



WESTMINSTER
SCHOOL AT OAK MOUNTAIN

Family Handbook

Updated April, 2023

Note: This handbook is designed to acquaint parents and students with Westminster’s mission, values, and culture, as well as provide an overview of general expectations and guidelines. The guidelines in this handbook cannot describe every situation that might occur. Westminster may, in its sole discretion, change these expectations and guidelines, in whole or in part, at any time, with or without notice, to meet changing needs and individual circumstances.

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Section I: History, Mission, and Values

The History of Westminster School at Oak Mountain

Westminster opened its doors in the fall of 1999 with 79 students in grades K-5. The founding School Board members and families envisioned a school, which honored God, and encouraged its students to grow up into the fullness of Christ as his disciples. The Lord led this small group to consider and adopt the classical and Christian model of education. He also led this group of founding members to seek out affiliation with Oak Mountain Presbyterian Church, a partnership which has blessed both the school and church since its inception.

Our gracious Lord has been pleased to bless this endeavor from its inception. Westminster is now a K-12 institution that has graduated hundreds of students equipped with the benefits of our classical and Christian model of education. To God be the glory for His faithfulness to our school.

Mission Statement

Building Christ's kingdom by equipping students with wisdom, virtue, and eloquence

Distinctive Values

Gospel Centered (Christian)

Westminster is rooted in an unwavering commitment to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. This means the gospel is integrated into every subject taught, not merely in Bible class. It also means everything we do is aimed at drawing students back to their fundamental need for grace, forgiveness, and salvation in Christ. Whether on the playground, in the hallways, or in the classroom, our aim would be that students experience Westminster as a place where the Gospel of Jesus Christ is central.

Covenantal Partnership:

Westminster is committed to partnering with Christian parents seeking to raise their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. This partnership thrives when the school and the parents are like-minded in regard to faith convictions and values. From this place of unity, parents, teachers, and administration work together toward the students' academic and spiritual growth. Regular communication between parents and teachers ensures that both parties have the information necessary to shepherd each child toward their God-given potential in Christ.

Classical:

Westminster builds upon the rich tradition of a classical liberal arts education to equip students to know and love that which is true, good, and beautiful. Dating back to the 4th century B.C., classical education became the primary method of instruction up until the early 20th century. At root, this method seeks to build a solid foundation of knowledge, skills, and tools into the hearts and minds of students in order that they be well prepared to live a fruitful life. Most importantly, classical education seeks to cultivate the affections of students to love wisdom and virtue. When equipped with this foundation, students receive instruction in all of the fundamental subjects like reading, math, grammar, and writing while also possessing the ability to think critically, speak with eloquence, and write with persuasion. The end result is students who are well prepared for a lifetime of learning because they have been equipped with the tools necessary to think and learn for themselves.

Relational (Shepherding):

Westminster seeks to cultivate an environment where every student is seen, known, loved, and pursued. In this context, students establish rich and meaningful relationships with teachers, ensuring that the highest level of nurturing support is offered. To achieve this, we keep class sizes small. We also focus on creating an intentionally relational culture, fostering an ideal environment for each student to be shepherded academically, socially, and spiritually.

Graduate Profile

We aim for our graduates to be increasingly:

Wise

- Find their identity in Christ
- Know the gospel of grace as revealed in Scripture
- Apply Christian worldview principles to everyday life
- Read, understand, and discuss great works of literature, science, mathematics, and the arts
- Possess a working timeline of history
- Be equipped for life-long learning

Virtuous

- Love and serve God
- Love and serve others
- Exhibit lives that are missional
- Practice biblical stewardship
- Cultivate diverse interests
- Engage culture actively and redemptively
- Solve problems creatively
- Be prepared for life's next step

Eloquent

- Recognize and articulate the value of truth, goodness, and beauty
- Have a command of language in writing and in speech
- Defend the Christian faith
- Craft compelling stories
- Possess a moral imagination
- Think and reason clearly, precisely, and creatively

What we mean by Christian and Classical

We are Christian

Everything we do at Westminster flows from our commitment to the glorious Gospel of Jesus Christ. This means every subject taught comes from a distinctly Christian worldview. It also means all our relationships and interactions are informed by our Christian faith. By necessity, all of our faculty and staff share in this love for God and His Word. As you would expect, the Bible is taught as its own subject, but a biblical worldview weaves its way into every subject we teach because the Good News informs all things. In other words, Christianity is not an isolated topic. Rather, it is at the center of everything we do at Westminster.

We are Classical¹

Classical education aims to equip students with tools for lifelong learning by providing a liberal arts education. This method seeks to give students a well-rounded knowledge base by focusing on the Seven Liberal Arts of Grammar, Logic, Rhetoric, Arithmetic (all mathematics through Calculus), Geometry, Astronomy (all the sciences up through Physics), and Music (including arts and athletics). We do this by immersing the students in the history, language, and art of Western culture in a manner that enables them to understand our present age and equips them to wisely build the future.

Throughout the history of Western civilization, classical education has aimed to teach the whole person, not just the mind. We believe that Christian classical education is the cultivation of the whole person in service to Christ. This means that true education involves the mind, body, and soul being conformed to the perfect Man, Christ. This holistic approach to education should pervade the entire educational process from early childhood all the way through adolescence

Statement of Faith

The statement of faith adopted by Westminster is limited to primary Christian doctrine, which is considered to be central to historic, orthodox Christianity, and which sets Christianity apart from other faiths. The following statement of faith is taken directly from The Westminster School at Oak Mountain's by-laws.

Sovereignty of God: God sovereignly controls all that occurs in His world and in His church. His plans and purposes always prevail; nothing can thwart them.

Inerrancy of Scripture: God's written Word, the Bible, is free from error and is completely trustworthy. It is His truth and the final authority in all matters.

God's Creation of the World and Man: The Triune God – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit – alone has existed from eternity past. In wisdom, He created the universe from nothing. God spoke, and it came into existence. Humanity did not evolve from lower life but was

¹ Westminster is a member of the Association of Classical Christian Schools (ACCS) and Society for Classical Learning (SCL)

created by God. Mankind, both male and female, was created with dignity in that he was made in God's image and with humility in that his purpose is to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever.

Fall of Mankind: All mankind participated in Adam's fall from his original sinless state and is thus lost in sin and totally depraved.

God's Dealing with Man: God has bound Himself to man by way of a covenant. Initially, God committed Himself to give life to Adam upon the condition of his perfect obedience. When Adam sinned, God made a new covenant. In this covenant, He bound Himself to save a people for Himself. He also committed to keep the terms of the covenant on behalf of man by the work of Jesus Christ. Therefore, the confidence and hope of believers are in God's covenantal faithfulness rather than in their own performance.

Jesus, Savior of Sinners: Jesus Christ is the unique Son of God and the only Savior of the world. Fully God and fully man, He was born of a virgin and lived a sinless life. He alone secured our salvation by His substitutionary atonement on the cross and by His righteous life imputed to His people. Jesus rose bodily from the dead, ascended to the right hand of the Father, and will come again in power and glory.

Justification by Faith Alone: Sinners are justified by faith alone. They do not deserve salvation, and they cannot earn it. Justification is granted by God's grace through faith in Jesus Christ.

Empowering of the Holy Spirit: Every true believer in Jesus Christ is indwelt and empowered by the Holy Spirit, who enables believers to live a godly life and to perform good works.

Body of Christ: All believers are spiritually united in the Lord Jesus Christ, the head of the church. Every believer is a member of the body of Christ.

Final Judgment and Resurrection: At the second coming of Christ, the saved and the lost will be bodily resurrected and judged. The saved will be resurrected to eternal life, and the lost will be resurrected to eternal condemnation.

Reverence

In all areas of instruction, proper respect and consideration of God's character should be given. Specifically, class songs, skits, stories, and discussions that include references to the name and attributes of the Lord must be consistent with biblical principles. Examples of things to avoid include silly or trite references to Jesus Christ, His work on the cross, or the name of God.

Secondary Doctrine

Secondary doctrine refers to any doctrinal issues that are not addressed in the Westminster Statement of Faith (see [above](#)). Classroom discussion of secondary doctrine should be on an informative, non-dogmatic level. When addressing areas of secondary doctrine, teachers must seek to present all sides of an issue and encourage students to follow up with any questions they have with their parents and pastor.

Biblical Worldview

It is essential that students understand all knowledge through the lens of Scripture and historic Christianity. They must grapple with the fundamental questions of life: Who am I? Why am I here? How should I then live? With Scripture as a foundation, students must forge their own worldviews based upon the Creation, Fall, Redemption, Restoration paradigm. Christian classical education integrates principles, thoughts, and events while seeking to understand them from a biblical worldview.

Covenantal Parent Partnership

Covenantal

At the heart of Westminster's identity is our commitment to operating as a covenantal school. Simply stated, the purpose of our school is to educate children of believers. Thus, parents must be members in good standing of an evangelical, Bible-believing church that proclaims Christ as the only way to God for salvation. It is also important that our parents actively participate in weekly worship. As a covenantal school, we understand and acknowledge that not all children of believing parents are, themselves, born-again believers in Jesus Christ. However, this reality does not threaten our covenantal mission; rather, it provides opportunities for teachers and faculty to actively share and communicate the gospel clearly to our students.

Partnership

As a covenantal Christian school, we desire to partner with parents as we seek to educate the whole child. As parents have delegated, not abdicated, the education of their child to Westminster, we believe it is necessary for our administration and faculty to serve as an extension of the parents (*in loco parentis*) by applying Deuteronomy 6:4, teaching from and to a thoroughly biblical worldview.

Church Membership

All members of the Westminster community are required to be members in good standing of an evangelical, Bible-believing church. Westminster families are required to submit church membership forms signed by church leadership every two years in order for their children to remain in attendance at our school.

In loco parentis is Latin for "in the place of the parent." At Westminster, authority over students is understood as delegated authority. During the school day, Westminster's faculty and staff stand *in loco parentis*. Here is what this partnership may look like:

In Academic and Personal Growth:

We desire that every student in our program be seen, known, loved, and pursued. In this way, teachers will regularly seek ways to come alongside students and parents to encourage growth academically and in character. Applications of this partnership will differ between Upper School and Lower School, but examples may include: parent/teacher conferences, phone calls, and regular email communications. All of these communications are aimed at ensuring students are nurtured toward success.

In Discipline:

We want to shepherd the student's heart and serve as an extension of the parents while their child is in our care. Aside from minor redirection, parents will be informed of patterns of disciplinary issues as observed by faculty and staff. It is the expectation that

parents will work to ensure negative patterns of behavior are addressed at home in addition to at school.

In Discovery:

As often as possible, parents will be made aware of specific, sensitive information that will come up in reading, literature, history, Bible, art, or science classes, prior to the class to allow parents to address those issues with their child and to teach and talk through them first at home. We will explain how that sensitive material will be presented and discussed in class, in keeping with Truth and the interpretation of it as defined by the Westminster Confession of Faith. Our desire is to protect the loss of innocence, yet to be unafraid to introduce challenging ideas when appropriate to educate our children to be “wise as serpents and innocent as doves.”

Additionally, as or if we discover any information about the child in social settings (not necessarily related to school) that would be helpful for the parents to know to have the ability to protect, redirect, seek counsel, and pray, we will share that information in love, acknowledging that none of us can correct something if we do not know about it. We desire to treat each parent as we ourselves would desire to be treated.

Community Living

In a covenantal school, we believe that students learn and grow best in community. Therefore, we believe that parents should actively engage in the Westminster community, along with its various events, programs, and activities as a part of their partnership with the school. Parents should commit to supporting the school and its mission, vision, and values.

Parents should commit to the following:

1. Pray for Westminster’s leadership and God’s blessings for the school.
2. Seek to grow in understanding regarding the Christian and classical vision of Westminster.
3. Ensure that your students have the time, place, and support to complete homework and studies.
4. Ensure on-time arrival and pick-up of students.
5. Ensure that when your students arrive, they are properly prepared for the day.
6. Encourage your students to comply with the letter and the spirit of all Westminster rules and policies with a respectful attitude.
7. Read the *Knighly News*, emails from administrators, and from your child’s teachers.
8. Actively engage in and support our community through attendance at Westminster events.
9. Partner with teachers and administrators to support the individual academic needs of your children. Such support may include securing additional testing, tutoring, or other types of academic assistance.

After investigating the philosophy and guiding principles of Westminster, parents annually make a commitment to trust the school with the education of their children.

Grievance Policy

As a Covenantal Christian community, we seek to always resolve conflict in a Biblical manner. Matthew 18:15-20 describes a healthy process for dealing with conflict. At Westminster, it is our desire that everyone always deal directly with the person involved

when trying to solve issues. Direct, loving, and straightforward communication with the person/persons involved is often the quickest and most effective way to resolve problems when they arise. If the conflict persists even after an attempt to solve it directly with the person with whom it resides, it may be necessary to involve others in authority to ensure that the problem is resolved appropriately. Here are a few specific examples:

Student to Student

If students find themselves in conflict with one another, our desire is for them to first seek to resolve the conflict directly with one another. If repeated attempts to resolve conflict directly with their peers are met with resistance, we recommend that students ask someone in authority (parents or teacher) for help in resolving the conflict. If, after involving parents/teachers, the conflict persists, it may be necessary to involve school administration in the process.

Student/Parent to Teacher

All concerns specific to the classroom should always be addressed directly with the teacher involved. If the student is mature enough, it is best for them to address the issue directly with the teacher. In cases where the student is too young, parents should address the concern directly with the teacher. Should the problem persist, the appropriate administrator may need to be involved to ensure an adequate resolution to the problem. If the problem persists, parents should present their concern to the Head of School. Should the concern remain after following all appropriate channels, parents may ask for an appeal directly to the board. Such appeals will only be considered if they are submitted in writing. Please note, however, that we believe this is a last resort and should not be used unless all other means of resolving the conflict have failed. Please also note that taking concerns directly to individual board members is not an effective way of resolving conflict at Westminster.

Problem Resolution Rubric

Issue	First step	Second step	Third step, if needed
Matthew 18 principle	1:1	1:1 + 1	1:1 + several
Student to Student	Encourage your student to talk directly with the other student one-to-one	Add the teacher or the other student's parents to the discussion.	If still not resolved, add the appropriate school administrator
Student to Teacher	Encourage your student to talk directly with the teacher one-to-one	Parent and student meet with the teacher	If not resolved, add the appropriate school administrator
Parent to Teacher	Speak directly with the teacher	Add appropriate school administrator	If not resolved, add the Head of School
Parent to Administration	Speak with the Lower School or Upper School Head	Add the Head of School	If not resolved, contact the Westminster Board in writing

Section II: Admissions

Admission Procedures and Requirements

Admissions Process

1. Tour - Ready for a closer look at our school? [Schedule a tour](#).
2. Fill out a [waiting pool form](#).
3. Application - Submit your student's [application online](#) and pay the application fee upon submission. Please read the instructions carefully as you go. If you plan on applying for [financial aid](#), you may do so after you apply.
4. Assessment - The Admissions Director will call you to set up the assessment for your student and recommend placement.
5. Parent Interview - Once we receive your application, we will contact you to schedule a meeting with the Lower School or Upper School Head. This is a chance for you to ask questions and for us to get to know your family better.
6. Acceptance - If your student is accepted, you will receive your acceptance notification by mail and email. Click on the link and complete the online enrollment packet.
7. Enrollment Forms - Complete your student's Enrollment Forms online and submit the new student fee of \$450 per student (family cap of \$1,000).
8. Complete - Congratulations! We look forward to partnering with you in the Christian education of your child.

Student Placement:

1. A child generally must have reached the age of five years by September 1 to enroll in **Kindergarten**.
2. For students **transferring** from a different school or home school, there will be an assessment to determine grade placement. Generally, children are placed in the grade for which they are applying. However, if there is evidence to show that the child may not be adequately prepared for the next sequential grade level, with the parents' agreement, the child may repeat the previous grade.

Admissions Requirements for Students

Westminster seeks to admit students and families who share beliefs, goals, and abilities in common with the school populace. This includes:

1. Students who understand and submit to a biblical understanding of authority, have developmentally appropriate physical, emotional, and cognitive abilities, and possess a strong work ethic.

2. Students who are academically compatible with the population of Westminster students they will join.

Westminster is not suitable for every student. Thus, acceptance into Westminster is not guaranteed, and the school reserves the right to deny admission or re-enrollment to a student or family if it believes the student or school is best served by this decision.

Admissions decisions are made after careful consideration and prayer. Student admission into Westminster will be declined when it would not benefit the student or the school due to incompatibilities in one or more of the areas listed above. Due to the sensitive and, at times, difficult nature of the process, decisions not to accept a student are shared by letter and without further comment.

Westminster does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, or national origin in the administration of its policies, admissions, financial aid, athletic, and other directed programs. As a ministry of Oak Mountain Presbyterian Church, we can and do discriminate on the basis of religion, gender, sexual orientation, and gender identity.

Admission Requirements for the Parents

Westminster is a covenantal school. As a result, we require at least one parent to be a member in good standing and an active participant at a local, evangelical, Bible-believing church that proclaims Christ as the only way to God for salvation. Parents will be required to submit a church membership form completed by an elder or ministerial staff member of their church, which will be renewed every other year verifying their active standing in a local church.

All parents are expected to cooperate with all the written policies at Westminster and engage in active communication with the respective teacher(s) and administration.

Re-Enrollment

Westminster reserves the right to refuse re-enrollment when it believes it is in the best interest of the student and/or the school. Current students and their siblings have priority consideration for enrollment at Westminster. However, new applicants are notified of class openings; therefore, the Admissions Director will process new applications once the priority deadline for re-enrollment has passed.

Process:

1. Each family's account must be current before recommitments will be honored for their child(ren). A student may not re-enroll until all outstanding balances are paid in full.
2. Priority consideration is forfeited if the required continuous enrollment fee(s) is/are not received by the last week in January (specific dates TBD for each new calendar year). In this event, priority consideration for each student for whom the fee has not been paid will be forfeited.
3. Priority consideration will also be forfeited if the family's required forms (i.e. church membership, tuition terms, etc.) are not received by March 1.

4. Siblings of current students must be in the school waiting pool to be considered for priority enrollment.
5. A completed application and required fees are due by the last Thursday in January for siblings to be considered priority applicants.
6. Family commitment forms for new students are not due until an offer of acceptance has been made.

Re-enrollment and Tuition Obligation

Westminster sets its budget and makes faculty decisions based on re-enrollment. It is critical that families recommit in January so the administration and board can make wise and timely decisions in preparation for the subsequent academic year.

Westminster expects families to honor their recommitment to enroll their child(ren) and to pay the agreed-upon tuition. By paying re-enrollment fees in January, families are committing to pay tuition for the coming school year.

Westminster recognizes that there are reasonable, unforeseen circumstances (e.g., unexpected move or loss of job) that may make it necessary for a family to withdraw after the re-enrollment deadline in January. In such cases, Westminster will release tuition obligations in accordance with the following schedule:

- a. 25% of the full tuition amount if withdrawn prior to March 1st.
- b. 50% of the full tuition amount if withdrawn prior to May 1st.
- c. 75% of the full tuition amount if withdrawn prior to July 1st.
- d. 100% of the full tuition amount for all withdrawals after July 1st.

If a family withdraws after July 1, they will be responsible for 100% of their tuition obligation for the upcoming academic year. If a parent requests an exception to this policy, based upon unforeseen circumstances, he or she must submit the request in writing to the Head of School. If the Head of School determines the appeal is warranted, he or she will present the request to the Finance Committee of the Board of Directors for approval. The Head of School or his or her designee will inform the family of the Finance Committee's decision. All decisions made by the Finance Committee or the Board of Directors will be considered final, and no other appeals will be considered.

Withdrawal

In circumstances when a withdrawal is necessary, a completed and signed Student Withdrawal form must be turned in to the school office before any school records will be forwarded to a new school.

Accounts must be paid in full before any school records will be released to a new school. Any request for a special exemption to this policy must be submitted to the Head of School in writing. The request should detail a plan for paying the account. Westminster cannot guarantee that any request for special exemption will be granted.

Section III: The School Day

Morning Arrival

The school day begins at 8:00 a.m. for all students. Doors will remain locked until 7:30 a.m. at the Upper and Lower School. Because of the potential for accidents and injury at this high-traffic time, parents and other drivers are strongly encouraged not to use cell phones while driving on campus.

Lower School

Lower School students may be dropped off at the portico between 7:30 a.m. and 7:58 a.m. Upon entrance into the Lower School building, students should go directly to their classrooms. Drink and snack machines are off-limits to Lower School students every school day until after 3:00 p.m.

Parents who wish to accompany students into the building are to park in the designated area away from the carpool line. If accompanying a child to class, parents should be considerate of the teachers' prep time.

Upper School

Students are to be dropped off at the front of the Upper School building. The Upper School building will be open to students beginning at 7:30 a.m. Upper School students may also be dropped off at the Lower School campus and may use the tunnel to access the Upper School. Parents dropping off students at the tunnel should pull out of the main lane of traffic and use the parking spaces lining the sidewalk leading to the tunnel.

After-School Dismissal

Both the Upper and Lower Schools will utilize a carpool system for after-school dismissal. Parents are strongly encouraged to avoid using cell phones while driving in either parking lot.

Lower School Dismissal

Mondays and Thursdays

1. Students in kindergarten through second grades will be dismissed at 12:40 p.m. and must be picked up by 1:00 p.m.
2. Students in third through sixth grades and any student in After School Care or attending an after-school co-curricular activity will be dismissed at 2:45 p.m. and must be picked up by 3:05 p.m.

Tuesdays and Wednesdays

1. Students in grades kindergarten through fifth grade will be dismissed at 12:40 p.m. and must be picked up by 1:00 p.m.
2. Students in the sixth grade and any student in After School Care or attending an after-school co-curricular activity will be dismissed at 2:45 p.m. and must be picked up by 3:05 p.m.

Friday

Students in all grades will be dismissed at 12:40 p.m. and must be picked up by 1:05 p.m. There is no After School Care on Fridays.

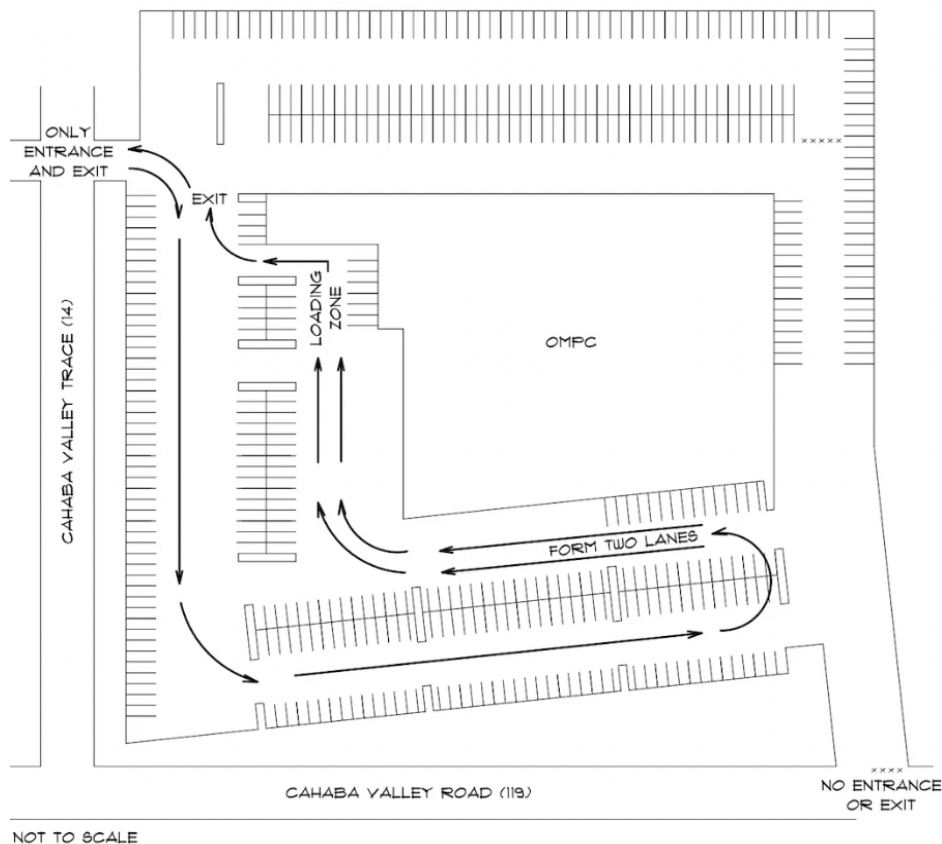
Carpool

Carpool Number

Each family will be assigned a carpool number. This number will remain with the family during the duration of their child's attendance at Westminster. Students will not be released to anyone who does not have an official and current carpool number card unless the office and the child's teacher have been notified. Should someone besides a parent need to pick up a child, parents should inform the driver of the proper carpool procedures. The carpool number should be clearly displayed until the child enters the car. Those picking up students from more than one family should display official carpool numbers for all families.

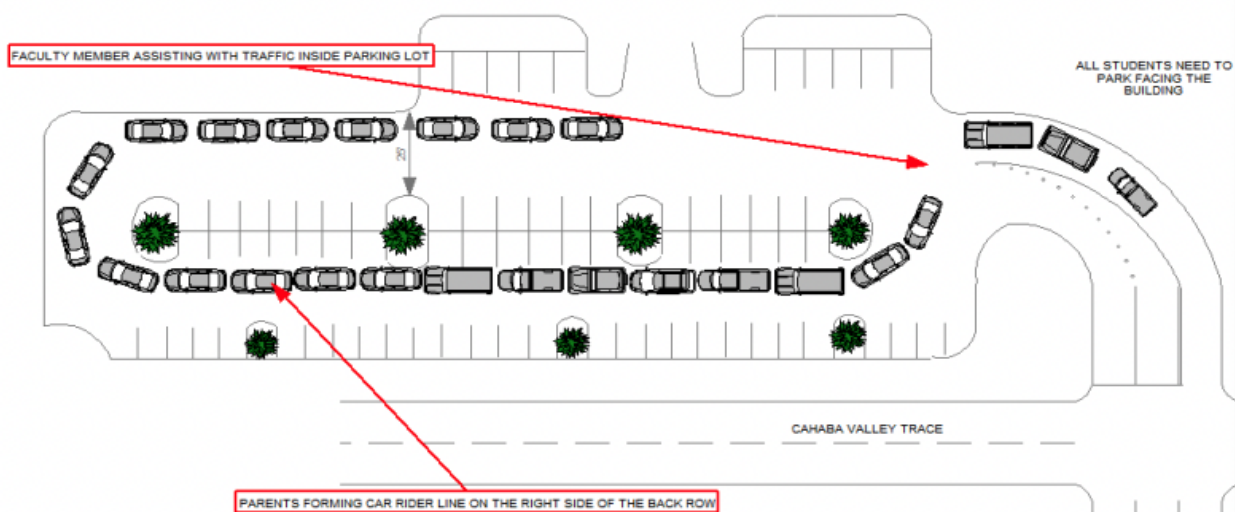
Lower School Procedures

All parents must use the carpool system to pick up their children. Carpool procedures will be the same for both dismissal times (12:40 and 2:45). See diagram below for specifics:



Upper School Procedures

All parents must use the carpool system to pick up their children. Upper School carpool will utilize one lane (closest to the building) for pick up and leave space for exiting traffic near the center of the lot. See diagram below for specifics:



Student Drivers

All student drivers must complete a driver registration form in the Upper School office, provide a copy of their insurance, and park in designated student parking areas. Students will also be required to display a Westminster decal on their windshields when parking on church or school property.

The speed limit in the school parking lot is five miles per hour. Student drivers are expected to drive responsibly and courteously. Failure to do so will result in the loss of this privilege on campus.

Seniors may park in the Upper School parking lot. Sophomore and Junior students may use the OMPC parking lot in Westminster designated parking spaces only. Students parking in the OMPC lot may use the tunnel to access the Upper School.

Students who are not siblings of the driver must receive parental permission before leaving campus with a student driver.

Students are not permitted to drive on field trips. Students are also not permitted to drive other (non-related) students unless given prior permission from parents.

Check in/Check Out

Students arriving on campus any time after 8:00 a.m. must check in at the front desk in the Lower and Upper School lobby.

All Upper School students must check out at the front desk whenever they leave campus during the day. Lower School students must be signed out by a parent or guardian at the front desk if leaving campus during school hours.

Junior and Senior students may leave campus during the school day but must have a signed parent permission form on file prior to being permitted to leave. All students must sign out and sign back in at the front desk.

Contacting Children During the School Day

Parents needing to contact their student during school hours should contact the school office to deliver the message to the student.

Emergency Procedures

Westminster makes student safety a top priority. Each year, staff will be trained on emergency procedures to ensure everyone has familiarity with each process. Emergency procedures will also be practiced with students (age appropriately) and staff.

Attendance & Tardiness

Students enrolled at Westminster are expected to be present and on time every day school is in session. Regular attendance is essential for your child's education and academic success. Excessive absences adversely affect a child's understanding of content and the acquisition of basic skills.

Definitions

Unplanned absences: are those that are unforeseen and require a student to miss school due to illness, or emergency, etc. The parents should contact the office by note or phone as soon as possible. This allows time for teacher(s) and/or students to compile the necessary work the student would otherwise miss.

Planned absences: are those that are scheduled in advance (ie. family vacations, mission trips, service in the community, doctor visits, etc.). Parents/students planning an absence must notify the teachers and the school office in advance of the absence.

Student Absence/Tardy Guidelines

1. Lower School absences are reported by emailing attendance@westminsterknights.org and should be completed by 10:00 a.m..
2. Upper School absences are reported by contacting the Upper School office (208-9696 or upperschool@westminsterknights.org).

3. In the event of excessive absences, a conference will be called with the Upper or Lower School Head to discuss the effects of the absences on the student, his classmates, and his teacher(s). Because of the strong correlation between attendance and achievement, students with 20 absences may be retained or lose the privilege of attending Westminster the following year.
4. Lower School Tardiness: A student is considered tardy when he arrives in his classroom between 8:00 a.m. and 10:00 a.m. If a student arrives after 10:00 a.m., he will be counted absent. In severe cases where tardiness is habitual, re-enrollment eligibility could be suspended.
5. Upper School Tardiness: A student is considered tardy when he arrives in his classroom after the class is scheduled to begin. Students developing a pattern of excessive tardiness in the Upper School may receive school-assigned consequences.

Missed School Work Guidelines

Lower School Makeup Work

1. Missed work will be placed in the Pick Up Kiosk (located in the Lower School parking lot) at 1:15 p.m. for kindergarten through second-grade students and at 3:15 p.m. for third through sixth-grade students on the date of the student's absence. On Fridays, the missed work will be placed in the kiosk at 1:15 p.m. for all Lower School students. It is the responsibility of the student and parent to pick up missed work and complete it in the time allotted.
2. The Drop Off Kiosk can be utilized by parents for returning completed work.
3. Upon the student's return to school, students will have one (1) day to complete makeup work for every day absent, with a maximum of seven days. All missing assignments must be completed unless unusual circumstances require an exception. All exceptions must be approved by the Head of the Lower School. If the absence occurs before a school holiday, all make-up work must be completed and turned in upon return to school.
4. Previously assigned projects and assessments must be turned in or taken on the day of the student's return to school. In certain circumstances, the teacher may grant additional makeup time.
5. An administrative conference will be held with students (and their parents) who exhibit a pattern of absences on assessment days.
6. Neither makeup work nor tests will be given in advance of a planned absence.

Upper School Makeup Work

1. The student is responsible for requesting makeup work. This can be done by contacting each teacher directly.
2. Upon the student's return to school, two makeup days will be allowed for each day missed unless a longer time is approved by the Upper School administration. Assignments missed because of school-sponsored activities should, whenever possible, be made up prior to the absence.
3. Previously assigned projects and assessments must be turned in or taken on the day of the student's return to school. In certain circumstances, the teacher may grant additional makeup time.

4. An administrative conference will be held with students who exhibit a pattern of absences on assessment days.
5. Neither makeup work nor tests will be given in advance of a planned absence.

Section IV: Education & Curriculum Guidelines

At the Westminster School at Oak Mountain, our aim is to build Christ's Kingdom by equipping our students with wisdom, virtue, and eloquence. We have carefully chosen the classical model as the primary means of accomplishing this goal.

Classical education is rooted in the rich liberal arts tradition. The liberal arts were originally aimed at cultivating virtue in such a way as to train virtuous citizens. Over time, this method of education was adopted by Christians through the early monastic schools and eventually parish/church schools. Though classical education always included an emphasis on educating the whole person, as these institutions adopted the model, the focus grew to include the total engagement of students as image-bearers of God. At Westminster, we strive to build on this rich tradition by educating the whole student: heart, soul, mind, and strength (Mark 12:30).

With this in view, we place a higher value on the learning process and heart cultivation than on grades. However, grades do convey information regarding student performance and effort.

It should also be noted that As and Es are generally reserved for performance that exceeds expectations and requirements.

Grades and Evaluation

Grades 9-12

Percentage	Grade	GPA Calculation
97%-100%	A+	4.4
93%-96.9%	A	4.2
90%-92.9%	A-	4.0
87%-89.9%	B+	3.4
83%-86.9%	B	3.2
80%-82.9%	B-	3.0
77%-79.9%	C+	2.4
73%-76.9%	C	2.2
70%-72.9%	C-	2.0
Below 70%	F	0.0

Grades 7-8

Percentage	Grade
90%-100%	A
80%-89.9%	B
70%-79.9%	C
Below 70%	F

Grades 3-6

Students in grades 3-6 will be graded according to the scale above for all subjects except penmanship, art, and music.

Grades K-2

Some subjects in first and second grades and all five subjects in kindergarten are graded using the following scale:

- E = Excels
- S = Satisfactory
- N = Needs Work
- U = Unsatisfactory

Grading Guidelines

- Upper School teachers should try to record a minimum of 10 academic grades per subject per term. The rule of thumb for achieving this is that all assigned work should earn a grade, and no one grade should dramatically shape a student's grade in that subject (with a few exceptions made by the Upper School Head). This means, on average, an upper school teacher should aim to put no less than one grade in the gradebook per week for each subject they teach—and can take the form of participation, homework completion, etc.
- Use an objective, criterion-referenced rubric for assessments: Objective standards will be used to judge student performance. In-class assignments or participation can be given completion grades.
- Homework assignments should be graded and returned to students within one week: Generally, teachers should get daily work returned to students within a week's time. This allows teachers, students, and parents to catch any areas of struggle early.
- Tests, larger projects, and writing assignments should be graded and returned to the students within one week.
- In order to keep any single assignment from overly affecting a grade, no one assignment should exceed 20%. The very few exceptions to this guideline may come when teachers use fewer, but more substantial assessments (i.e. the Senior Thesis in the final semester).
- **In the event of a student earning an "F" for the quarter or semester in any class or subject, the parents should have received prior notification. Parents should not be surprised by a failing grade.** When teachers notify parents and students, they

should explain the reasons (missing assignments, poor grades, etc.) for the failing grade. Teachers should attempt to meet with parents and students who have a failing grade before or at the middle of a quarter to give suggestions for how the student might be able to raise his or her grade.

- If more than 20% of the students in a class fail a test or quiz, and if 40% of the students in a class fail an assignment, the teacher should assume the majority of students are unclear on the subject matter assessed. If this happens, teachers should strongly consider re-teaching the material and re-testing to check for improved comprehension.
- **Grading Late Assignments:** Any assignment turned in after the determined date and time is late (adjusted as needed due to a student's illness or other excused absence from class). For each day an assignment is late 11% will be deducted. Assignments that are not turned in will earn a zero.

Graduation Requirements

Any request to diverge from or waive any graduation requirement must be approved by the appropriate teacher(s) and administrator(s).

Course	Graduation Requirements	Course Options
Theology	3.75	Biblical Interpretation; Covenant Theology; Old Testament; New Testament; Creeds; Systematic Theology; Apologetics; Ethics
History	4	Ancient; Medieval; Modern European; United States
Literature	4	Ancient; Medieval; Modern European; United States
Rhetoric	3	Rhetoric I(A/B); Junior Thesis; Senior Thesis
Foreign Languages	3	Latin; Spanish; Greek
Mathematics	4	Algebra; Geometry; Algebra II; Pre-Calculus; Calculus (AP); Statistics (AP)
Science	4	Biology; Chemistry; Anatomy and Physiology; Environmental Science; Physics; Conceptual Physics
Fine/Visual/ Performing Arts	2	Music; Visual Art
Total	27.75	

Summer Electives:

Credits Offered	Course Options
0.50 credit elective	Driver's Education for rising 9th and 10th graders
0.25 credit elective	Intro to Computer Programming for rising 10th, 11th and 12th graders
0.25 credit elective	Typing and Computer Keyboarding for rising 8th graders
0.25 credit elective	Google Products and High School Study Skills for rising 9th graders
0.25 credit elective	Graphic Design Workshop/Adobe Products Training Course for rising 11 th , 12 th
0.25 credit elective	Music Theory and Composition for 10 th , 11 th and 12 th graders

Early College Credit Electives:

Early College Credit (ECC) is when a Westminster student is enrolled as a full-time high school student as well as in a college-level course at an approved college. The approved colleges are Jefferson State Community College (High School Dual Enrollment Program), University of Alabama (UA Early College), University of Alabama in Birmingham (UAB High School Program - Dual Enrollment), and Auburn University (Auburn First).

ECC courses must be taken either online, in the evening, or during the summer months. No student will be permitted to check out of school to take a class during school hours.

The ECC course will not replace any class at Westminster. However, ECC courses will be added to the Westminster transcript for additional credit. The college course grade will be reflected on the transcript but not factored into the GPA. The course will be marked as an elective credit with the name of the college.

ECC courses are available only to 10th, 11th and 12th grade students with approval. The student must have at least a 3.0 GPA and be on track to graduate on time.

To enroll in an approved ECC course, a student is required to get permission from a Westminster College Advisor and the Head of Upper School (forms will be available in their offices or at the front desk). Their parents must also sign an agreement with The Westminster School at Oak Mountain and the college institution.

Homework Guidelines

The purposes of homework at Westminster are review, practice, and preparation.

- Review – Assignments intended to help students study for tests or refresh cumulative skills (e.g., vocabulary, math calculations)
- Practice – Assignments intended to help students repeat and reinforce skills learned in class
- Preparation – Assignments intended to extend material learned in class, introduce material for the next class, or challenge the students on information learned (e.g., reading assignments to be discussed in class, logic problem to stretch a given point)

Lower School

- No homework will be assigned over holidays and vacations.
- No homework will be assigned on weekends. However, students can be encouraged to use weekend time for outside projects or long-term assignments.
- Teachers should communicate the purpose and expectations of each homework assignment.
- Teachers will post assignments in FACTS (RenWeb), but the students' homework assignment sheets (HAS) should be the most accurate indicator of homework due.

Upper School

Grades 7 and 8

- Each student records homework assignments in his student planner. Students and parents can also check homework assignments on FACTS (RenWeb).
- Weekend homework will be limited to assigned reading for literature.
- Quizzes and tests should not be given on Monday.
- Homework may not be given over holidays.

Grades 9-12

- Upper School teachers will post assignments on FACTS.
- Homework may not be given over holidays.

Time Allotment

Though time spent on homework will vary from student to student, the following should be used as an estimate for time per night for the average student:

Grade	Homework	Reading Time
K-1	Up to 20 minutes	30 minutes
2-3	Up to 30 minutes	30 minutes
4-5	Up to 50 minutes	30 minutes
6	Up to 60 minutes	30 minutes
7-8	Up to 20 minutes per class	30 minutes
9-12	Up to 30 minutes per class	30 minutes

Parents are encouraged to talk first with the classroom teacher if they believe the homework load is regularly burdensome for their child. The teacher will carefully weigh their comments and work to determine the issues and strategies to help.

Academic Honesty & Plagiarism

Academic honesty is important to maintain. In the age of the internet with sites like CliffsNotes, SparkNotes, Wikipedia, Google, and others readily available, it is important to clarify how students can keep academic integrity.

Plagiarism and cheating are not tolerated at Westminster. We expect all students to do their own work—unless group work has been specifically assigned—and that tests and quizzes are done under a student’s own power, without looking at another student’s test or in some other way utilizing ill-gotten means to achieve a grade.

All of the following are considered plagiarism:

- turning in someone else's work as your own
- copying words or ideas from someone else without giving credit
- failing to put a quotation in quotation marks
- giving incorrect information about the source of a quotation
- changing words but copying the sentence structure of a source without giving credit
- copying so many words or ideas from a source that it makes up the majority of your work, whether you give credit or not (see our section on "fair use" rules)

Most cases of plagiarism can be avoided, however, by citing sources. Simply acknowledging that certain material has been borrowed and providing your audience with the information necessary to find that source is usually enough to prevent plagiarism.”²

A plagiarized assignment or test will generally receive a grade of F and also a visit with the appropriate administrator. The assignment or test may not be made up for credit, depending on the severity of the incident. Additional infractions may jeopardize a student’s standing at Westminster altogether. Teachers must, therefore, stress the importance of academic honesty.

Student Promotion Guidelines

In order to be promoted to the next grade at Westminster, all students should demonstrate an appropriate level of mastery of their assigned subjects and also display the grade-level maturity necessary to succeed in the next grade. Because of class-size constraints, Westminster cannot guarantee that space will be available for failing students or for students who need to repeat a grade. The following serve as guidelines for promotion at Westminster.

Lower School

- Regardless of grades, students in kindergarten and first grade must pass a mastery test before the end of the school year in order to be promoted to the next grade.
- Lower School students who fail two or more subjects may not be promoted and cannot be guaranteed admission for the next year. Lower School students who fail reading/literature may not advance to the next year. Because reading is so fundamental to an elementary student’s academic success across the subjects, a failure in reading/literature in the Lower School is indicative of more pervasive issues, and the cumulative knowledge and skills learned over the course of a school year cannot be made up with a summer course.

Upper School

- Upper School students currently enrolled at Westminster should pass all of their core classes to qualify for promotion to the next successive grade.
 - If a student does not pass the year with a cumulative grade above 70%, they may (at the discretion of the Head of Upper School) be required to repeat the class. Students who do not pass two or more classes with a grade above 70% may (at the discretion of the Head of Upper School) be asked to repeat the grade. Failing multiple classes may result in a student not being allowed to re-enroll at Westminster.
- Students seeking to graduate from Westminster must meet all applicable graduation requirements (see [Graduation Requirements](#)).
- All appeals for diverging from or waiving the requirements of this policy will be submitted to the appropriate administrator. The Upper School Head, with the counsel of the teachers and other administrators, will make the final decision on the appeal.

² <https://www.plagiarism.org/article/what-is-plagiarism>

Co-Curricular Eligibility

The Westminster School academic eligibility requirements for students choosing to participate in athletics or fine arts are as follows:

- To be eligible for athletics or fine arts, students entering grades 7-12 must have passed all of their courses during the preceding nine weeks. This will provide a composite numerical average of at least 70 in all core courses.
- A School Administrator will provide academic student eligibility reports to the school Athletic and Fine Arts Directors.
- Westminster will also follow all athletic eligibility guidelines established by all applicable local and state associations (e.g., The Alabama High School Athletic Association, hereafter, AHSAA).

Athletic Tiers with Academic Work and Athletic Involvement

- Students involved in athletics who receive one or more failing grades on a progress report (every 4.5 weeks) will be monitored by the administration, the Athletic Director, and the coach to ensure progress is made.
- Students involved in athletics who receive one or more failing grades on a report card (every 9 weeks) will not be eligible to participate in games, matches or meets until the subsequent progress report shows passing grades for all classes.
- Students involved in athletics who receive one or more failing grades for a semester (half the academic year), will not be eligible to participate in games, matches or meets until the subsequent progress report shows passing grades for all classes.
- Exam grades do not affect the quarter grades, but they do apply to the semester grade. If the exam grade causes the student to fail the semester, even though the student passed the two nine-week periods, the student will be ineligible via (c) above.

Example:

- 1st 9 weeks - 70% - (45% of semester average)
- 2nd 9 weeks - 70% - (45 % of semester average)
- Exam - 50% - (10% of semester average)
- Semester Final Average - 68%

Class Size

Westminster seeks to maintain ideal teacher to student ratios. As a result, our class sizes are limited to 16 students per section. At the discretion of the appropriate administrator, exceptions may be made to this ratio on a case-by-case basis.

Parent Conferences

All Lower School parents are required to attend a parent-teacher conference during the first quarter. Both parents and/or legal guardians are expected to attend the same parent-teacher conference. Additional conferences may be scheduled as deemed appropriate by either parents or teachers.

Upper School parents are encouraged to set up meetings with their child's teacher on an as-needed basis.

Accommodations/Modifications

Lower School

Westminster's Academic Support Program was established to better meet individual learning needs and to refine and strengthen the academic skills necessary for success at Westminster. Under the program's umbrella, there are two levels of academic support: universal and targeted. The universal support offered by the Instructional Support teachers and aides reinforces, supports, and enriches classroom instruction in individual or small group settings. All students within a grade level benefit from this level of support, and the classroom teachers decide how the support teachers are utilized, the content or skills students need to work on, which students will go to Instructional Support, and how often. This approach allows for more individualized instruction by directly supporting students who may need additional support meeting grade level expectations, as well as those who are ready to move beyond those expectations.

The targeted instruction of the Academic Support umbrella is designed to replace regular classroom instruction in math, grammar and composition, or literature. Students with greater learning differences or other significant needs are candidates for this program, and students are pulled out of the regular classroom daily for instruction more suited to their learning needs. Although students are expected to master the same content and skills as students in the regular classroom, the more targeted support gives these at-risk students the scaffolding necessary to succeed. Students are recommended for this program based on standardized testing scores, classroom observations and assessments, and/or outside testing. There is an additional fee for this program, \$2,800 per academic class, with a maximum of two academic class supports. The program can accommodate up to four students per academic class.

Upper School

At Westminster, we recognize that, with our limited resources, we simply cannot meet all of the social and academic needs of every child who applies to our school. However, we also understand that there are students of strong academic aptitude and motivation who are mission-appropriate for Westminster but may occasionally need small accommodations to ensure their individual success in our school. What follows are guidelines for assessing whether a student will be allowed accommodations at Westminster in grades 7-12.

The Upper School Head will have the final authority as to whether or not accommodations will be provided, as well as the nature of such accommodations. The Upper School Head also has the authority to suspend accommodations at any time if such accommodations become disruptive to the school community, unnecessarily burden a teacher or group of teachers, or it is determined that they are impeding the progress of the student receiving them.

Process:

The Administration will consider a formal request for accommodations only after the following criteria are met:

1. The request is made in writing to the respective administrator no more than four weeks prior to when accommodations are expected to begin.
2. The student for whom the accommodations are being requested has been formally evaluated by a qualified, professional educational psychologist or diagnostician. The official evaluation must contain recommendations from the professional evaluating the child. Parents will be responsible for all costs associated with the evaluation of their children.
3. The parents of the student must provide all legal releases allowing the administration to contact the professional evaluating the child. (Note: Any communication between the school and the outside professional, whether in person or over the phone, will include at least one parent of the student.)
4. The administration will evaluate the recommended accommodations to determine if Westminster is able to provide them. Recommendations that Westminster will likely consider providing include the following:
 - i. particular seating placement
 - ii. additional time on designated exams or assessments in accordance with College Board or ACT guidelines
 - iii. testing in a private area. Given multiple factors, such as limited time and facilities resources, Westminster may not be able to grant certain accommodations, such as additional time on any or all major exams.
 - iv. Other specific accommodations will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis

Families of students receiving accommodations may be required to pay an additional fee to cover any costs associated with the implementation of an approved plan. Such fees will be assessed once an accommodation plan is established by the administration.

Section V: Student Culture

Student Culture at Westminster

At Westminster, we seek to foster a culture of grace grounded in the love, submission, freedom, and creativity that characterizes life within the Holy Trinity. As the Persons within the Holy Trinity eternally love one another, our hope is that our students will love, encourage, and meet the needs of others. As a result, we aspire to craft gospel patterns of honesty, transparency, repentance, and forgiveness in the interactions among our students.

Our student culture should embody not only the cardinal virtues of prudence, justice, courage, and temperance but ultimately the principles of faith, hope, and love. Our students should be conforming to and embodying the character of Christ, exhibiting the fruit of the Spirit.

Because of these aspirations, we seek to maintain high standards of excellence befitting the God we serve while at the same time exhibiting grace as we assist our students in achieving those standards. Above all, we aim to direct the students to Christ through our expectations and standards, leading them to repentance when necessary but ultimately to the loving embrace of the Father.

Whole School Honor Code, Values, and Procedures

Overarching School Values:

- We are **Respectful**.
- We are **Responsible**.
- We **Love One Another** (Mark 12:30ff).

Student Honor Code

Westminster Honor Code prohibits cheating, drug or substance abuse, lying, sexual misconduct or impurity, slander or gossip, stealing, vandalism, and all other offenses that are detrimental to the Westminster community. Westminster students should not engage in any activity that undermines their witness for Christ or is contrary to the Bible, or standards, principles, and guidelines set forth in Westminster's Statement of Faith, mission, values, and/or this handbook, or that otherwise undermines the unity or reputation of the school. Westminster expects students to comply with this Honor Code at all times, whether on or off campus.

Student Dress Code

Westminster is a place of learning for students. Wearing uniforms makes one's clothing and appearance background to the learning environment. In this way, student attire should not draw unnecessary attention to individual students. As such:

- Students are expected to be clean and dress in clean, fitting, sex-specific, untoned clothing, which adheres to the school's uniform requirements.
- Only approved outerwear may be worn in the school building. Coats and other heavy outerwear may be worn outside. Be sure your child has an approved long-sleeve garment for layering indoors.
- Clothing may be selected to permit reasonable growing room, but unreasonably oversized uniforms are not permitted. Boys' shirts must be long enough to remain tucked in throughout the day.
- Visible tattoos and body (non ear) piercings are not permitted
- Earrings for girls should complement, not detract from the uniform. Earrings for boys are not permitted.
- Girls in kindergarten through sixth grade cannot wear makeup. Makeup for girls in the Upper School should be limited to that which is neither extravagant, nor distracting.
- Jewelry should be limited to that which is neither extravagant nor distracting and hair accessories should match the uniform.
- In the interest of modesty, girls' skirt lengths must at all times be no higher than three inches above the kneecap.
- Facial hair is not permitted for male students. Hair styles should not be distracting.

For specific uniform requirements, see Westminster Uniform Guidelines in the office or online. Go [here](#) for Lower School and [here](#) for Upper School.

If a student is not wearing the appropriate uniform, the teacher will assess and address the situation and may:

- Call a parent to bring the correct item of clothing.
- Refer the student to the appropriate administrator for repeated and/or serious violations.

Discipline Philosophy

The purpose of discipline at Westminster is to maintain an orderly classroom and school environment and also to partner with parents in the discipleship of their children. We also understand the disciplinary process as a primary tool to remind students of their need for the Gospel. We are all sinners in desperate need of a savior. In this way, when students need discipline, it is our privilege to remind them that they are loved and forgiven in Christ.

When discipline at school becomes necessary, faculty and staff should do so with grace and love, encouraging students to seek forgiveness and restore relationships. In this way, all discipline should be restorative - student with student, student with adult, and student with God. Should discipline occur at school, parents/guardians will be informed of student's misconduct to ensure appropriate measures can be taken at home as parents/guardians partner with us to curb problematic behavior.

Lower School Student Discipline

Student discipline in the classroom will be handled by the classroom teacher. Specific procedures aimed at maintaining an orderly and productive classroom will be determined by the grade-level teacher. When discipline becomes necessary, teachers will treat students with love and respect while still holding students to the standards of classroom decorum. From time to time, classroom disciplinary measures will not be sufficient to curb unhelpful behavior. In such instances, students may be referred to the Lower School Head for an office visit. Again, all discipline at Westminster is aimed at pointing students toward the good news of the Gospel in a way that restores fellowship with their Creator and with one another.

Upper School Student Discipline

Student discipline in the Upper School is intended to promote a productive and respectful learning environment. Each teacher will clearly communicate their classroom expectations with students at the beginning of every school year and then periodically remind them throughout the remainder of the year. As students progress through the Upper School, it is our goal that they become more independent and self-governing. As a result, when students act in ways that distract from a productive and respectful learning environment, they may be disciplined.

Discipline at the Upper School will most often be handled relationally with the teacher having a face-to-face conversation with the student to discuss their behavior and make a plan to remedy it going forward. Teachers are encouraged never to use sarcasm or shame to discipline a student. Instead, they are encouraged to address the behavior directly and, if necessary, meet after class. If the misbehavior is something only the teacher observes, the student should be quietly/privately corrected. If the misbehavior is public, students may need to be addressed publicly in order for the entire class to see that the behavior has been properly addressed.

When a straightforward conversation isn't sufficient to curb unhelpful or distracting behaviors, other disciplinary measures may be taken to help students grow in self-governance and self-control. Such measures include, but are not limited to detention, grounds maintenance, or an office visit with the Upper School Head.

Office Visits

When a student receives an office visit with an administrator, the following guidelines should typically be followed.

1. The first two times a student is sent to an administrator for discipline, his or her parents will be contacted and apprised of the details of the visit. Possible disciplinary measures include, but are not limited to, restitution, janitorial work, parental attendance during the school day, or spanking (Lower School only). If corporal punishment seems warranted, the administrator will act only in concert with the parents.

2. The third office visit will be followed by a meeting of the student's parents and an administrator.
3. Should the student require a fourth visit, a two-day suspension or other measures deemed appropriate may be imposed.
4. If a fifth visit is required, expulsion may result.

Serious Misconduct

Should a student commit an act with serious consequences, suspension or expulsion may be imposed immediately. Examples of such serious misconduct could include acts endangering the lives of other students or staff members, gross violence or vandalism to the facilities, violations of civil law, or any act in clear contradiction of scriptural commands and Westminster's Student Honor Code. Students may be subject to discipline for serious misconduct, even if such misconduct occurs outside of normal school hours or not on school property.

School Property

At Westminster, all equipment and property should be treated with care and respect and should be used for school-related purposes only. Students may also be required to be involved in the maintenance or repair of damaged property. Fines or other forms of restitution may also be levied for lost or damaged school property.

Personal Property

Westminster is not responsible for the loss, theft, or breakage of items brought to school. School employees (usually administrators) may conduct searches of property or persons when they have reason to suspect that the health, safety, or welfare of students or staff may be endangered.

Technology Guidelines

Technology is a tool that should not eclipse our relationship with God, distract from our interpersonal relationships or our education. The following guidelines seek to provide a framework for utilizing technology in a way that will aid students in engaging with their courses, their Creator, and one another.

Lower School students are not permitted to have any electronic devices during the school day. This includes cell phones and smartwatches.

Upper School students may have cell phones and smartwatches while at school, but must be turned off (not powered on or set to 'do not disturb') and stored in the students' lockers or backpacks during the school day. Any such device used, heard, or seen on a student's person during the school day will be confiscated and held until the end of the day, at which time a parent/guardian may pick up the device. Repeated misuse of a cell phone will result in additional disciplinary consequences and further loss of privileges with regard to

technology on campus. Wherever possible, we strongly discourage students from bringing phones with them to campus.

Students in grades 9-12 may obtain prior approval from the teacher to use other academic electronic devices (computers or tablets used as laptops) which are necessary for designated classes. Students who receive prior approval to bring computers to school must use them for educational purposes only. Educational purposes include classroom work, assignments, guidance counseling, and self-directed learning in keeping with the mission and purpose of Westminster. Except in rare cases, educational purposes do not include using the internet. Students may not use messaging systems or social networking on personal or school computers during the school day

Students needing to use the phone during school hours are permitted to use the phones located at the front desk at both the Upper and Lower Schools.

Social Media

Given the distinct nature of our gospel-centered community, actions taken by students and parents after normal school hours have the potential to impact the Westminster community. This is especially true as it relates to the use of social media by both students and parents. All members of the Westminster community, including students, parents, and faculty, must exercise sound judgment when using social media or distributed forms of electronic communication.

Students, parents, or faculty are to refrain from posting comments, information, statements, or personal opinions on any social media or electronic sites (including *GroupMe*) that reflect negatively on someone within the Westminster Community, Oak Mountain Presbyterian Church, or the gospel of Christ. Westminster reserves the right to take disciplinary action on those who violate this policy.

Physical Privacy Policy

Philosophy

We believe that God wonderfully and immutably creates each person as male or female. These two distinct, complementary genders together reflect the image and nature of God. (Genesis 1:26, 27). Rejection of one's biological gender is a sinful denial of the image of God within that person.

We believe that the term "marriage" has only one meaning: the uniting of one man and one woman in a single, exclusive union, as delineated in Scripture. (Genesis 2:18-25) We believe that God intends sexual intimacy to occur only between a man and a woman who are married to each other. (1 Corinthians 6:18; 7:2-5; Hebrews 13:4) We believe that God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity occur outside of a marriage between a man and a woman.

We believe that any form of sexual immorality (including adultery, fornication, homosexual behavior, bisexual conduct, bestiality, incest, and use of pornography) is sinful and offensive to God. (Matthew 15:18-20; 1 Corinthians 6:9, 10)

We believe that in order to preserve the function and integrity of the covenantal charter of The Westminster School at Oak Mountain (hereafter, “Westminster”), it is imperative that all families, employees, and volunteers at Westminster agree to and abide by this Statement on Marriage, Gender, and Sexuality (Matthew 5:16; Philippians 2:14-16; 1 Thessalonians 5:22).

We believe that the impact of the fall extended to all aspects of our humanity, to include our sexuality. Therefore, we believe that a biblical view of man is not inconsistent with an understanding that committed followers of Jesus Christ may genuinely struggle to overcome sin and temptation in any area of life, including their sexuality. However, as a covenantal Christian school, we maintain that members of the Westminster community (including parents, students, employees, and volunteers) must embrace the Statement on Marriage, Gender, and Sexuality and therefore may not affirm or condone the acceptance, practice, or promotion of lifestyles or expressions outside of this Statement.

We believe that God offers redemption and restoration to all who confess and forsake their sin, seeking His mercy and forgiveness through Jesus Christ. (Acts 3:19-21; Romans 10:9, 10; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11) We believe that every person must be afforded compassion, love, kindness, respect, and dignity. (Mark 12:28- 31; Luke 6:31) Hateful and harassing behavior or attitudes directed toward any individual are to be repudiated and are not in accord with Scripture nor with the doctrines of Westminster, Oak Mountain Presbyterian Church, or the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA).

In light of this, and Westminster’s Statement of Faith, Employee Handbook, and Family Handbook, and in recognition of personal physical privacy rights and the desire to promote individual safety and maintain school discipline, this policy is enacted to advise employees, parents and students of the Westminster community of their duties and responsibilities with regard to the use of restrooms, locker rooms, showers, and any other school facilities where individuals may be undressed in the presence of others.

Definitions

- For the purpose of this policy and all other policies of Westminster:
- “Sex” means the biological condition of being male or female as determined at birth.
- “Member” means any school employee, volunteer, student, parent, or visitor.

Policy

Notwithstanding any other policy, Westminster restrooms, locker rooms, and showers designated for one sex shall only be used by members of that sex.

In any other facilities or settings where members of the Westminster community may be undressed in the presence of others (e.g. changing costumes during school theatrical

productions), Westminster shall provide separate, private areas designated for use by members of the school community based on their sex.

Westminster recognizes there may be instances where members of the Westminster community experience disparity between their sex and their feelings about their sex. This disparity can motivate them to behave in ways contrary to God's Word and His plan for their lives. Westminster encourages any members of the school community who are struggling with their sexual identity to seek help from their pastor and other trained professionals who might best assist them in clarifying and defining their sexual identity in accordance with God's Word.

Westminster School at Oak Mountain will at all times interact with members of the school community according to their biological sex at birth. An employee or other member of the school community who wishes to express a gender other than his or her biological sex at birth is understood to be rejecting the truth and the image of God within that person. Biblical Christianity requires the body of Christ to compassionately dwell in the truth and assist those we love in doing the same (Eph. 4:15).

An employee or other member of the Westminster community who openly and unrepentantly rejects their biological sex at birth, either in or out of school, is rejecting the image of God within that person – behavior that dishonors the Holy Trinity and the Word

of God. Such behavior constitutes a person's failure to adhere to their commitment to abide by the behavioral standards (see Student Honor Code, Employee Handbook, and

Family Handbook) established by Westminster, which is cause for terminating their privilege of employment at or enrollment in the school.

Furthermore, students are encouraged to hold those around them accountable to the Honor Code.

Section VI: Accounting & Fees

Accounting and Fees

The mission of Westminster is to build the Kingdom of Christ by equipping students with wisdom, virtue, and eloquence.

In order to accomplish this task, it is important that all financial arrangements are clearly understood and followed. The following sections outline the financial terms and conditions of education at Westminster.

Beginning in the school year 2023/24, Westminster will be a Continuous Enrollment school. This simply means that once your student enrolls, he/she continues to be enrolled until you tell us otherwise or we notify you of a decision not to extend re-enrollment due

to serious academic or behavior concerns. This holds your student's spot from year to year, but we rely on you to be in good communication with us if you intend to leave.

Types of Fees

- New Student Application Fee: Per student fee billed through Facts at the time of application.
- Continuous Enrollment Fee: Per student fee billed to Facts account in January. This fee guarantees your student's place to be held for the upcoming school year. Your student is automatically enrolled each year unless a withdrawal form is submitted to the office by January 8 or the school otherwise notifies you of a decision not to extend re-enrollment for the following school year. Tuition and fees must be current to hold a spot for each student's enrollment for the upcoming school year.
- Tuition may be paid in full or in two payments (July and December). In addition, tuition may be paid via auto draft in 11 monthly payments from June 2023 through May 2024. No tuition payment is due during January when recommitment fees are due. For a current tuition and fee schedule see our website [here](#).
- Extra-Curricular Fees: These fees are billed to the Facts account on a per-user basis.

Each November, parents will be notified of the following year's tuition and fees schedule. The Tuition and Fees schedule will be available on the website and in the office.

Payment

Westminster uses FACTS Management for all fee collection. The enrollment process requires families to set up a FACTS account. Once this has been completed, FACTS will become the third-party collection organization for all fees and payments to the school. Families will be able to select tuition payment methods by logging into their FACTS account.

Families who are delinquent for two months will be contacted by the Head of School for a plan to get caught up. Should a family become delinquent, their child will be prevented from participating in co-curricular activities.

Patterns of delinquent payments may jeopardize a family's ability to remain at Westminster or re-enroll for the coming school year.

Westminster has contracted with teachers and arranged for supplies sufficient to meet the educational goals and objectives of each grade level. Therefore, once a family re-enrolls for the coming school year, they are obligated to pay their full tuition commitment regardless of their child's enrollment status. See "[Re-enrollment Tuition Obligation](#)" above for more information.

