Athenian
AN ACADEMIC & CREATIVE ADVENTURE
From Athenian’s first days, we have guided young people like you on an amazing academic and creative adventure, helping them find their voices as well as important things to say. Our warm campus community is made up of many colorful personalities, and we all share a deep curiosity and love of learning. At Athenian, friends and teachers ask questions, explore ideas, and expand your awareness. We have a great time in the process.

Athenian is a place where you can let your many talents and skills shine. You may become a geometry whiz or captain of the soccer team. Maybe you’ll create a sculpture with found objects, help design a robot, or travel to South Africa. All these experiences build the exciting, interesting life that lies ahead of you.

We’re proud of The Athenian Middle School students who have gone on to live their dreams—the doctors and entrepreneurs, novelists and environmentalists. They began right here, where you are now.

At The Athenian School, positive experiences with tremendous depth and breadth seem to occur naturally and with a certain inevitability. Though I have taught graduate level courses at the University of California, I found it especially rewarding to discuss the concepts that my sons brought home from their Athenian classes.

Charles Cerjan, parent
Research Scientist, Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory
Danville, CA
The number of students in each classroom at Athenian is small, and the rooms are filled with people as bright and curious as you are. Athenian inspires students to join in and do their best, which makes it easy to speak up, volunteer to lead class projects, and learn with excitement.

You have a natural curiosity about life and ideas. We take that curiosity and develop it into spirited intellectual exploration. Are reality T.V. shows a bad influence? Was Maya Angelou a revolutionary? Should young immigrants arriving alone over the border be allowed to stay? We want to help you develop your ideas.

On Focus Days you’ll spend the day putting what you learned that week into practical use, for example, re-enacting migration in the Pacific Rim or visiting San Francisco’s Conservatory of Flowers after studying plant adaptations.

Athenian’s outstanding teachers are your guides. They’ll explore medieval sailing ships with you, lead you on hikes, and they’ll always find a way to help you exceed your own expectations.

- Student engagement in learning is a cornerstone of Athenian’s teaching. Our student/faculty ratio is 10:1 and average class size is 15-17 students, so our teachers can involve students in problem solving, discussion, debate, and active learning.

- Visual and performing arts classes are a full part of the curriculum, meeting three times per week. Visual arts feature drawing, painting, sculpture, clay, and conceptual creations. Performing arts include instrumental and choral music as well as dramatic performance.

- Students are placed in math and language classes based on mastery and readiness rather than year in school. Some students in advanced classes have the option of attending these classes in The Athenian Upper School.

- Homework Club provides the option of staff-supervised study from 3:45 to 6 pm every day (hourly fee applies).

For a complete description of classes and programs, please see the Curriculum Guide on our website or in our Admission package.
Your Athenian education will last well beyond mastering the periodic table and your analysis of great books. When you finish middle school, you’ll be prepared not only for an excellent high school and college, but prepared to thrive in your future.

At Athenian you can expect to work hard but we also want you to take time to ponder, play, and try a lot of new things. How will you use your talents and newly sharpened intellect? We’ll be there to support your dreams. So just be you. Be different.

Our teachers are your partners in learning. As masters in their subjects, they ignite discussions, share great stories, celebrate our successes, and help us rebuild when we need it.

Beyond Classrooms

Hands-on and Outdoor Learning
An Athenian education is experiential, built on inquiry-based learning in our classrooms, laboratories, libraries, and across our beautiful expansive campus. We make use of our campus, as well as the parks, cities, and wilderness of the Bay Area, to experience and explore science, environmental awareness, and social sciences first-hand.

Focus Days
From Salon Day (role-playing historical figures) and Baseball Draft (teambuild, statistics, and computers) to Spartan Day, Athenian’s Focus Days provide unforgettable ways to fully apply and creatively master a variety of subjects.

Class Trips
Faculty-led adventures each spring in our program have recently taken our sixth graders to three days of camping at Pinnacles National Monument; seventh graders to explore Santa Cruz and Catalina Islands; and our eighth graders to Washington D.C.

After-School Activities
We offer an unusual array of fun and rewarding activities and electives, including our on-campus (real!) airplane construction project, robotics team, and sports competitions with other schools, homework club, and Middle School socials.

Young Round Square
Athenian’s Young Round Square membership involves Middle School students in exciting projects supporting community service, global adventure, and the environment. Students build useful cross-cultural skills.

Preparation for High School and College
Students in good standing are encouraged to continue their studies at Athenian’s outstanding Upper School.

A major United States Department of Education study, The Condition of Education, demonstrated that the characteristics of an Athenian education are key predictors of success in college and careers:
• small classes
• close-knit community
• hands-on learning
• actively engaged parents
• individual attention
• high quality teachers
• educational experiences beyond the classroom
Yes, we take our academics seriously, but we’re just as serious about learning in all kinds of creative ways. So make a joyful noise with the choir, write a play, sketch out your idea for a new app, or compete on Athenian’s basketball team against other schools.

We realize that each of you will find your path in different ways. Sometimes getting there means learning new values, like taking responsibility for your health and working with others toward a common goal.

• Athenian’s outstanding resources include our state-of-the-art library, gym, multi-purpose room, sports field, swimming pool, and theater.
• Join band or chorus with opportunities to perform in several concerts each year.
• Compete on inter-school teams in soccer, basketball, volleyball, golf, ultimate Frisbee, wrestling, and flag football.
• Just a few electives you’ll find are computer technology, journalism and yearbook, student leadership, and robotics.
• Recent field trips included nearby Mount Diablo State Park and San Francisco’s art museums.
• Service projects have involved cleaning the Hayward shoreline, working at a local food bank, and volunteering at an assisted living home.
• Friday Focus Days give you the chance to study one topic in-depth through a hands-on project or activity.
• The Athenian Engineering Collective is our Upper School robotics program where you can build and compete with a robot of your own design. Middle School students are invited to learn alongside Upper School students.
We love learning. Athenian students voice many perspectives; they are thoughtful, gregarious, comical, and serious, and together all of us inspire each other to think, ask questions, reach beyond our comfort zones, and do our best. And we know that when we need support, it’s always within reach.

Athenian’s cooperative spirit can be seen everywhere. On teams and in classes, it’s difficult to be left behind. Whether helping you with your costume for your first Focus Day or quizzing you on art history terms, you’ll find friends who can laugh and learn with each other.

Even Athenian’s beautiful campus is a source of inspiration. Our buildings are filled with learning resources and spaces, but there are also lots of big chairs, lawns, and shady trees where you can have a quiet conversation or just take time to daydream.

At the core of our community, all students take part in Advisory Groups, in which faculty mentors work with students to provide guidance and support.

My daughter grew miraculously at Athenian. She exhibits self-confidence and logical reasoning when communicating. Athenian enabled her to compete comfortably in the world of academic achievement but, most importantly, she developed an understanding, appreciation, and respect for human differences.

Karen White, alumni parent, mortgage representative
Oakland, CA
Athenian provides many opportunities to serve others in the school community and in the wider world. Friendships at Athenian include students with many different backgrounds, cultures, and perspectives. By collaborating with a diverse group of peers, you will develop greater cultural competence and be prepared for success in the 21st century.

The community at Athenian is vibrant and diverse, with students from all over the East Bay. Nearly 60% are young people of color. Our Upper School boarding program includes students from more than a dozen countries. At Athenian, more than 20% of students receive financial aid.

The Athenian School has given my daughter a middle school education that surprised and overjoyed my wife and me with its excellence and fully rounded approach to childhood development. The academic standards are rigorous and absolutely top-notch, and the humanistic techniques employed by teachers vigorously reinforce the values of self-reliance and caring for others. I could not be happier with this school.

Athenian parent in an online review

Our young Round Square International invites Middle School students to attend conferences and take leadership roles that support global service, global adventure, and environmental stewardship.
At Athenian, we believe that we can make a difference and that by helping others we help ourselves grow into better people. That’s why all of us make time to give back. Are you a whiz at English? You could volunteer your time to help someone learn to read. Maybe you love to work outdoors. Join us for beach clean-up or volunteer in our on-campus orchard. You’ll always have plenty of choices. You may even dream up your own service activity to make our communities just a little better for everyone.

• Here at Athenian, students collaborate in campus clean-up, benefit fundraisers, disaster relief, student government, and yearbook.
• Off the Athenian campus, we travel the region, engaging in projects designed to broaden perspectives and strengthen community ties including service at local food banks and assisted living facilities.
• Field trips often combine service and learning when Athenian students travel out into the broader community.

At Athenian we expected that not only our children’s intellect would be developed but their individuality, personal morality, creativity, and senses of humor and fun! Athenian promised us all this. We stayed at Athenian because that is exactly what we found.

Lesah Ross, alumni parent, educator
Lafayette, CA

Environmental Athenian

Athenian has taken steps to protect our ecosystem since we first opened our doors in 1965. From our solar panel arrays that supply much of the school’s electricity to our recycling and composting programs, Athenian models “green” across the campus and curriculum in many ways.

• Our newest buildings employ green design and construction.
• We conserve water and power on campus.
• Solar cells supply more than 50% of Athenian’s power.
Eighth grade graduates in good standing are invited to continue their education in Athenian’s Upper School, a program nationally recognized for its outstanding college and life preparation. For us, high school life isn’t the intimidating transition it is for many middle school graduates. It’s an amazing opportunity to expand our natural love of learning. Nearly 100% of Athenian graduates gain admission to four-year colleges and universities. Many are admitted to their first choice, which in recent years includes UC Berkeley, UCLA, NYU, U Penn, USC, Yale, Whitman, the US Military Academy at West Point, Pomona, Reed, Georgetown, Wellesley, Spelman, Stanford, Swarthmore, and many others.

We’re looking forward to being a part of your continued journey.

A survey of Athenian graduates attending outstanding colleges and universities showed how Athenian prepared them for college and life:

• In every academic subject, 97% felt “prepared” or “highly prepared.”
• More than 80% felt “better prepared” than their peers in these areas: diversity and inclusion, international understanding, articulate student voice, and environmental stewardship.
• Graduates said that Athenian helped them most in these areas: academic and life skills, the ability to meet all kinds of people, confidence, and the perspective gained from the Athenian Wilderness Experience.

The Adventure Continues

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We’re looking forward to being a part of your continued journey.

I’ve written books about the best education but despaired of finding such a high school. To my delight, Athenian is that ideal environment. Students are challenged to think, argue, explore, and try out new skills. Athenian helps teenagers find their place in the world. My son has become, literally, a better person, citizen, and a better sort of grown-up.

Alison Gopnik, alumni parent
Professor of Psychology, University of California, Berkeley
Applying to Athenian

Do you think Athenian might be right for you? We’d like to tell you more and show you our beautiful and lively campus.

Start by visiting the Admission page of Athenian’s website or contact us at the phone number or email address below. Complete the application through our website. Please contact us if you need any help with the application process.

We look forward to hearing from you!

The Athenian School
Admission Office
Telephone: 925.362.7223
Email: admission@athenian.org

Directions to The Athenian School
From San Francisco and the North Bay: take Highway 24 east to the 680 interchange in Walnut Creek. Follow Highway 680 south to Danville.

From San Jose and the South Bay: follow Highway 680 north to Danville.

In Danville, take the El Cerro Boulevard exit and drive east (uphill).

Follow El Cerro Boulevard for approximately 3 miles (it will become Diablo Road).

At the stop sign, turn left onto Mt. Diablo Scenic Boulevard.

The Athenian School is immediately on your right.

The Athenian School
2100 Mt. Diablo Scenic Blvd.
Danville, California 94506
Phone: 925.362.7223
admission@athenian.org
www.athenian.org

The Athenian School is fully accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges as well as the California Association of Independent Schools. Athenian is member of the National Association of Independent Schools, the Association of Boarding Schools, the Round Square Association of Schools, A Better Chance, Inc., the Council for the Advancement and Support of Education, the Secondary School Admission Testing Board, and the Educational Records Bureau. The Athenian School does not discriminate on the basis of ethnic or religious background, sex, gender, or sexual orientation in its educational program.

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The Athenian School believes the best way to master academic subjects is to experience their application first hand. In our rigorous academic program, you and other talented students from San Francisco’s East Bay and around the world will immerse yourselves in coursework, inspiring each other to think critically, problem solve, and collaborate as global citizens. As an Athenian graduate, you will thrive in any of the nation’s best colleges, and be poised for a life of intellectual exploration and meaningful contribution.