-based activities, they develop fundamental cognitive and language abilities as well as skills necessary to socialize and collaborate with others. Lesley Ellis's classroom environment introduces children to structure and routine, supports their growing independence, and provides a solid foundation for future learning.



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## PREKINDERGARTEN

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In prekindergarten, children continue to form friendships with their peers and engage more deeply in learning activities. Students begin to explore increasingly abstract concepts—from family food traditions to the recycling process. They engage in a child-driven curriculum that includes play-based exploration, animated class discussions, and group activities such as yoga and reading the morning message together.

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## TRANSITIONAL KINDERGARTEN

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Transitional kindergarten is a unique program for children who are not quite old enough for kindergarten or who could benefit from an extra year. A bridge between prekindergarten and kindergarten, transitional kindergarten combines independent discovery with structured activities. From artist studies to cooking projects to writing in journals, children thrive in an environment that nurtures their creativity and confidence while providing a solid foundation for kindergarten.



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## CORE VALUES

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*Accepting*  
*Caring*  
*Collaborative*  
*Creative*  
*Respectful*  
*Thoughtful*

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## KINDERGARTEN

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Kindergarten is the first year in the elementary program when all students move into a full-day schedule. Building on their early childhood experiences, kindergartners continue to expand their participation in creative projects as they discover the joys of reading, writing, math, and science. Hands-on exploration, guided lessons, and meaningful group discussions foster kindergartners' growing academic and social skills, as well as confidence in their abilities and passion for new and varied interests.

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## FIRST & SECOND GRADE

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Lesley Ellis's multi-grade classroom structure begins in first and second grade. Students spend two years in a classroom, enabling teachers to gain a deep understanding of their individual strengths, needs, and interests. Younger students look up to their older classmates as role models, who in turn develop leadership skills as mentors. New academic topics and appropriate challenges are introduced as students evolve into cooperative and successful learners.

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## THIRD & FOURTH GRADE

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Third and fourth graders develop critical thinking and organizational skills through a curriculum that may include units on motion and design, colonialism around the globe, and more advanced topics in mathematics. They engage in hands-on investigations with their science teacher, participate in reading and writing workshops with their classroom teachers, and continue to work with specialists in the music room and art studio. Within this framework, students start to assert their independence, learn mediation skills, and begin to take on leadership roles in the school community.

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## FIFTH & SIXTH GRADE

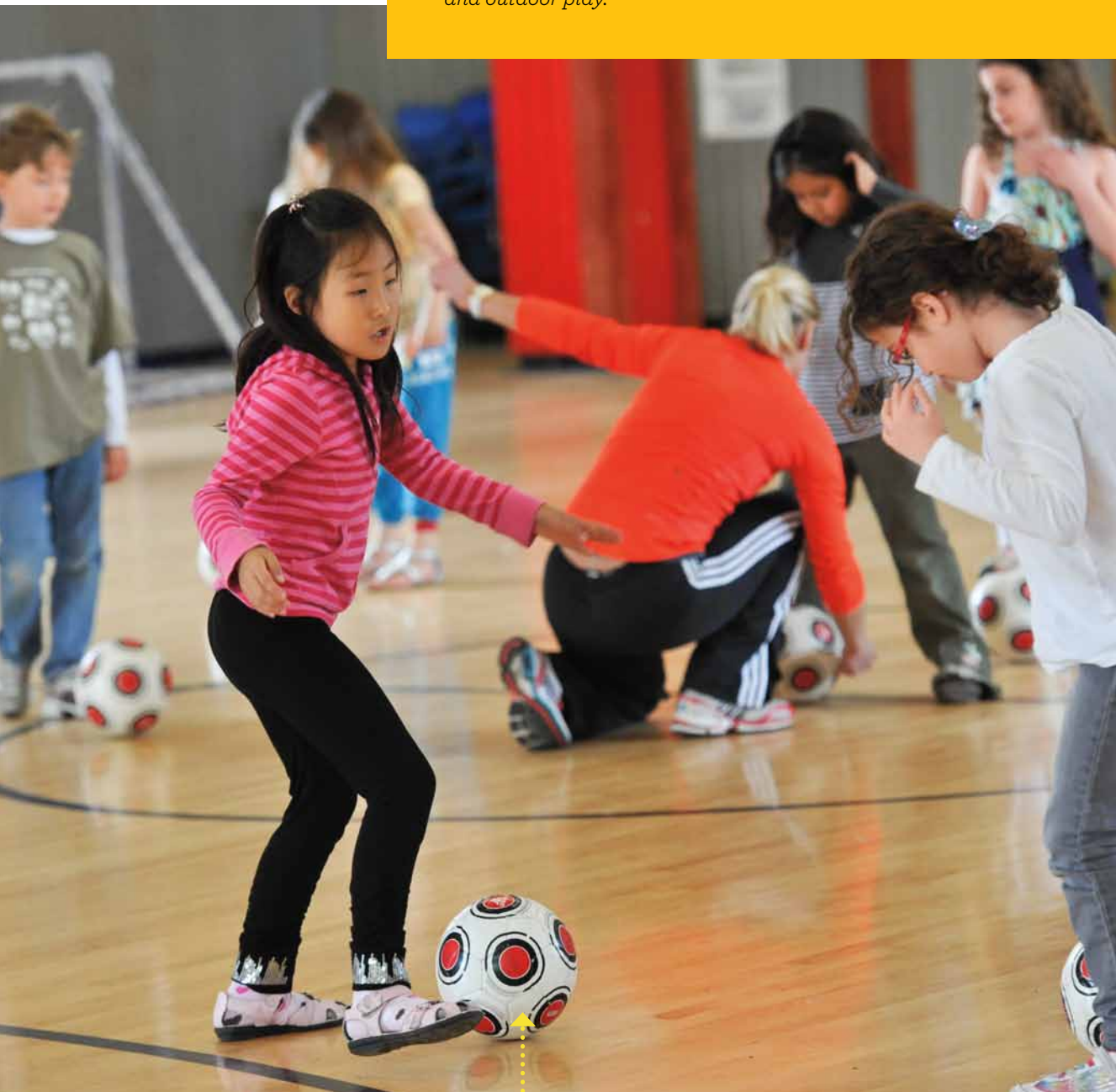
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Fifth and sixth graders solidify their leadership and mentorship skills through activities with their buddy classroom—the pairing of older students with children in earlier grades—and by organizing monthly all-school assemblies. They conduct independent research, manage the school recycling program, use the computer lab independently, and take leading roles in the annual musical. Their curriculum includes more in-depth study of areas including literature, ancient cultures, immigration, mathematics, world geography, and alternative energy, preparing them for middle school.



## AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAM

*The Afterschool Program is available to all students until 5:30 p.m. Students enjoy creative projects, organized activities, and outdoor play.*



- Lower elementary students challenge themselves to improve their passing and dribbling skills.



Students in the Afterschool Program kayak on Spy Pond.



An upper elementary student introduces the next class performance at an all-school assembly.

“I’m thrilled that my son can ski, swim, and study karate through the Afterschool Program. There are so many great extra-curricular offerings—both he and I wish there were time to do more. One day he asked, ‘Can I go to Afterschool every day? It’s so much fun there!’”

—ED WHITE, parent of first grader

# ENGAGEMENT • ENRICHMENT



In preparation for an all-school assembly, fifth and sixth graders work in small groups to coordinate the program. ✨ Third and fourth graders create their own exercises using agility ladders, hurdles, cones, and balls in physical education class. ✨ Elementary students spend the afternoon scaling the walls of a nearby rock climbing gym during the Afterschool Program.

Lesley Ellis students benefit from a range of activities that enhance and complement the academic curriculum and contribute to their personal development. From perfecting their softball pitch to visiting a museum to sampling produce at a farmers market, children discover new interests and abilities by exploring the world beyond our classrooms.

Monthly all-school assemblies provide a fun and supportive platform for students to share their passions and achievements with the entire Lesley Ellis community. Organized and led by fifth and sixth graders, the assemblies unite students, teachers, and parents in lively presentations, performance, and song.

Our physical education program offers numerous opportunities for both indoor and outdoor activities—from ballroom dancing and hockey to softball, swimming, ice skating, and soccer. Whether mastering a yoga position in the gym or returning a serve at a nearby tennis court, children improve their coordination and strength, develop good exercise habits, and learn the importance of fair play and teamwork.

## VACATION PROGRAM

*Our Vacation Program offers engaging activities on early release days, conference days, many holidays, and during school vacations. Programming typically includes field trips to local attractions, museums, and area historic sites such as the Freedom Trail and Boston Harbor Islands.*

# FAMILIES • COMMUNITY



The Lesley Ellis community includes families of all backgrounds, ethnicities, and makeup, with a range of perspectives and interests that contribute to the rich and diverse Lesley Ellis experience. From assisting with a class project to sharing stories about family traditions and celebrations to accompanying students on a field trip, parents have ample opportunity to participate in and enrich their child's education.

Parent involvement, dedication, and support contribute to the cohesive and caring Lesley Ellis environment. Many parents share their time and talents by volunteering for community-wide projects and events. Whether organizing special enrichment programs, sorting gently used kids' clothes for a sale to benefit the library fund, helping at an admission open house, or planning the spring auction, parents may select from a variety of meaningful activities if they wish to become more involved.

## GETTING INVOLVED

*"When my daughter entered Lesley Ellis as a preschooler, I looked forward to our family being fully engaged in the school community," says Susan Santos, parent of a sixth grader and past chair of the Lesley Ellis School Advisory Board. From her work in the classroom to the boardroom, Susan has been involved at all levels of the school. "I've met so many wonderful people and seen the dedication of parents," she says. "Giving of our time is a way to help make Lesley Ellis the best school it can be."*

In the hallways before and after school, at monthly assemblies, and during regular Community Conversations, parents gather to speak with faculty, staff, and fellow parents. Throughout the year, Lesley Ellis parents and families come together for Friday night playdates, performances, the fall meeting, spring auction, and the end-of-year family barbecue.



Parents strengthen the Lesley Ellis community as they share their time and talents.



The family barbecue celebrates year end at Lesley Ellis.





● The father of a transitional kindergarten student visits the classroom to play the upright bass, giving each child a turn with the bow.



Students tally the number of coats collected for a local drive by creating a graph using paper cutouts of coats.



Regular field trips allow children to connect their classroom learning with the greater world. Transitional kindergartners visit a 300-year-old farm as part of their curriculum unit on pioneers.



## HOW DOES YOUR GARDEN GROW?

*Lesley Ellis fifth and sixth graders engage in exciting learning adventures that open their eyes to new experiences and ways of life. The class spends three days at The Farm School, a nonprofit educational farm in western Massachusetts, where they learn first-hand what it takes to run a farm. From sunup to sundown, they feed chickens and pigs, milk cows, collect eggs, plant vegetables, and chop and stack wood. Their experience teaches them the importance of teamwork, the origins of the food they eat, and to care responsibly for animals and the land.*



A fifth grade student plants potatoes during a three-day visit to The Farm School.



# YOUR CHILD • THE WORLD

In the classroom, students learn about the principles of good nutrition and then take part in a community service project to collect canned goods for a local food pantry. ✨ Afterschool students help organize donations for the winter coat drive, which provides warm coats to area families. ✨ Children in every class create and sell colorful birthday cards to raise funds for an organization that provides birthday parties to homeless children in the community.

In conjunction with class work, Lesley Ellis students engage in activities and community service projects that benefit others and increase their empathy and understanding. As students interact with diverse communities, they learn about the world around them and begin to develop compassion and a social conscience.

Through participation in projects led by the Community Service Committee, children see the positive impact of their actions. The committee, made up of parents and faculty across grade levels, organizes school-wide efforts, which include an annual giving tree for local families in need and fundraising campaigns for farms that produce vegetables for area homeless shelters and food pantries.

Lessons about acceptance and caring permeate every Lesley Ellis community interaction. Responding to wider community needs, students discover the importance of helping others and develop the foundation for a lifetime of responsible global citizenship.



During an all-school assembly, students present their donation to a local organization that provides birthday parties for homeless children.



“Lesley Ellis is a small school with a big heart. Its focus is not only on the intellectual growth of children, but on their social and emotional development as well. Children gain an awareness of the larger world and learn to see themselves in relationship with others.”

—PENELOPE METROPOLIS, parent of third grader

## APPLYING TO LESLEY ELLIS SCHOOL

At Lesley Ellis, we strive to build a school community that is inclusive of the broadest possible range of races, cultures, family composition, and socioeconomic backgrounds. We are committed to an admission policy that is welcoming, fair, and nondiscriminatory. During our admission process, we do all we can to get to know your child and your family and to share the information you need to ensure that our program can meet your child's social, emotional, and academic needs.



**We strive to provide high-quality education that is accessible to all students.** Recognizing that the cost to attend Lesley Ellis may exceed the financial capability of some families, a financial assistance fund is available. We encourage parents to learn about the support we are able to give families who demonstrate financial need.

**Choosing the right school is one of the most important decisions you will make as a parent.** We invite you to visit Lesley Ellis and see what makes our school community unique. Spend time in our classrooms, meet our teachers and administrators, and experience the joy of learning that happens here every day.

**You can learn more about Lesley Ellis School at [www.lesleyellis.org](http://www.lesleyellis.org). To schedule a visit, please call our Admission Office at 781-641-1346. We look forward to getting to know your family.**



### lesley ellis school

Office of Admission  
41 Foster Street  
Arlington, MA 02474  
781-641-1346

[www.lesleyellis.org](http://www.lesleyellis.org)  
[admission@lesleyellis.org](mailto:admission@lesleyellis.org)

Lesley Ellis School will base all student admission decisions solely on the individual student's ability to benefit from the programs and activities offered. Students are accepted based on the ability to participate fully in age-appropriate school activities without the need for individual support due to behavior or learning issues. No child or family shall be discriminated against because of race, religion, cultural heritage, national origin, gender, political affiliation, sexual orientation, marital status, or disability. Lesley Ellis cannot accept students whose presence poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others or requires a fundamental alteration of its program. Lesley Ellis considers each student based on an individual assessment regarding whether it believes it can meet the particular needs of the child without fundamentally altering its program.





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