




**DOGWOOD**  
CLASSICAL ACADEMY

# **STUDENT & FAMILY HANDBOOK**

**2024-2025**



Dogwood Classical Academy

Street Address

City, NC 12345

[info@dogwoodacademy.com](mailto:info@dogwoodacademy.com)

(704) 576-4268

2024-2025 Family Handbook

Adopted May 7, 2022

Revised and Approved April 3, 2023

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>INTRODUCTION.....</b>	<b>1</b>
School Culture.....	1
Mission.....	1
School Pledge.....	1
Vision.....	1
Core Virtues.....	1
Affiliation with Hillsdale College.....	2
A Note from our Board of Directors.....	3
<b>SECTION 1: SCHOOL LIFE &amp; DECORUM.....</b>	<b>4</b>
School Hours and Calendar.....	4
School Hours.....	4
Front Office.....	4
Summer Hours.....	4
School Calendar.....	4
Student Drop-Off and Pick-Up.....	6
Carline.....	6
Parking.....	6
Attendance.....	6
Absences.....	6
Excused Absences.....	7
Make-up Work.....	7
Extended Excused Absences.....	7
To Report an Absence.....	7
Unexcused Absences.....	7
Truancy.....	8
Tardiness/Early Release.....	8
Releasing a Student from School.....	8
Early Drop-off and Late Pick-up.....	8
Uniform and Personal Appearance.....	9
Additional Uniform Provisions.....	9
Uniforms and Financial Assistance.....	10
Lost and Found.....	10
Toileting.....	10
Discipline.....	10
Core Virtues and General Expectations for Behavior.....	10
Honor Code.....	10
The Purpose of Discipline.....	11

Disciplinary Action.....	11
Detention.....	11
Notifying Parents.....	12
Pink Slips.....	12
Restraint.....	12
Bullying.....	12
Public Displays of Affection.....	13
Electronic Devices.....	14
Lockers.....	14
Lunch and Snacks.....	14
School Meals & Lunchtime.....	14
Snacks.....	15
Birthday Celebrations.....	15
Medication and Medical Care.....	15
Administration of Medication.....	15
Student Medical Records.....	15
Medical Operations.....	15
Medical Records and Enrollment.....	16
Parent/Guardian Obligations.....	16
Food Allergies.....	16
Sick Students.....	16
Lice Policy.....	16
Student Fees and Supplies.....	16
Textbooks.....	16
Fees.....	17
Extracurricular Activities.....	17
Eligibility.....	17
Clubs.....	18
Special Events.....	18
Sports.....	18
Volunteers.....	18
Volunteer Background Checks (DCA Volunteer Background Checks).....	18
Volunteer Confidentiality.....	19
Visitors (DCA Visitor Policy).....	19
Sign-In.....	19
Parent Visits.....	19
Classroom Observations.....	19
Withdrawals.....	20

## **SECTION 2: ACADEMIC POLICIES..... 21**

Curriculum Introduction.....	21
Homework.....	21
Late Homework.....	22
Grading.....	22
Reporting Student Progress.....	23
Teacher Conferences.....	23
Student Placement.....	23
Promotion & Retention.....	24
Kindergarten-5th Grade.....	24
6th-8th Grade.....	24
Academic Honesty.....	24
Plagiarism.....	24
Cheating.....	25
Student Services.....	25
State Assessments.....	25
Controversial Subjects.....	26
Religion.....	26
Evolution.....	26
Human Sexuality.....	26
Videos in the Classroom.....	27
<b>SECTION 3: ADDITIONAL POLICIES &amp; PROCEDURES.....</b>	<b>28</b>
Admissions and Enrollment.....	28
Admissions Eligibility.....	28
Limited Availability (DCA Admissions, Lottery, and Enrollment Policy).....	28
Field Trips.....	29
Extended Field Trips.....	29
School Communication Procedures (DCA Family and School Communication Process Policy).....	29
Parent Communications to Administration, Faculty, and Staff.....	29
General Communication with the School Community.....	30
Social Media.....	30
Communicating with Parents with Joint Custody.....	30
Student Network Use.....	31
Security Checks.....	31
Emergency Policy.....	31
Facility Use.....	31
Parent Teacher Organization.....	31
<b>SECTION 4: GOVERNANCE &amp; MANAGEMENT.....</b>	<b>32</b>
Board of Directors.....	32
Board Responsibilities and Obligations.....	32

Board Meetings..... 32

Communication to the Board..... 32

Role of the Head of School.....33

Chain of Command.....33

Grievance Policy (DCA Grievance for Family Policy)..... 33

    Grievance Related to the Classroom..... 33

    Grievance Related to Administration..... 34

Records Requests..... 34

**SECTION 5: PRIVACY..... 35**

    Family Educational Rights Privacy Act (FERPA)..... 35

    Student Information..... 35

    Change Log..... 36

# INTRODUCTION

## School Culture

### *Mission*

Dogwood Classical Academy will develop students in mind and character through a rigorous classical, content-rich curriculum that emphasizes the principles of academic fundamentals, virtuous living, and civic responsibility.

### *School Pledge*

I will learn what is true, I will do what is good, and I will love what is beautiful.

### *Vision*

The vision of Dogwood Classical Academy is to implement a classical, Great Books curriculum designed to actively engage young learners in order to shape a citizenry who aspire to the classical ideals (of prudence, integrity, justice, temperance, fortitude, charity, diligence, humility and kindness), and who are equipped for the continuation of the American “experiment” in self-government.

By engaging students in Socratic dialogue and inquiry about great ideas, DCA will develop within its students the intellectual and personal habits and skills upon which responsible, independent, and nourishing lives are built, in the firm belief that such lives are the basis of a free and just society. The Academy strives to offer enrichment and to develop character through both curricular and extracurricular offerings, to nurture the child’s humanity with a constant view to the potential adult. The time-honored liberal arts curriculum and pedagogy direct student achievement toward mastery of the fundamentals in basic academic skills and towards exploration of the arts and sciences. Through consistent rigorous engagement with the classical virtues and with great historical figures our students will form a complex understanding of the foundational tenets of our Western heritage.

### *Core Virtues*

Compassion	“There never was any heart truly great and generous, that was not also tender and compassionate.” - Robert Frost
Courage	“Courage is what it takes to stand up and speak; it’s also what it takes to sit down and listen.” - Winston Churchill
Gratitude	“Gratitude is a divine emotion. It fills the heart, not to bursting; it warms it, but not to fever.” - Charlotte Bronte
Humility	“An ill-educated person behaves with arrogant impatience, whereas truly profound education breeds humility.” - Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn
Integrity	“Integrity is doing the right thing, even when no one is watching.” - CS Lewis
Justice	“Justice consists not in being neutral between right and wrong, but finding out the right and upholding it, wherever found, against the wrong.” - Theodore Roosevelt
Perseverance	“I have learned that success is to be measured not so much by the position that one has reached in life as by the obstacles which he has had to overcome while trying to succeed.” - Booker T. Washington
Prudence	“By prudence we understand the practical knowledge of things to be sought and of those to be avoided.” - Cicero

## **Affiliation with Hillsdale College**

The BARNEY CHARTER SCHOOL INITIATIVE (BCSI) is a project of Hillsdale College devoted to the education of young Americans. Through this initiative, the College supports the launch of K-8 charter schools. These schools will train the minds and improve the hearts of young people through a content- rich classical education in the liberal arts and sciences, with instruction in the principles of moral character and civic virtue.

Reform of American public education, to be successful and good, must be built on a foundation of classical liberal arts learning—the kind of learning best suited to a free society and most needed for its preservation. BCSI is an important step in that direction.

To advance the founding of classical charter schools, Hillsdale College works with select school- founding groups of local citizens who care deeply about education, who plan to apply for a charter, and who prove themselves capable of starting and governing a school. When a founding group’s interests and abilities are a good match, BCSI will assist in creating and implementing the school’s academic program, providing the curriculum design and teacher training. This support, along with guidance on the shaping of a vibrant and ennobling school culture, will provide the foundation for these new schools to promote a liberal and civic education in America’s public schools.

Dogwood Classical Academy is supported by Hillsdale College through BCSI, a relationship that offers our school ongoing access to curriculum, training, and resources. For more information on the BARNEY CHARTER SCHOOL INITIATIVE, visit [hillsdale.edu/bcsi](https://hillsdale.edu/bcsi).



## A Note from our Board of Directors

The Latin word for student, *discipulus*, can be translated as “discipline” or “disciple.” This word encapsulates what it means to be a Dogwood Classical Academy Student regardless of whether we are referring to discipline or a disciple.

Dogwood Classical Academy’s school pledge is “I will learn what is true, I will do what is good, and I will love what is beautiful.” To help us pursue these things, our school virtues will be the foundation of the formation of both moral and intellectual virtue of our students. It will, however, take much discipline on behalf of the students to achieve these virtues. They will be held to high academic and behavioral standards. They will be asked to complete rigorous and challenging assignments, including homework, and take tests which will help their teachers see how much they have learned. By doing these things, Dogwood students will become disciples of the great liberal arts of math, grammar, literature, history, and science. This process is not completed overnight or even within a single school year as education is a lifelong experience.

There are many challenges to opening a first year school and we thank you, on behalf of all the faculty and staff at Dogwood Classical Academy for joining us this year. We obviously could not, but more so would not, want to be here without you and your children who will live as scholars each day in class. We know and believe in the power of classical education and have the wonderful opportunity to build the foundation for a wonderful school together and I hope you are excited to be part of this adventure.

A few notes on this Handbook:

1. Please read and review carefully. While we strive to be our best each day, we are not perfect and will be learning a lot together this year. Please work with us as we understand what policies and procedures will work best for the school community.
2. Dogwood Classical Academy believes that parents are the primary and most important educators of their children. Thus your feedback, communication, and support are fundamental to the success of the child. Please remember the importance of modeling open and respectful communication to your children regarding any questions or concerns you may have
3. We are in great need of volunteers including classroom helpers, recess monitors, front office and nursing support, and many other responsibilities that go into running a school. Please let us know if you are willing and able to volunteer and we will work with you on the approval process from there.

Together we strive to provide a rich classical education and instruction in virtue to your students. We thank you for giving us this opportunity and look forward to our partnership for this coming year.

Amy Shetler

Board of Directors | Dogwood Classical Academy

[a.shetler@dogwoodacademy.org](mailto:a.shetler@dogwoodacademy.org)

## **SECTION 1: SCHOOL LIFE & DECORUM**

### **School Hours and Calendar**

#### *School Hours*

Monday-Friday 8:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m

#### *Front Office*

Monday-Friday 7:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m

Closed weekends and during school holidays

#### *Summer Hours*

Monday-Friday 8:30 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

#### *School Calendar*

A digital copy of the Dogwood Classical Academy 2024-2025 school calendar is available for download at [dogwoodacademy.org](https://dogwoodacademy.org). A print version is available on page 5.

# Dogwood Classical Academy

## 2024-2025 School Calendar

June 2024						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30						

July 2024						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

August 2024						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

September 2024						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	
28	29	30	31			

October 2024						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

November 2024						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

December 2024						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				




January 2025						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	




February 2025						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	

March 2025						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
		25				1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

April 2025						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

May 2025						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

	School Closed
	Early Release Day
	Reading Day (students work at home)

	Employee Planning/Staff Development
	End of Nine Weeks
	First and Last Day of School

**Inclement Weather Make Up Days:** Instructional hours in excess of 1,025 will be used first. If additional days are needed, teacher workdays will be used.

Jun 17-27	Hillsdale College Training (tentative)
Aug 1-9	Professional Development
Aug 12	Open House/Reading Day (all grades)
Aug 13	First Day of Classes
Sep 2	Labor Day - no school
Sep 25	Reading Day/Planning/Staff Development
Oct 11	End of First Nine Weeks
Oct 14	Columbus/Reading Day/Planning/Staff Development
Nov 11	Veteran's Day Holiday - no school
Nov 18-19	Planning/Staff Development
Nov 20-24	Thanksgiving Break
Dec 20	End of Second Nine Weeks
	Half-Day/Planning/Staff Development

Dec 23-Jan 3	Winter Break
Dec 23-24 & 26-28	Annual Leave Days
Jan 13	MLK Day/Planning/Staff Development
Feb 17	President's Day - no school
Mar 5	Half Day/Planning/Staff Development
Mar 7	End of Third Nine Weeks
Mar 31-Apr 4	Spring Break/Annual Leave Days
Apr 18	Half Day/Planning/Staff Development
May 23	End of Fourth Nine Weeks/Last Day of School/
	Half Day/Planning/Staff Development
May 26	Memorial Day - No School
May 27-30	Snow day make up (if necessary)
May 27-30	Planning/Staff Development

## **Student Drop-Off and Pick-Up**

Students should begin arriving no earlier than 7:30 a.m, doors will open at 7:40am Faculty, staff, and volunteers will be at the front of the campus in the morning to escort our younger students from their vehicles to the building. Other staff will be inside to supervise students on their way to class. At 8:00 a.m. our doors will be locked to ensure the security of students and staff.

### *Carline*

Procedures for drop-off and pick-up give priority to the safety and security of all students. Parents are expected to cooperate fully to ensure that the process is safe and orderly. The school will release students only to parents, legal guardians, or adult designees. Carline procedures can be found at [dogwoodacademy.org](http://dogwoodacademy.org).

The adults driving through the carpool line are expected to serve as role models by always exhibiting courteous behavior. Please share these policies and procedures with anyone who will be picking up your student as everyone in the car line is expected to know and follow the procedures.

### *Parking*

The school will communicate designated parking spaces. Employees and parents are asked to adhere to the parking plan. The school has established five “five-minute parking only” spaces near the entrance to the main office to facilitate carline needs, deliveries, etc. Parents and visitors who will remain at school for more than 5 minutes should park in the designated visitor spots in the rear of the lot.

## **Attendance**

Classical education is highly interactive and requires consistent and punctual attendance. Because the classical approach relies heavily on classroom discussion among students and teachers, most work done in class cannot be made up if a student is absent. For this reason, parents should exercise prudence and make every reasonable effort to ensure that students do not miss class, including restricting trips to the allotted breaks.

Parents must alert their student’s teachers and the front office for every day a child is to be away from school. To notify teachers, please email your student’s teachers directly. To notify the front office, email [attendance@dogwoodacademy.org](mailto:attendance@dogwoodacademy.org). Please include your child’s name and the reason for his or her absence in your email. Parents must make us aware of the child’s absence before 8:00 a.m. on the day of the absence. If a parent fails to notify the office of a student’s absence, the absence will be coded as unexcused.

### *Absences*

Planned absence during the school term is highly discouraged. Any such absence must be requested at least one week in advance and in writing. The Head of School may require that the student obtain comments from teachers about the impact of the absence before the request for an excused absence can be granted, and may require evidence or a commitment that the time will be made up in some way. We discourage doctors’ and other appointments during the school day when avoidable. When those appointments are unavoidable, students are responsible for any make-up work during their absence. Assignments that are not made up, according to the time restrictions set by the teacher and school, will be reflected in their grades.

In the Upper School, absences are calculated by course. In the Grammar School, missing two clock hours equals one half-day absence and missing four clock hours equals one full day absence. Students must attend 90% of a class in order to receive credit for that class. This threshold includes both excused and unexcused absences. If a student is not physically present in class, regardless of the reason, the student’s total attendance percentage is reduced. Students who do not attend 90% of a class are in danger of failing the class because of absences and will be referred to the Head of School.

### *Excused Absences*

The following will be considered excused absences:

- Absences for medical reasons
- Absences for documented mental or emotional disabilities, with a note from a doctor or specialist
- Pre-arranged absences of an educational nature
- Important family events
- Attendance at any school-sponsored activity for which a student is eligible
- Bereavement (notify school if absence will extend beyond three days)
- Court appearances
- Religious holidays and observances
- The School may require suitable proof of excused absences, including written statements from medical sources.

### *Make-up Work*

Students may complete homework and other assignments that they miss during excused absences. Excepting major assignments (see below), students returning from an excused absence will have two additional days for each absent day to make up work that was due during or immediately after the absence. For example, if a student has an excused absence on Monday, then he has until Wednesday to turn in any work due on Monday or Tuesday; if a student has an excused absence on Thursday and Friday, then work due on Thursday, Friday, or Monday is not due until Thursday of the following week. The extra time is intended to allow students to catch up on any missed notes or lessons prior to turning in related material. Students are responsible for retrieving notes and assignments for themselves, preferably from a classmate, and are expected to be respectful of their teacher's time.

An absence on the date of a major assignment, such as a test or major paper, will not extend the deadline of that assignment if the student is absent only on that day. In cases of a single-day excused absence, the student must complete the assignment the day of his or her return. In cases of a multi-day absence, teachers will work with students to determine an appropriate deadline for major projects and a makeup time for tests.

### *Extended Excused Absences*

Dogwood Classical Academy recognizes the individual nature of extended excused absences including, but not limited to, such situations as acute or chronic illnesses/injuries, a terminally ill family member, or a death in the family. Families can expect to be informed by the Head of School or his designee of the general expectation of the faculty related to the completion of assignments and, as applicable, to the student's status for promotion to the next grade.

### *To Report an Absence*

Parents must notify the front office of absences by 8:00 a.m. in order to be excused. Please notify the school every day your child is to be away from school. Office staff will place calls daily to parents for unaccounted absences.

### *Unexcused Absences*

Absences are unexcused when parents do not follow the procedure to excuse absences noted above, when a student is unaccounted for, or if a student does not make a reasonable effort to come to school on time. Such absences are liable to disciplinary action, up to and including suspension. Students will not receive credit for homework and assignments that they miss during unexcused absences.

If a student has more than 3 unexcused absences in one month or 17 days in any year, the student may be classified as habitually truant according to [NC law](#). When the parent does not explain sufficiently the reason for unexcused absences, a parent conference will be required, and credit will be withheld. An unexcused absence is defined as an absence that is not covered by one of the foregoing exceptions. Each unexcused absence will be entered on the student's record. The parents or guardian of the student receiving an unexcused absence will be notified by the school of the unexcused absence.

### *Truancy*

A student who is absent from school without permission will be considered truant and is subject to disciplinary action. Specifically, as found in NC [G.S. 115C-378](#).

### **Tardiness/Early Release**

Each tardy or early release prevents students from engaging their classes appropriately. In order to get the most from class, students must begin and end on time. Tardiness refers to any occasion in which a student arrives after 8:00 a.m. or at the established school start time. Early release refers to any occasion in which a student leaves before 3:00 p.m. or the established school finishing time.

Three (3) tardies or early releases make one absence. These may be excused, but the total number does count against the 90% attendance record necessary for receiving credit in a class. In order for a tardy or early release to be excused, it must follow the guidelines for an excused absence. For an excused tardy, the front office must be notified prior to 8:00 a.m. on the day of the tardy, except in cases of extreme extenuating circumstances.

An unexcused tardy or early release is subject to the same provisions as an unexcused absence, and students will not be offered make-up opportunities for schoolwork missed during this time. Students who are habitually tardy will be referred to the Head of School for potential disciplinary action.

### *Releasing a Student from School*

Dogwood Classical Academy's campus is closed during the school day to encourage friendship among all our students. Students will only be released to people who are their parents or legal guardians, unless we have received written permission to release the student to another adult. Students may not be dismissed from the school or playground unless parents have signed them out in the office.

In the case of divorce or separation of the parents, both parents shall have full rights until legal notification is provided to the school limiting the rights of either parent.

School-sponsored activities require a teacher or sponsor to be responsible for the students. Students may only leave the activity or event with their own parent unless prior written authorization is given to the teacher or sponsor.

### **Early Drop-off and Late Pick-up**

Students may not be dropped off before 7:15 a.m. and must be picked up by 3:30 p.m. Students with siblings in clubs or athletics must still be picked up or wait outside with a parent/guardian at 3:30 p.m. Students who are still on campus and not participating in a club or athletics at 3:30 p.m. must wait for a parent/guardian in the front office. The late fee for pick-up after 3:30 p.m. is \$10 for the first minute and \$1 per minute thereafter.

## **Uniform and Personal Appearance**

A school uniform is crucial to a successful classical school, accomplishing three key goals. First, it diminishes the burden of thinking about clothing and fashion that can become all-encompassing for many students. This removes distractions in the classroom and redoubles focus on the task at hand. Second, it helps students take school more seriously by acknowledging that, through dress, we respect fellow classmates, teachers, and the common enterprise of education. Third, it develops school identity and pride. All students are therefore expected to adhere to the school uniform policy.

When questions about particular aspects of the uniform arise, the student is expected to follow the general and leading spirit of the policy, which is to diminish distractions, show respect, and elevate the tenor of the school.

Students must be in uniform in order to attend class. Students not in uniform will be sent to the office. The office will keep a limited inventory of basic uniform items that a student may be permitted to wear in order to meet uniform requirements and return to class (in most cases with a tardy slip). Loaned items will be carefully tracked and must be returned in clean, like-new condition. In the event that the office does not have appropriate uniform items for a student out of uniform, the student must call a parent or guardian. Parents will either bring acceptable attire, or students will be sent home. These absences are not excused.

DENNIS Uniforms is the sole uniform provider for all uniform pieces which require a logo. The uniform and dress code policy requires students to dress according to the mandatory and optional items listed on the Board-approved uniform policy for boys and girls, respectively, plus the following series of directives. Basic details for the school uniform, including ordering information, can be found on the Dogwood Classical Academy website.

### *Additional Uniform Provisions*

- Students may wear their own outerwear (coats, sweaters, vests) to school and on the playground. If a student is cold in the classroom, he or she should wear one of the long sleeve uniform items, or one of the uniform outerwear items.
- All students must be in uniform at all times. No other clothing other than uniform tops and bottoms are permitted. No outside tops, jeans, or bottoms are permitted in the building.
- All shirts must be tucked in.
- Skirts and shorts must extend to the knee when students are standing.
- Leggings or tights may be worn underneath clothing but must be ankle length or footed in a solid color—gray, navy, white, or black. Leggings are not to be worn without other bottoms on top.
- Girls may wear gym shorts or compression shorts underneath their skirt, so long as these are not visible when the student is standing.
- Students may use any backpack as long as it is clean and tasteful.
- Hair must be clean, neat, and styled traditionally. Only natural colors are allowed. No unusual or radical hairstyles.
- All girls' and boys' polo shirts may have the top button unbuttoned. All other buttons must be buttoned.
- Modest jewelry is allowed. An object that has a purpose other than jewelry cannot be worn as jewelry (i.e. chains or collars). Students may wear no more than two necklaces at one time. Students are permitted a maximum of two earrings per ear on the earlobe, and earrings must not be larger than a quarter. No stretched piercings (gauge) or holes may be visible.
- Makeup and nail polish must look natural. Colors such as black, yellow, rainbow, etc., are not acceptable.
- Hats and sunglasses are not to be worn in the building. Hats include visors and bandanas. Religious headgear is permitted when worn for religious purposes.

- Non-marking tennis shoes are required for P.E. class and/or sports in the gym. K-6 students will not change for P.E.
- Shoes, socks, and shoelaces should be mostly white, black, blue, brown, or gray. Shoes must be closed-toed, closed-heeled tennis or dress shoes; boots, sandals, moccasins, and slippers are not permitted.
- Good personal hygiene is required at all times. This includes wearing neat, clean clothing. Strong/offensive body odors are inappropriate. Clothes may not be ripped or torn. Boys should be clean-shaven and sideburns should not extend lower than the earlobe.
- The use of perfumes, oils, and body sprays by students should not inhibit the learning environment and smells should not be detectable in the course of a normal school routine. Smells of this nature that saturate a room often cause headaches, exacerbate allergies, and cause a disruption to the learning environment. Should this occur, students will be excused to the front office to call home.
- Should a student require reasonable uniform alterations based on religion, disability, or medical condition, please contact administration.
- All school-sponsored events, including after school and weekends, are subject to school uniform policy.

#### *Uniforms and Financial Assistance*

DCA will not allow financial need to limit access to the School, and this includes access to uniforms. At minimum, the School will fund one complete uniform set for children whose families qualify for financial assistance.

#### *Lost and Found*

The student Lost and Found is in the front office. Students are responsible for retrieving their misplaced items. Due to limited space, all unclaimed items will automatically be donated to the school uniform store on the 30th of each month.

#### *Toileting*

All students of Dogwood Classical Academy must be independent in toileting. On occasion students may have accidents. When an accident occurs, it is the responsibility of the parent to assist the child and to provide clean clothing. If there are repeated accidents, a meeting with the parents, the Head of School, and the school nurse will be held to evaluate the situation. Appropriate action will be taken based on what is in the best interest of all students and the school.

### **Discipline**

#### *Core Virtues and General Expectations for Behavior*

At Dogwood Classical Academy we seek virtue in all its forms, and focus specifically on the classical virtues of compassion, courage, gratitude, humility, integrity, justice, perseverance, and prudence. We hope that regular recurrence to these virtues in our learning, social interactions, and discipline will help students learn self-governance and strive toward excellence in all areas of life. The emphasis on virtue at Dogwood Classical Academy is not primarily intended as a discipline policy: we aspire to excellence for its own sake, because it is good, and because we are made better as we aspire to it. We have bound our commitment to virtue into an Honor Code that we ask our families and students to sign as a common pledge.

#### *Honor Code*

The DCA Honor Code: *A Dogwood Classical Academy student is honest in word and deed, dutiful in study and service, and respectful and kind to others. The student aspires to excellence in compassion, courage, humility, integrity, justice, gratitude, perseverance, and prudence.*



The last page of the *Family Handbook* includes a copy of the Honor Code with a place for parents and students to sign as a pledge of acceptance and agreement. One parent from each family is required to sign the pledge. All students in grades 5-8 are also required to sign it.

### *The Purpose of Discipline*

The main purpose of all disciplines is to teach moral and intellectual virtue. Self-discipline arises from a desire for virtue, and without that desire, a student will falter when laws and rules are silent. A secondary purpose is to foster an orderly and disciplined environment in which all students can learn and develop friendships. Order and discipline are the foundation for a thriving school culture. Any departure from proper decorum is liable to disciplinary action. Because not all students respond to the same arguments, incentives, or punishments, any discipline policy must be at once equal to all students and consistently applied, and also fitted to both the nature of each individual student and the circumstances in which any misbehavior occurs.

### *Disciplinary Action*

Disciplinary action ranges from verbal warnings to suspension and expulsion, and will be used to promote both a student's self-discipline and an orderly environment for all. Even when more serious discipline like a suspension is necessary, the purpose is not to punish but to educate. When a student acts in violation of school rules, directions given by a teacher or administrator, or the DCA Honor Code, the school has implemented three levels of consequences:

1. *In-class behavior protocols*: These include the various mechanisms that teachers use for correcting and habituating student behavior, and they vary considerably based upon the class (e.g. PE vs. History class) and the age of the students.
2. *Poor Behavior Slip (PBS)*: When student misbehavior rises to the level where parents should be notified, a student will receive a PBS from a teacher or administrator. The consequences of a PBS can include, but are not limited to, lunch detention or after school detention. PBSs are accumulative, and five are treated as equal to a Pink Slip.
3. *Pink Slip*: Pink Slips are reserved for serious offenses for which parents should be notified and which, if repeated or allowed to continue, will result in the suspension or expulsion of the student. Pink Slips are usually given out by the Head of School or Assistant Head of School. Very severe offenses may be met with immediate suspension or expulsion.

Consequences for misbehavior are correlated to the above levels of tracking/notification, but they will be tailored to the student and behavior in question. The point is to educate and improve students with an eye towards justice, not to tie every offense to a formulaic consequence.

In-class behavior protocols are generally informal tracking systems whose consequences may include poor participation grades and/or small assignments meant to correct student behavior. Poor Behavior Slips will be sent home to be signed by parents. The consequences for a PBS will generally extend beyond the classroom to include something like lunch detention, after school detention, or a special assignment. The consequences for a Pink Slip are explained in the section below.

Teachers have the authority to remove disruptive students from the classroom. Upon the third such removal from a teacher's class, the teacher may remove the disruptive student from that class for the remainder of the term of the class.

### *Detention*

Students may receive detention as a consequence of misbehavior tracked by either a PBS or a Pink Slip. Detention will occur after school or during lunch. During lunch detention, students will generally be permitted to do homework and eat their lunches quietly. After School detention is a more serious consequence, and students will not be permitted to do homework during this time and will be assigned other appropriate tasks.

Detention takes precedence over any extracurricular activity. Students who miss detention will need to make it up and serve another detention, and they may also receive a Pink Slip (see below). Repeatedly missing detention may result in Pink Slips and/or suspension.

### *Notifying Parents*

The School will notify parents of discipline problems that escalate to the level of a PBS or a Pink Slip. The school may also notify parents of lesser infractions, especially in cases involving a recurring problem. When a student is removed from the class for being disruptive, the school shall contact the parent(s) or legal guardian(s) as soon as possible to request his, her, or their attendance at a conference, which conference will include the student.

### *Pink Slips*

For consistent and/or more serious disruptions, the student will be sent to the Office and will receive a Pink Slip. Pink Slips accumulate over the course of the school year, and a student's total will not reset until the end of the spring semester. Receiving a Pink Slip indicates that a student's behavior is a serious problem, and earning repeated Pink Slips will result in more serious consequences each time. It is our hope that the consequences for receiving a Pink Slip will encourage students to display good character and act in accordance with the school's mission.

- *1st Pink Slip:* Student is sent to the Office and parents are notified. Student may receive detention. If the infraction is serious, a student may be suspended.
- *2nd Pink Slip:* Student is sent to the Office and parents are notified. Student may receive detention. If the infraction is serious, a student may be suspended. The student's parent(s) will meet with the Assistant Head of School to discuss the student's behavior. The purpose of this meeting is to exchange accurate information about the student and to determine how the school-parent partnership can best work to reform the student's behavior.
- *3rd Pink Slip:* Student is sent to the Office and parents are notified. Student goes home at least for the rest of the day. If the infraction is serious, a student may be suspended for more than the rest of the day. Upon the student's return, a parent should accompany the student to class for one full day to observe the school day.
- *4th Pink Slip:* Student is sent to the Office, calls home, and goes home. If the infraction is serious, a student may be suspended for more than the rest of the day. The administration will consider expulsion as a fitting consequence.
- A two-day suspension will be given for every disciplinary referral over four. When a student is issued over four referrals he or she will be considered a habitually disruptive student by Dogwood Classical Academy. If a student is issued four or more disciplinary referrals, Dogwood Classical Academy administration may request that the student be expelled. All NC laws will be carefully followed by DCA in using expulsion for a student.

### *Restraint*

If a student is disruptive to the point where he, she, or others are in danger, school faculty and personnel are authorized to use restraint or seclusion pursuant to [GS 115C-391.1](#). The school shall contact the parent(s) or legal guardian(s) as soon as possible after physical restraint or seclusion is used. Complaints regarding the use of restraint or seclusion should follow the grievance process as outlined in this Handbook.

### *Bullying*

DCA has zero-tolerance for bullying, harassment, intimidation, and/or bodily harm that adheres to the definitions established by state laws. North Carolina anti-bullying laws include the following definitions of bullying or harassing behavior: "Bullying or harassing behavior" is any pattern of gestures or written, electronic, or verbal communications, or any physical act or any threatening communication, that takes place on school property, at any school-sponsored function, or on a school bus, and that:

(1) Places a student or school employee in actual and reasonable fear of harm to his or her person or damage to his or her property; or

(2) Creates or is certain to create a hostile environment by substantially interfering with or impairing a student's educational performance, opportunities, or benefits. For purposes of this section, "hostile environment" means that the victim subjectively views the conduct as bullying or harassing behavior and the conduct is objectively severe or pervasive enough that a reasonable person would agree that it is bullying or harassing behavior.

Bullying or harassing behavior includes, but is not limited to, acts reasonably perceived as being motivated by any actual or perceived differentiating characteristic, such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, socioeconomic status, academic status, gender identity, physical appearance, sexual orientation, or mental, physical, developmental, or sensory disability, or by association with a person who has or is perceived to have one or more of these characteristics.

N.C. Gen. Stat. § [115C-407.15](#) (2009)

The term "bullying" identifies an act that is:

1. Any willful attempt or threat to inflict injury on another person, when accompanied by an apparent present ability to do so;
2. Any intentional display of force such as would give the victim reason to fear or expect immediate bodily harm; or
3. Any intentional written, verbal, cyber, or physical act which a reasonable person would perceive as being intended to threaten, harass, or intimidate, that:
4. Causes another person substantial physical harm or visible bodily harm;
5. Has the effect of substantially interfering with a student's education;
6. Is so severe, persistent, or pervasive that it creates an intimidating or threatening educational environment; or
7. Has the effect of substantially disrupting the orderly operation of the school.

The term applies to acts that occur on school property, on school vehicles, or at school related functions or activities or by use of data or software that is accessed through School computers, networks, or other technologies. The term also applies in instances of "cyber-bullying" involving DCA students, even if the technology in use does not belong to the School. ([GS 14-458.1. Cyber-bullying; penalty](#))

Parents, please notify DCA administration if your child reports being a victim of repeated behaviors that might be bullying. Conflict is normal in a child's life. To help distinguish between normal conflict and bullying, remember bullying behavior is: repeated, intentional, and involves an imbalance of power. If you think your child has been the victim of bullying or harassment, please contact the school administrator. Incidents of bullying or harassment can be reported to administration via the front office.

### **Public Displays of Affection**

Public displays of affection are not allowed on campus and during school-related activities, and are liable to disciplinary consequences.

### **Electronic Devices**

Electronic devices must be powered off and may not be used during the academic school day, including drop-off and pick-up, without express staff permission. Students may not keep electronic devices on their person during the academic school day. If a student must bring a cell phone or other electronic device to school, he or she must keep it in a locker for the entire day

including during recess, lunch, passing periods, and study halls. Such devices includes but are not limited to laptops, portable audio devices, head/earphones, hand-held video games, cell phones, and any other device or accessory with wireless or cellular capabilities, including but not limited to watches and eyewear. Exceptions will be made for necessary medical devices and at the Head of School's discretion.

Any student who is using a phone or other electronic device during the day will have that device confiscated until the end of the day. If there is reason to believe that the device has been used in the transmission or reception of communications prohibited by law, policy, or regulation, the device may be powered on and searched.

Students who break this rule will be subject to fines and other disciplinary action. Dogwood Classical Academy is not responsible for the damage, loss, or theft of these items.

## **Lockers**

Dogwood Classical Academy provides lockers (as available) for students in 7th grade and higher. The lockers and locks are school property. Students will be issued a lock and a combination upon request. Students who misplace their lock will be required to pay \$5 for its replacement. Only locks issued by the school are authorized.

DCA has the authority to search lockers when deemed necessary, even if it requires removal of the lock. DCA is not responsible for lost or stolen items. Valuables such as tablets, iPods, compact discs, and video games are NOT to be brought to school. Problems with lockers should be reported to the Assistant Head of School.

Students must observe the following rules:

- Students are not allowed to decorate the inside of lockers with posters, pictures, or anything else which advertises sex, drugs, suicide, cults, alcohol, or promotes other negative or derogatory messages as determined by the Administration.
- Lockers must be kept neat and orderly at all times. Locker checks will occur each semester.
- Lockers must be kept closed when not in use to maintain the integrity of the fire corridors and avoid careless accidents. Items left outside lockers or on the floor may be removed or disposed of.
- We strongly discourage students from sharing their locker combinations with others, as that may lead to conflicts should items go missing.
- Students may not decorate the outside of their lockers. A student may be assessed a fine or asked to clean a locker that becomes dirty or damaged because of his or her use of it.

## **Lunch and Snacks**

### *School Meals & Lunchtime*

Applications for free or reduced meals are available in the front office. Lunchtime provides an opportunity to relax, play, and restore the body and mind. Students must talk quietly and behave calmly during lunch.

### *Snacks*

We understand that young students require snacks to keep them going during the day, and teachers in Grades K-2 will set aside a time in the morning during which students can enjoy a quick bite to eat. Parents are responsible for sending students to school with a small, healthy snack that can be eaten in a couple of minutes. We ask that students bring things that can be eaten without utensils and without creating a mess. With the exception of water bottles and K-2 snacks, food and drink are not permitted in the classrooms or libraries. Upper School students may eat a quick snack between classes in the hallways as long as they bring food that can be eaten without utensils and without creating a mess. Students may not chew gum.

### *Birthday Celebrations*

If you would like to bring birthday treats in for your student's class, please coordinate with the classroom teacher several days in advance. Our students' academic days are carefully scheduled, and we cannot accommodate last-minute celebrations.

## **Medication and Medical Care**

### *Administration of Medication*

Dogwood Classical Academy is committed to the health and safety of its students. Medication and/or medical procedures required by students should be administered by a parent/legal guardian at home. Under exceptional circumstances, prescribed medication and/or medical health-related procedures may be administered by the school Head of School, his/her designee, the school nurse, or self-administered by the student per written physician's orders and written parent/guardian authorization. The parent/guardian must complete and sign the *Administration of Medication/Medical Procedure* form to acknowledge that the school assumes no responsibility for medications or procedures that are self-administered. Office staff will make this form available to parents/guardians.

School nurses or other employees may administer auto-injectable epinephrine to students upon the occurrence of an actual or perceived anaphylactic adverse (allergic) reaction by the student, whether or not such student has a prescription for epinephrine. Any school employee who in good faith administers or chooses not to administer auto-injectable epinephrine to a student in such circumstances shall be immune from civil liability, pursuant to North Carolina statute.

Students may not bring ANY medication to school. This includes cough drops, pain medication, etc.

### *Student Medical Records*

Student health records will be maintained in locked or password-protected files in order to maintain confidentiality. All health records will be managed by the Assistant Head of School and any appropriate, designated staff (such as the nurse) and will only be released to service providers as allowed and dictated by district and state regulations.

### *Medical Operations*

Dogwood Classical Academy will:

- Participate in workshops, in-services and/or training offered by North Carolina or the LEA regarding student health
- Use DPI sanctioned forms for health services
- Require part-time or contracted nurses and volunteers to have completed training in CPR/first aid, diabetic education, medication administration, and AED training, as required.

Parents will be informed when a student reports to the office with a fever or has been injured seriously. If a parent cannot be reached, school personnel will determine what action needs to be taken. Any child with a temperature of 100°F or higher will not be allowed to remain in the classroom and must be picked up by a parent or designee. If a head injury is sustained, or any injury requiring medical attention, the parent will be asked to come to school and determine what action should be taken. In case of more serious injuries, or in case the parent cannot be contacted, the school will immediately call 911 for emergency assistance.

Students who are sent home with a fever or vomiting may only return to school when they have been fever- or vomit-free for 24 consecutive hours. Please see the following link regarding state [General Operating Requirements](#).

### *Medical Records and Enrollment*

In order to complete the enrollment process, parents shall submit all required immunization records and health forms.

### *Parent/Guardian Obligations*

Parents shall, at all times, ensure that the school has updated medical information on file. It is the parent's/guardian's responsibility to keep this information updated. It is the parent's responsibility to notify the office if a child has been injured at home and may need special considerations at school.

### *Food Allergies*

DCA is not a peanut-free school. The school will, however, establish a table in the cafeteria for students with allergies, and teachers/monitors will ensure that this peanut-free zone is enforced.

### *Sick Students*

Sick children should not be in school. Any child who has a fever or is contagious (e.g., with pink eye, strep, the flu) should be kept home. Before a student may return to school, fevers must resolve and the student must be symptom-free without medication for 24 hours.

### *Lice Policy*

Lice is an extremely contagious issue that can easily spread through a school. Children suspected of lice (scratching heads, visible lice or nits) will be checked by trained staff in the privacy of the clinic. Should lice be found, siblings may be checked as well. Children suspected of having head lice may not attend school. Parents will be notified of the situation and asked to pick up their child. DCA's policy requires that no lice or nits (white eggs) be present when the child returns to school. Proof of treatment must be furnished before the child is readmitted to class. Students will be rechecked within 10 days of treatment to see if further treatment is necessary. If a head lice issue prevents a child from attending school, DCA will provide missed work within 24 hours for the student to complete.

## **Student Fees and Supplies**

### *Textbooks*

Dogwood Classical Academy provides students in 5th grade and up with paperback copies of some literature books free of charge. Students are encouraged to annotate these books as they read them with the class and add them to their home libraries when the class is finished. If you have questions about whether a book is yours to keep after the school year, please ask your child's teacher. DCA will incur the added expense of providing students with some literature books free of charge. It is our belief that helping students build their future library will help cultivate a love of reading. If you would like to make a donation to the school to help offset literature costs, please make a check payable to Dogwood Classical Academy in the amount of \$70 (the cost per child of literature books) or any amount you choose. Donations are optional.

Other textbooks belong to the school and must be used year after year. Students are issued textbooks at the beginning of the year and are expected to keep them in good condition. Textbooks that travel home with the student should be carefully covered in paper (not cloth) at the beginning of the year and returned to the teacher when the class has concluded.

Students who do not return their textbooks or who return them damaged will be charged for the cost of replacing the textbooks. In the case that reimbursement has not been made for lost or damaged materials, no further materials will be issued to that student until the past due fees are paid.

### *Fees*

From time to time the school may charge fees to its families for the purpose of funding expenses related to athletics, transportation, classroom supplies, band, orchestra, art, elective courses, activities, field trips, etc. All charges and fees must be authorized by the Head of School. All financial obligations must be rectified prior to registration for the upcoming school year. In cases of financial hardship, parents should inquire with the School office about receiving a fee waiver.

### **Extracurricular Activities**

We encourage students to participate in as many extra-curricular activities as they can reasonably manage, knowing that academics comes first. Every member of a club or team has a responsibility to his or her teammates to show up on time ready to participate, and to remain in good academic standing, and to display Dogwood Classical Academy's core virtues as ambassadors for the school.

Extracurricular activities may charge a participation fee and athletic events may charge an attendance fee for spectators. These funds will be used to pay for uniforms, equipment, instruments, fees for invitationals, and other miscellaneous items. Each coach or club leader will set rules by which each student must abide in order to participate. The coach or club leader will make sure rules align with the school mission.

### *Eligibility*

Extracurriculars enrich a student's life at the school. Dogwood Classical Academy's goal is to encourage students to prioritize academics, but also to provide meaningful opportunities to compete and flourish as young men and women. Participation in extracurricular activities, however, is a privilege that is contingent on school attendance, academic performance, and good behavior.

Only enrolled students may participate in DCA extra-curricular activities, though the Head of School may grant exemptions in specific circumstances and for specific events (e.g. school dances).

Students participating in any school-sponsored event or extracurricular activity falling on a regular weekday must have been in attendance at school the day of the event, otherwise they will be disallowed from participating in the event. Additionally, students who are considered truant based on this policy manual may be disallowed from participating in any extracurricular activities sponsored by the school.

Students with either two Ds or one F are ineligible to participate in extracurricular activities. Grades are based upon regularly scheduled progress reports, which occur at the midpoint and end of each academic quarter. Ineligible students will not become eligible until the following progress report or later.

Student athletes may still practice at the discretion of the coach if they are ineligible to compete.

Any student who receives three pink slips in a semester will be ineligible to participate in extracurricular activities for the remainder of the semester. Any student who receives five pink slips in a year will be ineligible for participation in extracurricular activities for the remainder of the year. Ultimate discretion on eligibility is the responsibility of the Head of School.

### *Clubs*

The school will sponsor a number of student clubs that enhance the curriculum of the school and are in keeping with the school's mission. The school will not sponsor clubs that are open to only part of the student body, including clubs for students with particular religious or political views. All clubs must be approved by the Head of School and have an active faculty sponsor.

### *Special Events*

Special events or parties held during a significant part of the school day must be directly tied to the curriculum and add to the instructional environment by conveying knowledge or an experience that supports the curriculum. Any special event or party must be approved by the Head of School a minimum of 3 weeks prior to its scheduled date. Approval for one year does not carry over to the next.

The school will host various social events, including dances, in the course of a regular school year. Students are expected to follow School rules and the Honor Code at these events, and attending students are subject to school disciplinary procedures. Eligibility to attend these events is based upon the same guidance given for all extracurricular activities, though the Head of School may make specific exceptions.

### *Sports*

All student-athletes will need to complete a physical and sign a release form before they will be allowed to participate in any school-sanctioned sport activity, including practice. These forms are available in the front office and on the school website.

DCA encourages students to participate in sports outside of the school day, whether at Dogwood Classical Academy, or at another school if we do not offer the sport in question. In order to encourage school spirit and keep students focused on the mission and philosophy of DCA, we discourage students from competing for other schools. Students wishing to do so will not be excused from class for practice or competitions. In all cases, a student's academic needs and performance are the foremost priority and take precedence over athletics. Similarly, disciplinary consequences will take precedence over athletics.

Dogwood Classical Academy will make every effort to develop a modest athletics program that focuses on sportsmanship and the school's core virtues. The school will consider adding new sports by weighing student interest, the number of potential participants, the school's general capacity to support new sports and teams, and the likelihood of a sport's longevity in the culture of the school.

### **Volunteers**

Dogwood Classical Academy rests on a partnership between the school and families who choose to enroll their students. Volunteering is a crucial element in that partnership. DCA relies on volunteers during carline, at lunch and recess, in the classroom, and in other events sponsored by the school. The classical model of education prioritizes the role of the teacher in the classroom, direct instruction, and Socratic conversation. For these reasons, the school's volunteering needs are primarily in assisting teachers in their administrative and supervisory tasks. The school also seeks qualified and interested parents to help with clubs, chaperone activities, and assist the school in developing a culture of respect and responsibility.

#### *Volunteer Background Checks [\(View Policy\)](#)*

All adults who volunteer with students (coaching, field trip chaperones, student tutoring, etc.) must complete a volunteer registration form. If the adult will be responsible for student supervision, the parent must go through an additional background check, the cost of which the parent is responsible for paying. The school conducts the complete background check to ensure the individual is clear of anything in their past which would prevent them from working with children.

#### *Volunteer Confidentiality*

Volunteers often inadvertently have access to sensitive information. Any information about students, grades, faculty, etc. is to remain confidential. Volunteers may observe situations of a sensitive nature. These are also to remain confidential. If a volunteer has a concern involving something that is witnessed, observed, or overheard it may only be discussed with the faculty members involved or the Head of School. The matter may also be brought to the attention of the Board of Directors



by following the grievance policy explained in this manual. Under no circumstance is it acceptable for a volunteer to confront a teacher about an issue when students are present. If a volunteer disregards the confidentiality policy, the privilege of volunteering may be revoked.

## **Visitors** ([View Policy](#))

### *Sign-In*

Dogwood Classical Academy has a mandatory sign-in procedure for all visitors on campus, including parents. Any visitor to campus between the hours of 7:30 am and 4:00 pm must first report to the school office, and will be required to furnish a U.S. federal or state-issued photo ID. The visitor's information will be stored in an electronic database to document visitors to the school. Information stored in the electronic database may be used only for the purpose of school security, and may not be sold or otherwise disseminated to a third party for any purpose.

Visitors must check in with the front office and provide identification each time they visit the school, not just the first. A visitor badge will be issued to the visitor and displayed conspicuously during the visit. In the unlikely event that a registered sex offender attempts to gain access to the school, the authorities will be notified immediately. If a person who is a registered sex offender is visiting the school because he or she has a child enrolled at DCA, that person will be supervised by school staff at all times during a school visit and will not have access to children without direct supervision.

### *Parent Visits*

Classrooms, the lunchroom, and the recess areas are closed to parents during the school day except school volunteers or parents who have scheduled a formal observation. Parents and family members are welcome to join their child for lunch. Please sign in at the office to obtain a badge prior to joining your student in the lunchroom. During the school day, it may be necessary for a parent to drop off lunch or a forgotten item. Parents making deliveries should stop by the front office. One of the office staff members will be happy to deliver the item. All of our teachers welcome parent/teacher conferences as long as they are scheduled in advance and on their calendar. To schedule a meeting with a teacher, please contact him or her via email.

### *Classroom Observations*

We encourage parents to visit our classrooms to learn more about classical education and discover ways to contribute to their children's education at home. Beginning October 1 of each school year, classroom visits are available to parents by appointment. Parents may schedule a formal observation of a student's class with the front office and check in at the office before the observation begins. A normal parent observation will last for one period, or, in K-6, two subjects at a time.

### *Inclement Weather*

When weather threatens a school closing, you may tune into one of the local news stations to find out if DCA will be closing. We will follow the decisions of the Cabarrus County School District when making our decision. If you see that the district schools are closed, then so are we. If the local district has a delayed opening then so do we. Please stay informed of the weather conditions and do not bring your child to school unnecessarily. If the school is closed there will not be a school employee on campus. As possible, DCA will also notify parents of school closures by email and other electronic methods.

### *Withdrawals*

We are always sorry to have a student leave DCA. To facilitate withdrawal, we ask that parents advise the School office of an intended withdrawal three days prior to leaving. A parent is required to sign the withdrawal paperwork with the Registrar prior to the student's departure. This will provide adequate time for contacting teachers, closing the student's records, and preparing transfer documents. All charges, fines, and fees must be paid prior to withdrawal, and textbooks must be returned.

## **SECTION 2: ACADEMIC POLICIES**

### **Curriculum Introduction**

The curriculum of Dogwood Classical Academy is based on the curriculum scope and sequence offered by the BARNEY CHARTER SCHOOL INITIATIVE of Hillsdale College. This curriculum is used throughout the network of BCSI-affiliated schools, of which Dogwood Classical Academy is an affiliate. While DCA has and will continue to make curricular adjustments in order to reflect local circumstances and requirements, our School has committed to embrace and uphold the following key characteristics:

1. The centrality of the Western tradition in the study of history, literature, philosophy, and fine arts;
2. A rich and recurring examination of the American literary, moral, philosophical, political, and historical traditions;
3. The use of explicit phonics instruction leading to reading fluency, and the use of explicit grammar instruction leading to English language mastery;
4. The teaching of Latin;
5. The acknowledgement of objective standards of correctness, logic, beauty, weightiness, and truth intrinsic to the liberal arts;
6. A culture demanding moral virtue, decorum, respect, discipline, and studiousness among the students and faculty;
7. A curriculum that is content-rich, balanced and strong across the four core disciplines of math, science, literature, and history;
8. A faculty where well-educated and articulate teachers convey real knowledge using traditional teaching methods rather than “student-centered learning” methods;
9. The effective use of technology without diminishing the faculty leadership that is crucial to academic achievement; and
10. A plan to serve grades K through 12.

### **Homework**

Homework is an important part of a classical education. Students who do not actively and consistently contribute to their own education, both in class and at home, will fall behind and sell themselves short. Homework takes place in the home, with all of the distractions that come with it. We encourage parents to provide a calm, quiet place for their children to complete their work. Television, music, movies, and video games seldom contribute to real learning, and we suggest that these be restricted while students are studying. At best this will extend homework time beyond what one would typically need and at worst will hinder real learning.

Every student will have homework assigned every day. Students in grades K-6 should spend 20 to 30 minutes every evening reading, whether or not reading homework is assigned. We encourage you to choose a book to read as a family, and make a little progress on it every night.

As a general rule, a student can expect 10 minutes of homework per grade level plus additional time for reading. So, a 1st grader will have approximately 10 minutes of homework per night (plus reading time) and a 6th grader will have approximately 60 minutes, or one hour. In the Upper School, students can expect to have 1.5 to 2 hours of homework per night plus reading time of 30-60 minutes.

The designated times serve as guidelines and may vary depending on the work assigned on a given day, the schedule, the student’s organizational skills and study habits, the varying abilities of the students, and the nature of the assignments. Students are expected to learn how to use their time effectively to complete the required work at each grade level. Parents are expected to support their children in this endeavor.

## *Academic Policies*

Advanced or honors classes may require additional homework time. It is generally understood that writing papers and studying for exams take more time than regular classroom assignments. For that reason, the end of a term does result in a peak in the homework load. Nonetheless, teachers will make every effort to give assignments well in advance, and students will be encouraged to work on those longer assignments steadily, so that students are able to manage their homework along with other activities and adequate sleep. In the upper school, students will often have the opportunity of taking a study hall, thus reducing the amount of time at home that must be devoted to homework. For poor or uncompleted work, teachers may require students to redo an assignment. Whether such work is given any credit is left to the discretion of the teacher. Students are expected to complete all their homework.

### *Late Homework*

One of the responsibilities of homework is to teach students responsibility and accountability. In order to accomplish this, and to ensure students do not fall behind on their school work, it is essential that students complete their work on time. Students who have an excused absence will have the number of days equal to the number of days absent to make up class and homework without penalty up to 7 days. Homework will not be sent home nor will credit be awarded for any work done during periods of unexcused absence. In grades 3-8, homework submitted one day late will receive 75% credit and two days late will receive 50% credit. Homework submitted more than two days late will not receive credit. In grades K-2, late homework will be treated as an in-class discipline issue, and students may be required to serve lunchtime or recess detention in order to complete assignments.

### **Grading**

Grading is not the be-all and end-all of education. If anything, some students put more emphasis on grades than their teachers do. The grade a student receives in a class is subordinate to the knowledge the student acquires. Still, grades are a useful tool to evaluate the extent to which a student has mastered a particular subject. Therefore, grades will be assigned in all classes and subjects. Dogwood Classical Academy will assign grades in order to accurately reflect the range between true mastery and insufficient knowledge of a subject. Grade inflation will be discouraged.

In Kindergarten and 1st grade we will use the following marks: E = Excellent performance, S = Satisfactory performance, N = Performance needs improvement, and U = Unsatisfactory performance.

Beginning in 2nd Grade, this grading scale is used:

<b>Grade</b>	<b>Grading Scale</b>	<b>GPA</b>
A+	97-100%	4.00
A	93-96.9%	3.85
A-	90-92.9%	3.70
B+	87-89.9	3.30
B	83-86.9%	3.00
B-	80-82.9%	2.70
C+	77-79.9	2.30
C	73-76.9%	2.00
C-	70-72.9%	1.70
D+	67-69.9%	1.30
D	64-66.9%	1.00
D-	60-63.9%	0.70
F	0-59.9%	0.00

## *Academic Policies*

Students will receive report cards every 9 weeks. Only semester grades will count toward a student's grade point average in the Upper School (grades 7-8). A semester grade for a class is the average (rounded to a tenth) of the numeric grades (percentages) from the two quarters in that semester.

In order to calculate a GPA, numeric grades are converted into points based on the grading scales above. Points are awarded for each class at the end of a semester. The semester GPA is calculated by totaling those points and averaging them by the number of classes taken that semester. A final GPA is determined by adding all the points from each semester and averaging them. GPAs are rounded to a hundredth.

Students completing high school level courses in grade levels 6th-8th are awarded high school credit. The final semester grades and credits are reported on the student's transcript, however, any high school level courses completed in grade levels 6th-8th grade will not be factored into a student's cumulative GPA.

### *Reporting Student Progress*

For students to be successful, both they and their parents should be informed of their standing in class. In addition to the regular grading of assignments, the school will inform parents of their student's academic progress in the following ways:

- If a student is determined to be significantly below grade level, a meeting will be scheduled with a parent, the teacher, and other faculty as deemed appropriate.
- Progress reports will be available at the midpoint of the quarter and sent home if a student has earned a D in two or more classes, or earned an F in one or more classes. In such cases, a student will be ineligible for extracurricular activities including athletics until the next report period, should they receive all passing grades.
- Report cards will be mailed or sent home quarterly.
- Once a semester, parent-teacher conferences will occur to discuss the student's academic progress.
- Parents have the ability to review student progress via online access to Dogwood Classical Academy's teachers' grade books.

In general, grades will be posted within seven business days after the due date unless otherwise notified by the teacher on the syllabus. Written assignments in the Upper School and labs may take longer to grade due to the kind and amount of feedback. Parents are able to monitor missing assignments online. Parents are encouraged to notify the teacher and the Head of School if there is no assignment/grade information for a particular academic subject or course.

### **Teacher Conferences**

Parent teacher conferences occur at the end of the first and third quarters. At the end of the second and fourth quarters teachers provide extensive comments on students' report cards. During the school year, a parent/teacher conference may be scheduled at any time a parent or the teacher thinks one is necessary. To schedule a conference with a teacher, please contact him or her via email.

### **Student Placement**

For students to thrive in school, they must master the fundamentals. The grade level placement policy is designed to promote educational excellence and fairness by placing students at the most appropriate level for instruction. Dogwood Classical Academy will respect the promotion and retention decisions from the school from which a student transfers. If new students are found to be reading more than one grade level behind their existing peer group, they may be asked to enroll in the grade level deemed appropriate by the teacher and Head of School. If the parent chooses that the student remain at the grade level in which the student originally enrolled, a signed document of this choice will become part of the student's permanent file.

## **Promotion & Retention**

The purpose of promotions and retentions is to provide maximum consideration for the long-range welfare of the student and to provide an opportunity for each student to progress through school according to his/her own needs and abilities. It is expected that most students will be promoted annually from one grade level to another upon completion of satisfactory work, however, a student may be retained when his/her standards of achievement or social, emotional, mental or physical development would not allow satisfactory progress in the next higher grade. In certain cases—especially the academic cases detailed below— school administration may recommend or require that a student be retained.

### *Kindergarten-5<sup>th</sup> Grade*

A student will be considered for promotion only if he or she can read just above grade level and is competent in the other core subjects (English, Math, History, Science, and in sixth grade, Latin). Students in Kindergarten through second grade must achieve minimum levels of mastery with the English phonograms taught in the DCA phonics and literacy curriculum. Students who fail end of course exams in reading or math may be retained.

### *6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> Grade*

A student must attain a 1.7 GPA (C- or higher) in the core subjects (English, Math, History, Science) to pass to the next grade. If a student does not earn a 70% or above in any semester of a high school credit course (Algebra I, Geometry, Algebra II, Latin I-III), then the student must retake the course in order to receive credit. Students who fail end of course exams in reading or math may be retained.

## **Academic Honesty**

### *Plagiarism*

Plagiarism will not be tolerated by any teacher in any subject. The entire system of assessment rests on the assumption that the work a student turns in is his or her own. Plagiarism compromises this system, is unfair to other students in the class who do their own work, and constitutes a form of theft of others' ideas and labor. Plagiarism is defined as the appropriation of another's ideas or words in order to present them as one's own. An instance of plagiarism can be as long as a term paper or as short as a sentence. Simply rephrasing an author's words can also constitute plagiarism. The words of authors can only be used when properly quoted and cited. Teachers will provide the guidelines of acceptable citation. When in doubt, the student has the responsibility to ask how an author should be used in an assignment.

Whenever a student has been caught plagiarizing, the following process will be followed.

- The teacher will keep a copy of the student's assignment and, whenever possible, a copy of the plagiarized work.
- The teacher will discuss the matter with the student.
- The teacher will inform the Head of School of the plagiarism.
- A disciplinary referral will be issued.
- Either the teacher or the Head of School will inform the student's parent of the plagiarism.
- The student will receive an F (an automatic zero) on the assignment if it is the first offense.
- For a second offense, the student will fail the entire course, and further disciplinary action, to include suspension or expulsion, may be instituted.
- High school students found guilty of academic dishonesty or similar serious offenses may, if applicable, lose the status of valedictorian or salutatorian.
- Instances of plagiarism may be placed in the student's permanent record.

### *Cheating*

Like plagiarism, cheating will not be tolerated by any teacher in any subject. Cheating occurs when a student uses someone else's work or a prohibited source of information in order to gain an unfair advantage on a test or an assignment and to avoid doing his own work. Cheating comes in many forms. One student copying off another, a student using a "cheat sheet" to answer questions on a test, and a student trying to pass off another student's work as his own are examples of cheating. The same process outlined for plagiarism will be followed for instances of cheating, including that students caught cheating will fail the assignment. A student who allows others to copy his work will also be held accountable in the same fashion.

A disciplinary referral will be issued if cheating has occurred. High school students found guilty of academic dishonesty or similar serious offenses may, when applicable, lose their status as valedictorian or salutatorian.

### **Student Services**

In furtherance of our mission and in order to meet federal guidelines, Dogwood Classical Academy admits all students, based on available seats, without knowing the special needs of any student before a seat is offered.

DCA will offer a continuum of special education services and placements for the special needs of students. DCA provides in-class accommodations, pull-out tutoring, and resource time for students with special needs. We also contract with providers for therapeutic services (occupational therapy, speech and language therapy, counseling) that the school is not able to offer on its own. Please see the [Notice of Procedural Safeguards](#).

When a child with special needs is accepted into DCA, the family will be informed of the services and staffing levels provided by the school. If a child has special needs that the DCA staff cannot adequately address with the current staffing and services, the school will convene an IEP meeting to discuss the provision of comparable services and/or other appropriate school placement and services.

DCA's Student Services program rests on three pillars of instruction: explicit phonics instruction, arithmetic skills, and organization. Since classroom time is crucial for all students to develop these skills, Student Services will create and lead resource class time for students who need extra help. The goal is to reinforce what is learned in the classroom and to help the student develop independence.

### **State Assessments**

The state of North Carolina requires standardized testing throughout the year. End of Grade (EOG) or End of Course (EOC) testing in reading and math at the end of the year is required for Grades 3-8. Grades 5-8 are also required to take science and history EOG/EOC. While we are required to participate in these exams and will take them seriously when they arrive in the spring, our approach differs from that in many public schools and deserves a comment.

Dogwood Classical Academy's curriculum is not designed around the state assessments and our teachers do not "teach to the test." We do dedicate some time to test preparation, but to do so excessively would detract from the classical course of study that DCA provides. Test preparation has less to do with content than it does with the form and manner in which test questions are written, as well as the order in which certain subjects are placed in the general state curriculum. Our curriculum in Grammar School math, for instance, follows a rational order that deepens and broadens student knowledge, but not in an order that aligns perfectly with the math subjects in the state exams. In order to do well on these assessments, we will supplement our curriculum where necessary. Please consult the school calendar for the testing schedule. On state testing dates, campus is closed and students may not be picked up early from school. Please plan accordingly.

## **Controversial Subjects**

Controversial subjects are defined as contemporary problems, issues, or questions of a political or social nature where there are entrenched differences of opinion and passions run high. When these subjects come up, teachers will present an impartial view of all sides of the issue without proselytizing. Contemporary controversial issues will not be discussed in the elementary school without Head of School approval.

### *Religion*

Western civilization has had and continues to have an ongoing, vigorous, and thoughtful conversation concerning the place of religion in human life. We will encourage such discussions as they arise from the material that students engage, and will respect the diverse viewpoints that such a topic elicits, so long as those views are offered respectfully and with the solemnity they merit. In the course of history and literature classes, DCA curriculum will include texts, stories, histories, and beliefs connected to Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, and Hinduism. Knowledge of these topics is crucial to understanding the modern world and much of our own history. Teachers will address these topics without either advocating or undermining religion in general or any specific faith.

### *Evolution*

DCA embraces a rigorous program in the natural sciences. In biology, the school will teach the theory of evolution as found in the standard high-school biology textbooks and as also taught at the college level in both secular and many religious colleges. The theory of evolution is largely misunderstood today by the general public. Much of what constitutes the teaching of evolution concerns adaptation of species to their environment and change over time. A great many of these phenomena are observable. A very small percentage of evolutionary theory deals with the more controversial issue of the origins of life. This latter aspect of evolution, to the extent it is taught, will be introduced to students briefly with a great deal of circumspection; it is not a central part of the theory. Furthermore, the study of science will be confined to the investigation of the physical world. It is not the place of science to make metaphysical claims nor to confirm or deny the validity of religion or the existence of God.

DCA recognizes a clear distinction between *science* and *scientism*. Science is the continued research into the natural world in order to find the most plausible explanations for natural phenomena. Scientism is the belief—and it is a belief—that science is the *only* means of understanding our world, thus excluding other ways of interpreting the world, such as through literature or religion. Keeping in mind this distinction, the teachers at DCA will leave matters of faith up to students and their parents. The role of a teacher in a public school is neither that of preacher nor of skeptic. Science teachers will teach science without comment on religion. Teachers, students, and parents must realize that a biology class has a particular purpose and is not the proper venue for a philosophical or theological discussion on the existence of God or claims relating to the activity of God or absence thereof in the natural world.

### *Human Sexuality*

At DCA, we believe parents own the fundamental responsibility for their children's education, which includes the areas of morality and sexuality. The school's role, at most, should be viewed as a supportive one. It is apparent that sexuality is more than biology and physiology. It also encompasses morality, spirituality, and the emotions. Because it is a part of the whole human experience, it must be taught with circumspection and sensitivity.

We believe children are naturally modest concerning their bodies and are not ready to learn everything at once. They are naturally curious, however, and need to get answers to their questions in a way appropriate to their stage of development. In teaching this topic, we want to minimize the embarrassment associated with it.

In the course of our usual science curriculum, 5<sup>th</sup> grade students will learn about human reproductive organs, reproduction, and the menstrual cycle. The class will be taught in a gender-separated environment. Parents will have the opportunity to preview the materials the class will be reading. Parents will also have the opportunity to attend a meeting with the teacher(s) prior to the section on sexuality. Sexual intercourse will only be discussed in the context of a monogamous relationship between two people of opposite sexes. Parents will have the choice of having their children opt out of this portion of the class, which will be taught during the regular science time.

In the upper school, themes that deal with sexuality may emerge from the reading of a serious text, such as *Brave New World* or *The Scarlet Letter*. When these topics do emerge from the curriculum itself, teachers will engage the material in a serious way. Upper school students may be involved in discussions concerning sexuality and sexual restraint as these issues affect their living a moral and responsible life. Such discussions will always be led by the Administration or a faculty member who has the full confidence of the Head of School in these matters.

Character education is an integral part of our program. Sexuality involves serious moral decision-making. It is important to help children build the capacity to make and abide by sound moral choices. We would like our teaching of human reproduction to be a springboard to initiate and facilitate discussions between parents and children on this sensitive subject. Employees will not discuss their personal lives on such matters with students.

### **Videos in the Classroom**

From time to time, videos or other media may be used to support a classroom lesson. To be used in class they must meet a specific curricular objective and will not have profane language or sexually explicit material. Teachers must receive prior approval from the Head of School to show a video more than 15 minutes in length. Students will not be shown a full movie in class without prior parent permission.



## **SECTION 3: ADDITIONAL POLICIES & PROCEDURES**

### **Admissions and Enrollment**

For current enrollment information, including grades offered, class sizes, admissions deadlines, and enrollment lotteries, please visit the school's website at [dogwoodacademy.org](http://dogwoodacademy.org).

#### *Admissions Eligibility ([View Policy](#))*

Dogwood Classical Academy is open to all students who reside within North Carolina, subject to availability. At the time of enrollment and re-enrollment, students will be required to demonstrate permanent residency within North Carolina. Students whose residence is not fixed or regular will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis in keeping with governing state and federal laws.

DCA will not discriminate on the basis of race, color, ethnic background, sexuality, national origin, gender, or disability in administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, athletics, and other school-administered programs.

Students expelled from another school will be admitted at the discretion of the Head of School. The Head of School will admit students who are being processed for expulsion and/or suspension on a case-by-case basis. In general, students facing suspension and/or expulsion for discipline problems related to drugs, alcohol, or violent behavior will not be admitted.

Admission forms and deadlines will be available in the school office and at [dogwoodacademy.org](http://dogwoodacademy.org).

#### *Limited Availability*

DCA will determine the number of seats to be offered in each grade on an annual basis. While it is our expectation that such numbers will be determined prior to the Open Enrollment period, the school may decide to revise these numbers prior to the beginning of the new school year. Open Enrollment will be held in January each year; exact dates will be posted on the school website and available in the school office. Families of enrolled students who wish to re-enroll will be required to submit a re-enrollment form for each student prior to or during the open enrollment period in order to secure each seat.

At the end of the Open Enrollment period, the school will admit students in the following order:

1. Current students who have submitted re-enrollment forms.
2. Applicants who are next-of-kin to any teachers, staff, or board members.
3. Applicants who have siblings already admitted to the school.
4. All other applicants

If the number of applicants exceeds the number of available seats in any grade, a random lottery process will be used to select admitted students from the pool of applicants. The lottery will also establish the order of the waitlist. Once students are admitted at the end of the open enrollment period, families will receive notice via mail and, if possible, via phone and/or electronic communication. Families will have three weeks from the date on which notices are mailed to submit enrollment paperwork. If families do not submit enrollment paperwork by the due date, they forfeit the offered seat. Seats that become available after the enrollment period will go first to waitlisted students—in the order established by the lottery— and will then become available on a first-come, first-served basis. The school will allow enrollment for open seats after the start of each school year, but only until such date as is determined by the Board of Directors.

### **Field Trips**

Field trips should be directly tied to the curriculum and add to the instructional environment by conveying knowledge or an experience that supports the curriculum. Field trips must be approved by the Head of School at least two weeks prior to their

proposed date. The field trip planner will work with administration to ensure that all procedures are followed.

A permission slip must be signed and returned to the teacher by the parent/guardian of each student prior to the field trip. Students may be required to pay a fee to attend field trips. School uniforms are required on all field trips unless specifically noted otherwise and approved by the Head of School. Students who have received 4 or more Pink Slips may not attend field trips without an accompanying parent.

#### *Extended Field Trips*

An extended field trip is one that requires an overnight stay. All extended field trips require individual Board approval a minimum of 90 days (180 days outside US) prior to the proposed trip. All students attending the extended field trip must have Head of School approval. For Upper School students, the trip must include coursework and/or lesson plans and all students must be awarded credit and a letter grade, which will be based on the accompanying coursework as well as their behavior on the trip. All extended field trips must have liability insurance protecting all the trip attendees, the school, and the North Carolina Board of Education. Any liability insurance not covered by the school's policy must be paid for by the fees charged to trip participants. Any increases in the costs of extended field trips (due to inflation, changes in exchange rates, etc) must be paid for by increases in fees by trip participants. All adults attending the field trip are required to be currently registered volunteers. The field trip planner will work with administration to insure that all procedures are followed.

#### **School Communication Procedures** ([View Policy](#))

##### *Parent Communications to Administration, Faculty, and Staff*

Dogwood Classical Academy values the conversation that takes place between parents and teachers about the education of children. Nonetheless, this conversation must follow certain guidelines in order to be fruitful and to allow teachers to devote themselves to their classes during the day.

Parents may use any of the following ways to contact or communicate with the Administration, Faculty, and Staff:

- Scheduled face-to-face meeting
- Scheduled phone call
- Message (given to the front office)
- Voice Mail
- Email
- *DCA employees will not use social media to communicate with parents or students*

During the school day and both immediately before and after school, teachers have their minds on teaching or imminent meetings and extracurricular activities. Parents should schedule in advance a phone call or meeting with a teacher rather than try to communicate through an impromptu conversation. Parents who are in the building for another reason should not use their access to faculty to circumvent the normal means of contacting a teacher unless that teacher clearly invites such a conversation. This policy applies to parents who are themselves teachers or other employees at the school.

DCA teachers and administrators will respond to parents as quickly as possible. In general, parents should expect to hear from a teacher or staff member within twenty-four hours of contacting the school, barring weekends and holidays. While a teacher's schedule may not permit an actual meeting within that time, the teacher will attempt to make contact in some way. During busy periods, the Head of School may require an extra day to respond to correspondence.

*General Communication with the School Community*

The Head of School must approve all letters and bulletins, including e-mail (excluding class assignments or bulletins by teachers to their classes) from teachers or parents or other parties to the entire school community. We ask parents to be responsible in sharing information about the school, and to consult the school website and school staff when asking questions or raising concerns. We also ask that parents be responsible when seeking out information about the school, especially online.

The official outlets for school information are limited to the following:

1. The school website, [dogwoodacademy.org](http://dogwoodacademy.org)
2. The official monthly newsletter
3. The official Facebook page, <https://www.facebook.com/dogwoodacademy/>
4. Correspondence from school administration, including emails and postal correspondence
5. Notices sent home with students and/or distributed by the school office

The school disclaims any responsibility for information from third-party websites, social media pages, or entities outside the school.

*Social Media*

DCA recognizes the utility and necessity of maintaining a social media presence and therefore regularly updates its official Facebook page. This page is intended to provide regular communication with the school community and beyond as we share information, celebrate our successes, and tell our stories. We invite parents to “like” or “follow” our page to receive updates. Any important notifications from DCA that are posted on our Facebook page will also be provided to parents by some other timely means of communication.

In the interest of privacy, DCA will limit the sharing of personal information about students on our Facebook page, and DCA staff and faculty will not discuss a student’s personal record in any format on social media, including direct messages.

In the interest of clarity and prudence, DCA will avoid lengthy or controversial replies to comments on our Facebook page. It will be the usual practice of DCA to invite questions and grievances posted on our official Facebook page to be brought to the school through our direct channels. DCA reserves the right to delete comments that are inappropriate, quarrelsome, or out of place. While DCA is aware that other social media pages connected to the school community exist or may exist, we disclaim any authority or responsibility for these pages or the content posted therein.

Furthermore, we encourage parents and other members of the school community to use social media for the positive support of the school and avoid using it for fomenting a culture of dissent. DCA administration does not review independent pages and will not recognize complaints until they are registered through formal channels.

DCA retains the right to enforce school policies and commitments insofar as these are implicated on social media and in the social media use of parents, students, teachers, and staff.

*Communicating with Parents with Joint Custody*

The school will recognize and communicate with parents with joint custody upon written request, signed by both parents or a court order. In the case of school forms, the school encourages one of the parents to complete the forms so that the school does not receive conflicting information.

## **Student Network Use**

Students at Dogwood Classical Academy shall not have access to the internet without staff supervision and will not have the network or wireless passwords. We recognize the need of supervision to protect our students. It is our goal to provide these services in as safe an environment as possible. Network access is a privilege, and all students are expected to practice proper and ethical use of these systems. The use of these systems is monitored, without an expectation of privacy, and subject to administrative review at any time. It is intended that these resources will be used to pursue intellectual activities in support of research and education.

DCA does not assume responsibility for system failures that could result in the loss of data. It is the policy of DCA to: (a) prevent user access over its computer network to, or transmission of, inappropriate material via Internet, electronic mail, or other forms of direct electronic communications; (b) prevent unauthorized access and other unlawful online activity; (c) prevent unauthorized online disclosure, use, or dissemination of personal identification information of minors; and (d) comply with the Children's Internet Protection Act.

To the extent practical, technology protection measures (or "Internet filters") shall be used to block or filter Internet, or other forms of electronic communications, access to inappropriate information. Specifically, as required by the Children's Internet Protection Act, blocking shall be applied to visual depictions of material deemed obscene or child pornography, or to any material deemed harmful to minors. Subject to staff supervision, technology protection measures may be disabled for adults or, in the case of minors, minimized only for bona fide research or other lawful purposes.

## **Security Checks**

The school may exercise its right to inspect all backpacks, packages, parcels, and closed containers entering and leaving the premises. School lockers are school property and may be subjected to searches at any time, with or without cause.

## **Emergency Policy**

The Administration shall maintain a stand-alone Emergency Operations Plan, which shall be available for reference in the School office.

## **Facility Use**

The Head of School will be the approving authority for all outside uses of the school fields, building, and facilities. All users will be required to carry insurance and appoint a representative acceptable to the Administration who is capable of executing the school's emergency and security procedures.

## **Parent Teacher Organization**

Dogwood Classical Academy's Board establishes the Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) to support the school's mission. PTO teams and activities will be designed to help the school flourish in and beyond the classroom. Largely, the PTO consists in a series of task-oriented teams whose purpose is to marshal parent volunteerism in achieving defined goals that improve the life of the school. All parents, adult family members, teachers, staff, and community members are encouraged to volunteer on a team and attend regular meetings. PTO meetings are an excellent opportunity to obtain information and engage in discussions about the school. The PTO may serve as a fundraising arm of the school, but it will not be a stand-alone, tax exempt, non-profit organization. DCA is itself a non-profit organization with 501(c)3 status. The Head of School reserves the right to create, remove, or dissolve PTO teams and leadership in accordance with immediate priorities and the long-term flourishing of the school.

## SECTION 4: GOVERNANCE & MANAGEMENT

### Board of Directors

Dogwood Classical Academy is a non-profit corporation, recognized as a 501(c)3 organization by the Internal Revenue Service. The corporation is governed by its Board of Directors. The Board operates in accordance with its bylaws and using the principles of policy governance. The Board has entered into a Charter Agreement with The North Carolina State Board of Education. The bylaws and Charter Agreement are available on the School's website, [dogwoodacademy.org](http://dogwoodacademy.org).

### Board Responsibilities and Obligations

The Board is the governing body of the school and is responsible for overseeing the effective, faithful execution of the mission. The Founding Board created Dogwood Classical Academy specifically to implement a traditional, classical, liberal-arts education guided by the following mission: *Dogwood Classical Academy will develop students in mind and character through a rigorous, classical, content-rich curriculum that emphasizes the principles of academic fundamentals, virtuous living, and civic responsibility.*

The Board oversees budgeting and spending, community outreach, charter fidelity, compliance with applicable laws and regulations, and development to support the program.

### Board Meetings

In compliance with the state's Open Meetings Laws (note: amend with the proper language for your state), the Board will:

- Establish a set schedule of meetings;
- Post meeting dates in a conspicuous location, including the School website (date, time, location);
- Post agendas not more than 2 weeks in advance but at least one week before a meeting;
- Post and place 24-hour notice for emergency called meetings and state the reason for the emergency meeting in the notice;
- Provide specific agendas for meetings to advise the public of the matters expected to come before the Board. Matters not on the agenda can be addressed if not anticipated before the meeting by amending the agenda.
- Keep minutes of all Board Meetings, including members present, description of motions or proposals, and a record of votes.

The Board welcomes public comments at each regular Board meeting. Community Comments are limited to 2 minutes. To ensure the accurate representation of the comments in the Board's meeting minutes and to ensure that the Board can accurately address the issues presented, it is requested that these comments also be submitted in writing. Grievances or discussions involving specific personnel will not be entertained at a public meeting. For information about Special Meetings or Executive Sessions of a regular meeting, refer to the DCA Board Bylaws and Policy Manual.

### Communication to the Board

The role of the Board is to oversee the school, not to manage its daily affairs. The Board will generally defer to the Head of School to address questions, complaints, and grievances brought to the attention of school leadership. While the Board possesses overall control of the school, the Board's collective authority is not held by individual Directors. The Board recognizes that accountability and good governance sometimes require that communication be brought to the Board directly. In such cases, the communication should be submitted in writing to both the Board Chair and the Board Secretary. This communication can be delivered to the School or sent via email to [a.shetler@dogwoodacademy.org](mailto:a.shetler@dogwoodacademy.org) and [s.jennings@dogwoodacademy.org](mailto:s.jennings@dogwoodacademy.org).

Communication can also be provided verbally during the public comment period at a regular meeting of the Board (see above).

The Board kindly requests that members of the DCA community refrain from approaching individual Board of Directors with concerns or grievances that should be brought to a specific teacher, the Head of School, or the whole Board. Any communication to the Board should follow the Grievance Policy detailed below.

### **Role of the Head of School**

The Head of School will implement a traditional, classical, liberal-arts curriculum. The Head of School makes final decisions on curriculum, subject to the approval of the Board of Directors. The Head of School, while chiefly the academic leader, is also responsible for the discipline, moral culture, operations, and financial priorities of the school.

### **Chain of Command**

The Board has established a chain of command whereby all authority for the management of the school rests with the Head of School, and he has the sole responsibility of reporting to the Board and managing the operations of the School. It is the expectation of the Board that the Head of School will establish a chain of command within the School to assist him with its operations.

In all communication to the School, the Board expects the DCA community to observe the chain of command and direct communication accordingly. The practice of following the chain of command in communications with the school on matters concerning particular students encompasses far more than grievances. It refers to parents' communication of any kind that seeks or requires an action on the part of the school regarding their students. DCA understands that parents will have questions, opinions, and comments that need to be expressed concerning their children's education. Such communication can be very helpful to the running of the school.

Our preference is that such communication be expressed initially to the teacher or teachers of the child. If further communication is warranted, the parent should consult the appropriate administrator. If further communication is warranted after speaking with the Head of School, then the parent should refer the matter to the Board, as needed. The Board is not the first point of contact and therefore will refer communications that seek response or action to the appropriate members of the Administration.

The reason for this chain of command is that the teacher invariably has the most direct knowledge of the child and can usually do more to remedy or ameliorate a situation than can an administrator or board member. We understand that some parents are "conflict averse" and do not want to bring up a potentially difficult issue with a teacher. Nonetheless, the teachers are eager to help each child in whatever way possible.

Some situations, admittedly, seem by their very nature to warrant a discussion with the Head of School initially. For example, parents may have questions or concerns about the overall homework load or a particular way of teaching, such as the Socratic method. As a result, it is easier and more expedient to speak to the Head of School first. In these cases, however, it is always better for the parent to have as much specific information as possible so the Head of School can act on that information.

### **Grievance Policy ([View Policy](#))**

#### *Grievance Related to the Classroom*

DCA firmly believes that adults must be models of good character even in the most difficult situations. Should a parent have a grievance concerning a particular class or the Administration of the school, that grievance should be resolved using the following chain of command. Issues that arise in a particular classroom should always be addressed to the teacher first since the teacher always has more direct knowledge of the student than anyone else.

The grievance chain of command related to the classroom:

- The Teacher: Parents should schedule a meeting with the teacher through the office. Under no circumstance is it ever acceptable for a parent to confront a teacher about an issue with students present, including his/her own.
- The Head of School: If the grievance cannot be resolved with the teacher, the parent should discuss the matter with the Head of School.
- The Board: If the grievance cannot be resolved with the Head of School, the parent should refer the matter to the Board, preferably in writing.

*Grievance Related to Administration*

For grievances regarding an administrator who reports to the Head of School, the grievance should be directed to the individual first, then the Head of School. If necessary, grievances left unresolved by the Head of School should be submitted in writing to the Board. Grievances regarding the Head of School should be directed to the individual first, then in writing to the Board.

**Records Requests**

DCA will comply with all local, state, and federal laws when handling records requests for all registered students. Please refer to the [\*Student Records Policy\*](#) to learn how to request records.

## **SECTION 5: PRIVACY**

### **Family Educational Rights Privacy Act (FERPA)**

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) affords parents and students over 18 years of age certain rights with respect to a student's education records. These rights include the following:

- The right to inspect and review the student's education records within 45 days of the day the school receives the request for access. Parents or eligible students should submit to the school Head of School or appropriate school official a written request that identifies the record(s) they wish to inspect. The school official will make arrangements for access and notify the parent or eligible student of the time and place where the records may be inspected.
- The right to request the amendment of the student's education records that the parent or eligible student believes are inaccurate or misleading. Parents or eligible students may ask the school to amend a record that they believe is inaccurate or misleading. They should write the school Head of School or appropriate official, clearly identify the part of the record they want changed, and specify why it is inaccurate or misleading. If the school decides not to amend the record as requested by the parent or eligible student, the school will notify the parent or eligible student of the decision and advise them of their right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the parent or eligible student when notified of the right to a hearing.
- The right to consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent. One exception, which permits disclosure without consent, is disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests. A school official is a person employed by the school as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member (including health or medical staff and law enforcement unit personnel); a person serving on the School Board; a person or company with whom the school has contracted to perform a special task (such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant, or therapist); or a parent or student serving on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee, or assisting another school official in performing his or her tasks. A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility. Upon request, the school discloses education records without consent to officials of another school district in which a student seeks or intends to enroll.
- The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the School to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the Office that administers FERPA: Family Policy Compliance Office: U.S. Department of Education 400 Maryland Avenue SW Washington, DC 20202-4605.

### **Student Information**

Students' names, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, weight and height of members of athletic teams, dates of attendance, awards received, and other similar information may be released without parental consent unless the parent notifies the school.

Classroom activities and events sponsored by the school occasionally are photographed or video- taped for use by the school, by the media, or by other organizations operating with approval from the school Head of School. Photos and videos help the school to share information within the school community and our mission beyond our immediate community. We request that all parents sign the DCA photo/video release waiver included with DCA enrollment paperwork, but respect the rights of parents who do not wish for photos and videos of their students to be shared. Student names will not be listed alongside their pictures on the school website or in DCA advertising publications.



## **Change Log**

This is version 1.0 of the *DCA Family Handbook*. The handbook and the policies herein were adopted for use by the DCA Board of Directors for use during the 2024-25 school year on April 3, 2023.

Future changes to the handbook and policies contained herein will be noted in this appendix.

## PARENT ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I, \_\_\_\_\_ (printed name of parent or caregiver), do hereby recognize receipt and review of the *Dogwood Classical Academy Family Handbook, 2024-25*. As a parent of a child enrolled in DCA, I agree to abide by these terms and support the mission and operations of the school.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### ***Honor Code***

A Dogwood Classical Academy student is honest in word and deed, dutiful in study and service, and respectful and kind to others. The student aspires to excellence in prudence, justice, perseverance, compassion, courage, humility, and gratitude.<sup>93</sup>

### ***Parent Pledge***

I have carefully discussed the DCA Honor Code with my child and he/she understands what it means. I pledge to encourage my child to be honest in word and deed, dutiful in study and service, and respectful and kind to others. I will help my child aspire to excellence in prudence, integrity, justice, perseverance, compassion, courage, humility, and gratitude.

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Signature(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### ***Student Pledge—To be signed by all students in grades 5-8***

I understand the DCA Honor Code and have discussed it with my parent(s). I pledge to be honest in word and deed, dutiful in study and service, and respectful and kind to others. I will aspire to excellence in prudence, integrity, justice, perseverance, compassion, courage, humility, and gratitude.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_