

TRUE LIGHT SHINES ACADEMY

PARENT-STUDENT HANDBOOK 2011-12



True Light Shines Academy

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Statement of Faith

True Light Shines Academy follows the teachings of Christ, and accepts His mandate that His children need to know Him. We are dedicated to spreading the Gospel of Jesus Christ throughout the world, focusing on children and youth.

We believe:

There is one God who created the heavens and the earth.

God is triune—meaning that He is God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost.

Jesus died on the cross, was buried, and three days later rose to life defeating sin and conquering death. He is seated at the right hand of God the Father.

God sent His Son, Jesus, to live as one of us—to be the ultimate sacrifice and pay the ultimate price for our sin. By believing in Jesus, we can be saved and enter in to God's presence and eternal life with Him.

God is love. He loves us so much that He has given us everything through His Son, Jesus, who is the Way, and the Truth, and the Life.

The Holy Spirit is our Comforter, our Counselor; He leads us into all Truth.

The Bible is the divinely inspired, living Word of God.

God's power to heal His people is being demonstrated on the earth today as it was in the past.

The Glory is His Glory.

School Structure

The school has an environment that centers on God first, and is designed so that His children can thrive. This requires an innovative structure that is geared to nurture, nourish, strengthen, and sustain God’s servants to carry His message in the digital age. Topics and concepts of study have Scripture at their central focus. A thematic approach is used throughout the school—with the older students delving more deeply into the subject matter and the Biblical references than the younger students. A combination of teaching strategies and techniques are used to ensure all students learn. Experiential learning (hands-on activities, inquiry, real-world examples) is the preferred method, which benefits all learning modalities.

Daily Opening: Songs of praise, Bible message, prayer, sharing, and announcements are part of the opening. The opening is a required part of the school day to set the atmosphere for the rest of the day. Parents are welcome to join in the worship with students and staff.

Fridays are dedicated to worship, service, and celebration of God; applying skills learned that week. The afternoon is a time for service by spreading God’s presence into the community—by visiting nursing homes, malls, schools for special needs students, missions—connecting with His people in ministry. Parents’ help is needed for transportation and chaperoning.

Admissions Policy

The True Light Shines Academy admits students of any race, color, national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national and ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship and loan programs, and athletic and other school-administered programs.

True Light Shines Academy as a private institution, reserves the privilege of setting and maintaining its own standards for student conduct, dress code, and scholarship. Admission to True Light Shines Academy is a privilege and not a right and therefore the school maintains the right to admit only those families who are in harmony with the standards of the school.

Official acceptance into True Light Shines Academy is based on the family interview, pastor recommendation, student records, and the availability of enrollment space. You will be notified in writing regarding your child's acceptance.

Students applying for admission who have special needs will be decided on a case-by-case basis by the school administration. True Light Shines Academy is not equipped to accept children with severe academic, physical, or emotional problems. True Light Shines Academy reserves the right to release any student with unusual psychological, social, or medical conditions that would prevent the student from adhering to school disciplinary policies.

Please note: By enrolling your student in True Light Shines Academy you are agreeing to support and abide by all of the policies stated in this handbook as well as any other policies, changes, or clarifications of policies that may come to you via newsletters, emails, or other official communication from the school.

Signature of parent(s) _____

Date _____

Orientation

Parents, upon registration, agree to support True Light Shines Academy both verbally and practically. This includes attendance at the scheduled Parent Orientation meeting held at or before the beginning of school. A letter will be sent to each household informing them of the date and time of orientation. Essential information and materials regarding classroom needs, classroom assignments, policy changes and programs will be distributed. Faculty and staff introductions will be made at this time. Every effort will be made to ensure that this meeting will be both beneficial and informative as to the hows and whys of our school.

Withdrawal/Dismissal

- Withdrawal and/or dismissal must be made in person in the school office. A Withdrawal form must be filled out.
- Tuition fees will continue until proper withdrawal is made. All properties belonging to True Light Shines Academy should be returned in good repair the day of withdrawal.
- No records, books, or other items belonging to the student will be released until all past due accounts have been paid in full (this includes but is not limited to tuition, books, lunches, library books or fines, and all TLSA property returned).
- A student may be dismissed if the school deems it necessary because of below average grades, a conduct unbecoming of a True Light Shines Academy student, financial problems with tuition, excessive absences and/or tardies, or if True Light Shines Academy feels it can no longer minister to the student in a way that brings honor to the Lord.

Class Placement

True Light Shines Academy's administration makes decisions about class placement. We will prayerfully consider where to place each student in order to maximize the benefit for all of the students. Parents are encouraged to give input on the strengths, weaknesses, and needs of their children. Your children are important to God and valued by the True Light Shines Academy.

Parent Statement of Cooperation

When applying for admission, parents are required to agree to and sign the Statement of Cooperation. It is repeated here for your benefit.

It is understood that my child's attendance at True Light Shines Academy is a privilege and not a right, and that if at any time his/her conduct, academic progress or cooperation with school authorities is not keeping with the school requirements the school reserves the right to terminate at its discretion any child's enrollment.

I understand that while my opinion is highly valued and my involvement encouraged, True Light Shines Academy is not a parent-run school. I agree to cooperate fully with its policies and with the directors, teachers, and staff in the education of my child. When I disagree or have concerns about policies or events that have taken place, I will speak directly and discreetly with the persons involved and will avoid spreading gossip and seek a friendly cooperative resolution."

I give my permission for my child to take part in all school activities and school sponsored trips away from the school site. I absolve the school from all liability in the event my child is injured at school or during any school activity. I agree with the school's efforts to instruct my child in the Bible and will encourage my child in this and all phases of instruction.

If my child is withdrawn or dismissed, it is understood and accepted that no refund of registration, book fees, or any tuition paid will be made.

True Light Shines Academy expects the student and family to:

- Faithfully attend their home church services
- Live a consistent Christian life
- Share their Christian witness by sharing the Word and life to their children
- Exhort one another in love and to build up and not tear down the reputation of the school or its staff
- Be involved in at least one major and one minor fundraiser for the school
- If the family decides that True Light Shines Academy is not for their family, they will leave quietly and leave others to make their own decision about the school

I have read and understand the student handbook and agree to comply with and support the policies stated therein."

Signature of parent(s) _____

Date_____

Discipline Policy

True Light Shines Academy has a core value to develop spiritual maturity in the youth of our nation. We believe God has given every believer special grace to extend His enabling presence to others and has been given gifts to establish their walk with God.

The goal of discipline is to restore a child to a right relationship with God and with others. Each student needs to have the mindset of desiring to walk in obedience to God and His established authorities. Jesus spoke of the importance of obedience in response to what He commands: “If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have obeyed my Father’s commands and remain in His love.” John 15:10~NIV

Each teacher will employ a number of methods to encourage, recognize, and reward good behavior as an evidence of progress toward spiritual maturity. Praise and recognition are important in creating a positive atmosphere where children are empowered to walk in response to the Master’s call in their lives. Verbal correction for inappropriate behavior may be necessary at times. Further action will be taken if the behavior, attitude, and action do not improve. This may include loss of privileges, righting the wrongs, logical consequences, and phone or personal conferences with parents. For serious offenses, suspension or expulsion may be deemed necessary.

Student Responsibilities

Students are expected to behave in a way that makes learning as effective as possible for all the students in the classroom. Teachers may have their own individual classroom rules and expectations, but the following guidelines will be observed in all classrooms.

Students Should:

- Demonstrate respect and honesty in their relationships with staff and other students.
- Submit to the authority of the administration and teaching staff; obeying all guidelines in the student handbook while on campus and at school activities.
- Students need to be familiar with all school and classroom policies and procedures and follow them.
- A student's behavior and actions reflect on the attitudes and commitment he/she has and his/her relationship with God, parents, and others. Students are expected to do their best in achieving and behaving in a manner that is responsible.
- Students are expected to do their own work, even on collaborative assignments. Any copying or cheating will result in a phone call to the parents and further appropriate disciplinary action, such as demerits, detention, suspension, or expulsion. Talking during assessments or tests without permission may be considered cheating and will be dealt with accordingly.
- Students need to take care of school materials, books, furniture, and other school property. If school property is damaged and defaced it must be repaired, restitution must be made, and parents will be contacted.

- Chewing gum is not permitted in the classroom. Eating or drinking is only permitted in classrooms as necessitated by inclement weather. Water bottles are allowed in the classrooms, but not on students' desks. Carbonated beverages are never permitted at school.
- Humor is fine at the appropriate time and can be an aid to effective brain-based learning. It needs to be used in an appropriate manner. Sarcasm, insults, and off color jokes or comments are never appropriate.
- Students are expected to demonstrate good sportsmanship at all times, whether in the classroom, physical education, recess, or participation in after-school sports as a player or as a spectator.
- Put others before yourself. Your attitude and actions are important expressions of your love and concern for one another.

Weapons Policy

It is unlawful for any person to carry, possess, or have under such person's control any weapon or explosive compound within a school safety zone, or in any school building, on school property, at any school sponsored event or activity, on any school vehicle, or other transportation furnished by the school, or in a private vehicle parked on school property.

The term "weapon" means and includes the following: any pistol, revolver, or weapon designed or intended to propel a missile of any kind; any dirk, bowie knife, switchblade knife, ballistic knife, dagger, any other knife having a blade of three or more inches; any straight-edged razor, any spring stick, metal knuckles, blackjack, or any flailing instrument consisting of two or more rigid parts connected in such a manner as to allow them to swing freely, which may be known as a nun chahka, nun chuck, nunchaku, shuriken, or fighting chain, any disk of whatever configuration, having at least two points or pointed blades which is designed to be thrown or propelled and which may be known as a throwing star or oriental dart, or any weapon of like kind; any stun gun or taser; any bat, club, or other bludgeon type weapon; or any other weapon as such term is defined by school principal or board.

Punishment: Violations may result in suspension, expulsion and /or criminal prosecution.

Sexual Harassment Policy

It is the policy of True Light Shines Academy not to tolerate sexual harassment. Any student who feels that he or she has been subjected to sexual harassment should immediately report the matter to school administration. Sexual harassment will result in expulsion.

Grievances

The first step in addressing a grievance should be a consideration as to whether it is necessary to take additional steps or whether the offense can be forgiven. If the offense cannot be forgiven and the matter dropped, then Biblical teaching should be followed.

Matthew 18:15-16 If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over. But if he will not listen, take one or two others along, so that 'every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.~NIV

The goal should be speaking the truth in love and seeking forgiveness and restoration of the relationship.

We should pursue peace and unity in the body of Christ whenever possible. With this framework, the following procedures should be used when addressing a grievance.

If a student has a grievance involving another student:

- The student who has been offended must decide if the offense can be forgiven and overlooked
- If the offense cannot be overlooked, the student should first try to address the issue with the individual involved keeping restoration as the goal.
- If the offending student does not respond appropriately, or if the offense includes a threatening or dangerous situation (involving any students), then the offended student should report the offense to his or her classroom teacher and the school administration.
- If after involving his or her classroom teacher, the offensive situation does not stop or the relationship is not restored, the student may request the opportunity to discuss the problem with the school administration.

If a parent has a grievance against a student who is not their own child:

- The parent should first consider whether the offense can be overlooked.
- If the offense cannot be overlooked and forgiven, the parent should address the grievance with the child's teacher rather than the student. The teacher will address the issue with the student involved and respond to the parent.
- If the response of the offending student was not appropriate, the teacher will take further step of notifying the offender's parents.
- If the grievance remains unresolved, the school administration may be asked to become involved or may initiate involvement.

If a student or parent has a grievance against a staff member:

- The student or parent should first consider whether the offense or perceived injustice can be overlooked.
- If the offense or perceived injustice cannot be overlooked, the student or parent should speak directly with the person who offended him/her, being careful to discuss the issue in question respectfully and not in an argumentative fashion.

- If the offended student or parent is not satisfied and the relationship with the staff member has not been restored, they may request the opportunity to discuss the issue/situation with school administration.
- If the issue relates to the school discipline issue with regard to demerit, the normal process will be followed.

In every instance, the offended individual should not discuss the incident or grievance with anyone who is not directly involved in the incident/situation. This includes discussing the incident/situation with other parents in the classroom. Relationships are more easily restored when they haven't been further damaged by gossip or tarnishing one's reputation.