



2015-16
Tidewater Classical
Academy
Parent/Student
Handbook

August 25, 2015

HALF-DAY CLASSES, FULL-DAY EFFORT

Tidewater Classical Academy, as a ministry of Green Run Baptist Church, exists to assist parents in fulfilling their commission to "bring [their children] up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord" (Ephesians 6:4), and to prepare the next generation to faithfully bring glory and honor to God.

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Purpose

The purpose of Tidewater Classical Academy, in partnership with Christian parents, is to provide children a classical Christian education.

History

In 2005-06, Green Run Baptist Church (GRBC) began an exploratory effort on how to start a classical Christian school. Through a number of providential circumstances, a group of men joined with the church leadership to begin planning for a school launch in the fall of 2007.

Under the authority of the GRBC elder board, a school board was formed, and began meeting regularly to pray and plan. After much deliberation, we chose Tidewater Classical Academy (TCA) for our name, as it reflected our vision for a community-wide, classical Christian school.

Upon additional review of the available educational programs in south Hampton Roads, we noted that a “half-day classes, full-day curriculum” approach would be a good fit for a number of homeschooling and private schooling families interested in classical education.

Tidewater Classical Academy offers enrollment for grades PreK-8, with our eventual goal being able to offer a full PreK-12 program.

Vision

Tidewater Classical Academy (TCA) exists to assist parents in fulfilling their commission to “bring [their children] up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord” (Ephesians 6:4 ESV), and to prepare the next generation to faithfully bring glory and honor to God. With the Gospel as the foundation, TCA values three pillars as integral to our identity: the Centrality of Christ, the Classical Method, and Christian Parenting.

Philosophy

Centrality of Christ

The Scriptures say that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. Therefore, rather than simply providing supplemental Bible classes, we seek to integrate the Scriptures throughout our studies. This approach requires that all subjects, whether history, literature, mathematics, or science, be taught in light of God's existence and his revelation to humanity through his Word and his Son, Jesus Christ. True knowledge is not fully understood until it is seen in connection to God, the source of all truth.

Classical Method

TCA is a classical school. The classical approach is based on the classical teaching model known as the *Trivium*, which classifies the educational development of every child into three stages: *Grammar* (K-5th), *Logic* (6th-8th) and *Rhetoric* (9th-12th). This approach is uniquely tailored to fit a

child's natural learning patterns.

Each stage, *Grammar* (memorization), *Logic* (argument), and *Rhetoric* (presentation), builds and develops the logical thinking and critical reasoning skills that equip students for a lifetime of learning.

Within these stages, the classical method focuses on mastery of four key tools of learning: reading, writing, language, and math. These tools are the essential building block necessary for success in every other educational discipline. By focusing on mastery of the tools, as opposed to simply knowing the subject matter, we prepare students to tackle any subject they may face.

Christian Parenting

TCA recognizes that children are raised up under the authority of their Christian parents with a greater Christian community. The instruction and discipleship of our children as faithful citizens in the kingdom of God is a covenantal responsibility. Parents are given the primary duty of discipling their children (Deut. 6). However, God has called the church and the greater Christian community to support Christian families in that effort.

Our role as educators is *in loco parentis*. That is, we believe that parents are responsible for the education of their children in the Lord and that *some training* can be delegated to another. However, primary responsibility cannot be delegated and we encourage parents to take every opportunity to teach their children. Our half-day program affords time for

parents to be significantly involved in their child's education. Without regular parental involvement, a child's success at school is limited. We are here to serve and assist parents only in this particular academic way.

What We Believe

In essentials, unity; in non-essentials, liberty; and in all things, charity. -Augustine

Where We Stand

We are a Christian school. Our statement of faith reflects a summary of our understanding of Scripture. Of course, this is only a summary. No creed, confession, or statement of faith can ever replace Scripture. However, Christ himself often used summaries to express key teachings of Scripture (Matt. 22:37-40).

We are a Protestant school, in the Reformed tradition. We believe that the historic creeds of the Protestant Reformation provide a trustworthy summary of Scripture. All of our school board members subscribe to at least one of the historic Reformed creeds (e.g. Westminster Confession of Faith, Synod of Dort, London Baptist Confession, etc.). However, we do not require our faculty, staff, parents, or students to submit to any of these specific standards.

Our Statement of Faith reflects our essential beliefs. All of our faculty and staff subscribe to and teach these doctrines. Of course, there are many other

important doctrines in the Christian faith. We recognize that some of these other doctrines, though important, are not essential to the Christian faith. Orthodox believers have held a variety of divergent views on baptism, the Lord's Supper, the end times, and the gifts of the Holy Spirit. We understand that this variety of opinion is represented among our families at TCA, so these doctrines will be taught with the understanding that various Christians differ on these issues. In all things our desire is to preserve unity and encourage healthy debate, doing all things in a spirit of love and humility. Parents and students are not required to submit to every tenet of our Statement of Faith. As a classical Christian school, we seek to be a safe place for open and honest debate. However, such discussion is dependent upon a framework of core beliefs that clearly states our starting point. We expect our parents to understand that the teachings listed below are considered essential and will be taught to the students. We ask that any disagreements, debates, and/or discussions be conducted with charity and the knowledge that on certain issues we will not move.

Statement of Faith

- We believe the Bible to be the inerrant Word of God. It is our only ultimate and infallible authority for faith and practice.
- We believe that there is one God, eternally existing in three Persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. He is omnipotent, that is, He is all-powerful. He is omnipresent, that is, He is present throughout all Creation, but not limited by it. He is omniscient, that is, nothing

is hidden from His sight. In all things, He is limited by nothing other than His own nature and character.

- We believe the God we serve is holy, righteous, good, severe, loving, and full of mercy. He created the heavens and earth and everything in them in the space of six days, and all very good. He is the Creator, Sustainer, and Governor of everything that has been made.
- We believe in the true deity and full humanity of our Lord Jesus Christ, in His Virgin birth, in His sinless life, in His miracles, in His vicarious and atoning death through His shed blood, in His bodily resurrection, in His ascension to the right hand of the Father, and in His personal return in power and glory.
- We believe in the full deity of the Holy Spirit, acknowledging Him together with the Father and the Son in the works of creation and redemption.
- We believe that because of Adam's sin all mankind is in rebellion against God. For the salvation of such lost and sinful men, regeneration by the Holy Spirit is necessary.
- We believe that salvation is by grace through faith alone, and that faith without works is dead.
- We believe in the present ministry of the Holy Spirit, by whose indwelling the Christian is enabled to live a godly life.
- We believe in the resurrection of both the saved and lost; those who are saved to the resurrection of life, and those who are lost to the resurrection of damnation.

- We believe in the spiritual unity of all believers in our Lord Jesus Christ.

Statement of the Sanctity of Marriage

As the traditional understanding of marriage is being challenged in our society in both public opinion and legislation, it becomes critical for TCA to clearly define its position on marriage, gender, and sexuality. As a protestant Christian school in the reformed tradition, TCA stands committed to the biblical definition of marriage as between one man and one woman for a lifelong covenant (Gen. 2:18-25; Eph. 5:21-33; 1 Cor. 7:12). Moreover we believe that God made mankind male and female, meaning that males should embrace masculinity and females should embrace femininity (Gen. 1:27; Matt. 19:4). Sex is a good gift from God (Heb. 13:4) but must be practiced in alignment with biblical teaching (1 Cor. 6:9-10, 18; Rom. 1:18-32). All of our board members, faculty, and staff must be in agreement with TCA's statement on the sanctity of marriage.

Governance and Organization

Tidewater Classical Academy is a ministry of Green Run Baptist Church (Virginia Beach, VA) and is *under* the authority of the elder board of the church. The elder board provides spiritual leadership, doctrinal stability, moral and financial support, and the final approval for critical administrative decisions including, but not limited to, budgets, hiring and terminations, and the school by-laws.

Reporting to the elder board, the school board

members oversee the vision and performance of the school. The school board also preserves the school's vision, seeks support, and continues to promote the school to the community. The role of the school board is to exercise spiritual leadership and to ensure that TCA achieves appropriate results, for the GRBC elder board, parents, students, teachers and staff.

The TCA school board selects and monitors the performance of the Headmaster. The TCA school board and Headmaster constitute a leadership team. Their contributions are formally separate but their roles are to support and respect each other. The TCA school board utilizes Carver's Policy Governance methodology as its framework for school governance.

Code of Conduct

TCA seeks to build students who love God's Law (Psalm 119) and rejoice in his grace and mercy. These principles will provide the foundation for maintaining good order and discipline in the classroom and instilling a true sense of the joy of the Christian life.

Three Key Character Traits: TCA's motto consists of three Latin words: *Veritas*, *Fides*, and *Gratia*. We build these three attributes in our children by first pointing to God, as the One who models these traits perfectly. Secondly, we daily seek to follow these character traits ourselves.

Veritas (Truth) – *Truthful lips endure forever, but a lying tongue is but for a moment* (Proverbs 12:19)

ESV).

Fides (Faith) – One who is faithful in a very little is also faithful in much (Luke 16:10 ESV).

Gratia (Grace) – May grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord (2 Peter 1:2 ESV).

Three Key Habits: One of the most important things we can do as faculty and staff is to encourage and develop key habits in our students. These habits should be modeled, taught, and reinforced daily.

Hard Work – Whoever is slack in his work is a brother to him who destroys (Proverbs 18:9 ESV).

Humility – The reward for humility and fear of the LORD is riches and honor and life (Proverbs 22:4 ESV).

Honor – Pay to all what is owed to them: ... respect to whom respect is owed, honor to whom honor is owed (Romans 13:7 ESV).

The Ethical Standard

The ethical standard for TCA students, parents, and faculty and staff alike is the Golden Rule (Matthew 7:12) and the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:2-17).

The Golden Rule: *Whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets (ESV).*

The Ten Commandments: *“I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.*

“You shall have no other gods before me.

“You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. You shall not bow down to them or serve them, for I the LORD your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and the fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments.

“You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not hold him guiltless who takes his name in vain.

“Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor, and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, your male servant, or your female servant, or your livestock, or the sojourner who is within your gates. For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.

“Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long in the land that the LORD your God is giving you.

“You shall not murder.

“You shall not commit adultery.

“You shall not steal.

“You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.

“You shall not covet your neighbor’s house; you

shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his male servant, or his female servant, or his ox, or his donkey, or anything that is your neighbor's" (ESV).

Honor Code

Everyone to whom much was given, of him much will be required, and from him to whom they entrusted much, they demand the more (Luke 12:28b ESV).

All TCA students are expected to conduct themselves appropriately, as defined by the wishes of their parents and the official TCA code of conduct. Maintaining God's standard of honesty and integrity is at the heart of the honor code. To this end, greater individual responsibility will be demanded with age and grade advancement.

Discipline Policy

The formation of godly character is paramount. Basic manners, morality, and social graces must be taught from the earliest age. Faculty and staff at TCA will strive to reinforce these values, but the most powerful tool will be the example set by the child's parents.

Biblical discipline is central to education. Obedience needs to be encouraged, and disobedience discouraged. If a child does not have discipline, he needs to be disciplined. This is all part of an education, yet no student will be allowed to continually disrupt the education of other students.

Misconduct

Misconduct will be handled at the lowest possible level. Students will be taught first to attempt reconciliation with the other party before speaking to a teacher. Our goal is for our students to learn and practice a biblical perspective of conflict resolution. All students will be taught to bear with one another and to be willing to forgive those who sin against them, avoiding any form of bitterness.

All behavior that falls short of the code of conduct and the ethical standard of TCA will be addressed. Students will be held accountable to this code and reminded of it as necessary. Some sinful behaviors, especially those of a public, grievous, and/or habitual nature, will be answered with appropriate measures, up to and including dismissal from the school. Each incident will be addressed on a case-by-case basis to ensure justice for all parties involved. Matthew 18 provides us with a biblical model for how to wisely resolve conflicts among Christians and serves as a guide for TCA's discipline policy.

Biblical Reconciliation (Matthew 18:15-17; 21-22)

If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses. If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a

Gentile and a tax collector (ESV).

Then Peter came up and said to him, “Lord, how often will my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? As many as seven times?” Jesus said to him, “I do not say to you seven times, but seventy-seven times (ESV).

When parents have a particular problem with an individual at the school, it should be resolved quickly, simply, and confidentially. Concerns and grievances should first be addressed directly to the party involved. If the individual will not listen, the problem should be taken to the Administrator. If no resolution can be gained, it should then go to the Headmaster. All parties are subject to the authority of their church elders.

Guideline for Gossip: Discussing a “concern” is usually gossip when the hearer is neither part of the problem nor part of the solution. Ask the question: “Is the conversation with someone who can fix the problem?”

Discipline

The purpose of discipline is to *disciple* – to teach the child how to behave and to encourage them to follow your example. Classroom rules are designed to maintain good order and discipline with the heart of a child in mind. To discourage a child in a heavy-handed way is a grievous sin (Matthew 18:6). However, “folly is bound up in the heart of a child” (Proverbs 22:15 ESV). A firm yet gracious hand is necessary to creating a successful learning

environment, grounded in both God's holy law and his grace.

Faculty and staff will exercise discernment in administering correction to children, yet understanding foremost that discipline is properly executed by parents. Parents can also reasonably expect that school faculty and staff will act on their behalf to exercise minor discipline in the classroom when needed.

Corporal Punishment

The use of corporal punishment is reserved for the children's parents. Students whose behavior deserves corporal punishment will be sent immediately to the Headmaster's office.

Admissions

Standard for Parents

As a Christian school committed to partnering with parents, at least one parent (or legal guardian) must be a member *in good standing* at a Christian church. This requirement must be verified by a letter from the family pastor. Additionally, parents must agree that the Statement of Faith will be taught to their children. Finally, parents must promise to hold their children accountable to complete the daily reading and homework assignments prescribed by TCA faculty. We do not discriminate student applications based on a parent's (or child's) race, sex, color, national or ethnic origin. However, the faith and practice of the parents and children are a factor in

our admission decisions.

Standard for Children

TCA is not equipped to handle children with significant learning, behavioral, or emotional challenges. We expect our students to be in faithful submission to their parents and the faculty and staff. Please see the TCA Code of Conduct for more information.

Financial Assistance

Financial assistance is not available from TCA. Please check with your local congregation for available financial assistance.

Calendar

The official school calendar is posted on the TCA website as well as on RenWeb. Notification of holidays, teacher training days, and vacation days are on both calendars.

Books/Materials

Most of the curriculum needed for the program is provided by TCA. However, parents will need to purchase the majority of the material that will be used for the home study portion of the program. A detailed Books & Materials list will be posted on the TCA website.

Materials belonging to TCA, and loaned to students for use, are expected to be treated with care. Fines

will be levied for any damage beyond normal wear and tear. If a textbook is damaged beyond repair, the parents will be responsible for its replacement.

Curriculum

Our curriculum is designed to build the four key *tools of learning*: reading, writing, language, and math. We are committed to helping children gain mastery of these tools, all within the context of the Christian worldview.

Although we cover a range of subjects (math, English, science, spelling, etc.), the content we study is not the end goal, but simply raw material for building the tools of learning and, equally important, the Christian character of the student.

Afternoons are devoted to home-based review and reading. TCA recommends students set aside approximately 1-2 hrs (K-4th) and 2-3 hrs (5th-8th) per day. Our hope is that late afternoons and evenings are free for family-based activities, sports, or extracurricular enrichment.

Art & Music

TCA integrates art and music throughout our program. However, parents may desire to supplement TCA's curriculum. If so, we highly recommend Young Musicians of Virginia (www.ymv.org).

Sports

TCA does not have an athletic program. Our half-day

model is designed to give parents the freedom to choose any of a number of activities available throughout Hampton Roads. Two organizations that we recommend are Hampton Roads Homeschool Sports (www.hrhs.org) and BEACH JA Homeschool Sports (www.beachja.com).

Parents' Role

The parents' role involves three things. First, set the example. Second, ensure their children complete their homework. Third, pray and encourage them through the many challenges they will face in the curriculum.

Report Cards & Grading

Parents receive end-of-term reports regarding their child's academic standing and citizenship. Teachers give most assignments and all tests numerical designations, which then guide the teachers in assigning interim and end term grades.

Test scores and grades are of a limited benefit. At best, grading only provides a snapshot of how a child performs on certain tests. In general, most students have strengths in some areas, weaknesses in other. We encourage parents *not* to use their child's grades to make the final determination regarding their work habits, spiritual state, or effort level.

Our goal is that each child gain a basic mastery of each of the key learning skills. In our system, basic mastery is given a CL (i.e. from the Latin *cum laude* – 'with honor'), or 70-79% on assignments and tests. Achieving a grade higher than CL indicates an

exceptional grasp of the material. Our grading system is per the Amherst System of Latin Honors, as follows:

Summa cum laude (with highest honor) = 90-100%

Magna cum laude (with great honor) = 80-89%

Cum Laude (with honor) = 70-79%

Rite (“duly” or duly earned) = 65-69%

Word of Warning: If transferring to another school or applying to college, our grading system will be different than the majority of programs. In those situations, course content and standardized tests can be used to validate the rigor of our program.

Academic Awards (for 3rd Grade and above) will be given at the end of the year:

- ***The Headmaster’s List*** will be for students who achieve an overall report of Summa cum Laude, scoring an average of at least 95% in each academic subject.
- ***The Honor Roll*** will be for students who achieve an overall report of Summa cum Laude, scoring an average of at least 90% in each academic subject.

Homework

Homework assignments shall consist of two parts: a daily reading assignment and coursework review. All other work shall be consigned to the classroom. Students should expect daily homework assignments

(including reading time) of approximately 1-2 hrs. (K-4) and 2-3 hrs. (5th-8th) per day.

Dress Code

Tidewater Classical Academy has a dress code for all students. Our vision is to teach our children how to take great joy in dressing “appropriately” for the occasion while, at the same time, not becoming legalistic (or vain) about what we wear.

Specifics of the uniforms are posted on the TCA website, in the *Parents Only* section.

Why uniforms?

We require our students to wear uniforms for two main reasons:

First, they “teach” the children. Wearing uniforms teaches children how to dress “appropriately” for the occasion. Even at this early age, children have a *vocation* (or calling), as students. This is a great privilege and takes a tremendous amount of work and focus. By having them wear good-looking uniforms, we are showing that we value and honor their efforts. Scripture often mentions the importance of wearing the right type of “uniform” for the event. This is a lost art and one that we hope to recover.

But when the king came in to see the guests, he noticed a man there who was not wearing wedding clothes. 'Friend,' he asked, 'how did you get in here without wedding clothes?' The man was speechless

(Matthew 22:11-12 ESV).

Second, they look nice and are modest. One of our main goals at TCA is to help our students develop a biblical love of beauty. Too many people today (including Christians) pursue beauty as an end in itself. This doesn't make beauty bad but it does mean that we must see beauty the way the Lord does. We seek to train our students in the right way to pursue beauty – through modesty, grace, and patience.

But let your adorning be the hidden person of the heart with the imperishable beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which in God's sight is very precious (1 Pet. 3:4 ESV).

Student Appearance

We ask that parents work with us to pursue a biblical model of appearance that is both God-honoring and flexible. Below are guidelines for your review. If we find a student's appearance to be disruptive to the classroom environment, we will contact the parent to discuss the issue.

Boys - Hair should be neat, above earlobes and out of the eyes. No facial hair. A belt must always be worn. If an undershirt is worn, it should be white (no colors or logos).

Girls - Hair should be neat and well-kept. Jewelry (if worn) should be appropriate for the age and not a distraction to the rest of the class.

Student Health

Students should be sent to school healthy, well-rested and ready for class. Students with fever, contagious illnesses, severe colds, and similar sickness must be kept home for the well-being of others. Children should be free of contagious symptoms for 24 hours before returning to classes. If it is discovered at school that a child has a fever, or becomes ill, the parent will be contacted for immediate pick-up. We will not dispense medication.

Attendance & Tardiness

Students not in their assigned places by 8:25 a.m. will be considered tardy. If a student is tardy, he must be escorted by his parent to pick up a tardy slip from the TCA Office and bring it to his teacher to be admitted into the classroom.

Due to the nature of the classical approach, student absences have a very negative impact on the rest of the class. Excessive absences could be grounds for disenrollment.

Communication Between Parents & TCA

Teachers will keep parents informed about what is happening in the classroom. Vehicles for accomplishing this include weekly notes, progress reports, parent-teacher conferences, and our

internet-based parent support. At the beginning of the school year, teachers will inform parents how they would like to be contacted outside of school hours. Parents are responsible for reading and following through on all teacher communications and homework assignments.

Contacting the office may be done in two ways: by calling 757-427-5683 or by emailing TCA@GreenRunBaptist.com. School office hours are 8 am to 1 pm, Monday through Friday.

Communications from the school office to your home will generally come through email, so please check that regularly. If you anticipate your email being unavailable to you, please contact the school office so we will know an alternate means of reaching you.

Parent-Teacher Conferences

TCA offers formal parent-teacher conferences twice each school year. In November, all parents should plan to attend the conference with their child's teacher. In March, formal conferences will be scheduled at the discretion of the teacher or the parent but are not mandatory.

Visitors

All visitors, including parents, must report to the TCA Office prior to entering the classrooms.

Weapons Policy

No student should bring any actual weapons (knives, guns, axes, swords, etc.) to TCA. Easily identifiable

toy weapons, as part of a costume, are allowed and encouraged for appropriate events.

Internet-Based Support

We provide direct parental access (via the internet) to a child's grades, classroom behavior, and homework assignments. This allows a parent to closely monitor their child's progress without having to schedule a parent-teacher conference for every issue.

Specific instructions to accessing this information are provided prior to the first day of classes.

Inclement Weather

In case of inclement weather, the message on the school's voicemail will be changed by 7 a.m. to indicate school closure. If there is not a power outage, an email will also be sent to each family. We do not always follow the closure schedule for Virginia Beach Public Schools, so be sure to check our voicemail and your email for notification.

Telephone Policy

School phones may be used by students to call home at the Headmaster's or Administrator's discretion. Any parent who wishes to have their child possess a cell phone must let the TCA Office know their wishes in writing. Under no circumstances must this phone be used during school hours except for emergencies. To contact a student, please call the TCA Office.

Homeschool Notice of Intent

Tidewater Classical Academy believes that parents are responsible for the education of their children. We have deliberately positioned our school to act as a support (*not a replacement*) for parents.

This means that every parent must file paperwork with the local public school superintendent, identifying your family as homeschoolers. As such, all TCA parents will provide a *Notice of Intent to Homeschool* to their local public school superintendent by August 15 for each child turning age 6 by September 30(per Virginia law). Additionally, once a year, parents must show evidence of educational achievement to the local public school superintendent by August 1.

TCA will help our parents fulfill all of these administrative requirements. We believe this approach provides maximum flexibility to our parents and the school. If you have questions about this issue, please discuss with the Headmaster.

Executive School Board

Mr. Aaron Reinick (Chairman)

Mr. Ken Christian, Jr.

Mr. Michael Callahan

Contact Information

Location:

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