

**The Saint Constantine School
Teacher Handbook
2021-2022**

The Saint Constantine School
7177 Regency Square
Houston, TX 77036

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School Overview

1.0 Educational Philosophy

Classical education combines the wisdom of the Church and the best of secular culture to teach a student to read well, write well, and think well. It is the methodology that Eton, Oxford, and Cambridge have used to produce leaders for centuries. A classical, Christian education teaches a student to learn to know and love the wisdom of the church and the culture from which they have come, while equipping them to face the unique challenges of living in the 21st century. Classical education “cuts with the grain” of human nature and natural human development as God created it.

Thus the usual gradations in a classical program: [Grammar \(Lower School\)](#) focuses on learning the structure of language and the world around you and the meaning of words; [Logic \(Middle School\)](#) is about learning the principles of right reason in order to think well; and [Rhetoric \(High School\)](#) is centered on learning how to bring all of one’s learning together and express it in a coherent and winsome manner. These stages follow the natural interests and strengths of each stage of a student’s development. Many of the educational options in America now emphasize achievement rather than cultivation of wisdom and virtue. The Saint Constantine School gives value and meaning to the achievements of the classroom by teaching students to pursue excellence with goodness, truth, and beauty.

To this end, all of our students participate in a common course of study in a university-style, block schedule model. The Saint Constantine School immerses students in both eastern and western Christian wisdom, philosophy, history, and literature alongside a rigorous math, science, and Latin and Greek program. Students will also have the opportunity to study fine arts in studio art classes, music in choir and individualized lessons, and theater, through producing and acting in semi-annual school plays. As we grow, our students will participate in competitive speech and debate, or select sports, as we seek to encourage and enliven all parts of the human soul in our students.

On Campus Responsibilities

2.1 Arrival Time

Teachers should arrive 20-30 minutes before the start of their first class session and stay until the end of day. All full time teachers and teachers who have a first period class should arrive by 7:15am. Those who are teaching first period K-12th grade are responsible for their students once they’ve been dropped off. Arriving late puts an undue burden on your colleagues, so please arrive on time.

2.2 Time on Campus

All full-time teachers should be on campus as much as possible between 7:30am-4:00pm. On days in which you do not have class, doing prep work and grading on campus increases your students' access to you and benefits the entire community, as your colleagues and students can ask you questions or consult on issues related to your classes. However, you do not need to ask permission to be off campus for events, appointments, etc, if it does not interfere with your class time.

2.3 Student Supervision In-Between Classes

Students in PreK through 6th grade need to be supervised in their transitions between classes and while on break. Teachers are responsible for them from the beginning of the period in which they teach until their next teacher arrives in their classroom. If your class is on an outside break, you are responsible for keeping an eye on your students while they are outside, and making sure they all come back to class in a timely fashion.

7th - 12th grade students are expected to manage themselves between classes and arrive to each class on time. However, teachers of 7th-12th grade should be keeping an eye on classroom dynamics, and ensuring that they are behaving appropriately on breaks. If a class is not, please take appropriate action, whether that be supervising until the next teacher arrives, alerting House Heads, or disciplining individual students who need to change their behavior.

2.4 Lunch Duty

Lunch duty for 3rd period teachers: Students in PreK-8th will be eating in their classrooms, supervised by their 3rd period teacher. If the student is in 6th grade or above, they can also eat outside. High school can move around in the high school classrooms as well. For elementary school, reading or playing classical music is a great way to keep noise down and help them focus on their lunch. Once students have finished with their lunch, they can be dismissed to play outside. You will escort them from their classroom to the playground, making sure that there are plenty of adult play supervisors around. Play duty supervisors start at 12:35pm. If you release students before then, you must stay with them until there are sufficient play duty faculty in the fields.

Play duty for non-3rd period teachers: If you do not teach a 3rd period class, you will be assigned to play duty or upper school supervision starting at 12:35pm. Play duty faculty should station themselves in particular areas where students are playing, or walk the fields to make sure there is enough coverage and all students are being properly supervised. Play duty faculty must be on the field from 12:35 and should be relieved by 1pm. Please make sure the students teachers are there to take them to class before leaving.

2.5 Drop Off and Pick Up:

Drop off: Between 7:30-8:15am, students can be dropped off at the front doors outside the foyer, or parents can walk their students into the courtyard if they prefer and meet the student's teacher there. If you are a first period teacher, you will be out in the courtyard by 7:30 to meet your students. They will then stand with you for morning prayers. Students being dropped off later will come straight to your class.

Pick up: Last period teachers will keep their students in their classrooms during pick up. Each last period teacher will be equipped with a walky-talky. Those on pick-up duty in the front of the school will call with the last name of the students being picked-up through the walkie talkies. You can then release those students to the foyer for pick up. Once all members of the family or carpool have arrived in the foyer, faculty managing pick up will escort them to their car.

2.6 School Event Attendance

The Saint Constantine School strives to provide a holistic and rich community for our students. To that end we offer many after school events. Full time faculty are required to attend at least two major House events (Field days, Balls, the Harvest Festival, and the End of Year Feast) and 1 performance each year (plays and concerts). Attending as many as you can is highly recommended, particularly if you teach in the grades involved in the event. Full time faculty are also required to attend our annual Open House in the Summer and all faculty are required to attend in-service before school starts. We encourage all faculty to participate in as much of the school life as they are able, so feel free to attend lots of events!

2.7 School Facility Use

If any faculty member would like to organize and host a social event for students or families, contact Kris Yee at kyee@saintconstantine.org to get approval and assistance with finding a date. If you would like to organize something academic in nature, contact your dean to get approval. House Heads can organize house events without prior approval. Once you have approval for your event, email the K-12 Coordinator Rebecca Rautio at rrautio@saintconstantine.org to reserve campus space.

Email and Communication

3.1 Computer Use

Faculty and staff are not provided with computers, but must have access to a computer to access email and use the Renweb database for both grade keeping and emailing. This job requires you to have a personal computer for your use.

3.2 Email and Calendar Use

Faculty are responsible to check their school email address and respond to all pertinent email every day during the week, and keep their gmail calendar updated. Faculty need to respond to student and parent emails within 24 hours in the normal work week. Faculty **do not** need to check their work email or respond after 5pm or on the weekends. In fact, we encourage faculty to wait until normal school hours to respond, if possible, to help students maintain better expectations of when you're available to meet their needs.

Your google calendar is an important tool of communication between the school and you. If you are invited to a meeting or training via your calendar, it is expected that you respond and attend or make other arrangements as necessary. Many all school events will be placed on your calendar, so checking it regularly is extremely important.

Before the first week of school, update your calendar with your regular class schedule, and any other meetings or duties so that other staff know when they can meet with you.

3.3 Emailing Students

When emailing your class or individual students, use Renweb's email client as much as possible. Not only does this help ensure you have the most up-to-date email contact information for your students, but it keeps a record of your correspondence in the individual student's online file, so that you, House Heads, and other pertinent faculty can see what students have been sent. If a student or parent emails you directly, there is no need to switch to Renweb. All email correspondence should be professional in tone and above reproach in all areas. CC the parent of any student you are communicating with directly.

3.4 Online Interaction and Tutoring

Should you ever choose to meet with a student online, it is especially important to practice safe online habits for our students and our own sakes. Teachers should never meet one on one with students online. Please arrange for group tutoring sessions whenever possible, or make sure a parent is available to be present the entire time, or meet in a public place (such as a group work room or office). You may also choose to record the online meeting.

Grading Policies and Procedures

4.1 Philosophy

At The Saint Constantine School, grades are always at the service of the student and the subject. A grade can be a helpful tool to determine if a student has achieved the desired mastery of the subject at hand, but is never the ultimate indicator of student success. Generally,

we want to emphasize feedback more than letter grades when assessing student work, and students should learn to focus on feedback and (when needed) revision more than a letter or number. We do not use letter grades in PreK-5th grade, but focus on mastery of a subject versus needing additional practice.

4.2 Grading Standards

In PreK-5th grade, grades serve to indicate where students are missing vital understanding, and demonstrate to a parent where a student might need help. Grades focus on skill acquisition and mastery, and are not calculated on an A-F scale. In 6th-12th, grades are used to show students how their work compares to a standard of excellence we hope they will achieve over the years they are here. It is often valuable to weight assignments later in the year so that they're more significant to the student's overall grade. This gives new students a chance to catch up to a Saint Constantine standard of excellence. Students in PreK utilize a separate grading system based on developmental goals.

K through 5th Grades

Grade Assigned	Meaning	Consequence
Mastered	Student is excelling and ready to move on to the next grade level.	Congratulations all around, special recognition from their House Head if they have achieved Mastered status in all their classes.
Proficient	Student is successful, has advanced in the important skill sets required of the class, and is ready to go to the next grade level.	Students should feel confident about moving on to the next level, and ready to do more advanced work. Teacher should be sure to help them find ways to continue to grow.
Sufficient	Student is doing their work and mostly getting it. They are likely ready to move on, though they may struggle a bit as skills advance, and redoing class or grade level might be to their benefit.	This student is in the right class and understanding the concepts, though a teacher might keep an eye on them to make sure they are not missing essential skills. Students in this spectrum might be ready to move on, but might not be.

Needs Improvement	Student is regularly unable to keep up with class requirements, or does poorly on assessments. They have not attained the necessary skills to move on to the next grade level.	If a student receives this assessment regularly throughout their subjects, they are not ready to move on to the next grade. If they receive them periodically, they should receive some extra tutoring and support.
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6th - 12th Grades

Letter Grade	Percentage Range	GPA
A	90-100	4.0
B	80-89	3.0
C	70-79	2.0
D	60-69	1.0
F	0-59	0.0

4.3 Reporting of Grades

Teachers will write grades and/or feedback on the physical copy of the student’s work to hand back to the student, and report grades in the student’s gradebook in Renweb, unless given specific exception. Teachers will update Renweb grades no less than every two weeks, though weekly submission is ideal. TSCS will send out grade reports monthly and at the end of the semester, with the final grade report for the year sent by the Monday following finals week in May. All gradebooks must be completely updated before the mid-semester reports or final grades are sent.

4.4 Homework Policy

TSCS does not assign homework for students in grades K-4th, with the exception of special projects and reading, or for students who cannot keep up with the in class work load and need some extra time. In 5th grade homework is kept minimal and is only assigned for reading and math. Teachers should use the longer class periods to incorporate active work into their class

time, including practice of essential skills and concepts, composition, narration, or dictation, quizzes, games, and creative projects.

However, homework is a key component to success in Upper School. Students in 6th-12th grade should expect an increased homework load as they are prepared for university schedules and standards. The following policies should apply to all upper school homework assigned.

- a. **Hard Copy:** Homework must be turned in in a physical copy on the day it is due. Email submissions are not permitted. Online students are an obvious exception. They will turn in work via google classroom.
- b. Students should plan to submit all homework on the scheduled due date. If this is not done, the student has 3 class periods (including the original due date) during which they can submit the assignment. Each class period after the original due date that the student does not submit the assignment will incur a loss of 10% of the original possible score. For example, if an assignment is due on a Monday and the student turns it in at the beginning of class on Wednesday, they would receive a 90 instead of a 100, or an 83 instead of a 93, etc. If, after 3 class periods, the assignment has not been submitted, the assignment will receive a 0, and there will be no further option to submit that assignment. [NOTE: If an assignment is due on a Monday, the last possible time to submit that assignment would be at the very beginning of class on the following Monday.]
- c. **Reading:** Reading the assigned texts before the date in which they are due is an absolute requirement of all humanities courses, most particularly the Great Books courses. Students must request an extension at least 24 hours in advance if they are not able to finish the reading on time, and must be able to explain why they are unprepared and how they plan to finish the assignment. Extensions are never guaranteed, and unpreparedness can have serious consequences.
- d. **Unpreparedness:** Students are expected to participate in class through discussion and other active assignments. Students who come to school unprepared to discuss (having not completed their reading or other assignments as applicable) will be removed from class and sent to their House Head or the Head of School. They will complete the work during the remainder of the period. A student who arrives unprepared to class on a regular basis will be dropped from the class and may face expulsion from The Saint Constantine School.
- e. **Unprepared due to Illness:** If a student is unprepared for class due to illness, but able to attend, the parent should notify the appropriate teacher. The student should provide a make-up date for any missed assignments, no longer than one

week. Note, all subsequent assignments will be expected to be complete on their regular due date, unless otherwise instructed by the teacher.

- f. Absent due to Illness: If a student is absent due to illness, the parent should email absent@saintconstantine.org. The absence will then be marked on your roster. Excused absences can only be recorded by the person checking the absent email. Any absences a teacher records should be unexcused, as the student has not properly notified the school. Any missed assignments should be completed in an appropriate time. In the event of extreme illness or injury, the parent should notify all teachers and work out a timeline for any missed work.
- g. Absent due to Vacation: If a student has received an excused absence for a reason unrelated to illness, they must work with their teacher to create a plan for completing and turning in any homework that is due during their absence. Some additional homework may be assigned to make up for missed classes.

4.5 Revision and Resubmission

Throughout their humanities classes, and where applicable in other classes, Middle and Upper School students are allowed to revise and resubmit any homework they are dissatisfied with. Students must show significant improvement and application of the teacher's feedback in order to receive an improved grade. Students should revise and resubmit immediately following the receipt of an unsatisfactory grade. Teachers can refuse to regrade early work in the final weeks of the semester, or after a significant length of time has passed.

4.6 Contesting Grades

If a student believes they have received a grade in error or one they believe to be unfair, they are required to first bring it to the attention of their teacher within a week of the grade having been turned back to them. If you are unwilling to change the grade and the student remains dissatisfied with your explanation as to why you assigned the grade you did, they may bring their complaint to your Dean, who will assess the homework and grade and may involve the Head of School if needed. It is unlikely that the grade will be changed without the agreement of the teacher in question, but we will work towards a solution that satisfies both parties.

4.7 Make Up Exams

Make up exams may be provided at the discretion of the teacher and only in the case of an excused absence. Students must be given permission to miss and make up the exam before the original exam takes place.

4.8 Academic Dishonesty

Plagiarism and cheating are absolutely not tolerated at The Saint Constantine School. Students who cheat or plagiarize in any way must receive a 0 on the assignment with no ability to make it up, nor can they receive extra credit on other assignments to help compensate for the 0 from cheating. Students who are caught cheating or plagiarizing must be removed from any leadership roles and extracurricular activities. They may also be prevented from earning college credit for their dual-enrollment courses. A second offense will receive all the consequences of the first offense, automatically put the student on academic probation, and could result in the student being dropped from or failing the class and expulsion from the school. It is imperative that teachers report suspected cheating or plagiarism to their dean immediately.

Disciplinary Policy and Resources

5.1 Disciplinary Procedure

If a student misbehaves in your classroom, it is often best to deal with it immediately and for yourself. If the behavior continues or becomes disruptive enough that it is harming the learning or community of other students, you can send the offending student to their House Head for a visit or the remainder of their class time. Classrooms will be equipped with walkie talkies that teachers can use to call a House Head to come to the class and meet with the student. If you send a student to a House Head, they will complete a behavior report, informing the parent of the incident. If you handled it in class, but want to make sure there is a record and the parent is informed (an excellent practice) report the behavioral incident in Renweb after your class is finished. All disciplinary incidents need to be reported on Renweb the day they occur.

5.2 House Heads and Student Care

The House system is the structure by which we enact student discipline. As soon as an inappropriate behavior becomes consistent, extends beyond your classroom, or is too disruptive to be dealt with in class, the House Head should be informed and should intervene. One of the reasons we have houses is so that a single student behaving badly under many different teachers can be dealt with differently than students who are struggling in a single class. If you are concerned about a student, bringing that student to the attention of their House Head is an important part of helping them.

5.3 Expulsion or Suspension

Suspensions are at the discretion of the Associate Head of School, Head of School, Provost or President. Expulsions are at the discretion of the President. It is very important that you report behavioral incidents so that if we ever need to suspend or expel a student we will have a thorough record of the behavior that has resulted in expulsion.

Vacation, Substitution and Sick Days

Please see the employee handbook for the full policy

6.1 General Principle on Short Term Substitutions

As a relatively new school where every teacher contributes unique gifts and works hard throughout the school year, there is no easy way for us to find substitutes from among the staff. Because we are a classical school, there is no easy way for us to find substitutes from outside the staff, though we do establish a substitute pool from parents in the community each year. With this in mind, please be careful to only request substitutes for true needs. It is our expectation that you will schedule all trips, vacation, and other voluntary activities during school breaks. Even missing a single day of classes during the school year puts a heavy burden on your colleagues, and so should be reserved for emergency needs.

To request sick or emergency leave time, you will notify your Dean, request the time off through employee navigator, and email the substitute teacher list to request coverage for your classes.

6.2 Vacation

Vacation is built into the school year, and you should make your plans accordingly. Besides natural requirements that may come from the particular classes you're teaching and the restraints of your own planning, the school has no requirements for you during Thanksgiving Break, the Christmas Break (the day after the last day of the Fall semester through the day after Martin Luther King Jr Day), Spring Break, and the Summer Break (June 1 - July 31st). Please do your very best to plan any time away during these breaks.

6.3 Maternity Leave

Mothers of new babies will receive 6 weeks of paid time off to be taken consecutively within the weeks surrounding the birth of a new baby, and fathers will receive 2 weeks to be taken consecutively and immediately surrounding the birth of the baby. If a parent chooses, they can take the remainder of the school year off unpaid without losing their job for the following school year.

6.4 Nursery and Young Children on Campus

The Saint Constantine School prioritizes both the centrality of the family and the importance of women in the leadership and faculty of our school. To that end, TSCS provides the space for an on-campus nursery for any children too young to participate in Pre-K. Though we desire to accommodate everyone, the nursery is licensed through the state and has certain restrictions, so may become full. Space in the nursery cannot be guaranteed.

Families who would like to take advantage of the nursery will contribute a certain monetary amount per child monthly. The nursery program is heavily subsidized by the school in order to make it an affordable option for all staff. The nursery is open when school is in session and during the months of July and August. The nursery is closed during the month of June, the week of Thanksgiving, the week of Spring break, over the Christmas school holidays, and any other days during the school year in which school is not in session.

When needed, young children are allowed to accompany their parents to work, but cannot be in the classroom, or in meetings with parents, students, or fellow faculty members. Please use discernment as to whether your child will be a disruption to your own responsibilities or the people around you, and use the nursery accordingly.

6.5 Sick Leave

Please see the Employee Handbook for sick and emergency leave policies.

Dress Code and Professionalism

7.1 Dress Code

TSCS teachers should dress as professionals. In general, take a look at the uniform guidelines for students and be sure you're better dressed than the students are. In general, men should plan to wear collared shirts and often wear a tie, and women should wear their skirts no shorter than their knees, since we've required that of students. Tattoos should generally be covered, but we are not strict about this when it comes to field days and other casual dress opportunities. Dress as an example of professionalism, grace, and mature adulthood.

7.2 Social Media

As a faculty member at The Saint Constantine School you are a representative of this school. Your social media use should reflect the principles and values of the school, and represent you as a kind, thoughtful, mature, Christian adult.

Staff and faculty are not to friend or follow students without them first requesting the same of you. Even if they do request, you can decide not to accept students on your social media platforms. However, don't fall into the real mistake of believing that because students don't

follow you they can't see what you post. Consider all social media a public platform and act accordingly. We expect you to represent the school well in all communication, whether public or private.

Never conduct private conversations with students over social media. If a student starts one via Facebook messenger or any other private messaging system, immediately, and kindly, refer them to email. This is good training for them anyway, and serves to keep your interactions in relatively public and appropriate forums. For this same reason, do not follow students or interact with students on Snapchat, as the automatic deletion element of the platform does not allow your interactions to remain public.

7.3 Behavioral Expectations

If any member of The Saint Constantine School staff and faculty engage in an inappropriate or harmful relationship with a student, he or she will be immediately dismissed from the school and not allowed to reapply or return. We will not hesitate to pursue legal and criminal consequences against you if they apply.

You are expected to fulfill the duties laid out in this handbook, conducting your classes excellently and ensuring your students are learning that which you have committed to teaching them. Failure to do this may result in your dismissal.

Your primary job is to help these young people flourish, living more fully out of the image of Christ in them. Every decision you make and conversation you have should keep this ultimate goal in mind. Everything we do here we do because it serves the end of glorifying God through human flourishing and holiness, and anything that gets in the way of that must be dismissed. We expect that you as a teacher will be a conduit of this mission, and a blessing, help, and joy to the students in your life.