



Academic HANDBOOK

MIDDLE SCHOOL EDITION
2024-2025

DC
DELAWARE COUNTY
CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

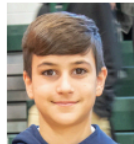


TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|---|-----------|
| Introduction | 3 |
| The Mission | 3 |
| DC Promise | 3 |
| The Vision | 3 |
| Academic Handbook 2023-2024 | 3 |
| Academic Information | 4 |
| School of Liberal Arts and SAIL Course Descriptions | 4 |
| Middle School SLA Course 6-8 | 4 |
| 7th and 8th Electives | 5 |
| Course Weighting | 5 |
| Classes with Final Exam | 5 |
| DC MS Grading Scale/G.P.A. Conversion Chart | 6 |
| Academic Policies | 7 |
| Honor Roll | 7 |
| Failures | 7 |
| Deficiency/Unsatisfactory Notices | 8 |
| Academic Probation | 8 |
| Ineligibility | 9 |
| Homework | 10 |
| Middle School Late Work Policy | 10 |
| Testing | 11 |
| Academic Honesty | 11 |
| Student Support Services | 14 |
| Upper Campus Services Offered | 14 |
| Middle School Resource Room | 14 |
| Psycho-Educational Testing | 14 |
| Accommodation Plans | 14 |
| School Counselor | 15 |
| Services | 15 |
| Personal Counseling | 15 |

Introduction

The Mission

The mission of DC is to educate students who will serve God and impact the world through biblical thought and action.

DC Promise

We prepare students for a life of impact through an innovative and exemplary education rooted in Christ.

The Vision

Delaware County Christian School (DC) is an exemplary educational institution in the greater Philadelphia area, providing a comprehensive PreK-12 college preparatory education that is grounded in the Word of God. Firmly rooted in Christian community, DC seeks to continue building rigorous, innovative programs in academics, the arts, and athletics. The school provides students a liberal arts education, engaging the mind and body as well as developing leaders who are equipped to impact the world for Christ. Moreover, DC aspires to be an institutional leader and model for schools both nationwide and globally.

Academic Handbook 2024-2025

This handbook is designed to provide important information to students and parents regarding course offerings, academic support services, testing, and school policies pertaining to these areas. We encourage all students and parents to become familiar with this handbook.

Academic Information

School of Liberal Arts and SAIL Course Descriptions

All course descriptions for our Schools of Liberal Arts (SLA) and Schools for Applied and Innovative Learning (SAIL) can be accessed on our website at <https://www.dccs.org/academics/middle-school/curriculum>.

Middle School SLA Course 6-8

| Subject | 6th Grade | 7th Grade | 8th Grade |
|--------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------|--|
| Bible | Old Testament Survey | Life with Christ | Acts (1 semester) Church History (1 semester) |
| English | English 6 | English 7 | English 8 |
| History | Social Studies | US History | Modern World |
| Science | Earth Science | Life Science | Chemistry (1 semester) Physics (1 semester) |
| Math | Math 6 Pre-Algebra* | Pre-Algebra Hon Algebra 1* | Algebra 1 Hon Geometry* |
| Spanish | Spanish 6 | Spanish 1A | Spanish 1B |
| Fine Art | Art 6 Theatre Choir | Art 7 | Art 8 |
| Physical Education | Physical Education | Physical Education/ Health | Physical Education |
| Other | Guidance | Research Skills | Guidance |

* denotes Accelerate Level

7th and 8th Electives

7th and 8th grade students have the opportunity to choose from a variety of elective classes:

- Choir*
- Band*
- Theatre/Middle School Play
- Ceramics
- Stagecraft
- Yearbook*
- Middle School Newspaper
- Video Editing
- World Building Class
- Board Game Design
- Chess Club
- Essential Skill in Outdoor Adventure
- Micro-certs

*** denotes year long class**

Students will have the opportunity to select their electives in August before the start of school for the 1st semester and in January before the start of the 2nd semester. Band, Choir, and Yearbook are year long classes and students are expected to be enrolled for the entire year. All other classes run for a semester. Some classes will run both semesters and others will only run for one semester.

The elective classes fall under two categories: The Arts and The Center for Innovation. Classes are filled on a first come, first served basis. We do our best to schedule students in their electives of choice, but a few classes have size caps. Therefore, it is important for students to select their 2nd and 3rd choice on the class selection form.

Course Weighting

Final grades are calculated with each quarter having a weight of four. The formula for calculating each end-of-course grade is $MP1 (x4) + MP2 (x4) + MP3 (x4) + MP4 (x4)$ divided by 16 and round to the nearest whole number (at the end of the course).

Classes with Final Exam

Final exams are administered at the end of the Eighth grade year in Bible, English, History, Math, Science, World Language; and at the end Seventh grade in Honors Algebra 1. Final grades in classes with a final exam are calculated with each quarter having a weight of four and the final exam having a weight of one. The formula for calculating each end-of-course grade is $MP1 (x4) + MP2 (x4) + MP3 (x4) + MP4 (x4) + (\text{final exam})$ divided by 17 and round to the nearest whole number (at the end of the course).

DC MS Grading Scale/G.P.A. Conversion Chart

| Number Grade | Letter Grade |
|---------------------|---------------------|
| 100 | A+ |
| 99 | A+ |
| 98 | A+ |
| 97 | A |
| 96 | A |
| 95 | A |
| 94 | A |
| 93 | A |
| 92 | A- |
| 91 | A- |
| 90 | A- |
| 89 | B+ |
| 88 | B+ |
| 87 | B+ |
| 86 | B |
| 85 | B |
| 84 | B |
| 83 | B |
| 82 | B- |
| 81 | B- |
| 80 | B- |
| 79 | C+ |
| 78 | C+ |
| 77 | C+ |
| 76 | C |
| 75 | C |
| 74 | C |
| 73 | C |
| 72 | C- |
| 71 | C- |
| 70 | C- |
| 69 | D+ |
| 68 | D+ |
| 67 | D+ |
| 66 | D |
| 65 | D |
| 64 | D |
| 63 | D |
| 62 | D- |
| 61 | D- |
| 60 | D- |
| 59-0 | F |

Academic Policies

Honor Roll

The honor roll is determined at the end of each report period and indicated at the bottom left of a student’s report card. Honor roll has three levels. An average of A or above is necessary for *Highest Honor*, an average of B+ for *High Honor*, and a B average for *Honor*. A student is not considered for the honor roll if he/she has a grade lower than a C in any subject or more than one C in any subject.

Failures

Students who fail a required full-year course must make up that work in one of three ways:

1. If the failing grade is 50-59, pass a comparable course in a local summer school or an accredited online program, approved by the upper school department head. Upon successful completion, the final grade of the failed course will be changed to a 60. This option is not available for Bible.
2. If the failing grade is 50-59, be tutored for 20 hours in the subject by a tutor approved by the upper school department head and the Head of Middle School, and pass a re-examination. After completing the required hours of tutoring, a student may be re-examined only one time to earn a passing grade for the course. Upon successful completion, the final grade of the failed course will be changed to a 60.

Failure of two or more courses will result in an academic review process where it may be required for a student to repeat the grade.

| | 50-59 | 60-69 |
|---------------------------------|--|---|
| Middle School Bible | Successfully complete a project assigned by the Bible teacher | |
| All Other Courses | Credit recovery through a comparable summer school course or an accredited online program (course must be approved by department head) OR 20 hours of tutoring by tutor approved by department head, must pass a re-examination | |
| World Languages and Math | See “All Other Courses” requirement above | 10-20 hours of tutoring <u>strongly</u> recommended |

Additional Notes:**A. Low Grades in World Languages:**

Any 7th or 8th grade student who completes level IA or IB of Spanish, with a passing final average of 60% - 69% should receive 10-20 hours of tutoring during the summer on topics recommended by his/her teacher in order to be successful in the next level.

B. Failures in Math/World Language (8th Grade)

Any 8th grader who fails their math course or Spanish 1B, may be required to retake the course in 9th grade.

Rationale:

Math and language study are cumulative and math/language acquisition requires a solid foundation upon which to build subsequent skills.

Deficiency/Unsatisfactory Notices

A. Deficiency notices are emailed home in the middle of each report period, and at other times as necessary, for students who are failing a subject (below 60).

B. Unsatisfactory notices are emailed home in the middle of each report period for students who are not doing well academically (60-69), and at other times as necessary.

Academic Probation***Purpose of Academic Probation:***

1. To assist students experiencing academic difficulty by providing a support structure and accountability aimed at raising their academic performance to an acceptable level.
2. To give a strong warning that a student is experiencing academic difficulty, and in danger of not continuing at Delaware County Christian School.

Criteria for Academic Probation:

1. A student who fails two or more major subjects in a report period (quarter).
2. A student with an overall D average or below (below 70%) in a report period (quarter).

Steps Leading to Academic Probation:

1. Students who have deficiencies in two or more major subjects will be given a cautionary letter from the Head of Middle School/Dean of Students. This letter will alert the student and parents that a continued slide would mean the student is in danger of academic probation.
2. Students who fail two or more courses at the end of a quarter or have an overall D average or below (below 70%) in a quarter will be placed on academic probation. A probationary conference will follow with the Head of Middle School, Dean of Students, and/or Counselor.

Counseling During Probation

A student on probation will have a personal conference each school week with an administrator or counselor, who will receive written input from faculty members and will provide periodic reports for parents.

Activities Limited

During the probationary period, a student may not participate in extracurricular activities, must relinquish all positions of leadership and responsibility, and/or may not run for class office.

Length of Probation

Students on academic probation are evaluated at the conclusion of each marking period. If a student has passed all of the subjects in that marking period and does not have a failing cumulative average in two or more courses, or an overall D average or below, he or she is removed from academic probation.

- A. A student who does not earn the grades necessary to be removed from academic probation after two successive grade reports may be recommended for non-continuance.
- B. Continued enrollment on academic probation beyond two successive marking periods requires approval of the Head of Middle School.
- C. Continued enrollment by a student who is placed on academic probation on more than two occasions requires approval by the Head of Middle School.

Ineligibility

A student can be removed from participation in a leadership position or extracurricular activity by action of the Head of the Middle School if he or she is failing two or more subjects at any time during the year.

A student-athlete's eligibility is determined by the Middle School administration and is based on grades and behavior. Grades are assessed on Fridays to determine eligibility for the following week. Any student failing two major subjects or more will be ineligible for athletic contests for one week. In the event that a student-athlete may become ineligible, administrators will send a preliminary email to the student-athlete and his or her parents to provide the student-athlete with an opportunity to rectify grades over the weekend. Final grades are reviewed on Monday at which time a final eligibility determination is made. If a student-athlete is ineligible, the Middle School Office will notify the student-athlete, parents, and the Athletic Office, and the student-athlete will be ineligible for the duration of the week. After the second week of ineligibility, the student-athlete may be removed from the team by the Athletic Director (in consultation with the Middle School administration and head coach).

Homework

Homework is an important aspect to the Delaware County Christian Middle School program. In general, homework is for skill practice, enrichment, or more in depth attention to a given unit of study. Some assignments are considered daily assignments and other assignments are larger in scale and therefore are considered major assignments. In addition to the academic gains, homework helps develop responsibility and accountability. It is assumed that homework will be a regular part of the school life, with increasing time and application required as a student progresses through each grade.

In general, a sixth grade student on average should have about 45 minutes of homework each night. A seventh grade student on average should have about 60 minutes of homework each night. And an eighth grade student on average should have about 75-90 minutes of homework each night. Whether or not a student spends less or more time on homework depends on the organization, use of time, homework environment, or other factors.

Students and parents may access their homework for the week on Blackbaud. Teachers are required to post the daily assignments by 8:00pm the night before the first day of school for the following week. With the nature of the occasional unpredictability of what might get accomplished in a school day, the assignments on Blackbaud might be subject to change throughout the week. Therefore, it is recommended that students and parents check daily to see if any changes were made for the week. In addition, all quizzes, tests, and major assignments should be posted to Blackbaud at least a week before the assessment date or due date. For good communication and to avoid late work, we ask that parents please review their student's daily assignments.

Middle School Late Work Policy

Daily Homework Assignment: These consist of assignments in preparation for a class or in review of a concept taught in class.

1. 30% will be deducted off an assignment that is one class period late.
2. 50% will be deducted off an assignment that is two class periods late.
3. After the third class period, a zero will be given on the assignment.

Major Assignments and Projects

1. 30% will be deducted from a major assignment or project that is one class period late.
2. 50% will be deducted from a major assignment or project that is two class periods late.
3. If an assignment/project is turned in more than two class meetings late:
 - a. At teacher discretion, the students may still be required to complete the work, but will not be able to earn more than 50% credit.

- b. There is a point, determined by the teacher, when the work will no longer be accepted and the final grade will be a zero.

Special exemption to this policy may be granted by the student support personnel if deemed necessary for the academic success of the student.

Late Work Due to Absences:

Students will be given class periods equal to the number of class periods missed to complete missing work; if a student missed two class periods, he or she will be given two class periods to make up the missed work. Students who miss an assessment, must connect with their teacher to schedule a time to make up the test upon their return. Students with a planned absence should make arrangements with the teacher to take the assessment before they are absent from school. Exceptions to these guidelines will be based on the amount of absences and/or a student's support plan. Major projects, tests, quizzes, papers, and all long-term assignments, which are not completed within this time frame, will be considered late work.

If a grade of Incomplete (I) is recorded at the end of a marking period and is not made up in the allotted time (normally two weeks), the missing work will be averaged as a zero and the lowered grade will be placed on the report card. Exceptions may be granted with the approval of the Head of the Middle School.

Testing

Students may not be required to take more than two tests during any one school day. However, it is the responsibility of the student to notify the teacher whenever it becomes apparent that three tests have been scheduled for one day. This exception to an expected test will not be enforced if the student fails to notify the teacher prior to the day in which three tests are scheduled.

Academic Honesty

As stated in the DC Honor Code, students are expected to pursue a life of honor and integrity that is characterized by honesty, respect, gratitude, and responsibility. Doing so reflects their respect for the mission and core values of DC and the calling of the Christian to glorify God in all things. This commitment is reflected in academics as students strive for excellence in their academic pursuits recognizing that the work they do is not for their own ends but to bring glory to God, their Creator. Further, as members of a greater community, their excellence in academic endeavors enriches the teaching and learning of others. When students pursue their academics with honesty and integrity, they are behaving in a way that honors themselves and their community, and ultimately glorifies the Lord.

In contrast, academic dishonesty is defined as:

Lying - communicating untruths in order to gain an unfair academic advantage. This includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Utilizing translation software or websites to complete assignments
- Counterfeiting data
- Providing false or inaccurate information in order to be excused from classes or assignments
- Forging notes or signatures

Cheating - giving or receiving unpermitted aid on assignments, whether from other people or from unapproved materials. This includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Copying from another student on homework, a quiz, or a test
- Allowing another student to copy one's own work
- Distributing information about material on a quiz, test, or exam before others have taken the assessment
- Using unauthorized sources for information, or using unauthorized equipment or devices (such as calculators) on assignments or assessments
- Placing one's name on a group assignment or project, having completed very little, if any, of the work

Accountability for Cheating

All parties involved in cheating **will not receive credit** on the assignment/assessment in question. The assignment may be reviewed by the Academic Review committee for final determination.

Plagiarism - presenting the work of another as one's own without giving proper acknowledgement. Plagiarism may be a result of intentional deceit, or may be due to inadvertent or unintentional disregard of proper scholarship. All academic work must be completed individually unless the faculty member expressly authorizes collaboration. Plagiarism may include, but is not limited to, the following:

- Copying and submitting work from a website
- Allowing someone else (a ghost writer, parent, or tutor) to complete all or some of an assignment
- Directly quoting from a source without acknowledgement
- Using graphs, images, or presentation slides without acknowledging the source

Accountability for Plagiarism

1. Teachers will utilize Turn It In (turnitin.com) regularly to verify the authenticity of written assignments.
2. In the case of apparent plagiarism, the teacher follows up with the Dean of Students and/or Division Head as well as the student and his/her parents.
3. **1st instance:** If no prior instances of plagiarism, and depending on the severity of the offense, student receives a **10% grade deduction** and must resubmit the assignment with corrections.
4. **2nd instance:** Student's assignment is reviewed by the Academic Review committee (2 teachers, 1 administrator). Depending on severity of plagiarism, grade penalties of 25%, 50%, 75% or 100% will be enforced. The student has the option to meet with the Academic Review committee to state his/her case; however, they are not mandated to do so.
5. **3rd instance:** Student's assignment is reviewed by the Disciplinary Committee. A 25%, 50%, 75% or 100% grade penalty is enforced on the assignment and an additional disciplinary consequence is decided upon by the Honor/Disciplinary Committee. At the discretion of the committee and the student's previous disciplinary record, consequences will range from a Saturday School to a suspension.

We would like to acknowledge that this policy has been informed by the policies and codes of Haverford College and Duke University.

Artificial Intelligence:

With the inception of AI into our daily lives, DC is committed to helping students grow in discernment and integrity in deciding when and how its use is appropriate. AI has the potential to amplify human intelligence and save considerable time in task completion. However, we also understand the importance of original human thought and creativity, that we are called as image bearers of God to create and cultivate.

Schools are focused on the acquisition of students' knowledge and skills during critical years of "heart and mind" development. The use of AI tools requires very little knowledge or skill on the part of the user. However, the more knowledge one has, the better equipped he is to assess the quality of the product generated by an AI tool.

Good educators help their students acquire knowledge, ask good questions, and critically evaluate outcomes. There may be times in school when a teacher shows students how to leverage an AI tool as part of a particular lesson or assignment. It will be important for these teachers to clearly articulate which elements of a graded assignment allows for the use of an AI tool. Otherwise, all student work submitted on graded assignments is assumed to be the student's original work, an original representation of the student's knowledge and skill.

Submitting work generated by any form of artificial intelligence (AI) and passing it off as one's own work is considered academic dishonesty.

DC is committed to reassess our approach to AI tools in the PreK-12 setting each year.

Accountability for unauthorized use of Artificial Intelligence

1. Faculty will utilize Turnitin to verify the authenticity of questionable written assignments.
2. Based on the results of Turnitin's authenticity report, the assignment will be reviewed by an Academic Review committee (2 teachers, 1 administrator). The student has the option to meet with the Academic Review committee to provide input and or explanation; however, they are not required to do so.
3. Depending on the extent of the AI use, grade penalties of 25%, 50%, 75% or 100% will be enforced. Students will be required to redo the assignment in order to receive said credit; otherwise, they'll receive a 0% on the assignment.

Student Support Services

Upper Campus Services Offered

Middle School Resource Room

Resource room enrollment is recommended by a classroom teacher(s), by parents, or as a result of testing. Resource Room is scheduled in place of a language or elective, and meets for a minimum of two or as many as four periods per week. Small group instruction and individualized help is given in executive functions, note-taking, study skills, and academic support. Students are assisted through reinforcement of new concepts, re-teaching of material, and strengthening of academic skills in areas such as reading, math, spelling, and written expression. Students receive help with establishing short-and long-term goals, planning for long-term assignments, test preparation, and organization of time and materials. The goal of Resource Room is for each student to achieve independence and success in the classroom setting. This is a contracted service available at an additional cost. For more information about the resource room, contact Student Support Services at 610-353-6522, ext. 2379 or kgottier@dccs.org.

Psycho-Educational Testing

A teacher or parent can request that a student be considered for testing to determine if accommodations are needed for success in school. Testing includes a psycho-educational battery of standardized tests, typically including a Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children or Adults and an achievement assessment. Results are reported to parents and a written report is reviewed, from which an accommodation plan can be developed, if appropriate. Parents can

pursue testing through their public school district, the DCIU (both are free options) or a private psychologist (fee charged).

Accommodation Plans

Students with documented disabilities, attentional problems, and/or serious health concerns may qualify for an accommodation plan. Current documentation (within the last three years, or more recently in the case of a medical issue) is required and must be given to the Director of Student Support Services for consideration.

School Counselor

Services

- A. The middle school counselor's role is to help students with social and emotional concerns. The counselor works with students in individual, small group, and classroom settings.
- B. The purpose of the counselor teaching in the classroom is to help students understand themselves and others in a way that will prevent some concerns from happening and/or to support students with tangible coping skills. The counselor integrates a biblical framework into everything that is taught.
- C. The middle school counselor consults with parents, teachers, pastors, and other professionals about student concerns.

Personal Counseling

- A. While DC is not a counseling center, our counselors have advanced degrees and experience in helping young people and adults with a wide variety of personal concerns. School counselors are available for all students throughout the school day. Counselors, in consultation with parents, refer serious concerns to other helping professionals outside of DC.
- B. School counselors observe biblical principles, the professional ethical standards of the American School Counselor Association, and the legal parameters of The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (the Buckley Amendment) for student records and confidentiality.