

PARENT/STUDENT HANDBOOK 2021-2022

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 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 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.

Parents must agree to support their students in their academic efforts. Parents maintain the final responsibility for their students academic performance. It is imperative that they check email, keep up with Gradelink and oversee their student’s work.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Admissions

In order to sign up for classes, parents must submit one 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, and the first payment made.

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 mtsophiahs@yahoo.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 for these sessions.
- If a student is ill, please keep the student home.
- **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 parents check their email on a regular basis, preferably daily. Assignments handed in late will receive a lowered grade. When a student is ill or misses 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.
- Letter grades will be given to all students and may or may 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".

- 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%
- Gradelink: Mt. Sophia uses an online tool called Gradelink for on-site classes to keep parents informed about grades and missing assignments. Soon after enrolling in MSA classes, 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.

GENERAL POLICIES

Students are expected to show respect for: God, Ourselves, Others, 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.. Prayer is foundational to our school. "Unless the Lord builds the house, the builders labor in vain." (Psalm 127:1, NIV)

Ourselves:

- Students respect themselves by dressing modestly, doing assignments to the best of their 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) constitute plagiarism, unless credit is given to the author of the information.
- **We are a drug-free, alcohol-free, smoke-free campus.** This includes the use of chewing tobacco and vaping.

Others:

Respecting others is demonstrated in several ways:

- No physical aggression, sexual harassment (in-person or online), hazing (in person or online), bullying (in person or online), or foul language (in person or online) 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 from the class.

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.
- Church supplies are not to be used.
- Students must clean up after themselves.
- Delaware has mandatory recycling. Students are expected to put trash in trash receptacles and all recyclable materials in designated recycling containers.
- Students must report any damage to the church property to a teacher, parent-volunteer, or the school office.
- Students should not loiter in the parking lot.
- Students/ parents/ designated driver's must drive slowly in the parking lot.
- Students must stay out of the church offices and all areas except those designated for MSA.
- No food or beverages should be consumed anywhere except in the large fellowship room (the tank). Water bottles are permitted in all the classrooms.
- Students must not leave the building during the day except with a parent's permission.
- There is to be no smoking/tobacco/vaping, alcohol, or drugs on campus.

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.

MSA is not responsible for any student who uses the playground without authorization by the school.

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.

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.** No loitering in the parking lot. No parking in front of the glass doors. This blocks the flow of traffic. Students may (with the parents permission) walk out to their parents car after signing out of the building.

Visitors must sign in and out at the office and wear a visitor identification badge.

Other issues will be dealt with on an individual basis.

Complaints concerning any teacher or staff member of the school should be reported to either the office or the MSA Board.

ATHLETICS

Mount Sophia participates in three sports - soccer, swimming, and golf. In order to participate on our teams, students must fulfill all DIAA and Mount Sophia requirements for academic eligibility. Since 8th grade is part of the same administration unit as grades 9 through 12, this fulfills Regulation 2.7.5.1 found in the DIAA High School Sports Handbook allowing our 8th grade students to participate on our sports teams. Mount Sophia only enrolls students in grades 8 through 12, therefore Regulation 2.7.5.3. in the DIAA High School Sports Handbook does not apply to our school. We do, however, allow the younger siblings of our high school students to be enrolled in an umbrella program to assist those families with their homeschooling.

If a player is removed from play due to a head injury, parents will be notified in writing (either via letter or email) of a suspected concussion and given information regarding symptoms by either the head coach or the principal.

SUSPENSION/EXPULSION

If a student is accused of any rules violation, the principal (or her designate) will investigate the incident including but not limited to interviewing the student and their parent. The student may be requested to meet with the board. Depending on the severity of the offense, suspension can occur 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 if they desire) any rules violations, especially threats of violence or any type of harassment to the principal.

SOCIAL MEDIA:

While we are not trolling the internet or social media apps, should we become aware of inappropriate posts on social media, it will be dealt with as necessary - including duty to report.

PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES

Parents, YOU are still your child's primary teacher and must take responsibility for the following:

EMAIL:

Mount Sophia communicates using email. Make sure you have mtsophiahs@yahoo.com in your contacts. If not, the emails may go into spam. MOST TEACHERS ALSO COMMUNICATE WITH EMAIL - SOME COMMUNICATE BY USING THE MESSAGE PORTION OF GRADELINK..

We will be using the email you supplied on your database sheet - if this is not the email that you check regularly (**at least once daily**), please let the office **AND** the teachers know. If you are not receiving emails and your student is missing information, the responsibility lies with YOU to make sure that the information is correct. If there is a second parent or guardian that wants to receive the emails, let the office AND teachers know. If you have not received an email from MSA for a week or two, please contact us - something is wrong!

In case of inclement weather, subscribers to remind.com will receive a text (as well as an email). To subscribe, text @profsoph to 302-401-4689. It will then ask you for your name. Multiple members of the family can receive the text by each following this procedure.

GRADELINK:

It is your responsibility to be checking Gradelink regularly. Your child's education is still your responsibility. Gradelink allows you to keep up-to-date on your student's grades and to see if there are missing assignments.

SYLLABI:

Mount Sophia courses are syllabus-driven. Your student must refer to the syllabus. If changes have been made, the teacher will inform the students (and usually the parents as well). If your student is absent, he/she should still do the assignments on the syllabus. He/she should also be contacting the teacher(s) and following instructions given. Assume that your student has homework due each week. It is your responsibility to oversee your student's work.

ABSENCE:

If the student will be absent, it is your responsibility to contact the office via email and the individual teachers prior to class starting.

For test-taking protocols, please refer to each teacher's instructions. Many teachers require students to take the tests in the presence of a parent and have the parent sign the test &/or envelope in which the test is to be inserted.

Most teachers require assignments to be handed in, hard copy. Email copies are only accepted if the student is absent. If there are extenuating circumstances the parent should let the teacher know why the homework can't be printed at home. Any assignments emailed should include the name of the student.

DIPLOMA PROGRAM MEETINGS:

Parents of diploma program students must agree to schedule and attend midyear and end-of-year review meetings, bringing necessary documentation with them. This documentation includes evidence of instruction, progress, and grade for any class not taken on-site at Mt. Sophia. (Ex: tests, writing samples, book lists, lab reports, etc)

STUDENT DROP-OFF AND PICK UP:

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.** No parking in front of the glass doors. This blocks the flow of traffic. Students may (with the parents permission) walk out to their parents car after signing out of the building.

MSA is not responsible for any student/child who uses the playground without authorization by the school.

SOCIAL MEDIA:

While we are not trolling the internet or social media apps, should we become aware of inappropriate posts on social media, it will be dealt with as necessary - including duty to report.

LEVELS FOR CLASSES:

Mt. Sophia reserves the right to determine the level for classes taken elsewhere.

PARENT AGREEMENT STATEMENT

Name of student: _____

Date: _____

As the parent (and primary teacher) for my student, I agree to the following (please initial):

_____ **E-MAIL MUST BE CHECKED REGULARLY - AT LEAST ONCE DAILY! THIS IS IMPORTANT FOR BOTH STUDENTS AND PARENTS. CHANGES IN EMAIL MUST BE REPORTED PROMPTLY. If you don't receive an email at least weekly (except breaks) you will contact the office to make sure we have your correct email)**

_____ I agree to read to parent student handbook that is available on the Mount Sophia website (mtsophia.com) under the "Classes" tab.

For non-diploma program students taking classes:

_____ **PARENT MUST AGREE TO CHECK GRADELINK AT LEAST WEEKLY.**

_____ **Parent agrees to oversee work done at home.**

For diploma program students:

_____ **PARENT MUST AGREE TO CHECK GRADELINK AT LEAST WEEKLY.**

_____ **Parent agrees to oversee work done at home.**

_____ **I agree to pay a \$25 no-show fee for any missed appointments (without 24-hour notice)**

_____ **I agree to schedule and attend the mid-year and end-of-year appointments in a timely manner. I will bring the following with me to my appointment, understanding that without it the appointment is not able to proceed and it will be considered a no-show (\$25 charge)**

- **evidence of instruction for all classes (this includes tests, quizzes, all writing assignments - essays, short papers, research paper or other long paper(s) whether or not they are done for MSA classes)**
- **logged hours with totals for each category**
- **book list (even if taking a literature class at MSA)**
- **grades for classes not taken at Mt. Sophia**

Signed: _____