



WINTER HAVEN CHRISTIAN SCHOOL
2015-2016 SECONDARY HANDBOOK
GRADES 6 – 12

Winter Haven Christian School
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Student Honor Code

The purpose of Winter Haven Christian School is to encourage the learning and growth of children and young men and women who desire to live their lives as disciples of Jesus Christ. The WHCS Student Honor Code is the foundation of our school community, describing the kind of Biblically-based behavior that is appropriate for disciples of Jesus.

The kind of community we envision is one of mutual trust, respect and honesty—a community in which there is constant encouragement to live lives of honor, fully committed to Jesus. It is a community where students do not feel compelled to keep their belongings locked up, where students do not feel pressure to make ungodly choices, and where students are not ridiculed for their commitment to live honorably.

An honorable community is more than a commitment to follow a set of rules; it is a commitment to an honorable lifestyle. It is our expectation that our students will conduct themselves honorably at WHCS and wherever they go, and that this commitment will far outlast their time at WHCS.

As a student at WHCS, I pledge to the following:

I will honor Jesus Christ by seeking to glorify and obey him in all areas of my life. I understand that my personal conduct both in and out of school is a key indicator of my walk with the Lord, and therefore, I commit to a lifestyle that is consistent with being a Christian.

I will honor my teachers and the entire WHCS staff by doing more than what is expected of me and by having a positive attitude. I will be a positive contributing member in each of my classes and in the school community.

I will honor my fellow WHCS students by treating them as special and respecting who they are, and their viewpoints, academic work, and personal property. I understand that any form of bullying, intimidation, theft, harassment, violence, or sexual contact is unacceptable.

I will commit to absolute honesty and full effort in all of my academic pursuits. I understand that I am at Winter Haven Christian School first and foremost to learn to “love the Lord with my heart, soul, mind and strength.”

I will respect the WHCS facilities, and will do my part to contribute to a clean and orderly learning environment. I understand that vandalism, littering, and any other means of defacing school property is unacceptable.

I commit to following the guidelines and policies outlined in the current version of the WHCS Student Handbook, which are designed to provide for a well-structured, safe, positive, and Christ-centered learning environment. I understand that there are discipline processes in place which are intended to engage my heart and help me learn to flee evil and pursue righteousness.

I will accept the consequences for any unacceptable behavior in a gracious manner. I understand that my choices have consequences and that I will be held accountable for what I do and what I don't do.

Signature

Date

Parent Signature

Date

Curriculum and Program

Academics

The curriculum offered at Winter Haven Christian Secondary School is designed both for the present and the future. It seeks to develop academic and life skills that can be used during the student's time at WHCS and will be foundational for building success in future endeavors both academically and in the student's Christian walk. Both the schedules and the curriculum are designed to provide opportunities for individual expression within the academic world and also to create opportunities to use and increase the gifts that they have been given by their Creator through service to their individual communities and the world at large.

The school recognizes the responsibility that it has to provide each student with the opportunity to succeed. However, it is abundantly clear that no amount of prodding or nurturing can substitute for personal desire and commitment. The student, yes, you, must take responsibility for your own education. Success is something that you control. All learning is intentional.

There may be times when requirements seem quite demanding, but you will find that teachers are anxious to help you through those times. Teachers are here to do more than give assignments, grade tests, or collect homework. They are here because they love the Lord and want to share that love by sharing their knowledge and interest in a subject with you. They wish to challenge you, provide you extra help and be available to listen to you as someone the Lord is using to make a difference in the world.

You are expected to avail yourself of the opportunities that are presented by using study periods for study and by seeking out teachers for the extra help that you need.

School Textbooks

School textbooks are the property of the school and will be used year after year. Students must take care of books issued to them. If a textbook or workbook is damaged or lost, parents will be required to buy a replacement.

Divisions of School Year

The school year is divided into four quarters of approximately equal length. At the mid-point of each quarter, interim progress reports are generated and report cards are generated at the end of the marking period. Both reports will be sent home and are available on *Sycamore Education*.

Sycamore Education is the WHCS online grade book. It is for use by students to keep current on their assignments, download class notes and view their grades in real time. Parents logging in and checking on their student's progress is another key to successful communication between parent and teachers. It is the parent's responsibility to make sure that the school has a current email address so that parents may access the Sycamore Education website. Accounts will be set up during the summer for new families. Lunches are ordered exclusively through Sycamore Education

Students showing deficiencies will be placed either on Academic Probation or Academic Warning further explanation to follow.

Marking System Grade 6-12

Numerical grades for all subjects will be given unless otherwise stated. A student qualifies for Honor Roll with a grade point average of 3.0 or higher with no grades below a "C" in any subject on their report card.

A failing grade will be given when a numerical grade is lower than 60.

Final grades are derived by computing each quarter as 25% of the final grade. Half credit/half year course grades are derived by computing each quarter as 50% of the grade with the final counting as 20% of the grade.

In order to advance to the next grade level, each year's requirements must be met. Any summer grades for classes that were not satisfactorily completed for that year must be registered with the WHCS office by August 10th of that year.

Grading Scale

Please refer to the following chart for numeric conversion into GPA and letter grade values.

Code	Description	Low	High	GPA Value
A	Excellent	90	100	4.00
B	Very Good	80	89.99	3.00
C	Average	70	79.99	2.00
D	Poor	60	69.99	1.00
F	Fail	0	59.99	0.00

Academic Probation

Students who are failing three or more subjects will be placed on academic probation. When a student is placed on probation, a mandatory meeting with the student and parents will be arranged. The student will have a five week period to demonstrate a marked improvement. If no improvement is shown, they may be subject to dismissal following another conference with Administration. The student on probation will also be prohibited from participating in any competitive team play, student government offices, after school memberships, or field trips when their classes are in session. Their grades and subsequent privileges will be reviewed at the end of a five week period.

The student on probation is required to take advantage of any extra help offered by the subject teacher either during a study hall period or afterschool. WHCS reserves the right to dismiss a student either mid-quarter, mid-year or any time after said student persistently fails to meet academic standards.

Academic Warning

Students who have failed any two graded subjects will be placed on academic warning.

The student on academic warning is required to take advantage of any extra help offered by the subject teacher either during a study hall period or after school.

Both the student on probation and academic warning will come up for review midway into the following quarter. If at this time their academic standing has improved with passing grades in subjects previously failed the student will be reinstated with all rights and privileges afforded a student in good standing.

Any students who have failed three or more core subjects at the end of the school year may not be considered for re-enrollment the following school year.

Incompletes

If a student is unable to complete the course requirements within the quarter due to absences caused by sickness, or family crisis, the student will receive a grade of "I". The student will be given 15 school days in

the following marking period to complete all course work if the incomplete grade occurs within the 1st, 2nd or 3rd quarters. If an incomplete grade is given in the 4th quarter, the student will be given 10 school days to complete all course work.

If the work is not satisfactorily completed the incomplete will turn into a grade of 50. Students, who believe that they may receive an incomplete grade, should speak with their teachers concerning all needed course work.

Late Assignments

All Homework is expected to be completed on time to receive the 100% maximum homework grade. Teachers are under no obligation to accept homework or assignments that are late with the exception of a legal absence and/or a rare circumstance approved by administration.

Rank in Class

This calculation determines how a student places in comparison to other members of his class. Students will be ranked at the end of the junior year and their final ranking at the end of the 3rd quarter in the senior year. Colleges request this information as part of their assessment of a graduating senior.

Testing

Various types of standardized tests evaluate the progress of a student. Tests to evaluate ability, achievement and anticipation of future progress form a vital part of the educational program at WHCS

- ***Stanford Achievement Test*** – Grades 6-10: This test assesses student achievement in major subject areas.
- ***Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude & National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT Test)*** – Grade 11 Students – Fee \$15.00. This test determines a student's qualifications for National Merit Scholarships, and provides evaluation of the student's academic and study skills, strengths & weaknesses. Insight is provided into grammar, vocabulary, reading, math and reasoning ability. This test is considered practice for the SAT college entrance exam.
- ***Armed Services Vocational & Aptitude Battery (ASVAB)*** Grade 11 Students. Provides students with skills assessment and a career interest inventory.
- ***Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT)*** – Grade 11 and 12. The SAT meets the admission requirements of many colleges. It assesses reading vocabulary and math skills. The test results are often used by colleges to determine academic scholarship. Administration of test will be at a public high school of your choice.
- ***American College Test (ACT)*** – Grade 11 and 12. The ACT assesses verbal, math science, and social studies achievement. Many colleges will consider this exam as an alternative to the SAT in determining college admission. College scholarship merit may be determined by the ACT score, as well.

Parent-Teacher Conferences

Formal Parent-Teacher conferences are offered at the end of the 1st and 2nd marking period. However, parents are free to make appointments with their teachers at anytime in the school year. If a parent or a teacher desires to have a parent-teacher conference with a teacher(s) of classes in which your child is enrolled the conference must be individually scheduled in advance. Appointments for Secondary conferences are usually held after school hours. If meeting times are not possible due to parents' schedules, a phone conference can be arranged.

With respect to ongoing communication with faculty, please feel free to contact any particular teacher during the course of the year. You may leave a message with the school office or contact them via the WHCS email. It is the desire of the school to be of service to both parents and students. We do urge, however, that face-to-face meetings be made by appointment with the teacher at a mutually convenient time. You may also make your request known to the school office and it will be forwarded to the teacher.

HONOR ROLL

While making the honor roll is a worthy goal for any student, parents should be careful not to overemphasize the importance of making the honor roll. Not all students are endowed with the same intellectual gifts. The primary emphasis should be placed on encouraging the child to always do his best and praising him for his efforts. Parents should complement their child's achievements but at the same time should not ignore his failures. Students are selected for the honor roll on the basis of academic achievement and attitude. A student is named to the honor roll by achieving a grade point average of 3.0 or better with no grades below "C". No honor roll is named in kindergarten.

In calculating grade point average, the following values are given to grades: A=4, B=3, C=2. Full weight is given to the primary subjects of Bible, Phonics/Reading, Math, Writing, Science, History/Social Studies, Language /English and Spelling. Only half-weight is given to the subjects of Music, Art, Physical Education/Group Play (and computer classes for Middle School).

A recognition called "2-ups" is given to any student who brings his/her grade up two letter grades in any subject during a nine-week period.

When honor roll is read, those making all "A's" in both academics and conduct will be recognized.

RETENTION AND DEMOTION

Students unable to work on grade-level may be subject to demotion during the school year or retention at the end of the school year. Students will normally not be demoted except during their first nine weeks in a class. Students will not be demoted or retained until such recommendation is reviewed by a committee composed of faculty and Administrator. Maturity of a student may also affect the committee's recommendation to retain a student.

In grades 6 & up in order to be promoted to the next grade students must maintain a minimum of a 2.0 (C Average) Grade Point Average in their core classes (Math, Social Studies, Science, English, Bible and Full Year Foreign Language classes). Students may be given an opportunity to bring their GPA up to a 2.0 over the summer if they received a grade of D or lower in only one or two classes.

8th GRADE MOVING UP/GRADUATION

We will no longer be having a school sponsored 8th grade graduation due to the advent of a 9-12 program. WHCS will continue to have special events for Middle School/8th Grade as planned by the Middle School Staff.

HIGH SCHOOL VALEDICTORIAN/SALUTATORIAN

WHCS will name a Valedictorian and Salutatorian at the end of the first semester of the graduating classes Senior Year. This timetable may be extended if students are close in GPA. The criteria will include (but are not limited to) GPA, numeric averages may be utilized to break a tie, behavior record and years spent in the WHCS High School Program. Valedictorians and Salutatorians will have to submit a copy of their speech for pre-approval prior to graduation ceremonies and the approved speech must be presented at graduation verbatim.

Diploma Requirement

Graduation Requirements Winter Haven Christian School

*Requirements are subject to change as per Florida Graduation Guidelines.

Subject Area	Description
Bible – 4.00 Credits Or 1 Credit for every year enrolled at WHCS.	Old Testament Survey (1.00) New Testament Survey (1.00) Understanding the Times 1 (1.00) Understanding the Times 2 (1.00)
Math – 4.00 Credits	Algebra 1 (1.00) Geometry (1.00) Algebra 2 (1.00) Pre-Calculus (1.00) Advanced Topics in Math (1.00)
English/ Language Arts – 4.00 Credits	English 9 English 10 English 11 English 12
Science – 3.00 Credits (With two lab components)	Physical Science (1.00) Biology (1.00) Anatomy (1.00) Physics(1.00) Chemistry (1.00)
Social Studies/History – 4.00 Credits	World Geography/ Life Management (1.00) World History (1.00) U.S. History (1.00) U.S. Government and Economics (1.00)
Foreign Language – 2.00 Credits Completed Online Must be two in the same language.	Foreign Language 1 (1.00) Foreign Language 2 (1.00) Foreign Language 3 (1.00) Foreign Language 4 (1.00)
Physical Education – 2.00 Credits	PE 9 (0.50) PE10 (0.50) PE 11 (0.50) PE 12 (0.50) Team Sport (0.50) Interscholastic Sports can count as P.E. Credits
Fine Arts – 1.00 Credits	Art Music Performing Arts Graphic Design
Academy Credits – 4.00 or 1.00 for each year at WHCS starting in 2015-16	Academy (1.00)
Electives – 2.00 Credits	Student Council, Computer Electives Classes outside of the minimum requirements can also be counted as electives.
26 Credits Minimum	

Courses at Warner University and Polk State (Junior and Senior Year Only):

A semester long class at Colleges will count as 1.0 High School Credits. However, grades at Colleges will be given an extra 0.5 grade point in calculating Grade Point Average. For example, if a student in WHCS High School Government and Economics gets an A in the class, it is given a G.P.A. weight of 4.0. However, a student taking Government and Economics at Warner University or PCS receiving an A will have that grade point recorded as 4.5 when determining G.P.A.

Students are responsible to make sure that classes at Warner University or PSC fit into their High School class schedule or take that class via the internet. Students are also responsible to get any courses they wish to take at PSC or Warner University pre-approved by WHCS administration. Student is responsible to provide their transportation to and from Warner University and/or PSC.

- **Dual Enrollment:** College credit is available for certain courses that meet the criteria as per our agreement with Warner University and PSC. These courses vary from year to year. When one of the dual enrollment courses is satisfactorily completed, that student will receive full college credit. There may be an extra fee involved for dual enrollment classes. Enrollment is voluntary. Contact the Principal's office for further details.
- **CLEP Testing:** Any High School student may participate in CLEP testing. These are tests given by the College Board that allow a motivated high school student to take a college level test for credit. They must achieve a passing grade as determined by the College Board and then they are eligible to "place out" of a college class with full credit for that class. For further information about CLEP tests, please contact the Principal's office.

Note: All graduation requirements must be met in order to receive a Winter Haven Christian School diploma. Any senior who fails any course in their final year will not receive a diploma.

Chapel Services and Procedures

Chapel will take place one day a week, and it is designed as a time when all students and faculty can renew themselves in the Lord. There will be a period of praise and worship followed by the ministry of the Word or personal testimony. Students should bring their Bible to chapel.

Student Community Service Requirement

An important aspect of Christian education is to instill the necessity of having an attitude of willingness to serve the needs of the community. Therefore, **twenty hours of community service are required for each student in grades 9 through 12. The hours must be completed each school year and verification forms submitted to the Principal's Office by the end of the third quarter.**

- **Community Service opportunities include:** Volunteering to serve in various capacities during the school day such as serving on cleanup teams in the cafeteria, hallways, and as assigned by the custodial office. Students should also seek opportunities outside of WHCS such as church related activities that serve others, helping neighbors, and other community outreaches. *Family related chores such as babysitting, cleaning or lawn care do not qualify for Community Service Hours as these activities are part of a healthy family dynamic.

Field Trips

Each year individual subject trips may be engaged. Trips are designed to accomplish academic learning goals as well as to provide spiritual and social interaction in the exposure to different community activities.

Junior/Senior Class Trip & Missions Trip

Juniors and/or Seniors will be going on an overnight trips (one each year) and will be either educational or missions in nature. In addition, upperclassmen will attend a domestic mission's trip that also meets the travel guidelines as the educational trip. Students should start planning for this trip their Freshman year

with the help of their class advisor and must be approved by administration. These trips have the potential to be the most significant relationship building trip to be undertaken in the course of a student's educational experience at WHCS. All funds needed for these trips are to be raised by the student. Students who have had a history of behavioral and/or academic problems may not be eligible to participate in these trips.

Athletics

The purpose of the athletic program at WHCS is to encourage students to appreciate the physical abilities that are God given, and to understand that different levels of physical ability are vital to successful teamwork. Each student is challenged to the limits of their own physical ability through hard work and discipline in facing difficult challenges. The setting may be the physical education class, team practice, or the field of competition.

Each student must meet the physical education requirement on a yearly basis. Failure to do so may be cause for dismissal. Physical Education receives a numeric grade.

Sports Offered

The following sports are offered or are in the development stage at WHCS:

1. Soccer
2. Tennis
3. Cheerleading
4. Bowling
5. Archery
6. Cross Country
7. Volleyball
8. Basketball

Winter Haven Christian School desires to expand our athletic program. However, student participation is vital to make these programs successful. It is expected that students who sign up for Athletics stay with the team until the completion of the season with the exception of an injury. All students entering grades 6-12 are able to try out for the Sports and Cheerleading Programs. Students, however, must complete all required sports physicals prior to trying out for a team. Additional fees will be required for interscholastic sports or athletic clubs.

Athletic Equipment and Uniforms

At the end of each sport season, students are expected to return all individually loaned school equipment and uniforms. Uniforms are expected to be returned laundered. A five-day return period is granted. Items not returned within this time period are assessed a \$5.00 per day late charge up to a maximum of five school days. If not returned by this time the student will have a bill sent home for the replacement cost of the item plus the late charges incurred. All late charges must be paid even if the item is returned at a later date. A student will not be selected for a competitive team if a uniform or equipment from a previous season is not returned or if there are outstanding late charges or replacement costs.

Sports Events

If a WHCS student wishes to attend a sports event after school, an adult must provide supervision, either the parent or responsible adult to whom the parent has assigned authority. Notification must be made to the office of such arrangements and transportation home is the responsibility of the parent or designated adult. Students may not be in the aftercare program once signed out by an adult. Students utilizing aftercare before a sporting event will be charged the normal fees as per WHCS policy.

All student spectators at sports events must remain in attendance at the designated activity. Students are not permitted to wander in the building, but must always be under the supervision of an adult. If found

wandering throughout the school, WHCS security personnel will detain student until the designated adult or parent/guardian retrieves student. Student spectators showing a pattern of inappropriate behavior at sporting events may be banned from all after school activities.

Sportsmanship (Christ-likeness)

An educational environment is critical to the success of interscholastic athletics. An important part of that environment is the learning of sportsmanship. Without sportsmanship at a contest, the lessons learned lose their value. Remember when you are at an interscholastic event that you are really in a classroom where “good sportsmanship” or “Christ-likeness” is always the lesson and “good sports” gives God the glory.

Good Spectatorship at an Athletic Contest

- Shows interest in the contest by enthusiastically cheering and applauding the good plays or performance of both their team and that of the opposition.
- Shows proper respect for opening ceremonies by standing at attention and by remaining silent while the National Anthem or Pledge of Allegiance is being played or recited.
- Understands that it is a privilege to observe the contest, not a license to verbally attack others or be generally obnoxious.
- Does not boo, stamp feet, or make disrespectful remarks (negative chants, name-calling or trash talking) toward the players and officials.
- Learns the rules of the game and develops an understanding and appreciation for situations that take place in a contest.
- Obeys officials and faculty supervisors who are there to keep order.
- Stays off the floor, field or contest area at all times.
- Does not disturb others by throwing food, cups, or other materials around the building, playing field or floor.
- Shows proper respect for officials, coaches, cheerleaders and contestants as guests in his/her community, and extends all courtesies toward them.
- Knows that noisemakers or laser lights of any kind are not proper for athletic events.
- Pays attention to the halftime program and does not disturb others who are watching.
- Respects public property by not causing damage to equipment or facilities.
- Knows that school officials reserve the right to refuse attendance of those whose conduct is not proper.
- Informs or alerts school personnel of any violations of proper sportsmanship.
- Wears proper clothing that adheres to the WHCS dress code requirements whether in uniform or plain clothes.

College Applications and Academic Transcripts

It is the student's responsibility to mail all college applications, essays, fees and recommendations. Requests for academic transcripts, mid-year reports, standardized test scores and medical records are processed and mailed through the Principal's Office. A Transcript Release Form must be submitted to the Principal's Secretary with all the items completed. The processing time for transcripts to be mailed is two weeks after receipt of the form in the Principal's Office. All financial accounts must be current before the mailing of the transcript. Seniors are not charged for transcripts.

Fines & Charges

In order for report cards and/or academic records to be released, all outstanding fines and charges must be paid prior to the close of each academic school quarter unless prior arrangements have been made with the Accounting Office, or the appropriate school department. This will include fines for lost or overdue books, lunch charges, and any other unpaid bills.

General Conduct Policies and Procedures

In all matters of discipline and conduct, the emphasis at WHCS is on encouraging growth in Christ like character and on maintaining a godly learning atmosphere for the entire student body. Following are the specific campus and classroom guidelines and policies which comprise the basic standards for student behavior. Of course, it would be impossible to cover every conceivable situation in the Student Handbook, and therefore it is understood that the administration of WHCS has appropriate latitude in determining what is acceptable and unacceptable behavior.

Prohibited Objects and Materials

The following objects or materials are never allowed on campus or at any school-sponsored event:

1. Dangerous items, such as fireworks, firearms, matches, lighters and weapons of any kind (including toy or makeshift weapons);
2. Magazines, books, music or any materials that are in poor taste;
3. Pornography in any form;
4. Tobacco, alcohol, illegal drugs, unreported prescription or non-prescription drugs or medications.

Cell Phones and Personal Electronic Devices

Electronic Devices like ipads, ipods, mp3 players, etc. are not permitted at school unless they are issued by the school or if the Principal allows it for academic reasons. Students in Middle/High School are only allowed to have cell phones in school in the event of attendance in an after school activity or sporting event. Approved devices and phones must be stored out of sight from arrival at the school until after 3:15 dismissal, and if visible, used or audible during the school day may be confiscated and only be retrieved by the parent from the office. Phones must be turned off during the school day. Students that bring these devices to school do so at their own risk and WHCS is not liable if any item is lost, damaged or stolen.

Food and Beverages

Food and beverages are allowed only in the cafeteria and/or in classrooms at the discretion of the teacher. Open food and beverages are never permitted in the hallways or other common areas. Trash must be put in waste receptacles. Gum chewing is not allowed anywhere on campus.

Building and Grounds

Students are not permitted in the hallways during class periods without a proper pass. If a student is late to class or must be in the hallway for any reason, it is the responsibility of the student to obtain and carry a pass.

Dress Code

Parents are encouraged to teach their children to live happily and submissively within the school's dress code guidelines. Even though we readily acknowledge that much of the dress code is institutional preference, **it is not optional**. Students are expected to comply with the dress code and parents are expected to monitor compliance before their children leave home. Teachers, staff, and administration are not here to be "clothes police." It is inappropriate that complying students, teachers or principal be distracted from the educational process due to someone failing in his or her commitment to follow the code. Final authority regarding code interpretation rests with the administration and is not subject to appeal.

Guidelines for all students grade 6-12

1. Students must wear the approved polo shirt with the WHCS logo. Students in 9th Grade and Higher will be given the option of other colors than the Red, White and Blue that is required in grades K-8. Uniform shirts will be supplied by a local vendor and orders will take place periodically during the school year. **STUDENTS ARE NOT ALLOWED TO WEAR PLAIN COLOR POLO THAT DOES NOT HAVE THE WHCS LOGO ON IT.**
2. Students must have uniform bottoms or bottoms that have a uniform appearance that are either blue or khaki in color. The cargo style of shorts and pants are allowed for students in grades 6-12. However, they are not permitted for elementary school. The material may not be denim (regardless of color).
3. Uniform bottoms must be fitting in such a way that they do not reveal any midriffs or backsides when attending school.
4. Boys must wear slacks that are not cargo style and girls must wear skirts on chapel days.
5. Students attending Warner University or PSC for dual enrollments are not required to wear a uniform on days they are leaving WHCS to attend Warner University or PSC. However, students should be in neat, clean and appropriate attire that would be considered business casual. Such as a plain polo shirt and non-faded jeans. Sloppy looking t-shirts and ripped jeans or similar is not allowed. Administration has the final say regarding what is allowed and not allowed. Students who abuse this privilege will be required to wear a school uniform at Warner University or PSC.
6. The only piercings that are allowed on a WHCS student are limited to two ear piercings for the girls (see below).
7. Visible tattoos are not permitted at WHCS.
8. Students not in compliance with the dress code will be not allowed to attend classes until the situation is rectified.

COLD WEATHER DRESS:

Cold weather guidelines only apply during the months of December through February when the forecasted low temperature for Winter Haven is 49 or below during school hours (7:00 AM – 5:45 PM). The Principal has at his discretion the authority to allow cold weather dress guidelines on unseasonably cool days during other months.

Indoor Wear:

On cold days students may wear a solid color sweatshirt and/or sweater over their uniform shirt. The sweater and/or sweatshirt must be clearly indoor wear, not be distracting to the educational process (excessively bright, offensive, etc), not clash with the uniform, students in grades 6-8 are not allowed to wear hoodie sweatshirts. However, students in grades 6 and up may wear an approved WHCS "hoodie". The sweater and/or sweatshirt must be free of any writing except a brand name logo, which is to be no larger than 2x2 inches.

Students are allowed to wear a long sleeve shirt underneath their uniform shirt. The shirt underneath the uniform shirt must be the same color as the polo uniform shirt. The student is not allowed to remove the undershirt during the school day. The shirt should be of a similar material as the polo shirt and not have any writing on it, or be of a spandex type material. Turtle necks are not allowed.

Outside Jackets: Students can wear any jacket to school for outside play (no inappropriate logos or wording, of course). However, these jackets cannot be worn inside the classroom.

PANTS, SHORTS, SKIRTS, SKORTS, SCOOTERS, CAPRI PANTS:

Uniform pants/skirts/shorts that meet the guidelines below are approved to be worn as part of the WHCS school uniform.

1. Items may be purchased from any school uniform supplier as long as the garment is labeled as a school uniform product and/or is consistent with school uniform styles. Cargo Style is permitted in grades 6-12 as long as the material is consistent with uniform style bottoms
2. All items must be either solid navy blue or solid khaki in color
3. All items must be neat, clean, fit appropriately, and be absent of signs of excessive wear.
4. All items must not have any embroidery or markings from previous schools.
5. Unless noted below, the bottom may be either pleated or flat style.

Girls:

1. Skirt
2. Skort or Scooter
3. Shorts
4. Pants/Slacks
5. Capri's
6. Jumper *

* Due to the various styles of uniform jumpers the only approved jumper is the IZOD brand solid navy blue or khaki jumper, which is available on JC Penney.com.

Boys

1. Shorts
2. Pants/Slacks

Shorts must be mid-thigh length and **skirts, scooters and skorts** must be **no shorter than 2" above the top of the knee cap.**

Students can wear blue jeans, blue jean shorts or blue jean Capri pants (girls) on Fridays once a month (see school calendar). All jeans must be modest, fit appropriately, and have no holes or tears.

BELTS: Belts must be worn with pants, shorts, scooters or Capri pants. Belts are not required on jeans/T-shirt Fridays once a month. Belts must be plain (no glitter or decoration of any kind) and either navy, black, tan, white or brown.

SOCKS/TIGHTS/LEGGINGS: Socks must be neat and clean and should not be distracting to the educational process (bright neon colors, characters, etc.) Tights and/or Leggings should be plain and match/coordinate with the uniform white, navy, black or red. No distracting decorations are allowed. Administration has the final say in what is appropriate or not.

SHOES: All shoes must be close-toed and coordinate with the colors of the uniforms. The following are **not allowed:** sandals, flip flops, backless footwear of any kind, or boots. For safety reasons, shoe heels should be no higher than 1". Shoes must be clean and neatly tied or fastened with Velcro, where applicable. Dress shoes should be either brown or black. Sneakers should be predominately one color that are not bright in appearance. Bright colored or distracting shoe laces if deemed by administration to be distracting are not allowed. Light up shoes are not allowed. Shoes with wheels like "heely's" are not allowed.

OTHER GENERAL GUIDELINES:

Uniform clothing is not to be torn or faded. Children should be encouraged to take pride in their appearance.

No caps or hats may be worn inside the school.

No tattoos (including washable, temporary).

No body piercings of any kind. (Girls may have pierced ears, see guidelines under "GIRLS".)

Pants, shorts, Capri pants, skirts, scooters and skorts must be worn at the waistline.

GUIDELINES FOR GIRLS:

CHAPEL DRESS

Girls are required to wear the uniform on Chapel Days and be dressed in a uniform skirt or skort. On days when the forecasted low temperature for Winter Haven is 49 or below during school hours (7:00 AM – 5:45 PM), girls can wear long pants.

MAKEUP: Girls in grades 6-12 may wear natural- looking makeup. Extreme Bright colors or designs that are distracting to the learning process (too long, black, causing a distraction, etc.) are not allowed. Nail polish for girls in grades 6 & up is allowed as long as the nails are not too long and that the design is not extreme, too bright, or a distraction to the learning environment. The Principal is the final arbitrator regarding makeup and nail designs so if you have any doubt ask.

HAIR: Hair coloring or hairstyles that are a distraction to learning are not allowed. Hair paint or shaved designs are not allowed. Hair color must be a natural color or natural looking color, highlights should be subtle and natural looking. In addition, hair cannot be spiked, unevenly cut or styled in a way that is extreme. If you have doubts see an Administrator BEFORE YOU GET THE HAIR STYLE.

JEWELRY FOR GIRLS:

GRADES 6 – 12: Secondary student girls are allowed to wear earrings that fit within a ¼" circle or dangling earrings that hang no further than ¾" from the earlobe. Middle school girls are limited to two earrings per earlobe (no other part of the ear). Excessive jewelry is not allowed. Any jewelry that is a distraction to learning will not be allowed. Necklaces are limited to 18" in length.

BELTS AND TUCKING IN SHIRTS: When wearing shorts, scooters, Capri pants, or pants with a WHCS polo shirt, girls must tuck in their shirt and wear a belt. Belts are not required on bottoms that are not manufactured with belt loops.

GUIDELINES FOR BOYS

WHCS logo polo shirts can be worn with the following:

- (1) **Khaki or navy pants or shorts.** They must be "uniform brand" or "uniform style". Cargo Style is allowed for students in grades 6-12.
- (2) **Blue jeans or blue jean shorts on Fridays once a month** (see school calendar). A WHCS T-shirt (not P.E.) can also be worn on monthly jeans/T-shirt Friday's. Shirts can be untucked on monthly jeans/T-shirt Fridays. Belts do not have to be worn on these Fridays.

(Boys can wear a white or matching color short sleeve undershirt under their shirts, if desired -- no turtlenecks. The bottom button of polo shirts must be buttoned at all times.)

BELTS AND TUCKING IN SHIRTS: All shirts must be tucked in and a belt must be worn on all days except jeans/T-shirt Fridays.

CHAPEL DAY CLOTHES: Boys must wear long pants on Chapel Day. Boys can wear any WHCS logo uniform polo shirt (not T-shirt) on Chapel Day. Cargo style pants may not be worn on chapel days.

HAIR (Boys): Hair must be **neatly** trimmed and no longer than the top of the uniform shirt collar in the back. Hair should not cover more than the upper half of the ear. Hair coloring or hairstyles that are a distraction to learning are not allowed. Hair paint is not allowed. Hair must be a natural and uniform color. No ponytails, shaved heads or shaved designs are allowed for boys. Boys are allowed to have the smaller corn row braids only if they had that hairstyle at the time they enrolled in WHCS. In the event a boy has that hairstyle WHCS will contact the parent regarding expectations regarding that hair style. Larger dreadlocks are not allowed. In addition, hair cannot be unevenly cut like a Mohawk or spiked. Administration has the right to amend this policy as hair styles and fads change often. If you have doubts see an administrator BEFORE YOU GET THE HAIR STYLE.

JEWELRY (Boys): Boys are to wear no jewelry except watches. Any watches that are a distraction to learning will not be allowed (no beeping).

GIRLS AND BOYS PHYSICAL EDUCATION UNIFORMS, GRADES 6 – 12

Students in grades 6 – 12 must dress out for P.E. class. Students must wear the approved school gym uniform for PE class.

ADMINISTRATION RESERVES THE RIGHT TO BAN ANY FASHION ITEM THAT BECOMES A FAD AFTER THE PUBLICATION OF THIS HANDBOOK, OR THAT IS DEEMED TO BE DISTRACTING TO SCHOOL.

Dress Code Violations

In the spirit of open communication and working as a team, the following procedures will be enacted regarding dress code violations:

1. Students who are in violation of the WHCS uniform requirements will be issued a warning to correct the infraction. No infraction will be counted more than once per day.
2. The next infraction will result in a documentation of the infraction
3. After three documented infractions, parents will receive a phone call and an email as a warning that two more infractions will result in a lunch detention.
4. After five infractions, students will receive a lunch detention.
5. The sixth infraction will result in a Saturday detention.
6. All infractions are cumulative, and will result in detentions and loss of dress down privileges or other consequences as outlined in the sections titled, "Violations of Honor Code or Campus and Class Room Guidelines."
7. You may call the Principal's office to check on your student's status.

Dress Down Days

At times, the administration may relax the dress code for various fundraisers or special events. The following are not allowed on any dress down day, unless otherwise specified by the administration:

- Clothes with tears or holes
- Shorts that are considered too short
- Tank tops, tube tops, spaghetti straps, midriff tops
- Hats or bandanas
- Tight-fitting clothing
- Sweat Pants
- Flip flops
- Pajama/lounge pants

Concert Performances

Student attire for all concerts is outlined and approved by the Music Department.

School Picture Day

Students must wear appropriate uniform clothes for picture day.

Moving Up, Commencement, and Special Events

Girls are to wear appropriate dresses. Dresses that are not acceptable include the following:

- Strapless, halter, one-shoulder, or off the shoulder dresses that are inappropriately revealing
- Low-cut dresses
- Spaghetti strap dresses without a jacket or sweater
- Dresses or skirts shorter than knee length
- Excessively tight dresses
- Dresses with slits above the knee

Boys are to wear a jacket and tie or suit and tie.

The administration may at times give more detailed dress parameters for special events or require the outfit to be pre-approved by faculty, staff or administration.

At the discretion of the supervising administrator, students not adhering to these guidelines will not be permitted to participate in the ceremony or special event.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism refers to presenting someone else's words or ideas—whether intentionally or unintentionally—without giving credit to that person, and is unacceptable. Teachers, at their own discretion, may question a student's work and/or submit student work at Turnitin.com to check for plagiarism.

Sexual Purity

Students at WHCS are expected to practice the highest standards of sexual purity. All forms of sexual immorality are inappropriate for Christian school students, both on and off campus and online.

We define sexual immorality as any of the following:

1. Sexual contact or behavior outside the bounds of marriage, as outlined in Scripture.
2. Illicit, sexually-oriented speech or writing, (private or public) including sexual inferences, off-color jokes, and vulgar language, either verbally or electronically (text messaging, online, etc.).
3. Possessing, viewing, or creating any pornographic material or images, including print, online, or any other media.
4. Endorsing or proclaiming Homosexual behavior.

Public Display of Affection

One-on-one romantic relationships are not encouraged due to the age and stage of maturity of the students. Physical displays of affection between students are not allowed at any time on school grounds, on the bus, or at school sponsored activities. This includes, but is not limited to, hand-holding, kissing, extended hugs, etc.

Profanity

Students are expected to use decent language at all times. Any words, phrases or gestures traditionally or currently understood to be profane or "curse words" are inappropriate.

Vandalism/Property Damage or Misuse

Students will be responsible to pay for any intentional damage that they cause to the school building or school property. Students will be held responsible for activating a fire alarm, misusing 911, or otherwise initiating a report of a fire or other catastrophe without valid cause.

Violations of Honor Code or Campus and Classroom Guidelines

Violations of the WHCS Student Honor Code and the Campus and Classroom Guidelines will be addressed by school staff, faculty and administration for the dual purposes of nurturing Christ like character in our students and preserving a well-ordered learning environment. The following outlines basic principles for how violations will be handled.

Group One Violations include nuisances and minor behavioral problems.	
Typical Group One Violations	Possible Consequences
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Running, shoving or boisterous activity • Chewing gum • Shouting, excessive noise or talking when not appropriate • Passing notes • Uniform violations • Minor violations of individual teacher classroom guidelines • Cell phone use during school day. • Marking or writing on one self or others. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Verbal warning or correction • Non-punitive written notification • Conference with teacher • Parent notification • Writing assignment • Detention • Temporary removal from class • Work detail • Other consequence deemed appropriate by administration

Group Two Violations include significant behavioral problems, often accompanied by deeper attitude and heart issues.	
Typical Group Two Violations	Possible Consequences
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Repeated Group One violations • Cutting class • Profanity or obscenities • Overtly disruptive behavior • Threatening behavior, including bullying of any kind (emotional, physical, verbal) • Fighting • Cheating or plagiarism • Leaving school without permission • Malicious damage to, or theft of, school property or the personal property of others • Disrespect to staff, faculty or administration • Public displays of affection • Use or possession of tobacco • Malicious teasing, scoffing or fault-finding • Computer/Internet Acceptable Use violations • Reckless driving on campus or in transit to PSC or Warner University. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conference with teacher • Parent notification • Writing assignment • Restriction of privileges (i.e. computer privileges, extra-curricular activities, etc.) • Referral to Principal • Paddling (Grades 6-8) • Counseling with school staff or approved volunteer mentors • Work Detail • Behavioral contract • Suspension from sports teams • Failing grade on test or assignment • School community service project • Counseling with professional counselor • In school suspension • Saturday Morning Detention with a \$10 fee to pay supervising teacher. • Other consequence deemed appropriate by administration

Group Three Violations include serious infractions, on or off campus, evidencing significant unacceptable (for a Christian school setting) heart issues.	
Typical Group Three Violations	Possible Consequences
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Repeated or egregious Group Two Violations • Possession or use of pornography, alcohol, firearms, weapons, illegal drugs, unreported prescription or non-prescription medications. • Falsely activating a fire alarm • Sexual harassment or immorality • Homosexual behavior • Blatant insubordination • Serious threats to the safety or welfare of another individual(s) • Posting any item about WHCS and/or a WHCS student online without permission. • Theft from the school or another student. • A Parent or student posting any item about WHCS and/or a WHCS student online without permission • Parent or student not following the traffic guidelines in the parking lot, including cutting over the center grass median. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involvement of law enforcement, as necessary • Out of school suspension • Referral to Board of Directors • Student placed on probation • Dismissal • Paddling (Grades 6-8) • Other consequence deemed appropriate by administration

Administration reserves the right to categorize any discipline issue that is not specifically listed in this handbook.

Student Probation

Students who were not expelled the previous school year, but had a pattern of behavior that resulted in many discipline notices may be placed on probation the following school year at the discretion of the Principal. Terms of the probation will be given to the family in writing before the start of the school year.

Student Conduct Procedure – Steps to dismissal.

It is the expectation of WHCS students to be on their best behavior while at WHCS. Over 90% of our student body goes the entire school year without one behavior referral to the office. WHCS will simply not allow a small number of students disrupt the educational process for those who desire to learn in a Christian environment. Once a student has received two or more group two violations for the year and/or one group three violation that student is in danger of being removed or dismissed permanently from WHCS. The following factors including, but not limited to the following will be used in determining the dismissal of a student:

1. Prior history of behavior problems at WHCS or other schools.
2. Cooperation of the parent/guardian.
3. Attitude of the guilty party.

Ultimately parents understand that regardless of how cooperative they are in working with WHCS once a student has established a negative pattern of behavior that child will be dismissed from WHCS if the child continues to exhibit the behavior that is unacceptable at WHCS.

If a student comes to us confessing a sin in their life before they have been caught in that sin, WHCS may amend discipline consequences if the student is willing to change that behavior, submit to Biblical counseling and other reasonable steps which will be determined on a case by case basis by Administration and the Board of Directors.

General Student Life Policies and Procedures

Student Pranks or Student Cut Days

While student pranks or student cut days are customary at other schools, WHCS has a “zero-tolerance” policy for such activities. Participation in any such activity will result in not being allowed to participate in Commencement activities, as well as other possible consequences.

No Retaliation Policy

Winter Haven Christian School has the policy of zero physical or verbal retaliation in the event of an altercation between two or more students. Students who strike or lash out at another student cannot make the excuse or expect no discipline consequences because “the other party started it”.

APPROVED ALTERNATIVE TO PADDLING

Parents who are totally opposed to paddling their child at home or school must inform the school **prior to the start of school**. Such parents must submit a written plan of discipline before school starts, subject to the approval of the Board of Directors. At the time when a paddling would normally be given, this approved plan would be followed. Paddling will not be a discipline option for students in grades 9-12.

Searches

WHCS reserves the right to search student book bags, purses, gym bag and other personal belongings at the discretion of the administration.

Lockers

Lockers are assigned each year for students in 6-12 by the WHCS Principal’s Office. Any requests for changes must be made in writing, from the parents to the Principal’s Office.

1. Lockers are to be kept neat and clean.
2. Failure to completely clean out a locker at the end of the school year will result in a \$25 fine.
3. Damage done to a locker will be charged to the student who causes the damage.
4. WHCS retains ownership of all locker space, and all lockers may be searched by WHCS administration at any time, for any reason.
5. WHCS is not responsible for lost, damaged or stolen items belonging to students.
6. All personal items and books should be stored in the locker, not on the ground or in the hallway. Unattended items are cleaned up daily, and may be discarded.

Lost and Found

Lost and found articles are kept in the school office, where students or parents may claim them. All lost and found items without names on them and that are not claimed after 2 weeks, are either discarded or donated.

After School Activities

Students staying after school for any reason may only do so under the supervision of an adult. Students must report directly to their assigned location after school, and must stay with the supervising adult until parent pick-up. Anyone staying after school without permission or supervision will be required to attend WHCS aftercare where the parents will pay the appropriate fees.

Phone Calls

Students may only place calls to parents from the office phone. The office will not deliver messages to students during the day, except in emergencies. Students are not permitted to call home to report medical problems. Medical problems are only reported to parents by the school nurse.

Visitors

Only students who are considering enrolling at WHCS are allowed to visit campus. Complete guidelines are available in the office. Parents are always welcome to attend chapel at any time, and without notice.

Library

Students may use the library for research during their lunch period or study hall. To access the library during these times, a student must have a signed pass from the teacher assigning the project, or the study hall teacher.

Social Media in school and outside of school

Winter Haven Christian School reserves the right to ask a student at any time to show their Social Media or any internet posting pages to staff or administration for monitoring or if inappropriate content is suspected. Students and adults may NOT post any items about any student, staff or parent from WHCS past or present without their permission. Students understand that they can be severely disciplined and/or expelled from Winter Haven Christian School if any items are posted online that administration deems as inappropriate, this includes postings by Parents and Students.

Driving to and from school/Warner University/PSC.

Students with a valid Florida Driver's license may drive to and from school and to and from PSC or Warner University or can ride with another student with parental permission. **STUDENTS ARE NOT ALLOWED TO LEAVE THE CAMPUS DURING THE DAY FOR LUNCH, ERRANDS, ETC. WITHOUT PERMISSION FROM ADMINISTRATION.** Students must have the following to the school before they can drive to and from WHCS:

1. Proof of insurance for the vehicles they are driving to school.
2. A signed permission form from their parent to drive to and from school.
3. A copy of their valid driver's license on file with the office.
4. A Valid WHCS parking permit (to be issued when all paperwork has been returned to the school)

Student drivers are allowed to have their siblings as a passenger in their car if permission is given by the driver's parent prior to the start of driving privileges. Students may car pool to and from Warner University or PSC if written permission is given by the parents of all parties.

General Handbook

Students and parents understand that the general portions of the Elementary & General Handbook apply to students in grades 6 & up as well as the policies listed in this Secondary handbook.

Attendance

The following table identifies legal and illegal absences:

Legal	Illegal
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Personal sickness• Death in the family• Impassable roads• In-school suspension• Quarantine• Religious observance• Requirement to be in court• College visits	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Family vacations• Lack of transportation• Cut classes• Working a job• Out of school suspension

Students are responsible to make up all missed work when absent. Students will be given at least one school day to make up work when legally absent. A teacher may give more days if needed.

Ten legal or illegal absences during any one quarter may result in a failing quarterly grade. A prolonged illness with consecutive absences will result in an "incomplete" (I). Any work needed to clear an incomplete is to be submitted to the teacher no later than five days into the next quarter or incomplete will result in a failing grade for the quarter. More than 15 legal or illegal absences per semester will result in the student needing to make up class time with private tutoring, and may result in retention or dismissal.

All absences must be followed by a note of explanation from a parent on the day the student returns to school.

Students who are late to school must bring a note of explanation from a parent, and must sign in at the school office. Late arrivals after fourth period are considered absences.

Tardiness and Class Cuts

Students are expected to report to all classes and lunch periods on time. Illegal lateness of more than 3 minutes will result in a class cut.

TARDINESS/SIGN OUT EARLY

"It is the policy of Winter Haven Christian School that students are expected to be in the classroom all day when school is in session. School starts at 7:35 AM (secondary) and 8:15 AM (elementary) and dismissal is at 2:20PM, 2:40 PM or 2:55 PM depending upon what grade that child is in. Student attendance in class and academic success go hand in hand, as a result students who are consistently receiving illegal tardies and/or are being signed out of school early for any illegal reason, will be subject to the following penalties:

- Once a student reaches four unexcused tardies and/or sign out early during a 9-week marking period will receive a warning notice from the principal.
- Once a student reaches six tardies for a 9 week marking period that student will be assigned a Saturday Morning detention. Parents must pay \$10 which must be pre-paid prior to the detention to cover the cost of a faculty member coming on Saturday morning. The detention will start at 8:00 AM sharp and last an hour. Students will not be allowed to enter the Saturday morning detention room after 8:05 AM. Students who do not go to the assigned detention, do not have their \$10 penalty pre-paid and show up late for the detention will be assigned a three day out of school suspension. No refunds will be given for a student who does not show up or is beyond 5 minutes late for a Saturday morning detention.
- 12 or more unexcused tardies and/or sign out early during a 9 week marking period will result in a three day out of school suspension for the student and a parent meeting with the Principal which may result in the student being removed from Winter Haven Christian School.
- 15 or more unexcused tardies and/or early sign out during the entire school year may result in more severe penalties and a parent meeting with the Principal.

Late Assignments/Homework Make-up Policy

Late Homework and Homework makeup policies are to be determined by the teacher. Administration will approve the teacher's policy to ensure consistency in policies. Parents and students will receive the policy within the first few days of school.

Community Service

Students are required to complete twenty hours of community service each academic year. Community service is defined as any volunteer activity, not performed for the benefit of one's own family. Verification forms are obtained from, and must be submitted to, the Principal's Office by the end of the third quarter. Students failing to complete the required community service hours will not receive their final report cards.

Winter Haven Christian School Internet/Computer Acceptable Use Policy

While computers are a tremendous educational and personal resource, they can also be a source of extremely offensive and dangerous information and images. WHCS uses the most current and advanced Internet filters to protect staff and students from unwanted content. However, no filter is fail-safe. With this in mind, the following policies govern the use of computers and the Internet at WHCS:

1. WHCS computers and the Internet are for supervised educational use only. No unsupervised usage of computers or the Internet is ever allowed. Activities not allowed, but not limited to: online gaming, online shopping/browsing, personal research, online social networking (Facebook, etc.), personal email, chatrooms, or other non-educational usage.
2. Software or Apps may only be installed or downloaded by the WHCS network administrator or computer instructors.
3. Network passwords must not be shared among students.
4. Inappropriate content or images that are mistakenly accessed must be reported to the supervising teacher immediately.
5. No food or beverages are to be brought into the computer labs.
6. Any lost or damaged tablets and/or computers that are signed out to the student will be the responsibility of the student's family.
7. Any items downloaded or produced on a WHCS tablet, computer or other electronic device is to be considered the property of WHCS and may be read by any WHCS personnel. This would include but not limited to school work, personal documents, e-mail and/or social media posts.
8. Winter Haven Christian School reserves the right to ask a student at any time to show their Social Media and/or any internet posting pages to staff or administration for monitoring or if inappropriate content is suspected. Students and Parents/Guardians may NOT post any items about Winter Haven Christian School including, but not limited to any information about any student, staff or parent from WHCS past or present without their permission. Students understand that they can be severely disciplined and/or expelled from Winter Haven Christian School if any items are posted online by themselves or their Parent/Guardian that administration deems as inappropriate or harmful to the school.

These policies extend to all WHCS computers at all times, including after school hours. They also include any computers and/or electronic devices that are brought into WHCS.

MODIFICATION AND EXCEPTIONS TO POLICIES

The Board of Directors reserves the right to modify policy at its discretion when it is in the best interest of the school. An exception to the policy for one is not meant as an exception in the policy for anyone else.

GENERAL HANDBOOK

Parents and Students are also subject to the General Guidelines that are published in the WHCS 2015-2016 General Handbook & Pre-K & Elementary Policies

APPENDIX

MATTHEW 18 PRINCIPLE FOR SOLVING SCHOOL PROBLEMS

BY DR. PAUL A. KIENEL

The "me generation" philosophy of "I'll do it my way" sometimes spills over into the Christian community. For example, when differences develop between individuals some Christians take matters into their "own hands" and by-pass the Biblical procedure of solving problems.

A Christian school is made up of people--parents, administrators, teachers and students. Like any other collection of earthly mortals, the people associated with a Christian school have the potential for misunderstanding, disagreement and even wrongdoing. Nevertheless, it is God's will that we live and work together in harmony. Jesus said, "A new commandment I give unto you that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if you have love one to another." (John 13:34-35)

Due to our human nature we may at times irritate others, resulting in misunderstandings or strong disagreements. In Matthew 18:15-17 Jesus gives His formula for solving person-to-person problems. I call it "the Matthew 18 principle" for solving school problems. The following are the words of Jesus:

"Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou has gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: But if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican."

There are several clear principles that Jesus taught in solving people-to-people problems:

One: KEEP THE MATTER CONFIDENTIAL. The very pattern of sharing the problem only with those directly involved establishes the principle of confidentiality. The Bible has much to say about those who gossip or malign others with their words. "A hypocrite with his mouth destroyeth his neighbor: but through knowledge shall the just be delivered." (Proverbs 11:9)

Two: KEEP THE CIRCLE SMALL. ".....if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone...." The first step and most often the only step needed in solving a person-to-person problem is for one of the two people involved to initiate face to face dialogue. Most problems are solved at the two people level.

Three: BE STRAIGHTFORWARD. "...TELL HIM HIS FAULT...." Jesus tells us to be forthright and to love honestly. Sometimes it is difficult to be straightforward and tell someone the very heart of the matter. But restoration and improvement can only come when the issues are lovingly yet clearly presented. The Scripture says "...faithful are the wounds of a friend...." (Proverbs 27:6)

Four: BE FORGIVING. "...if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother." This implies that once the matter is resolved we should wholeheartedly forgive and restore the person whose fault has offended us. Galatians 6:1 reads "...if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such a one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted."

As I mentioned earlier, most school problems are resolved at the two people level. Forgiveness and restoration is the normal happy conclusion. But what is the Matthew 18 principle if the individual will not "hear" you, or openly disagrees with your version of the problem? Let's say you are a parent of a student in a Christian school. You are unhappy with a teacher because you believe your child is being treated unfairly in the classroom. The two of you have met and talked together and you are not satisfied with the outcome of your discussion. What is the next step in the Matthew 18 principle?

Five: THE PARENT AND TEACHER SHOULD AGREE TO SHARE THE MATTER WITH THE SCHOOL ADMINISTRATOR. At this stage the counsel of Jesus would be "...take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established." Both parent and teacher should rehearse their version of the issue or issues with the school's administration. Each person should come to the meeting in a spirit of prayer and humility, willing to submit to the Lord's will in the matter and also willing to submit to reproof and correction if needed. Those of us who bear the

name of Christ should joyfully conform to the will of Christ. An open and honest discussion among people who are sensitive to godly principles will most often reach an amiable solution.

I estimate that 80% of school problems are solved at the two people level. Another 18% of school problems are solved at the three and four people level which includes the school's administration. This leaves 2% to be resolved at the level of the school board. The board represents the church or church community. Let's say a problem now exists and is not solvable by the normal channels of communication and established school policy. What is the next step in the Matthew 18 principle?

Six: THE PARENT SHOULD SEND A WRITTEN REQUEST TO THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS VIA THE ADMINISTRATOR.

Depending on the complexity of the problem, it may be appropriate for the board chairman to request that all persons involved be present at a school board meeting. The goal of such a high-level meeting is 1) a clear understanding of the problem; 2) solving the problem; 3) reproof and correction if necessary; and 4) forgiveness and wholehearted restoration of those who have made amends.

In summary, the Matthew 18 principle requires that parents talk to teachers about student problems before they talk to administrators. If unresolved at the two people level, the matter is prayerfully and in an orderly fashion moved upward in the school organizational structure. This is the Lord's way of solving people-to-people problems.

A Christian school is a ministry in Christ's name. Everything that is done in the context of the school must be done Christ's way. The world's methods of solving school problems are inappropriate. The idea of suing the school or persons in the school is a secular idea that has no place in the Lord's work. The Bible is clear on this. "Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unjust, and not before the saints?" (I Corinthians 6:1)

Satan would like to destroy the normal flow of harmony and good fellowship in Christian school education. That is not possible if all of us follow the Matthew 18 principle of solving school problems.