



# 2022-2023 Family Handbook



# Table of Contents

|   |          |
|---|----------|
| <b>Table of Contents</b>  | <b>2</b> |
| <b>Welcome!</b>   | <b>5</b> |
| <b>Mission and Vision</b>   | <b>5</b> |
| Mission   | 5        |
| Vision  | 5        |
| <b>Charter and Affiliations</b>   | <b>5</b> |
| <b>Governance</b>   | <b>6</b> |
| Board of Directors (Board)  | 6        |
| Board Responsibilities  | 6        |
| Conflict of Interest  | 6        |
| Board members will confirm annually that they have no inappropriate conflicts that would preclude them from faithfully serving the school with fidelity. Board members shall keep on file and update at least annually the conflict of interest disclosure forms. | 6        |
| Advocacy  | 6        |
| School Leader Support   | 7        |
| Fiscal Accountability   | 7        |
| Development/Fundraising   | 7        |
| Other   | 7        |
| Core Principles Held to be Non-Negotiable   | 8        |
| School Culture  | 8        |
| Academics   | 8        |
| Role of Head of School  | 8        |
| Teachers  | 9        |
| Parents/Guardians and Students  | 9        |
| Fiscal Responsibility   | 9        |
| Conflict of Interest  | 9        |
| Adherence to Law  | 9        |
| Charter Agreement   | 9        |
| Open Meetings Act   | 9        |
| Community Comments at Public Meetings   | 10       |
| Official Posting Place for Communication  | 10       |
| Policy Making   | 10       |
| Fundraising   | 10       |
| Parent Grievances   | 10       |
| Grievance Related to the Classroom  | 10       |
| Grievance Related to an Administrator   | 11       |

|   |           |
|---|-----------|
| Importance of Following the Chain-of-Command  | 11        |
| <b>Academic Policies</b>  | <b>12</b> |
| Educational Priorities  | 12        |
| Homework and Classwork  | 12        |
| Grading Policy  | 14        |
| Florida State Assessment (FSA) Testing Schedule   | 15        |
| Teacher Conferences   | 15        |
| Academic Textbooks and Supplies   | 15        |
| Reporting   | 15        |
| Schedule Changes  | 15        |
| Plagiarism  | 15        |
| Cheating  | 16        |
| Promotion and Retention   | 16        |
| General   | 16        |
| Special Events and Celebrations   | 17        |
| Special Events – Guest Speakers   | 17        |
| Special Events – Field Trips  | 17        |
| Virtual Extracurricular Activities (Grades K-8)   | 17        |
| Teaching Controversial Issues   | 18        |
| Teaching Evolution  | 18        |
| Role of Parents/Guardians and School in Relation to Human Sexuality                       | 19        |
| Teaching Human Sexuality  | 19        |
| Video Viewing Policy  | 19        |
| <b>School Life and Environment</b>  | <b>20</b> |
| Attendance, Illness, and Tardiness  | 20        |
| Absences  | 21        |
| COVID-19  | 21        |
| Vacations   | 22        |
| Excuse of Pupils for Religions Reasons  | 22        |
| Tardiness   | 22        |
| Special Education   | 23        |
| Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)  | 23        |
| Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act | 23        |
| Classroom Activities  | 24        |
| Daily Life  | 24        |
| Movies in the Classroom   | 24        |
| Gift Policies   | 25        |
| Internet and Cell Phone Usage   | 25        |
| Civility  | 25        |

|  |           |
|--|-----------|
| School Guidelines for Student Behavior                           | 26        |
| General  | 26        |
| Honor Code   | 26        |
| Discipline   | 27        |
| Uniforms and Grooming  | 27        |
| Student Publications Policy                                      | 27        |
| Student Fees and Supplies  | 27        |
| Parent Communications with the Administration, Faculty and Staff | 27        |
| Faculty and Staff Phone/Email Reference*                         | 28        |
| Expectations for Parents or Guardians                            | 29        |
| Parent/Guardian Involvement                                      | 29        |
| <b>Enrollment Policy</b>   | <b>30</b> |
| General  | 30        |
| <b>Operations</b>  | <b>30</b> |
| School Calendar  | 30        |
| School Hours   | 30        |
| School Website   | 30        |
| Communicating with Parents with Joint Custody                    | 30        |
| Online Orientation Forms   | 31        |
| Mass Communication Policy  | 31        |
| <b>Student Code of Conduct</b>                                   | <b>31</b> |
| Violation of Academic Integrity                                  | 31        |
| Defiance of Authority/Insubordination                            | 31        |
| Computer Misuse  | 32        |
| Anti-Bullying Policy   | 32        |
| Internet Acceptable Use Policy                                   | 33        |
| Academic Integrity Contract                                      | 33        |
| <b>Policies</b>  | <b>34</b> |
| Nonsectarian Policy and Anti-Discrimination Policy               | 34        |
| Internet Acceptable Use Policy                                   | 34        |
| Internet–Terms and Conditions of Use                             | 34        |
| <b>Privacy</b>   | <b>35</b> |
| Family Educational Rights Privacy Act (FERPA)                    | 35        |

# Welcome!

Welcome to Optima Classical Academy! OCA is committed to meeting your diverse needs and helping you to successfully complete your online classes. This family handbook will provide you with the resources and information that you'll need to begin learning online with OCA. Taking full advantage of these resources will help ensure your success!

## Mission and Vision

### Mission

*The mission of Optima Classical Academy is to provide an excellent, virtue-centered education using a classical curriculum, great books, and innovative content delivery in the context of a sincere and inspiring community of scholars.*

Optima Classical Academy uses a great books curriculum, thoughtful Socratic instruction, and our excellent faculty to inspire and inform our scholars, and we ensure that virtue is at the center of each course, unit, and lesson. It is our goal to graduate scholars of fine moral character, with an understanding of their rights and responsibilities, the value of the life of the mind, and the rewards inherent in a fully engaged life. .

### Vision

*Optima Classical Academy's vision is to introduce our scholars to the good, the true, and the beautiful, both in our curriculum, and in the world around them. We aspire to educate students in such a way that they will be prepared to participate meaningfully in whichever pursuits they desire, and to do so understanding that happiness is only truly achieved when it is found in the pursuit of something worthwhile.*

We work to ensure our scholars understand, embrace, and appreciate the cultural, social, and literary inheritance they have in western society, and enable them to participate meaningfully in the ongoing conversation of a liberal arts education and all of its benefits. Our vision is to see our scholars become not only inheritors and stewards of the western tradition, but also the architects of its future flourishing.

## Charter and Affiliations

Optima Classical Academy is a public charter school authorized by the Collier County Florida School District.

Optima Classical Academy is a non-profit 501 (c) (3) corporation governed by a Governing Board of Directors. Optima Classical Academy contracts with The Optima Foundation, a

non-profit management organization, to support its member schools with academic program oversight, board communications, administrative duties, government and public relations, budgeting and financial reporting, maintenance of student and financial records, personnel staffing and training, student recruitment, and compliance management..

## Governance

### Board of Directors (Board)

The school is governed by its board of directors (the “board”). 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 local school district. The bylaws and charter agreement are available on the school’s website.

### Board Responsibilities

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 the school to implement a traditional, classical, liberal-arts education guided by the following mission:

*To 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.*

The board oversees budgeting and spending, community outreach, charter fidelity, compliance with applicable laws and regulations, and development to support the program. More specific responsibilities of the board include but are not limited to:

### Conflict of Interest

- Board members will confirm annually that they have no inappropriate conflicts that would preclude them from faithfully serving the school with fidelity. Board members shall keep on file and update at least annually the conflict of interest disclosure forms.

### Advocacy

- Serving as ambassadors for the school by clearly protecting and articulating the school's mission and goals and by garnering support of the community.

## School Leader Support

- Providing input and feedback to the Head of School on campus-specific issues and concerns (e.g., school culture, discipline policy, student recruitment, etc.).
- Supporting the Head of School by ensuring that he/she has the moral and professional support necessary to further the goals of the school.

## Fiscal Accountability

- Participating in the budgeting process each year, providing advice and feedback to the Head of School.
- Monitoring the management of financial resources by approving the annual budget and ensuring that proper financial controls are in place.
- Financial reporting of the treasurer to the board as required in the by-laws to ensure the board is “hands-on” as it relates to fiscal controls and responsibility.

## Development/Fundraising

- Assuring there are adequate resources for the school to fulfill its mission by raising funds from the local school community.

## Compliance

- Monitoring and ensuring compliance with the Florida Department of Education regulatory statutes and other local, state, and federal laws by regularly reviewing school policies, programs, and practices.
- Reviewing school data against charter and charter goals to ensure compliance with the vision, strategies, and objectives identified herein.

## Other

- Serving as a source for appeals for parent and staff grievances that are unable to be resolved by the Head of School.
- Recruiting new board directors and advisory council members.

In summary, the board is accountable for the academic, financial, legal, and operational performance of the school. The board places responsibility for implementing its policies with the executive director, but the board remains accountable.

# Core Principles Held to be Non-Negotiable

## School Culture

- Employees will model and encourage students to uphold the school's core virtues: courage, courtesy, honesty, perseverance, responsibility, self-government, and service.
- The academy is an open enrollment school with no enrollment criteria outside of statutory and contractual requirements.
- The Head of School is accountable for the well-being of every student.
- Faculty members personally know each of their students as well as others.
- Students and employees adhere to a code of conduct.
- Discipline policies are designed to prevent interruption of teaching and learning as well as reinforce the core virtues.
- Classrooms are open for observation (for the purpose of understanding classroom expectations and how to help your child be successful) any time by parents or guardians. Appointments must be made with the classroom teacher.

## Academics

- Our educational philosophy is expressed in the writings of E. D. Hirsch, Jr., essays by T. O. Moore, and James Kilpatrick's *Why Johnny Can't Tell Right From Wrong*.
- Student services provides support to all students with academic and behavioral needs. Interventions utilized to achieve the school's expectations are targeted and specific to each individual student.
- The school resists grade inflation and social promotion. Mastery of core subjects always takes priority.
- Students will be academically prepared to pursue multiple post-secondary options. Although most graduates will go on to college, students who do not intend to attend college will be prepared for success in their career endeavours.
- Literacy is taught through an explicit phonics program. Math is taught conceptually. Teachers frequently employ the Socratic method of discussion.
- Standardized tests do not drive the curriculum.

## Role of 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 and moral culture of the school.

## Teachers

- The Head of School employs teachers based on their mastery of an academic discipline, their ability to convey knowledge to young people, and their capacity to maintain order and decorum in the classroom. Teachers must be certified as required by law.
- The school's teachers are treated as professionals. Their professional development consists of required training sessions at the end and the beginning of each school year, to be coordinated by the Head of School, and weekly group professional development.

## Parents/Guardians and Students

- Parents' or guardians' support of the school's academic and moral mission is essential. Parents or guardians are encouraged to learn more about the school's philosophy and curriculum in order to help support and guide their students.
- To thrive at the academy, students must be polite and attentive in class and have a strong work ethic and willingness to learn.

## Fiscal Responsibility

- The academy's budgeting philosophy is conservative. We do not expend funds until we know they are in our possession. When budgeting, first priority is given to faculty salaries, then instructional materials, then other areas of the school deemed important by the administration and the board.

## Conflict of Interest

Board members will confirm annually that they have no inappropriate conflicts that would preclude them from faithfully serving the school with fidelity. Board members shall keep on file and update at least annually the conflict of interest disclosure forms.

## Adherence to Law

### Charter Agreement

The board will adhere to federal, state, and local laws identified explicitly or implicitly in the Charter Agreement. In most instances, when the board has been granted autonomy, the board will develop its own policy.

### Open Meetings Act

The board will adhere to the Florida Sunshine Laws. The board will:

- Establish a set schedule of meetings;

- Post meeting dates in a conspicuous location (date, time, location);
- Post agendas at least one week before a meeting;
- Post and place 24-hour notice for emergency called meetings;
- 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, record of votes.

## Community Comments at Public Meetings

The board welcomes public comments at each board meeting. Community comments are limited to three 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.

## Official Posting Place for Communication

Committee meeting times and agendas are visibly posted on the school website. Board of directors meeting agendas are posted in the same manner.

## Policy Making

The board shall operate according to the policy governance model. The board shall be solely responsible for adopting, repealing, or amending governance policies for the school. The executive director shall be responsible for reasonably interpreting those policies and executing them.

## Fundraising

Fundraising activities must not undermine the mission and philosophy of the school. Students of the school will not engage in door-to-door sales of any kind.

## Parent Grievances

### Grievance Related to the Classroom

The school 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 Teacher: Parents or guardians should schedule a meeting with the teacher in advance. Under no circumstance is it acceptable for a parent to confront a teacher about an issue with students present, including his/her own.

The Dean of Families: If the grievance cannot be resolved with the teacher, and the matter regards discipline, the parent should discuss the matter with the dean of families.

The Head of School: If the grievance cannot be resolved with the dean of families, 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.

It is recommended that grievances referred to the board be submitted in writing. Parental concerns and grievances may also be raised during the community comments portion of the board of directors meeting. The concern or grievance must be submitted in writing, and no more than three minutes will be granted. Grievances or discussions involving specific personnel will not be entertained at a public meeting. It is recommended that the concern or grievance be addressed in one of the aforementioned steps before using this option.

## Grievance Related to an Administrator

Grievances regarding an administrator should be directed to the individual first, then in writing to the board.

## Importance of Following the Chain-of-Command

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' or guardians' communication of any kind that seeks or requires an action on the part of the school regarding their students. The school understands that parents or guardians 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 (Dean of Families or Head of School), according to whether the matter concerns discipline or academics. If further communication is warranted after seeing an administrator, 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 to 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 or guardians 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 or guardians 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.

## Academic Policies

### Educational Priorities

The board desires that all students receive a classical liberal arts education. To this end the board has determined the following educational priorities.

- Basic cognitive skills and academic fundamentals: reading/writing/mathematics;
- Core subjects: English language and literature; history, geography, and government; physical and biological sciences; mathematics;
- Other classical subjects: music; art; Latin;
- Auxiliary subjects: foreign languages, physical education, performing arts, other social sciences; and
- Extracurricular activities as defined by the Head of School.

Grades K-8: The K-8 curriculum will follow the Core Knowledge Sequence. Occasionally, the school will diverge from the Core Knowledge Sequence in order to raise the standards in teaching a particular skill or subject. The board and Head of School will determine these instances. The Head of School will ensure that all skill areas in the Grades K-8 Core Knowledge Sequence are taught at some point in Grades K-8. Teachers must develop their courses under the direction of the Head of School, who is the chief academic leader.

### Homework and Classwork

Homework is a fundamental part of our general academic program. It prepares students for high school and college and for entry into the workforce upon graduation. It also helps develop a strong work ethic and habits of organization. Homework’s immediate educational purpose is:

- to reinforce skills, concepts and knowledge learned in class;

- to develop good skills and habits of study;
- to practice skills and reinforce knowledge in ways that are not readily accomplished in the classroom;
- to work on assignments, such as the writing of papers, and prepare for exams that require a great deal of sustained, individual attention;
- to prepare for the following day's work so that the most can be made of class time; and
- to inform parents or guardians of what is being taught in the classroom.

In addition to regular classroom assignments, we would like each younger child to read, or be read to, at least three times a week and preferably every day. As cited in *A Nation at Risk*, "the single most important factor for determining whether children will go to college is being read to as a child." Going to college is not necessarily a goal for everyone, but becoming a thoughtful reader should be if one hopes to be knowledgeable, wise, insightful, and competitive throughout one's lifetime. We believe that becoming a competent reader is critical to being a good student and the first step to being able to explore the world. Reading to a child encourages the child's growth and also elevates and informs conversation within the family. In the upper grades, the extra reading time (roughly half an hour) allows for the increasing length of great works of literature.

The expected homework time allotment for each grade is as follows:

|              |                                     |
|--------------|-------------------------------------|
| Kindergarten | 10 minutes plus family reading time |
| Grade 1      | 10 minutes plus family reading time |
| Grade 2      | 20 minutes plus reading time        |
| Grade 3      | 30 minutes plus reading time        |
| Grade 4      | 40 minutes plus reading time        |
| Grade 5      | 50 minutes plus reading time        |
| Grade 6      | 60 minutes plus reading time        |
| Grade 7      | 70 minutes plus reading time        |
| Grade 8      | 80 minutes plus reading time        |

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 or guardians are expected to support their children in this endeavor. 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.

## Grading Policy

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. The school will assign grades in order to accurately reflect the range between true mastery and insufficient knowledge of a subject.

Grade inflation is discouraged. In relation to the student's performance, the following is the school's traditional grading system:

### Grades 2 through 8

- A (90% - 100%) Superior
- B (80% - 89%) Above Average
- C (70% - 79%) Average
- D (60% - 69%) Below Average
- F (0% - 59%) Unsatisfactory
- I – Incomplete
- P – Pass; credit earned
- W – No grade; no credit earned

### Grades K-1

- O (Outstanding)
- S (Satisfactory)
- N (Needs Improvement)
- U (Unsatisfactory)

Incompletes will only be given under special circumstances and must be approved by the Head of School. Parents/guardians and students will be regularly informed of the student's progress.

"Extra credit," whether to make up for work not turned in on time or to increase a student's grade, will be discouraged at the school.

## Florida State Assessment (FSA) Testing Schedule

The school shall publish on the school website a detailed FSA testing schedule.

## Teacher Conferences

Teacher Conferences will be scheduled at least once per year. Arrangements for additional conferences may be made with your child's teacher before or after school hours.

## Academic Textbooks and Supplies

Materials that are loaned or given to students are to be treated appropriately. Students are responsible for these materials. If materials given or loaned to a student are lost or damaged the student must pay for any needed replacement.

In the case that reimbursement has not been made to the school for lost or damaged materials, no further materials will be issued to that student until the past due fees are paid.

## Reporting

For students to be successful, both they and their parents or guardians should be informed of their standing in class. In addition to the regular grading of assignments, students' progress will be formally reported four times per year. Midway through each marking period a progress report will be emailed to parents/guardians for students earning a C or below. At the end of each quarter report cards will be distributed documenting student progress.

Additionally, the organization will utilize Canvas Learning Management System. Using this system, teachers will update student grades at least weekly so that parents can stay up-to-date about the progress of their children.

## Schedule Changes

There will be no class schedule changes during the semester unless it is deemed in the best interest of the student by the school as determined by the Head of School.

## 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 Dean of Families and Head of School of the plagiarism.
- A disciplinary referral will be issued.
- Either the teacher or the Dean of Families will inform the student's parents of the plagiarism.
- The student will receive an F 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.
- 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. 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.

## Promotion and Retention

### General

It is our goal for parents or guardians, teachers, and students to work together during the year to ensure that students are developing responsible work habits and attaining a sufficient level of understanding in their courses. Please refer to the Student Progression Plan posted on the school website for more information.

## Special Events and Celebrations

Special events held during 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 must be approved by the Head of School a minimum of two weeks prior to its planning. Approval for one year does not carry over to the next.

The school recognizes that birthdays are a special day for our students. We must also ensure that parties and celebrations do not disrupt the instructional day or interfere with the health and safety of all of our students.

## Special Events – Guest Speakers

Guest speakers presenting during the school day must speak on topics covered in the course or grade. If possible, the students should be studying the given topic at the time of the presentation.

Guest speakers must be approved by the Head of School prior to the invitation being extended. Approval must still be obtained for guest speakers used in the previous school year. Approval for one year does not carry over to the next.

Guest speakers who cover controversial topics must be screened by the Head of School. The screening may include an interview of the guest by the Head of School or designee. Parents or guardians must be notified prior to guest speaker presentations on controversial issues, including religions covered in the Core Knowledge Sequence. Parents or guardians may have students excused from such presentations in which case the student will be supervised in a silent study hall. Teachers will provide permission slips to Parents or guardians as notification of a guest speaker covering controversial issues and indicate an option on the permission slip for their student to be excused.

## Special Events – 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.

## Virtual Extracurricular Activities (Grades K-8)

Students are ineligible for extracurricular activities if they have two Ds or one F in any subject(s). Academic eligibility will be determined with quarter ending grades. Ineligible students will remain ineligible for the remainder of the following quarter. Two disciplinary referrals in one quarter or three in one semester will render a student ineligible for any extracurricular activities for the

remainder of that quarter. Four disciplinary referrals will render a student ineligible for all extracurricular activities and functions for the remainder of the school year.

## Teaching Controversial Issues

Controversial issues are defined as contemporary problems, subjects, 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 both sides of the issue without proselytizing. Contemporary controversial issues will not be discussed in the elementary school even if part of the Core Knowledge Sequence without Head of School approval. No part of the curriculum will be used to undermine the nobility of America's experiment in liberty and self-government under the rule of law.

## Teaching Evolution

The school 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 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. The school 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 the school will leave matters of faith up to students and their parents or guardians. The role of a teacher in a public school is neither that of preacher nor of skeptic. Rather, teachers of history, when called upon by the curriculum, will teach the history of religion without either advocating or undermining religion in general or any specific faith. Likewise, science teachers will teach science, without comment on religion. Teachers, students, and parents or guardians 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.

## Role of Parents/Guardians and School in Relation to Human Sexuality

We believe parents or guardians 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 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 for both children and parents (or guardians).

## Teaching Human Sexuality

We will teach the Core Knowledge Sequence in the fifth grade, which includes a discussion on the reproductive organs, reproduction, and the menstrual cycle. The class will be taught in a gender-separated environment.

Parents or guardians will have the opportunity to preview the materials the class will be reading, on which the discussion is based. Parents or guardians will also have the opportunity to attend a meeting with the teacher(s) prior to the section on sexuality. The lesson will focus on a scientific discussion of human anatomy and reproduction.

*Parents or guardians 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.*

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/guardians and children on this sensitive subject.

Employees will not discuss their personal lives on such matters with students.

## Video Viewing Policy

Videos or other media may be used to support the 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 or other media. Teachers are responsible for previewing videos to ensure that they are appropriate.

# School Life and Environment

## Attendance, Illness, and Tardiness

OCA students will have a daily program of regular, structured school in which they must participate. Some of this will be live, synchronous Zoom video classes, lessons, and activities which take place at scheduled, regular times. Daily engagement through Canvas will be required. Students will be accountable for daily work, and teachers will regularly and actively assess student progress. Discrete grades and scores will be given for activities, assignments, and assessments; there will be no “pass/fail” grading at the end of the quarter or semester. A student will be considered as “present” on a given day of distance learning if any of the following occur:

- A student logs into a Zoom synchronous class, VR class in Engage, or tutoring session
- A student submits on-line work, or a daily attendance assignment
- A student submits an assignment, activity, or completed assessment on its due date
- The teacher communicates with the student regarding academic progress via phone and/or email

Merely being “present” at school, even distance learning school, does not ensure that students are learning as much as they need to be. In the regular classroom, students are invited by the teacher to engage actively in lessons, activities, and discussions. They volunteer, get called on (with or without raised hands) to share their work or answers, ask their own questions, and take part in discussions; in all of these activities, students build their understanding just as surely as they do by studying, practicing math facts, or completing homework independently.

Thus, it is recommended that students attend and actively participate in live synchronous class.

Pursuant to A.R.S. §15-803, it is unlawful for any child who is between six and sixteen years of age to fail to attend school during the hours school is in session, unless either:

1. The child is excused pursuant to section 15-802, subsection D or section 15-901, subsection A, paragraph 5, subdivision (c).
2. The child is accompanied by a parent, or a person authorized by a parent.
3. The child is provided with instruction in a homeschool.

A child who is habitually truant or who has excessive absences may be adjudicated an incorrigible child as defined in section 8-201. Absences may be considered excessive when the number of absent days exceeds ten percent of the number of required attendance days prescribed in section 15-802, subsection B, paragraph 1.

For the purposes of this section:

- "Habitually truant" means a truant child who is truant for at least five school days within a school year.
- "Truant" means an unexcused absence for at least one class period during the day.
- "Truant child" means a child who is between six and sixteen years of age and who is not in attendance at a public or private school during the hours that school is in session, unless excused as provided by this section.

## Absences

Regular attendance and prompt arrival at school are vital to an Academy student's attitude and subsequent success as a serious student.

The Department of Education defines "...an excused absence as being an absence due to illness, doctor appointment, bereavement, family emergencies, and out-of-school suspensions." All other cases of absence, whether reported by the parent/guardian or not, shall be considered unexcused. An unexcused absence of ten consecutive days or longer will automatically result in the withdrawal of the student from the Academy. Unexcused absences in excess of eighteen days will be considered truancy. Teachers will not provide homework and/or class work in advance for unexcused absences.

It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to notify the school before 8:00 a.m. to report an absence. Parents can send the instructor a direct message through Canvas LMS letting the instructor know that the student will be absent. Students will be recorded as having an unexcused absence if no valid excuse is provided. Student absence is anticipated, it is recommended that the parent/guardian notify the school teachers to request the assignments prior to the absence.

It is the responsibility of the student to make up all missed assignments after an absence from school. If a student is unable to attend school and seeks their assignments, the student or parent/guardian should contact the teacher. Each teacher will have an established make-up policy, including appropriate deadlines, for missed work. At the discretion of the Head of School, students may not be allowed to make-up missed work due to an unexcused absence. Parents/guardians may receive a detailed attendance report upon request from the school Registrar.

## COVID-19

All COVID-19 related absences or tardiness will be excused.

## Vacations

Since regular attendance is essential to a student's success at the Academy, and numerous absences are also damaging to student morale, all vacations should be scheduled during school breaks. Absences due to vacations will be considered unexcused absences.

## Excuse of Pupils for Religions Reasons

In accordance with A.R.S. §15-806 (A)(1) and (2), the Academy permits students to be excused from school attendance for religious purposes, including participation in religious exercises, religious instruction, or the observance of religious holidays, subject to the following conditions:

1. A reasonable number of excused absences from school incurred by a student for religious purposes shall be allowed. For purposes of this policy, "reasonable number of excused absences for religious purposes" shall not exceed 2 school days in any one school year.
2. The parent/guardian who has custody of the student shall provide written consent for the student to be absent from school on the designated days, the dates of which will be included in the written consent. The written consent should be sent in sufficient time to be received by the school no later than one week prior to the dates of the designated days on which the student will be absent.
3. A request for reasonable accommodation for absences for religious purposes in excess of two school days in one school year must be made and approved in advance by the Head of School.
4. Unless specifically approved by the Head of School in advance, all absences for religious purposes that exceed two school days in any one school year shall be designated as unexcused absences.
5. Any religious exercise, instruction, or observance of religious holidays shall take place at a suitable place away from school property designated by the church or religious denomination or group.

## Tardiness

If a student will be late, the parent/guardian should notify the teacher and Registrar via email.

Following the distinction between excused and unexcused absences described above, the Academy makes a distinction between cases of excused tardiness (e.g., due to a doctor's appointment, illness, or other family business) and unexcused tardiness (e.g., due to oversleeping, or some other reason).

The school disapproves of the accumulation of unexcused tardiness, irrespective of the circumstances. Persistent tardiness is highly disruptive of instruction and undermines student morale. On the third occasion that a student has an unexcused tardy in a quarter, a restitution will be issued to the student by the teacher. For each subsequent unexcused tardy in the quarter, another restitution will be issued. When a student has received four restitutions for tardiness in a quarter then they may receive additional disciplinary actions as determined by the administration.

## Special Education

As a public charter school, the Academy will provide identification, evaluation and instructional services to any enrolled student as required by state and federal law. As required by law, all new students will also be screened by teachers within the first 45 days of their attendance at the Academy for possible special education eligibility; results of these screenings are confidentially referred to the Optima Classical Academy's Student Services Director. If requested by the parent/guardian or teacher, a student may be evaluated for possible special education placement. Parental approval is required prior to an evaluation. The Academy is also required under the "Child Find" law to offer possible referrals and/or evaluations for children not enrolled in the school.

## Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)

IDEA is a federal law that protects the rights of students with disabilities. In addition to standard school records for students with disabilities, education records could include evaluation and testing materials, medical and health information, Individualized Education Programs and related notices and consents, progress reports, materials related to disciplinary actions, and mediation agreements. Such information is gathered from a number of sources, including the student's parents/guardians and staff of the school of attendance. Also, with parent/guardian permission, information may be gathered from additional pertinent sources, such as doctors and other health care providers. This information is collected to assure the student is identified, evaluated, and provided a Free Appropriate Public Education in accordance with state and federal special education laws.

Each agency participating under Part B of IDEA must assure that at all stages of gathering, storing, retaining and disclosing education records to third parties that it complies with the federal confidentiality laws. In addition, the destruction of any education records of a student with a disability must be in accordance with IDEA regulatory requirements.

## Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation ACT and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act ("ADA") is a civil rights statute designed to prevent discrimination against individuals with disabilities and to assure that students with disabilities have educational opportunities and benefits equal to those provided to nondisabled students.

It provides that:

- No otherwise qualified individual with disabilities in the United States... shall, solely by reason of her or his disability, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.

- Congress enacted a similar civil rights statute, the ADA, in 1990, also for the purpose of preventing discrimination against individuals with disabilities. While Section 504 only applies to recipients of federal financial assistance, the ADA protects individuals from discrimination by both public and private entities.

Both Section 504 and Title II of the ADA include similar nondiscrimination requirements. Since Title II applies to public institutions such as state governments, not just to schools, it does not include the same level of detail as Section 504 with regard to certain obligations of schools in educating students with disabilities (e.g., in providing students a FAPE).

## Classroom Activities

Classroom activities are of unique value and cannot be duplicated by make-up work. Student interaction and the development of ideas through discussion are lost when a student is absent. A student's enrollment in a school is a commitment to participate in school each day. Therefore, it is the intent of this rule to encourage students to be present daily in school unless a situation exists which makes their absence absolutely necessary.

## Daily Life

### Movies in the Classroom

The academy emphasizes the use of engaging the multiple intelligences of students, and as such will use various media to educate students. Teachers may occasionally use videos in the classroom and at school-sponsored events, providing that the following policies are adhered to:

#### *Copyright*

Teachers are required to follow the legal copyright requirements of videos and media within the classroom.

#### *Elementary Students*

Elementary students may be shown "G" rated movies without parental permission. Movies which are "PG" require that the teacher notify parents at least one week in advance using the school's online communication system, giving parents the option to opt their students out of watching the video.

#### *Middle School Students*

Students in grades six through eight may be shown "G" or "PG" rated movies without parental permission. Movies which are rated "PG-13" require that the teacher notify parents at least one week in advance using the school's online communication system, giving parents the option to opt their students out of watching the video.

#### *"R" Rated Movies*

No "R" rated movies may be shown to students during school.

## Gift Policies

Collections of funds from students by students for the purpose of giving gifts to a staff member of the organization is discouraged.

## Internet and Cell Phone Usage

### *Social Media Guidelines for Parents*

Classroom blogs and other social media are powerful tools that open up communication between students, parents, and teachers. This kind of communication and collaboration can have a huge impact on learning. The organization encourages parents to view and participate by adding comments to classroom projects when appropriate.

1. Parents should expect communication from teachers prior to their child's involvement in any project using online social media applications, i.e., blogs, wikis, podcast, etc.
2. Parents will not attempt to destroy or harm any information online.
3. Parents will not use classroom social media sites for any illegal activity, including violation of data privacy laws.
4. Parents are highly encouraged to read and/or participate in social media projects.
5. Parents should not distribute any information that might be deemed personal about other students participating in the social media project.
6. Parents should not upload or include any information that does not also meet the student guidelines.

## Civility

In order to ensure all individuals associated with the organization behave civilly and with fairness and respect, several policies are in place to ensure proper behavior. Students are obligated to meet school expectations as defined elsewhere in this policy. Adults are subject to the following civility policies:

### *Civility of Parents and Patrons*

All parents and patrons of the organization shall behave with civility, fairness and respect in dealing with fellow parents, patrons, staff members, students, and anyone else having business with the school. Uncivil behaviors are prohibited. Uncivil behaviors shall be defined as any behavior that is physically or verbally threatening, either overtly or implicitly, as well as behaviors that are coercive, intimidating, violent, or harassing. Examples of uncivil behavior include, but are not limited to: use of profanity; personally-insulting remarks; attacks on a person's race, gender, nationality, religion, or sexual identity; or behavior that is out of control.

Any uncivil behavior by parents or patrons shall be reported to school administration. A record shall be made of the alleged incident and the action taken. Confidentiality shall be observed

whenever possible to protect the complainant and the alleged offending individual. Repeated incidents of uncivil behavior can result in the individual being banned from school activities. Retaliation against a person who reports a claim of uncivil behavior is prohibited.

## School Guidelines for Student Behavior

### General

Student self-government and a sense of purpose develop from application and accomplishment, from consistent expectations in the school climate and culture, and from the habitual practice of the virtues.

The aim of the school is to teach students. “Student” derives from the Latin word *studēre*, which means “to give attention to,” “to take pains with,” “to apply oneself to,” “to strive after,” “to pursue,” “to desire.” Students, then, should be diligent in, attached to, and zealous for their studies. Simply put, we expect students to live up to their name. The teachers of the school will work hard to prepare their lessons. These lessons are designed to teach students nothing less than who they are and what the world offers them. Students must in turn take fullest advantage of these lessons and make the best use of this time of their lives given to preparing their minds for the opportunities and challenges that await them. All policies regarding student conduct and discipline flow from this general principle: students must fully engage themselves in the education the school offers them.

Please refer to the school’s Code of Student Conduct.

### Honor Code

The Academy was founded to develop students in both mind and character. The school’s virtues are the guiding principles used to cultivate and nurture character: courage, courtesy, honesty, perseverance, responsibility, self- government, and service. Students are expected to conduct themselves honorably in word and deed, to strive to live by the virtues, and to encourage others to do so as well.

The school’s Honor Code is as follows:

*Optima Classical Academy students strive to be virtuous in conduct, seek to grow in scholarship and learning, and pursue a commitment toward civic responsibility. Optima Classical Academy students will not lie, cheat, or steal, and will discourage others from such actions.*

### Discipline

The activity of learning requires students to be attentive and polite. Students are expected to adhere to the school’s high expectations for behavior and core virtues lest they compromise

their own learning and interfere with the learning of others. Minor infractions or disruptions will largely be handled in a way suitable to the age of the student. Whenever a student misbehaves repeatedly or flagrantly, the consequences for the infraction will be immediate, relevant, and effectual. Rather than allow misbehavior to fester, teachers will remove the student from class and refer them to the Dean of Families.

## Uniforms and Grooming

At the school, students wear uniforms to eliminate distractions, to level the playing field, and to remind ourselves that we are doing important work.

The spirit of the uniform policy is that students will dress and groom themselves in a manner that is professional, not distracting, and not obstructive.

Students must be in uniform to attend class. Parents will be notified if proper attire is not worn.

## Student Publications Policy

Student publications must uphold the school's mission, philosophy, core virtues, and policies. The purpose of such publications is to inform the school community of school-related events, achievements, and business. In addition, student publications are a way for students to learn and to practice responsible writing and journalism. Student editorials are permitted subject to prior review by the Head of School. Employees of the school or parents/guardians may not use student media to proselytize their own views on controversial issues. The Head of School acts as the final editor in all cases.

## Student Fees and Supplies

All charges and fees must be authorized by the Head of School.

## Parent Communications with the Administration, Faculty and Staff

The Academy's teachers and administrators will respond to parents or guardians as quickly as possible. In general, parents or guardians should expect to hear from a teacher or from the administration within 24 hours of contacting the school, barring weekends and holidays.

The Head of School reports to the Executive Director and is responsible for overseeing the day-to-day operations of the school. He/She directly oversees the implementation of OCA's curriculum and has sole authority to manage all teachers and staff at OCA.

The Assistant Head of School oversees areas relating to the curriculum, teacher support and supports discipline and daily operations.

The Deans oversee areas related to student growth, academics, discipline, and curriculum. They also regularly coach and train our faculty.

The School Operations Manager works closely with the Head of School in communicating information to the families. He/She also assists families with records and school business unrelated to student discipline, curriculum, or the classroom.

The Student Services Director oversees programs for all students with IEPs and is responsible for screening incoming students for special needs and conducts evaluations for special education when necessary.

The 504 Coordinator is responsible for overseeing the programs of students with Section 504 Plans, including screening for, and evaluating student needs for 504 accommodation plans.

The ELL Coordinator is responsible for overseeing the programs of students who qualify for English Language Learner services, including screening for, and evaluating student needs for accommodation plans.

**Questions or concerns about curriculum should be directed to the Dean of Curriculum \* Instruction.**

**Questions or concerns about student conduct or discipline should be directed to the Dean of Families.**

**General questions regarding the school may be directed to the School Operations Manager.**

### Faculty and Staff Phone/Email Reference\*

\*A brief email, via Canvas Learning Management System, is the preferred method for communicating with faculty members.

## Expectations for Parents or Guardians

We believe parents or guardians own the fundamental responsibility for their children's education and that the school's role should be viewed as a supportive one. The school expects parents or guardians to:

- Model good character and insist that their children cultivate good habits and virtues;
- Help their children develop effective study skills;
- Read to their children, especially those in the early grades;
- Oversee regular reading and writing and mathematics skill development;
- Stimulate discussion and exploration of ideas and events with students;
- Support the school goals through familiarity with this handbook and parts of the website devoted to the mission and philosophy of the school, homework review, getting children

to school on time, and holding high expectations and aspirations that contribute positively to the student's success.

## Parent/Guardian Involvement

Parent/Guardian support is essential to a student's success at the academy. This is the primary way to be involved as a parent/guardian. It's important to establish a plan for listening to and then encouraging each student when they are working hard. For younger students, parents/guardians will likely need to offer support with technology set up and initiation for live classes. Parents/guardians should contact the teachers to share important information on how their student approaches the curriculum at home and if the student is experiencing difficulty.

Parents are encouraged to read through the entire handbook carefully and seek out the academy with any questions they may have.

Parents will receive a welcome email with pertinent information such as logging into their parent portal on Canvas Learning Management System and teacher's contact information.

Throughout the school year, if support is needed for a student's specific class, please contact the teacher directly. The teacher's contact information can be found under Course Information in the Canvas Learning Management System.

If support is needed for any issue or topic not related to a specific class, please contact Tech Support by email at [info@optimadomi.com](mailto:info@optimadomi.com) or call 239-399-3885, ext. 504.

## Enrollment Policy

### General

With regard to enrollment and the lottery procedures, please refer to the policies on the school website for more information. Current parents or guardians will not need to reapply each year, but will need to complete the re-enrollment process each year.

## Operations

### School Calendar

The OCA academic calendar will be posted on the school website and in Canvas. The Academy generally follows the brick and mortar school calendar schedule. Please see our affiliate Naples Classical Academy's board approved [Academic Calendar](#) as an example.

## School Hours

OCA school hours are Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. OCA administration is available Monday through Friday, 7:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Eastern Standard Time. Online teachers are available at various times throughout the day and evening. Office hours will be included in each course syllabus.

## School Website

The Academy's website is an important tool for communication. Families are encouraged to visit the website regularly to view updates and access information regarding the school. Faculty contact information, updates on athletic and extracurricular schedules and locations, and other school related events and information will be available for viewing on the website. OCA is committed to making websites usable by all people, including those with disabilities. OCA is dedicated to meeting the accessibility needs of all students, parents/guardians, and members of the public. For specific questions or concerns about the accessibility of the website or need assistance in using it, please contact the School Operations Manager.

## Communicating with Parents with Joint Custody

The school will recognize and communicate with parents with joint custody upon review of a court order identifying them to do so. In the case of password-protected school forms, the school encourages one of the parents to complete the forms so that the school does not receive conflicting information.

## Online Orientation Forms

The school will maintain secure electronic information to run the day-to-day operations of the school. Parents or guardians are expected to complete these online forms as a condition of enrollment.

## Mass Communication Policy

The administration (Operations Director, Dean of Families, or Head of School) must approve all letters and bulletins, including email (excluding class assignments or bulletins by teachers to their classes) from teachers or parents or other parties to the entire school community.

## Student Code of Conduct

OCA adheres to set policies to maintain the integrity of its curriculum, students, and staff. The policies address the consequences for noncompliance, as noted below. All students must read and electronically sign to the Student Code of Conduct to continue with the enrolment process.

## Violation of Academic Integrity

Violations of Academic Integrity, in any form, are not tolerated. Violations of Academic Integrity include, but are not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, copying another student's work or allowing another student to copy your work.

If a violation of academic integrity is found, the following consequences may result:

- *First offense:* a written warning from the teacher, parent/guardian contacted, and a note added to the records of the student(s) involved. Students will have the option to redo the assignment for full credit.
- *Second offense:* a written warning from the teacher, parent/guardian and school contacted, and a note added to the records of the student(s) involved. Students will have the option to redo the assignment for 50% credit.
- *Third offense:* a written warning from the teacher, a meeting with student, parent/guardian and school staff to discuss the incident and consequences, and a note added to the records of the student(s) involved. Students will not have the option to redo the assignment and a zero is issued. Possible removal from the course.

## Defiance of Authority/Insubordination

Disobedience or noncompliance toward any staff member of Optima Classical Academy is considered insubordination. That includes refusal to maintain communication with Academy staff. An act of insubordination may occur in any situation or communication, including, but not limited to, in an email, during a phone conversation, or in person.

If defiance of authority or insubordination is found, the following consequences will result:

- *First offense:* referral to Academy Administration.
- *Second offense:* Possible withdrawal from program.

## Computer Misuse

Any student who attempts to access the secure information of Optima Classical Academy or Optima Domi or its affiliates in an improper manner, uses another student's or staff member's log-in information to gain access to information, intentionally attempts to obtain access to areas or information not open to normal access, or engages in any act similar to the above, has committed a computer misuse.

If computer misuse is found, the following consequences will result:

- *First offense:* Depending on the nature of the offense, the consequences can include a written warning, referral to a guidance counselor, suspended access to Academy courseware, or administrative referral and possible withdrawal.
- *Second offense:* Referral to the administration for possible withdrawal

*Deviation from the above consequences: Notwithstanding anything in this policy to the contrary, the Optima Classical Academy reserves the right to modify the consequences or action taken against a student violating this policy in the Optima Classical Academy's sole discretion for reasons including, but not limited to, the severity of or damages caused by the violation or to ensure compliance with applicable law.*

## Anti-Bullying Policy

Cyber bullying, or bullying in any form, is not acceptable behavior for any student enrolled in classes at Optima Classical Academy. Any student found to be involved in these activities may immediately be withdrawn from the Academy.

OCA uses this definition of cyber bullying: Cyber bullying is the use of the Internet and related technologies (cell phones, smart phones, etc.) to harass, hurt, embarrass, or humiliate other people. Using these technologies to act or speak in a deliberate, repeated, and hostile manner with the intent to harm others is also cyber bullying or cyber stalking.

## Internet Acceptable Use Policy

The internet is a compilation of many networks that supports the open exchange of information for research and educational purposes. The internet can be accessible to anyone, anywhere, anytime. Students must understand that by using the network, their actions can be monitored at any time by a teacher or administrator.

### Internet–Terms and Conditions of Use

- Users will not be abusive in Optima Classical Academy messages to others. They will not use offensive, obscene, or harassing language when using any Optima Classical Academy its affiliates' systems or software.
- Users will not reveal personal addresses or phone numbers of other users.
- Users will not post information if it violates the policy of others, jeopardizes the health and safety of students, plagiarizes the work of others, is a commercial advertisement, or is not approved by the teacher or school administrator. Users will accept responsibility for all materials they link to or upload.
- Users shall promptly report any inappropriate material they receive.
- Users will not attempt to log in to the network using any other user's name and password.

- Users accept and acknowledge that additional documents and paperwork may be required, including but not limited to documents requiring agreement and signature upon the request of Optima Classical Academy administration.
- Any and all student-produced web pages will be subject to the approval of the teacher or school administrator.
- Vandalism will result in the cancellation of privileges. Vandalism is defined as any malicious attempt to harm or destroy the data of another user, agency, Optima Classical Academy. This includes, but is not limited to, the uploading or creation of computer viruses.
- In the event of a virtual field trip, all users will conduct themselves in accordance with the policy or agreement applicable to the field trip.

### Academic Integrity Contract

1. I will do my own work.
2. I will not copy another person's work, in whole or in part, and turn it in as my own.
3. I will not consult unauthorized material or information during tests unless my teacher gives me permission.
4. I will not plagiarize.
5. I will not copy text, graphics, mathematics solutions, artistic layouts or presentations, or any ideas in any form from another source without proper citation.
6. I will not communicate exam information or answers during or following an exam.
7. I will not provide unwarranted access to materials or information so that credit may be wrongly claimed by others.
8. I will not turn in an original paper or project more than once for different classes or assignments without notifying the teacher of the course prior to the submission.
9. I will not, in lab situations, falsify or fabricate data or observations, including computer output.

By signing below, I agree to adhere to this policy and refrain from committing any of the violations identified in the policy. I understand that any violation of this policy could result in the loss of credit and revocation of access to all instructional materials provided by Optima Classical Academy, in addition to the other consequences identified herein.

## Policies

### Nonsectarian Policy and Anti-Discrimination Policy

Optima Classical Academy is committed to supporting our multicultural environment through positive awareness. Courses were created to provide a representative, multicultural balance

through our text and images. The learner interface, lessons, assessments, and documents provided within the course are free of bias.

## Internet Acceptable Use Policy

The internet can be accessible to anyone, anywhere, and at any time. Students must understand that by using the network, their actions can be monitored at any time by a teacher or administrator.

## Internet–Terms and Conditions of Use

Users will not abuse the OCA internet terms and conditions to others which includes using offensive, obscene, or harassing language when on any of OCA's internet platforms or its affiliates' systems or software.

Users will not:

- Disclose personal information such as addresses or phone numbers of other users.
- Post any information that violates the privacy of others, puts the health and safety of students at risk, plagiarizes the work of others, or displays a form of personal advertisement not approved by the teacher or school administrator.
- Users will accept responsibility for all materials they link or upload to any platform both offline and online.
- Users are expected to report any inappropriate material they receive immediately upon receipt.
- Users will not willingly use another user's name and password to enter the network.
- Users accept and acknowledge that additional documents may be required, including but not limited to documents requiring agreements and signatures upon the request of OCA administration.
- All student produced web pages will be subject to the approval of the teacher or school administrator.
- Vandalism will result in the cancellation of privileges. Vandalism is defined as any malicious attempt to harm or destroy the data of another user, agency, or course platform.
- During virtual field trips, all users will conduct themselves in accordance with the policies set forth for said field trip.

# 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 the student's education records. These rights are:

- 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 records that they believe are inaccurate or misleading. They should write to the school Head of School or appropriate official, and 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 are:

Family Policy Compliance Office  
U.S. Department of Education - 400 Maryland Avenue, SW,  
Washington, DC 20202-4605