

PARENT/STUDENT HANDBOOK

2014-2015

LETTER FROM THE BOARD

Mount Sophia's Mission is to "equip our students to maximize their unique potentials; encourage them to follow the call of Christ". Along with fulfilling the requirements for high school graduation, we attempt to provide our students with the skills that they will need for their future endeavors.

Our teachers share the vision of the school and make every effort to give students a quality experience in their classes. We have classes that are geared to various learning styles and academic abilities. Teachers are available by email to help students when they encounter a difficulty in their classes.

We firmly believe that God has a unique place for each of our students. We pray for our students and families and strive to make His grace evident in our school.

The Mount Sophia Board

RAISON D'ETRE (why we exist)

Mt. Sophia Academy exists to assist parents in providing an excellent education for their children. The staff of Mt. Sophia are committed Christians and this will be reflected in all our assemblies. However, people of other faiths are welcome to be part of the diploma program and classes.

While Mt. Sophia does not discriminate on the basis of race, ethnicity, or religion, the school was formed on a foundation of biblical principles. Its staff must agree with our statement of faith and serve as examples of the Christian lifestyle, modeling for our students a life that is dedicated to honoring God in all they do and say.

STATEMENT OF FAITH

- We believe the Bible to be the inspired, infallible, and complete Word of God.
- We believe that there is one God, eternally existent in three persons - the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
- We believe in the deity of Jesus Christ, His virgin birth, His sinless life, His vicarious and atoning death, His resurrection, His ascension to the right hand of God, and His personal return in power and glory.
- We believe in the absolute necessity of regeneration by the Holy Spirit for salvation because of the exceeding sinfulness of human nature and that men are justified on the single ground of faith in the shed blood of Christ and that only by God's grace and through faith alone can we be saved.
- We believe in the Resurrection of both the saved and the lost, they that are saved unto the Resurrection of life and they that are lost unto the resurrection of condemnation.
- We believe in the spiritual unity of believers in our Lord Jesus Christ.
- We believe in the present ministry of the Holy Spirit by whose indwelling the Christian is enabled to live a Godly life.

PHILOSOPHY

High school is a time of transition from childhood to adulthood. Therefore the content of a high school program requires more structure and accountability than the earlier years. As greater numbers of home school students complete their education at home it becomes more important for us to develop documentation that has meaning to the world beyond the home.

The intent of Mt. Sophia Academy is to provide a diploma program and classes with a reputation of excellence. The standards we set are higher than some public schools because we feel that as home educators we need to be “above reproach” in our educational standards. Many parents involved in home education began as a response to the increasing failure of the public schools to maintain standards equal to that of other nations, as well as being respected by the work force. We recognize, however, that not all students have equal academic abilities and are willing to work with each individual to achieve a meaningful transcript. Our classes are designed to meet the criteria of the diploma program and to attain our standards.

ADMISSION TO CLASSES

Mt. Sophia classes are open to home schooling students who wish to participate and are willing to abide by the rules of Mt. Sophia. It must always be understood that attendance at Mt. Sophia is a privilege and not a right. This privilege will be forfeited by any student who does not conform to the school’s standards of conduct and/or is unwilling to adjust to our environment.

All students must agree to honestly and wholeheartedly apply themselves to “study to show [themselves] approved unto God” (2 Timothy 2:15, KJV). They also agree to be courteous and respectful to their peers, staff, faculty, and other daily associates.

Mt. Sophia admits students of any race, color, national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Admissions

In order to sign up for classes, parents must submit a class registration form per student along with a non-refundable deposit. Prior to the first class, an emergency medical card must also be filled out.

Special needs will be handled on a case by case basis. Parents should inform teachers of their child’s special needs prior to the beginning of classes.

Transfer or change of classes: students transferring, withdrawing, or adding classes must fill out the appropriate paperwork. **Students withdrawing from a class after the quarter has begun will still be held responsible for the cost of that entire quarter.**

Orientation: a mandatory new student orientation will be held each year. It will be held at the school on the Monday prior to the first week of classes. At this time, the first installment of class fees is due. The class fees can be paid in full, 8 monthly installments or 4 quarterly installments.

Academics

Students must demonstrate an appropriate degree of success in the classroom in order to be given opportunities to participate in other aspects of school life. Academic issues will be regulated as indicated in each area below:

Attendance: A student is expected to be in attendance at each class unless ill or excused. Because our classes only meet once or twice weekly it is important that the student be present at class as often as possible. Please inform teachers in advance if a student has a planned absence. If the student is ill the day of class, please email the office and the teacher at the beginning of the day (or as soon as you know the student will be absent). The school's email is office@mtsophia.com. In the email please list which classes the student will be missing that day.

Student athletes must be present the day of a practice or meet/game or they will not be eligible to participate.

Our absentee policy includes the following: 5 or more absences may result in a failing grade. 3 absences may result in a lowered final grade. 3 days of being tardy will be equal to one absence. As a standard policy there may be no more than "5 absences for a full year class that meets once weekly, 8 absences for a full year class that meets twice weekly, and 2 absences per semester for a class that meets once weekly". If a student must miss a class due to illness or other reasons, the parent may opt to pay the teacher or other qualified person to tutor the student in the material that he/she missed. The tutor may charge up to \$25 per half-hour session.

If a student is ill, please keep the student home rather than risk infecting the rest of the school.

Participation: Most, if not all, of our classes require some sort of participation. Refusing to participate in class or absenteeism will adversely affect a student's grade.

Assignments: Each teacher will give the students a syllabus. Any changes to the syllabus will be conveyed during class and by email. It is imperative that students and Updated 8/4/2014

parents check their email on a regular basis, preferably daily. Assignments handed in late will receive a lowered grade. In the event of illness or missing a class, most assignments can be e-mailed to the teacher. If the student knows in advance that he/she will be missing a class, arrangements should be made for assignments that will be due.

Unless otherwise instructed by the individual teacher, homework assignments are expected to be turned in printed (not emailed to the teacher). Teachers may penalize students for assignments emailed rather than turned in as hard copy.

Grading: The following scale will be used in order to maintain consistency in grading:

A 92%-100%

B 82%-91%

C 72%-81%
D 65%-71%
F 0%-64%

Letter grades will be given to all students and may or not be accompanied by numerical grades; for purposes of graduation, the letter grades shall take precedence. The lowest possible passing grade for a quarter is 65% or a "D". Credit will not be given for a final grade less than a "C".

Engrade: Mt. Sophia uses an online tool called Engrade to keep parents informed about grades and missing assignments. At the beginning of the year, each family will be sent a link and a temporary password to access the system. Teachers are not responsible to keep you informed - you are responsible to be checking grades on a regular basis. The school no longer sends out quarterly progress reports.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Our rules are based on the acronym GOOF. Students are expected to show respect for:

G God
O Ourselves
O Others
F Facility

Violation of any of these rules of conduct may result in disciplinary action up to and including suspension or expulsion from MSA.

God:

We expect all involved in the school to behave respectfully toward God. A student-led Bible study is available on Mondays during lunch. During this same time, teachers, office staff, and interested parents will meet in the office to pray for the school and its families. During the winter, we hold a Praise and Prayer Night. At this time, we meet as a school for a potluck dinner, then spend some time in worship, break into small groups to pray for our school, community, and nation, and pray for the graduating seniors and staff as a large group. Prayer is foundational to our school. "Unless the Lord builds the house, the builders labor in vain." (Psalm 127:1, NIV)

Ourselves:

- We respect ourselves by dressing modestly, doing assignments to the best of our abilities, and participating in class.
- **No cheating of any kind will be tolerated.** This includes plagiarism. Plagiarism is the use of someone else's intellectual property. Any quotes, direct or otherwise, or images used from someone else's writing (whether or not it is copyrighted) constitutes plagiarism, unless credit is given to the author of the information.
- Drug use will not be tolerated.

Others:

Respecting others is demonstrated in several ways.

- No physical aggression, harassment of any kind, or foul language will be tolerated.
- No weapons of any kind will be tolerated on the school grounds. If a student disregards this rule, it will be reason for immediate dismissal.
- Electronics, including cell phones, iPods, and laptops must be used with respect. All cell phones will be turned OFF during classes. If a student is caught texting during class, the phone will be confiscated (for the remainder of the class (and he or she will be warned). If it happens again, he or she will be dismissed.
- Sign in when you enter the building, sign out when leaving.

Facility: The Newark Church of Christ is gracious to allow us to use the building. Students must respect the church property.

- No vandalism will be tolerated.
- Do not use church supplies.
- Clean up after yourself.
- Delaware has mandatory recycling. Students are expected to put trash in trash receptacles and all recyclable materials in designated recycling containers.
- Report any damage to the church property to a teacher, parent-volunteer, or the school office.
- Do not loiter in the parking lot.
- Drive slowly in the parking lot.
- Stay out of the church offices and all areas except those designated for MSA.
- No food or beverages anywhere except in the large fellowship room (the tank).
- Do not leave the building during the day except with a parent's permission.

Miscellaneous:

All students must sign in upon entering and out upon leaving the building. This is important for safety in the event of a fire.

If students sign out and leave during the school day, the staff is not responsible for their safety or whereabouts.

We encourage parents to discuss with their students whether they are allowed to leave campus walking or drive with other students. We are not able to police these behaviors.

Mt. Sophia maintains the right to search any bags, etc. brought on campus.

When not in class, students must remain in the "tank". No loitering in the hallways or bathrooms. Updated 8/4/2014

Fundraising must be approved by the school's board or principal. A fundraiser request form is available in the school office.

Fliers must be approved by the office.

Parking is in the rear of the building. The spaces near the church office are reserved for church business. **Please be aware of students in the parking lot and drive slowly.**

Use of the gym and playground is limited to times an adult is available to supervise. No loitering in the parking lot.

Visitors must sign in and out at the entrance to the building.

Suspected drug use and student pregnancy will be handled on a case by case basis.

SUSPENSION/EXPULSION

If a student is accused of any rules violation, he/she will be requested to meet with the board and suspension occurs until a decision has been reached. While suspended, a student is responsible to contact teachers to keep up with assignments.

Students are encouraged to report, anonymously, any rules violations, especially threats of violence.