

# Pittsburgh Christian Academy



## Family Handbook 2022-2023

*Updated June 8, 2022*

## PCA Mission Statement

Luke 2:52: And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man.

Our mission is to partner with families to enable students to know Jesus grow in Him in the following ways:

**Spiritually** - By developing a personal relationship with Christ as Savior.

**Emotionally** - In the fruits of the spirit: love, joy, peace patience, gentleness, and self-control.

**Physically** - Growing strong and healthy through the understanding that the body is a temple of the Holy Spirit.

**Socially** - Focusing on Christ-centered relationships, reaching outside of self to have a positive impact on family, friends, and community

**Intellectually** - Gaining knowledge and skills that will enable each student to Glorify God through education, career, and family.

## Enrollment

Parents and students should be committed to the PCA mission and Statement of faith before enrolling. You are welcome to discuss any of these tenets with us to determine if you are able to fully support this partnership.

PCA will generally enroll students who are average or above average in ability and achievement. If we believe we have the resources in staffing and facilities, we will do our best to accommodate special needs. Please be aware, however, that resources are limited, and if we cannot fully serve your child, we will recommend enrollment in another setting with necessary resources and staff.

An admissions exam and interview are required, along with reference checks, to determine a student's potential for success at PCA.

Pittsburgh Christian 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 hiring policies, educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship, athletic, and other school-administered programs.

## Curriculum

PCA offers a full curriculum that will prepare each student individually for a chosen career path in higher education, trades, business, ministry, arts, or other chosen fields.

In addition to regular course work, we will work to enhance opportunities through vocational and technical partnerships, dual enrollment, and à la carte classes for home schoolers.

Our curriculum consists of these main components:

1. **Biblical World View:** Courses are taught with the understanding that God is the creator of each discipline, and that all knowledge points to God as the Creator. Students will have opportunities for prayer and spiritual growth throughout each school day.

2. **Base knowledge:** These skills are needed for everyday life, and will be taught each day

- Mathematics and Technology
- English, Reading, Grammar, and Writing

3. **Core Knowledge:** This instruction is necessary for additional life skills and higher education. Core classes will be taught at least three days per week:

- Science
- Language
- Social Studies

4. **Specialties:** Students should devote a large portion of their time to areas of personal skill and gifting. This can include focused study, technology, creative arts, athletics, music, and more. Time will also be allotted for creative self-directed application (See enterprise projects, page 6).

## Grades Pre-K through 5

Students will receive classroom instruction at or above grade level in the appropriate Math, Reading, Writing, Spelling, History, Bible, Science, and Language skills. Special attention will be given to emotional and social development through instruction, playtime, and peer interaction.

Elementary students will also receive special weekly instruction in Art, Music, PE, and Language.

Middle School and High school students will be enrolled according to ability and achievement in each subject area. Some course offerings may be adjusted due to class size and students entering the school at differing levels. The general grade by grade track is as follows:

## **Grade 6**

Math 6 or Pre-Algebra  
English 6 / Grammar / Writing: Regular or Accelerated  
Social Studies  
Life Science  
Bible 6  
Spanish

## **Grade 7**

Pre-Algebra or Algebra 1  
English 7 / Grammar / Writing: Regular or Accelerated  
Social Studies  
Physical Science  
Bible 7  
Spanish

## **Grade 8**

Algebra 1, Intermediate Algebra, or Honors Geometry  
English 8 / Grammar / Writing: Regular or Accelerated  
Social Studies  
Earth Science  
Bible 8  
Spanish

## **Grade 9**

Algebra 1, Geometry, Honors Geometry, or Honors Algebra 2  
English 9 / Writing: Genre or Honors Genre  
American History  
Biology  
Bible 9  
Spanish 1

## **Grade 10**

Algebra 2, Honors Algebra 2, or Honors Trigonometry  
English 10 / Writing: Western Literature or Honors Western Literature  
Western Civilization  
Chemistry  
Bible 10  
Spanish 2

## Grade 11

Consumer Math, Honors Trigonometry, or Honors Calculus  
English 11 / Writing: American Literature or Honors American Literature  
Conceptual Physics or Honors Physics  
American History  
Bible 11  
Spanish 3 or Forensics

## Grade 12

Math: College Algebra, Honors Calculus 1, or Honors Calculus 2  
English: College English 101 or British Literature  
Science: Environmental Science, Forensics, or Anatomy  
Spanish 4, Botany / Zoology, or Honors Physics 2  
Bible 12  
Economics and Personal Finance

## Electives

All middle and high school and students should choose and prioritize the following electives. Students will choose by prioritizing any electives they would like to take, with 1 being the most desired, 2 being second, etc. Based on class size and availability, we will attempt to enroll each student in as many of their top choices as possible. Students should number at least 1 through 5.

- Christian Service
- Bible Quizzing
- Gym / PE
- Personal Fitness
- Chorus
- Painting
- Drawing
- Creative Writing
- Worship Team
- Bible Study
- Home Economics / Cooking
- Marketing
- Spiritual Emphasis
- American Sign Language
- Sports Theory, Coaching, and Officiating

Students should also list any additional questions or requests regarding their schedule.

## Enterprise Projects

An enterprise is defined as a project or undertaking, typically one that is difficult or requires effort. Each student in grades 6 through 12 will choose and conduct their own enterprise project. The projects may also be offered to younger grade levels if deemed appropriate by the teacher.

The project should make use of individual skills, gifts, and interests.

Much of the work for the enterprise should be done on a Chromebook or on paper, so that work can be done during a quiet time at school or on a cyber day. However, the project can include additional components such as producing audio / video or building a physical product.

The following are potential enterprise projects:

- Write a novel
- Write a screenplay
- Develop a portfolio of artwork
- Design puzzles or games
- Produce a comic book
- Write and comment on sporting events
- Research and comment on political or social issues
- Design a physical product
- Write lyrics or poetry
- Research a scientific subject, unsolved mystery, conspiracy, historical event, or Biblical subject
- Learn a programming language using w3schools.com
- Code a program or game
- Develop a live website and domain
- Write devotionals or Bible Study materials
- Any other creative endeavor that can be conducted on a computer and / or paper

At any time, each student should be conducting at least one active enterprise. At any time, a given project can wrap up and a student move on to a new one.

Students will periodically discuss projects with parents and an advisor in order to share content and brainstorm on additions to the enterprise.

There will be opportunities to discuss projects and to present projects to one's class and present in additional venues. However, a presentation is not a requirement, and there is no requirement to display the work publicly.

Enterprise projects will be the main component of some cyber days. For cyber days where this is the focus, online classes will be replaced with this individualized work.

Students will share what they are doing with their parents and advisors.

Course credit will be given for enterprise projects.

## GPA Calculation and Class Rank

GPA is currently computed per the quality points listed in the following table. There may be some adjustment in these weightings as the curriculum is further developed and transcripts received from previous schools:

Letter Grade	% Range	Weighted Quality Points	Unweighted Quality Points
A+	99-100	4.5	4
A	92-98	4.5	4
A-	90-91	4.25	3.75
B+	88-89	3.75	3.25
B	82-87	3.5	3
B-	80-81	3.25	2.75
C+	78-79	2.75	2.75
C	72-77	2.5	2
C-	70-71	2.25	1.75
D+	68-69	1.75	1.25
D	62-67	1.5	1
D-	60-61	1.25	0.75
F	0-59	0	0

## Homework

The amount of homework assigned should be well balanced and appropriate for grade level. We prefer that teachers assign useful practice exercises and valuable research assignments instead of an excessive amount of busywork. Homework time will vary per student, but the general goal is that most students' average workload will not exceed one hour per night. Special assignments and projects may create an exception to this recommendation, but these should be assigned with ample lead time. Advanced course work may also require more than one hour of work per night.

With a focus on quality over quantity, it is our expectation that teachers will normally collect homework and grade it based on neatness, completeness, correctness, and quality.

## Dress Code

Dress code is often subjective. Parents and students, please do your best to keep dress code from becoming an issue. We believe that students can meet the following guidelines in clothes they already own and like.

Come to school dressed ready to work, learn, and glorify God. If your clothing meets the following three requirements, you will do very well with our dress code:

### - Comfortable

Clothing should be appropriate size and generally somewhat loose fitting.

Clothing should be clean and well maintained (not torn).

Clothing should cover your shoulders and be appropriate length.

Dress for the weather. Layers including sweatshirts or sweaters are a good idea so you can adjust to changing temperatures.

Footwear should be comfortable and should have a back. If needed for PE, you should wear or bring athletic shoes.

### - Casual

Khakis, joggers, and jeans are permitted.

Appropriate length cargo or khaki shorts are permitted.

Sweatpants will be permitted on certain days.

You are also permitted to dress up for special occasions, and there will be special dress up and spirit days.

### - Conducive to learning

Clothing should be generally simple and noncontroversial.

Clothing should not promote musical groups, shows, political slogans, or other contentious messages.

It is a good idea to have extra clothing available for athletics, work activities, or outdoor activities.

Hair should be clean and well kept, and for boys a reasonable length.

Piercings should be kept to a minimum, and you may be asked to conceal them, along with any tattoos. For any nose or body piercings, wear small studs instead of rings or hoops.

If you are concerned that an item might not be in dress code, it is better to wear something else. Additional requirements may be given to any student who consistently pushes the boundaries of this dress code.



## Electronic Device Policy for Grades 6 - 12

The average individual in the US now owns several internet connected devices, and most are required to use at least one device during working and university hours. Many who work also sit in meetings where the use of a device would be inappropriate.

We believe that students should begin learning to carry their devices, use them as a tool when helpful, and eliminate their distractions when appropriate.

1. Students are permitted to carry cell phones or electronic devices. During “down time” (see point 7), students are permitted to use them appropriately but sparingly.
2. During instructional time, devices must be turned off and put away. They may be kept inside a closed case, backpack, or locker. They may not be kept inside a pocket or anywhere else that could be visible or accessible. In other words, students should not be aware of messages or notifications they receive during instructional time. Wearable devices such as an Apple Watch must be set to a mode that will not receive or send notifications during class time.
3. During school hours, unless special permission is given, devices may not be used to photograph or to record audio or video. Other students should expect a reasonable amount of privacy during school hours, and audio or video recording will violate that privacy.
4. Social media usage during down time may be monitored or removed.
5. All content accessed on all devices should be appropriate for school.
6. If devices are needed for a specific usage such as research, they may be permitted by the instructor and then returned to their enclosed case or bag.
7. What constitutes “down time” (bus? homeroom? class change? lunch?) will be clarified by teachers and administrators as the policy progresses and according to grade level.
8. We believe this policy will help to train students to use their devices properly in the work force and in higher learning. However, a student who goes beyond the proper usage may be required to leave all devices with the office at the beginning of the school day.

## Statement of Faith

Pittsburgh Christian Academy is a non-denominational Christian school dedicated to help Christian parents fulfill their Biblical mandate to educate their children in the Lord. To that end, all subjects are taught from a Christian worldview. Bible classes will train students to study Scripture, to interpret it accurately, and to apply its truths to every area of life.

Students are encouraged to discuss questions of doctrine with their parents and church leaders, partners with the Christian school in equipping them for righteous living.

Pittsburgh Christian Academy focuses on these essential elements of the Christian faith:

- 1.** We believe the Bible to be the inspired and the only infallible, authoritative Word of God (2 Tim. 3:16).
- 2.** We believe in one Triune God, eternally existent in three coequal persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Eph. 4:3-6; Matt. 3:16-17; Jn. 20:21-22)
- 3.** We believe in the deity 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 from the dead, in His ascension to the right hand of the Father, and in His personal and physical return in power and glory (Jn. 1:14; Jn. 10:30; Is. 7:14; Matt. 1:23; Heb. 4:15; Jn. 2: 1-11; Mk. 7:31-37; Lk. 24:5-6; Jn. 3:16; Lk. 24:50-53; Mt. 24:30-31).
- 4.** We believe in the necessity of regeneration by the Holy Spirit for salvation because of the exceeding sinfulness of human nature, and that men are justified by faith in the shed blood of Christ and that only by God's grace through faith we are saved. (Rom. 3:23-26).
- 5.** We believe in the resurrection of both the saved and the lost: they that are saved to the resurrection of life, and they that are lost to the resurrection of damnation. We believe in the Spirituality of believers in Christ. (Mt. 25:31-46).
- 6.** We believe that all human life is sacred and created by God in His image. Human life is of inestimable worth in all its dimensions, including pre-born babies, the aged, the physically or mentally challenged, and every other stage or condition from conception through natural death. We are therefore called to defend, protect, and value all human life. (Ps 139)
- 7.** We believe God has ordained marriage and defined it as the covenant relationship between a man, a woman, and Himself (Gen. 2: 18-25; 1 Cor. 7:2-5). We recognize that marriage is between a biological man and a biological woman (Heb. 13:4).

## Expected Behaviors

All PCA Students, staff, volunteers, parents, and guardians are expected to follow these principles:

- **Be Present**
- **Be Respectful**
- **Be Kind**

Conflicts should be resolved according to the principles outlined in Matthew 18: 15 – 18, with the appropriate help and disciplinary guidance of instructors and administrators.

All members of our community should show continual progress in the following characteristics:

### **Christ-Centeredness**

PCA is a Christ-centered school. We seek to know Jesus, be led by His Word and Spirit, and be shaped by the Gospel.

### **Discipleship**

We are distinguished by Christ's redemptive discipleship. A disciple imitates and shares the mindset of the Savior (2 Cor. 3:16). Our teachers exemplify the Christ-centered life, teaching all subjects within the authority and context of Christ as preeminent and transforming all Creation, including our lives. We foster prayer for and with one another as we draw closer to Christ and our PCA family.

### **Academic Focus**

Jesus sets the standards for excellence and with Him as our example, we offer distinctive academic programs from a Biblical perspective. Students learn to think critically and creatively, to communicate ideas, and to cooperate with one another within a biblical worldview.

### **Community Outreach**

We are a relational community in which every member is known and loved. We endeavor to form purposeful partnerships with teachers, students, our families, and local churches. These relationships nurture and encourage our students through Biblical teaching and Christ-like examples. Our goal is to see students become servants of Christ in the school, the church, the community, and the world.

## Outside Behavior

The actions of students, staff, and parents outside the school and church walls reflect our faith in Christ and our testimony to others. These actions can and do affect what happens in the school. If outside actions are shown to affect instruction or unity within the school community, these issues are open for discussion with students and parents alike.

## Discipline

Most behaviors that require disciplinary action will be handled with a requirement of additional work, a corrective action, and / or a lunchtime, recess detention. More serious issues may require suspension or expulsion, and these will be administered in cooperation with the parent. Final decisions regarding disciplinary actions rest with the school administration.

## Make-up Work

It is the responsibility of students to make up work after an absence. Each teacher will communicate a make-up policy and expectation and will also assist in clarifying work that needs to be completed.

## Cheating and Plagiarism

Students who cheat or plagiarize will be receive a zero on the work involved, and the parents will be notified. Repeat offenses may result in more serious consequences.

For a given class or assignment, the teacher should clarify the amount of help a student may receive, such as the following possible expectations:

- a) **None:** Students may receive no help and must do all work on their own
- b) **Assistance allowed:** Students may receive some level of assistance from fellow students or from parents or teachers
- c) **Work together:** Students may work together and may check answers

In cases where assistance is allowed, this does not include copying answers from another student's paper. Generally, the helper should be actively assisting or explaining, but not freely giving out answers.

For academic papers, students should plan to turn in a digital version, and this version may be run through plagiarism checking software. This will prepare students for college level scrutiny of their work.

## Absences

Parents must call the school or send an email the office with the reason for a student's absence, expected late arrival or early dismissal. Please do so before 8:15 so the student will be listed as such on the attendance roster.

If consistent absence or lateness becomes a problem, remediation or discipline may be necessary. Please be aware that we are required to follow state and local guidelines for truancy reporting.

## School Hours

8:30 am to 2:20 pm

## After Class Hours on Campus

When students are on campus after class hours to attend a specific school event or designated activity, they are to remain at the site of the event or activity, for safety and security reasons. Both students and parents should know in advance the time and the place of the activity and the expected time of completion.

PITTSBURGH CHRISTIAN ACADEMY does not provide after school care, and it is the responsibility of the parent to ensure the students depart from the facility in a timely manner at the end of scheduled classes or activities.

The facility closes at 3:00 pm daily. Students remaining on campus after this time must have permission from administration and must be participating in an authorized PCA activity.

## Driving Privileges

Students and parents, remember at all times that there may be other students in the parking lot before and after school. Traffic around the school can be busy and safety must be maintained at all times. The following are guidelines should be observed:

- The pedestrian always has the right of way.
- Reckless driving will not be tolerated
- Students will need permission from administration to go to their cars during school hours without the permission of the administration.
- Students will observe parking regulations.
- Students may only drive or ride home with other students that are their siblings except when the administration approves the transportation for an extremely special condition (such as a normal carpool approved by both sets of parents, when their children do not live in a district that provides transportation.)
- Student drivers must complete an authorization form.

## Off-Campus Trips

In order for a student to participate in a school-sponsored trip, a parent must sign the permission slip provided by the school on the student information sheet.

## Accidents or Illnesses

In the event of an accident or illness at school, every attempt will be made to contact parents. Please make sure that all contact info is updated. There are times, however, when situations develop and neither parents nor the individual designated can be reached. At these times, it will be the responsibility of the administration to determine the course of action to be taken.

## Athletics

### - Fall Sports:

Volleyball (Girls)  
Soccer (Boys and Girls)

Fall Sports camps begin in August

### - Winter Sports:

Basketball (Girls)  
Basketball (Boys)

### - Spring Sports:

Spring sports will be determined based on interest level and league openings. Possible Considerations are Baseball, Girls Softball, and Boys Volleyball.

## Fundraising

The administration must approve all general fundraising activities.

## School Office

The School Office will be open from 8:00 AM to 3:00 PM on regular school days. The voice mail system is available for calls when the office is not open or at times when all the office's phone lines are busy. Classroom teachers must grant permission for any student to go to the office (unless the student is arriving late).

## Medical Screenings

All students in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania are required by law to be screened yearly for height, weight, vision, and hearing. This will be scheduled and performed by the local district nurse without prior parental notification. If families prefer to have the screenings done at their own expense by private physicians, they may do so by submitting a written request stating their intent to have it done privately to PCA as close to the first day of school as possible. As per vaccination status, please follow Allegheny policies regarding and exemptions.

## Student Medication Policy

Please communicate to the PCA office regarding any medications your child may need to take during the school day. Please be sure that the plan for administering the medication is communicated in writing or via email. Under no circumstances should any medication be made available to another student.

## Snow Days and Delays

If it is necessary to close the school due to weather or other emergency, students should plan to continue their cyber / service day work so that they will receive credit for the school day.

On days of inclement weather, all delay and closing information will be conveyed via message service.

You may follow your local district schedule, even if the PCA announcement is different. For example,

- If your local district announces a two-hour delay, your children will be picked up two hours later than their normal pickup time.
- If your local district is closed but PCA is open, you may wish to transport your child to and from school that day. If you are unable, the day will not be counted as an absence.
- If PCA is on a two-hour delay, classes begin at 10:30 AM.
- If PCA is on a delay but your school district is not delayed, your child's bus will come at the normal time. PCA Staff members will be in the building when students arrive.

Please look for notifications throughout the morning because sometimes a delay can turn into a cancellation if conditions worsen.

There may be times when the weather causes an early dismissal at PCA. The individual school districts make the decision as to when to pick up students for an early dismissal. We will attempt to contact every parent of students in Grades KR-5 to make sure that someone will be home early to greet the child. Students in Grades 6-12 will be responsible to get into their own homes and their parents/guardians will not be called.

## Parental Commitment to PCA

As a Pittsburgh Christian Academy parent or guardian, I agree:

1. That I am in support of an educational environment here my child will be instructed as a disciple of Christ and according to the Statement of Faith outlined in this handbook.
2. To fulfill my financial obligations to PCA
3. That I am responsible for any damages my child may cause to school or church property.
4. To support and abide by Pittsburgh Christian Academy policies. I affirm that I am in agreement with the policies outlined in the Family Handbook.
5. To support school personnel, programs and activities with prayer and communication, and where possible, to serve as a volunteer in various capacities.
6. To allow my child to be photographed or videotaped for public relations and/or training purposes, or to send the school a waiver to the contrary.
7. To direct any grievances through the proper channels according to the principles outlined in chapter eighteen of the gospel of Matthew.

---

Parent Signature

Date