

Holden Christian Academy Family Handbook



2026-27 Edition

Table of Contents

updated August 2026

WHO WE ARE

- 101. Statement of Faith
- 102. Philosophy of Education
- 103. Our Approach
- 104. Our Goals
- 105. Partners in Education
- 106. Conflict Resolution at HCA
- 107. School Hours, Half Days, & Snow Days

POLICIES/PROCEDURES

- 201. Non-discriminatory Enrollment
- 202. Preschool Entrance Eligibility
- 203. Kindergarten Entrance Eligibility
- 204. Attendance Policy
 - 1. Tardiness
 - 2. Classroom Disruption Fee
 - 3. Irregular Dismissal
 - 4. Makeup Work
- 205. Student Health Policies
 - 1. Well Child and Illness Policy
 - 2. Student Immunization Policy
 - 3. Medication Administration
 - 4. Minor Injuries
 - 5. Allergies & Nut Policy
- 206. Communication Procedure
- 207. Visitor Procedure
- 208. Discipline Policy
- 209. Middle School Discipline
- 210. Safety Policy
- 211. Student Acceptable Use Policy
- 212. Alcohol Policy

STUDENT LIFE

- 301. Dress Code
- 302. Snacks/Lunch
- 303. Birthdays
- 304. Playground
- 305. School Prayer & Chapel
- 306. Library
- 307. Field Trips

ACADEMICS

- 401. Homework
- 402. Grading System
- 403. Report Cards
- 404. Parent Teacher Conferences
- 405. Physical Education
- 406. Student Records
- 407. Guidance

TUITION, PROGRAMS, & FEES

- 501. Tuition and Fees Payment
- 502. Before/After School Programs
- 503. Financial Aid
- 504. Late Payment Policy

ADDENDUMS

- 601. Special Needs Philosophy
- 602. The Study of Mythology at HCA
- 603. Homework Help by Parents
- 604. Teacher-Parent-Student Responsibilities
- 605. Sample Classroom Behavior Report
- 606. Sample Academic Notification (MS)
- 607. Sample Behavioral Demerit (MS)
- 608. Sample Merit Applications (MS)
- 609. Sample Disciplinary Action Form (MS)
- 610. HCA Snack and Lunch Ideas
- 611. Preschool Addendum

WHO WE ARE

Holden Christian Academy (HCA) is a non-profit organization governed by its own school committee, and is organized under the sponsorship umbrella of Holden Chapel, Inc., a non-denominational Christian church. HCA is a member of the Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI).

101. STATEMENT OF FAITH

1. We believe the Scriptures contained in the 66 books of the Old and New Testament, as originally written, to be inspired of God and free from error. They are the only true, infallible, and authoritative guide in faith and practice. (Rom. 15:4; 2 Tim. 3:15-17; 2 Pet. 1:20-21)
2. We believe there is one God, eternally existing in three persons who are equal in deity, power, and glory: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. (Gen. 1:26; Deut. 6:4; Matt. 3:16-17, 28:19)
3. We believe that God the Father is an infinite, eternal, personal Spirit, perfect in holiness, wisdom, power, and love. God is the Almighty Creator, Savior, and Judge who governs all things according to his sovereign will and for his own glory. As Father, he forgives, adopts as his own, redeems, and gives eternal life to all those who come to him in faith through Jesus Christ. (Gen. 1; Matt. 6:6-13; Rom. 8:15; 2 Cor. 6:18; Eph. 2:17-19, 1 John 3:1)
4. We believe in the deity of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and in his complete and perfect humanity. We believe in his virgin birth, his sinless life, and in his miracles. We believe he died on the cross as the sinner's substitute, shedding his blood for the remission of sins. We believe that on the third day he rose bodily from the dead. He ascended to the right hand of the Father where he performs the ministry of intercession. We believe he will come again, personally and visibly, to complete the eternal plan of God and to rule over the nations. (Psa. 22:27-31; Matt. 1:23; John 14:3; Heb. 7:25; 1 John 2:2)
5. We believe the Holy Spirit is God, a separate and distinct person along with the Father and the Son. He is sent to dwell within the heart of each born-again believer, to comfort, teach, empower, and lead into all truth. (Gen. 1:2; John 14:16-26, 16:7-15; Acts 1:4, 1:8, 10:44-46; Rom. 8:11)
6. We believe that Satan, originally a great and good angel, rebelled against God, taking a multitude of angels with him. He was cast out of God's presence and is at work with his demonic hosts to establish his counter-kingdom of darkness and evil on the earth. Satan was judged and defeated at the cross of Christ and will, at the end of the age, be cast forever into the lake of fire which has been prepared for him and his angels. (Gen. 3:1; Isa. 14:12-15; Matt. 4:10; Rev. 12:9, 20:7, 10)
7. We believe that mankind was originally created to be good and holy in the image of God, but voluntarily sinned. This one act of disobedience brought upon the entire human race both physical death and spiritual death, which is eternal separation from God. Because of our sinful nature, no one is able to obey or please God, and the entire human race is in active moral rebellion against our Creator. (Gen. 1:27; Rom. 5:19, 6:23)

8. We believe that marriage was ordained by God to be a lifetime covenant relationship between one man and one woman, as he created them. Gen. 2:21-24; Gen. 3:20; Matt.5:31-35; Matt.19:7-8; Mark 10:5-9; Rom. 7:2-3; 1 Cor. 7:2-5, 39; Heb. 13:4.

9. We believe that it is only by the grace of God through faith in Jesus Christ that people can be saved from eternal death. By faith, not by our own effort, we are also transformed by the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit to become holy and acceptable to God. (John 14:6; Acts 4:12; Rom. 10:13-15; Eph. 1:13-14, 2:8-9; Tit. 3:5-7)

10. We believe the Holy Spirit empowers believers to obey the commands of Jesus Christ and to be his witnesses in the world. For the edification of the church, the Holy Spirit distributes spiritual gifts as he determines. We believe the Scriptures teach us that all the gifts of the Holy Spirit at work in the church of the first century are available today, are vital for the mission of the church, and are to be earnestly desired and practiced in love, humility, and in order, in accordance with instructions given in Scripture. (John 14:26, 16:8-11; Rom. 8:26; 1 Cor. 12:4-11; 2 Cor. 3:6)

11. We believe that communion (also called the Lord's Supper) and baptism are the two ordinances instituted by Jesus Christ. Neither is required for salvation, but each is a public confession of a Christian's desire to be identified with Christ and to live in obedience to him. Those who personally and consciously place their faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord are welcome to partake of communion and to be baptized. (Matt. 26:26-28, 28:19-20; Acts 2:38-39; 1 Cor. 11:23-26)

12. We believe that the church is the body of Jesus Christ and he is its head. The church is comprised of all believers throughout history and is God's primary instrument through which he is fulfilling his redemptive purposes in the earth. We also affirm the priesthood of all believers and the importance of every Christian regardless of age being joined with and actively involved in a local church. (1 Cor. 12:27; Eph. 1:22-23, 2:19-22; Heb. 10:24-25; 1 Pet. 2:5)

13. We believe that the church is commanded by Jesus Christ to make disciples of all nations, sharing the good news of salvation with non-believers and instructing and baptizing believers, teaching them to obey everything he has taught. God has called the church to care for the poor, the widows, and the orphans, and to minister to their needs through sacrificial giving and practical service. (Prov. 19:17; Matt. 28:18-19; Acts 1:8; 1 Tim. 4:13; Jas. 1:27)

14. We believe in the resurrection of both the unsaved and the saved; those who are unsaved enter into eternal separation from God, which is hell, and those who are saved enter into eternal fellowship with God, which is heaven. When Christ returns, the Kingdom of God will be completely fulfilled in the new heaven and the new earth, where righteousness dwells and where God will be worshipped forever. (Matt. 25:40-46; John 5:28-29; 1 Cor. 15:20-25; Phil. 3:20-21; 1 Thes. 4:13-18; 2 Thes. 1:5-10; Rev. 20:11-21:8)

102. PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION

Our Mission

Honoring God through
Creative learning and strong
Academics, in a caring, fun-filled school!

Our Vision

Inspiring students to learn joyfully, think biblically, and serve faithfully.

During the elementary and middle school years, the minds of children are developing at a remarkable rate. Patterns of thinking, reasoning, and analyzing are being formed that will last a lifetime. Because this is the most opportune time for faith and reason to grow together, we seek to create an environment that nurtures both.

In this way, children are given the tools to cultivate a worldview based upon Biblical truth, enabling them to think and reason from God's perspective. This training provides them with a dependable framework through which to interpret the world, make wise decisions, and pursue future learning.

Our Foundation

We believe that knowledge, wisdom, and truth come from a deep personal relationship with God, and that the Bible is the inspired Word of God. We believe that although people are separated from God by sin, God in His infinite, tender mercy planned for our redemption through the blood of His Son, Jesus Christ. We can enter that new life in Christ by confessing our sin and giving our lives to Jesus Christ through faith.

Our Parents

We believe that education is the responsibility given to parents by God. Therefore, we work in partnership with families and their greater family, the Church, to accomplish this task. Parents play a vital role in our school and are always encouraged to visit and participate in their child's education; therefore, our School Service Fee is reimbursable once a family has performed 30 school volunteer hours.

Our Children

All children are created in the image of God and are worthy of the respect that demands. We follow the example of Jesus who made time for children and called them to Himself. He took their faith seriously and used it as an example for adults to emulate. The Bible tells us that God has individually gifted every person. Therefore, each child, no matter what their I.Q., is a "gifted" child. We seek to help each child discover ways of using and developing their gifts for the common good. While the child and his or her ideas are to be respected, his or her opinions should not be regarded as having the same weight as those of a mature adult. God ordained that parents and teachers are to lead the child into wisdom.

Our Behavioral Expectations and Discipline

Because we are all sinners living in a fallen world and inclined toward self-centeredness, we should never be surprised when a child is disobedient or rebellious. We need only to look at our own relationship to God to understand these tendencies. The teacher is to deal with each child as God deals with us. As the authority figure, the teacher is to first assure the child that he or she is loved unconditionally, affirming the child as a person; then the teacher must uphold the standard and teach the child a better way. Right behavior will be taught and encouraged, while wrong attitudes and behaviors will be addressed appropriately. No corporal punishment will be administered.

Self-discipline is a positive, personal attitude of the heart that God helps us to develop. As a fruit of the Spirit it is always to be encouraged in children. Discipline in a school provides boundaries, which give the children a sense of safety, stability, and security. Personal discipline allows one to be more productive and creative and is a necessary element in positive conflict resolution. It also promotes ethical work habits, which are an important foundation for good lives.

103. OUR APPROACH

Concept Based Instruction

Each school year concept statements are developed. These statements provide a superstructure for the curriculum out of which flow the units of study for the year. They provide the thread that weaves our entire curriculum together, thus minimizing fragmentation of subject matter. Our concepts are based on the Bible content for the year preventing the artificial separation of secular and sacred studies. Some of the concept areas for the different years include Heritage, Change, Great Civilizations, and Cultures.

Integrated Studies

Using our concept statements as a guide, units are developed that integrate traditional disciplines. Studies in history, geography, science and Bible will have a common unit theme, reinforcing and expanding one another. By using an integrated, unit-based approach, teachers as well as parents work together to combine resources and expand the units indefinitely. Children are able to explore aspects of particular interest to them in each unit and individualize their learning. Children are given time for presentations, each learning from one another.

Basic Skills

At the heart of every good elementary education are the basics. Learning well the skills of reading, writing and mathematics will enable children to read, think about, and understand Man and the world of ideas in relation to God, developing a Biblical worldview. These basics will be taught using logical, sequential, and enriching methods. Because mornings are opportune times for learning, our mornings will be carefully protected so the children will have uninterrupted time to grasp these basic skills.

Curriculum/Textbook Choices

Our concept statements serve as our guide and a valuable tool for textbook and other resource material selections. Instead of searching for a good textbook and then basing our curriculum on

it, we are able to plan our units then find the best of the best to meet our needs. We freely use the best of both secular and Christian books and materials.

104. OUR GOALS

1. To provide a Christ-centered environment where faith as well as educational pursuits are nurtured. We encourage all to come to know Jesus Christ and learn to walk in His ways.
2. To provide the opportunity for the natural integration of a variety of subjects within a Biblical conceptual framework.
3. To be godly role models for all, taking seriously the admonition from Jesus who said, "but everyone who is fully trained will be like his teacher." (Luke 6:40)
4. To educate the whole child intellectually, emotionally, socially, physically, and spiritually.
5. To provide our students with a blend of traditional and innovative educational experiences that meet the highest standards of excellence.
6. To develop positive and caring student-teacher relationships.
7. To encourage a variety of opportunities for family participation.
8. To be fair, consistent, and respectful of our students in all matters of discipline and correction.
9. To develop moral and ethical work habits in students that will carry over into all areas of life.

105. PARTNERS IN EDUCATION

The relationship HCA works hard to establish with parents is one built on:

mutual love
mutual trust
mutual respect
mutual help and support

We believe that parents are the experts with their own children. We respect and seek their valuable insight, prayer support and help. School staff and parents trust one another to positively uphold each other with friends, family and the community at large. It is imperative to a partnership that each side trusts, respects and supports one another.

"If you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any fellowship with the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose." Philippians 2:1-2

HCA strives to work in partnership with families. We believe that parents are ultimately responsible for the education of their children (Deut. 6:7, Eph. 6:4). They have a God-given duty to be involved in the educational process, which should be a great benefit to both the family and

the school. We believe that God has directed us to a concept-based, integrated approach and that this approach fosters opportunities for parents to be involved in their student's education.

Active parent participation enhances our program as well as the overall education of their children. When parents are here, they see our approach in action and they cannot help but get enthusiastically involved. We want and appreciate their involvement. We believe that education is the responsibility given to parents by God. Therefore, we work in partnership with families and their greater family, the Church, to accomplish this task.

Parents play a vital role in our school and are always encouraged to visit and participate in their child's education; therefore, our School Service Fee is reimbursable once a family has performed school volunteer hours. The reimbursable School Service Fees are as follows:

Two Day Preschool: \$165 per year or 6 hours of service

Three Day Preschool: \$300 per year or 9 hours of service

Five Day Preschool: \$500 per year or 15 hours of service

Kindergarten through Grade 8: \$500 per year or 30 hours of service

A list of service hour jobs are available on our school's website under the "Parents" tab, and will be published regularly in our Pathways newsletter. Hours may involve work at home, work at school during the school day, or help with school events or committees. Families are responsible to track their own hours on an electronic or printable form that can be found on our website. Once a family has logged the necessary amount of hours, the fee will be deducted from their remaining tuition balance. If a family has already paid their tuition in full, the service fee will be credited for the next school year, or if a student is not returning, a reimbursement check will be issued. School Service Logs should be turned into our finance manager, Mrs. Judy Bleau. Credits/Reimbursements may be pro-rated; please see our website for more detailed information <https://www.holdenchristianacademy.org/tuition>

106. CONFLICT RESOLUTION - *Family School Covenant*

Problems, conflicts and concerns are an inevitable part of life. They are neither positive nor negative in themselves but the way in which they are handled can have extremely beneficial or detrimental consequences.

God's Word makes clear the steps we are to take in Matthew 18: 15-20 when there is a conflict. Based on that scripture, HCA has a clearly defined process we expect all (staff, students, and parents) to follow. Our goal is that conflict can be the positive, building, helpful tool that God intends. Iron sharpens iron and improves the quality of the product. We want to improve, we want to be informed of any questions, concerns or problems but *please* let us all approach it in a way that honors God and builds one another up in the process.

We, the family of HCA, agree to follow the steps outlined below whenever an inevitable question, problem or conflict occurs. We will not discuss it with those not directly involved or portray any parent, student or staff member in a negative light. We covenant together to

uphold one another, giving one another grace and the benefit of the doubt as we prayerfully seek God's solutions to any conflicts.

We promise to:

1. **Pray first, seek God's answer. Pray for all those involved.**
2. **Contact the person involved.** Problems are immediately escalated when others are included in a process that could have been quickly resolved one on one. If one needs to call a staff member, please call the school at 508-829-4418 and leave a message. The call will be returned as soon as he/she is able. Please do not call a staff member at his/her home unless it is an emergency.
3. **Contact the Principal** if, after contacting the person involved, the problem has not been adequately resolved. A meeting will be arranged to prayerfully reach a solution.
4. **Contact the School Committee Chairman** with the concern if no resolution has been reached after meeting with the Principal. Again a solution will be prayerfully sought.
5. **Seek the counsel of the entire School Committee** if still no resolution has been reached. Because of the confidential nature of the School Committee meetings, contact the Chairman of the School Committee for further instructions as to how to be put on the agenda and at what time these concerns will be addressed.

In an attempt to apply the scripture to every aspect of our school life and work and recognizing that our work is composed of spiritual activities over an educational function, we must follow the scriptural principles for resolving grievances. I Corinthians 6:1-18 is very clear on this, stating that believers waive all rights to take their cause before a court of law, and resolve the matter within the Christian community. With this in mind, let us walk in love with one another forgiving as Christ forgave us and seek to live at peace with one another. (Eph. 4:25-32 & Col. 3:12-17)

107. SCHOOL HOURS

School hours are 8:00 a.m.-2:45 p.m. on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays. School hours on Wednesday are 8:00 a.m.-1:45 p.m. Before School Care is available from 7:30-8:00 a.m. for a charge. The After School Program runs from dismissal until 6:00 p.m. daily for a charge. All holidays, vacations, ½ days, and Professional Development Days are listed on our school calendar which can be found at www.holdenchristianacademy.org/calendar.

Half Days

On scheduled half-days, we dismiss at 11:30am and there is no After School Care available on those days.

Snow Days

HCA's cancellations and delays will be announced on WCVB Channel 5 (TV and app) and parents will also receive a phone call & email through our Parent Alert system. However, because our students are commuters coming from so many different towns, parents should use their own discretion in inclement weather.

POLICIES/PROCEDURES

201. NON-DISCRIMINATORY ENROLLMENT

HCA recruits and admits students of any race, color, or ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities of the school. In addition, the school does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, or ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, scholarships/loan/fees/waivers/educational programs and athletic extracurricular activities.

202. PRESCHOOL ENTRANCE ELIGIBILITY

To be eligible for entrance into our Preschool program a child must be 3 years old by August 31st, and pass the Preschool screening.

203. KINDERGARTEN ENTRANCE ELIGIBILITY

To be eligible for entrance into our Kindergarten program a child must be 5 years old by August 31st, and pass the Kindergarten screening.

204. ATTENDANCE POLICY

Statistics show that regular school attendance increases a student's opportunity for overall achievement. School attendance provides opportunities for both academic and social growth. When students are absent from school, they are excluded from teacher-led, whole-group learning experiences that cannot be recreated. These shared school experiences are also part of the social-emotional development that results from exploring new ideas together, working cooperatively, and modeling. The Holden Christian Academy attendance policy recognizes the importance of regular attendance and seeks to support best practices for student learning.

Parents are asked to **email attendance@holdenchristianacademy.org or call the office by 8:30 a.m. if a child will be absent that day.**

Every child at HCA must be accounted for each school day. If we haven't heard from you, an HCA staff member will call to confirm the reason for your child's absence. Students who arrive after 11:00 a.m. or leave before 11:00 a.m. will be considered absent for the day.

Massachusetts General Laws state that parents/guardians are responsible for their child's attendance (M.G.L. C 76§2, C 76§4), and that absences may not exceed 7 full-day session or 14 half-day sessions in any 6-month period (M.G.L. C 76§1). A student who is not present for at least half of the day is considered absent (M.G.L. C 72§8).

The school recognizes that there are legitimate reasons for a student to be absent from school. Excused absences include:

- Illness verified with a doctor's note
- A positive Covid-19 test (see Well Child and Illness Policy)
- Funeral
- Medical or dental appointments with a doctor's note

Massachusetts law ([G.L. c. 76, §1B](#)) requires that the school principal make a reasonable effort to meet with the parent or guardian of a student *in-person* who has **5 or more unexcused absences** to develop action steps for student attendance.

If a student has ten (10) absences (excused or unexcused) over the course of the school year, parents will be contacted to remind them of the school's attendance policy and see if additional support is needed. An administrator will contact them to schedule a meeting should the absences approach fifteen (15) days.

A student who is absent more than twenty (20) days total (excused or unexcused) in a school year will not be promoted to the next grade or allowed to return to HCA the following year without School Committee approval.

Tardiness

Arrival time is between 8:00 and 8:15 a.m. each morning. After 8:15 a.m., students are entering a working environment where instructions have already been given and learning is in-progress. Tardy students should enter through the school office to sign in. Occasionally, morning routines go awry. With this in mind, students are allowed up to six (6) tardies per term without consequence. Families who accrue twelve (12) tardies in one term will be asked to meet with the Principal. Please let the office know if there are extenuating circumstances that prevent arrival by 8:15 a.m. on a regular basis.

Classroom Disruption

Families who have accumulated more than six (6) tardies per term will be assessed a Classroom Disruption Fee of \$5 per family per tardy until the end of the term. This will be billed through your FACTS account on a weekly basis.

Irregular Dismissal

If someone will pick up your child other than their parent/guardian or their regular carpool, you need to send a note with your child, or send an email to the office staff. Please tell any driver who is not a parent/guardian at our school that they may be asked to show some identification to the staff car-loaders.

Students are not allowed to use the school phone to make plans during the school day for going home with another student. Plans must be made in advance and a note sent in by the parent. If a student does not have a note and someone else is there to pick them up, the driver will be asked to park their car so that a staff member can call the parents of the student to verify the situation. Students will only be released when an HCA staff member has received permission from the parent or guardian.

For any child not picked up by 3:00 p.m. and not signed up for ASP, parents may be charged \$1/minute. Late pick up charges will be added to FACTS accounts weekly.

Make-Up Work

If the student is absent but not sick, the simplest way to stay current and get missed assignments quickly is to call a classmate at the end of the missed day and do the missed work on the day of absence. Students benefit greatly by coming back to school with assignments complete whenever it is possible.

Requests for make-up work can also be made at the time the absence is reported. It is understandable that students who are sick will not be able to complete work until they feel better. Students will be granted as many days as they have been absent to make up work. It is the responsibility of the parents and child to email or ask the teacher directly for missed assignments, to arrange the transportation of the work home, and to hand all assignments in within this grace period. (Staff emails are available at www.holdenchristianacademy.org/faculty.)

HCA strongly discourages the planning of vacations during school time. In unavoidable cases of planned absence, parents should confer with teachers at least a week in advance so that assignments can be gathered prior to the absences and work can be completed before the student's return to school. There is not a grace period for missing work due to planned absences.

205. STUDENT HEALTH POLICIES

1. WELL CHILD and ILLNESS POLICY

HCA's well child and illness policy is in agreement with guidelines from the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH) and the CDC, which focus on preventing the spread of illness while maximizing in-person learning.

General Illness Guidelines

Parents and guardians must keep their child home if they have the following symptoms:

- **Fever:** Temperature of 100.0°F (37.8°C) or higher. The child must be fever-free for at least 24 hours *without* the use of fever-reducing medications (e.g., Tylenol, Motrin) before returning to school.
- **Vomiting and/or Diarrhea:** The child must be symptom-free for at least 24 hours after the last episode and able to tolerate normal food and fluids.
- **Persistent Cough/Cold Symptoms:** While a mild cold or slight cough is usually acceptable, a child should stay home if symptoms are severe, disruptive, or they are too unwell to participate in school activities.
- **Undiagnosed Rash:** An unexplained or suspicious rash, especially if associated with a fever, must be evaluated by a healthcare provider before returning to school.
- **Eye Discharge:** Red, itchy eyes with yellow or green drainage ("pinkeye" or conjunctivitis) should be treated. For bacterial infections, the child can return 24 hours after starting antibiotics.

Specific Communicable Diseases

If a child is diagnosed with a specific communicable disease, parents *must notify the School Office* and follow specific return-to-school criteria:

- **Strep Throat:** The child must complete at least 24 hours of antibiotics before returning to school and be fever-free.
- **Chickenpox:** The child must remain home until all sores have dried and crusted over, which is usually about five days after the rash first appears.

- Impetigo: The child must stay home until 24 hours after beginning antibiotic treatment and their lesions must be covered.
- Head Lice: The child will be dismissed from school immediately and must be treated properly before he/she returns to school. A staff member will need to confirm that the hair is free from live lice and/or nits prior to re-entry.

Respiratory Viruses (Including COVID-19, Flu, and RSV)

Massachusetts public health guidance for respiratory illnesses emphasizes a unified approach.

1. Stay Home: Stay home if you have symptoms of a respiratory virus (fever, cough, sore throat, runny nose, fatigue).
2. Return to School: You may return to normal activities when, for at least 24 hours, both of the following are true:
 1. You have not had a fever (without the use of fever-reducing medication).
 2. Your symptoms are improving overall.
3. Take Precautions Upon Return: For at least five days after returning, students must wear a well-fitting mask when indoors around others and practice good hygiene.

2. STUDENT IMMUNIZATION POLICY

Holden Christian Academy is committed to providing a safe, healthy, and caring learning environment for all students. In accordance with Massachusetts law, students are required to meet the Commonwealth's immunization requirements as a condition of school attendance.

Required Immunizations

All students must submit documentation demonstrating compliance with the **Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH) immunization schedule** appropriate to their age and grade level. Required vaccines include, but are not limited to:

- DTaP/Tdap (Diphtheria, Tetanus, Pertussis)
- Polio
- MMR (Measles, Mumps, Rubella)

- Hepatitis B
- Varicella (Chickenpox)
- Additional vaccines as required by MDPH for specific grade levels

Immunization records must be submitted prior to the first day of attendance and kept current throughout enrollment.

Exemptions

Massachusetts law permits **only the following exemptions** to required immunizations:

- **Medical Exemption:**
A student may be exempt from specific immunizations if a licensed physician provides written documentation indicating that the immunization is medically contraindicated.
- **Religious Exemption:**
A student may be exempt if a parent or guardian (or an adult student) submits a **written and signed statement** indicating that the required immunization conflicts with the individual's **sincerely held religious beliefs**.

Philosophical or personal belief exemptions are not permitted under Massachusetts law.

Exclusion During Illness or Outbreak

In the event of a vaccine-preventable illness or public health outbreak, students who are not fully immunized — including those with medical or religious exemptions — may be **temporarily excluded from school or school activities** as directed by public health authorities. This measure is taken to protect the health and well-being of the school community.

Recordkeeping

All immunization and exemption documentation is maintained as part of the student's confidential health record and must be updated as required.

3. MEDICATION ADMINISTRATION

Because HCA does not have a school nurse on site at all times, school staff can administer no regular medication. Inhalers and Epi-pens can be kept in the office and self-administered under staff supervision, with assistance in emergency situations and with written permission from the student's physician. Any special circumstances must be evaluated and approved by the School Committee. The following forms can be printed and signed by parent/physician and kept on file.

[Emergency Medication](#)
[Medication Self-Administration Form Information](#)

If a student requires Benadryl/Epi-pen in the case of a serious allergic reaction (eg, food allergy), staff will assist a student in self-administration of Benadryl and/or Epi-pen (or administer in children younger than 9 years old) on an emergency basis, per medication plan signed by the student's parent and doctor. Whenever an Epi-pen is administered, 911 is called for transport to the nearest hospital and parent/emergency contact will be informed.

The parent/guardian will sign the forms above, requesting HCA staff to assist/administer the emergency medications in accordance with the physician's instructions, that they understand that

- ❖ in the case of Epi-Pen administration, 911 will be called for emergency transport
- ❖ HCA personnel are not responsible for any problems arising from the administration of this medication
- ❖ HCA does not have a school nurse on staff

4. MINOR INJURIES

In the event that your child should be injured (bruised, scraped, cut) while at school, the child will be treated (i.e. ice pack, peroxide, bandage). An Injury Report form will be sent home for your review; please sign and return to the office.

5. ALLERGIES & NUT POLICY

We are sensitive to students and staff who have environmental and food allergies, and do our best to accommodate those individual needs on a case-by-case basis. If your child has allergies, especially food allergies, please communicate with us so we can make a plan to keep your child safe at school. This plan includes taking allergies into consideration in the HCA kitchen, labeling foods available at school functions, making alternate seating arrangements during snack/lunch as necessary, etc.

No nuts, peanut butter, or obvious nut products may be brought to HCA at any time, out of loving concern for our highly allergic students for whom these products are life threatening. *This includes nut-flavored products and products that "may contain" nuts.* If a nut product is inadvertently brought to school, the food will be sent home and an alternative will be provided. Due to the fact that many non-HCA people use this building we cannot guarantee that HCA is a completely nut-free environment, so caution is still advised for those with allergies.

206. COMMUNICATION PROCEDURE

We will use a variety of means of communication to maintain our partnership with parents. The HCA Office and Administration will communicate with parents primarily by email to the address(s) provided in the enrollment packet. If you have a change of email address, please communicate that to the Office so we can update your information.

In the event of school closures or emergencies, we will communicate by Parent Alert phone call to the numbers provided to the school. Phone calls sent by mass distribution may sometimes be delayed or garbled, so we encourage you to call the Parent Alert Replay #866-840-0415 to

retrieve the last message sent, if you miss the phone call for any reason. Occasionally we will send a text reminder to parents.

Teachers will use email to communicate with their student's parents, and will respond to emails within 2 business days. Teachers should not be contacted on their cell or home phones and by HCA policy, will not communicate through text.

Any urgent questions or concerns to the teacher during the school day should go to the office through one of these channels:

- email to info@holdenchristianacademy.org
- send a written note in with your student
- call the office 508-829-4418

Please mark if the communication is "urgent". The message will be given to the teacher and you will receive a response by the end of the school day from either the teacher or the office staff.

207. VISITOR PROCEDURE

All visitors must stop in the Office to sign in. All packages delivered during the school day should be left outside the school, or in the school office.

Alumni Visitor Procedure: We love our alumni! We look forward to staying in touch with our former students & graduates, especially to hear how they are doing in high school, college, the workforce, and beyond! While we wholeheartedly welcome alumni visits, our current students and faculty are only available for visits during outdoor recess time. Please call the Office to make arrangements in advance.

208. DISCIPLINE POLICY

Self-discipline is a positive, personal attitude of the heart that God helps us to develop. As a fruit of the Spirit, self-discipline is always to be encouraged in children. Discipline in a school provides boundaries. These give children a sense of safety, stability, and security, which together free them to learn. Personal discipline allows one to be more productive and creative and is a necessary element in positive conflict resolution. It also promotes ethical work habits, which are an important foundation for sound lives.

We are all sinners living in a fallen world and inclined toward self-centeredness; we should never be surprised when a child is disobedient or rebellious. The teacher is to deal with each child as God deals with us, loving and affirming the child as a person, yet using corrective discipline to teach the child a better way.

The teacher is responsible to uphold the standard, encouraging and teaching right, while addressing and correcting wrong attitudes and behaviors appropriately. Corporal punishment will not be administered.

Behavioral Expectations

Our primary function is to educate children in a context of Biblical faith. It is the responsibility of the teachers and support staff to create an environment where children are free to learn and the Holy Spirit is welcome.

We want a school where:

- God is honored
- teachers are obeyed
- children feel safe and secure
- children feel loved and valued as individuals
- there is order and seriousness about learning
- each person is respected
- the teachers are in control of the classroom
- children are actively engaged in their learning
- children are treated fairly and consistently

School-wide rules make the student aware of the expectations, allowing each to choose accordingly. Students must learn that all behavior is a choice, and that there are consequences for both good and bad choices (Gal 5:19). Self-control, a fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23), is available to us at all times; it is a positive attribute that both children and adults must develop in order to lead happy, productive lives. HCA works in partnership with parents to uphold and enforce the following rules:

School Rules

"And let us consider how we may spur one another on to love and good deeds." (Hebrews 10:24)

1. Raise your hand and wait for permission to talk.
2. Look at your teacher, listen and follow directions.
3. Respect everyone; use words that build up others, no cursing or put-downs.
"Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs that it may benefit those who listen." (Ephesians 4:29) "So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you." (Matthew 7:12)
4. Respect the equipment and furnishings in our school.
5. Change tasks quickly and quietly, adjusting your voice level to suit the activity.

209. MIDDLE SCHOOL DISCIPLINE

In addition to the overall school discipline policy, a reset system and a demerit system is added at the Middle School level. The purposes of this system include the following:

- Facilitation of two-way communication with parents
- Providing information for parents
- Helping students differentiate the seriousness of infractions

Middle School Reset System

Resets are a tool used by teachers to help a student change the direction of his/her behavior by removing him/her from the classroom to stop a behavior and reflect on choices.

Used during class for:

- Disruptions to teaching
- Distractions from learning

How it works:

1. Teacher recognizes one of the above during class
2. Teacher instructs the student: "Name, reset."
3. Student walks quietly out of the classroom without any questions
 - stands outside of the door listening to all instruction as it continues
 - tries to consider what they did that their teacher wants them to reset
 - returns to class silently within 30 seconds to 2 minutes
 - continues learning
4. If the student was unable to figure out what necessitated the reset, they should seek out the teacher after class to clarify.
5. Teacher communicates student(s)' name(s) to homeroom teacher

Academic Notification

Students will receive an Academic Notification for missed homework, a missing signed document, or unpreparedness. This is a non-punitive tool of communication between home and school. Repeated Academic Notifications will result in a meeting with the student, parent, and teacher to create an action plan for improved responsibility.

Behavioral Demerits

Behavioral Demerits will be issued for student behaviors that are disruptive to the learning environment or pose a risk to the student or others. There are three levels of Behavioral Demerits. Potential consequences rise with the level of severity of the behavior. (See sections 605-609)

If a student accumulates three behavioral demerits (of any level) in the course of the school year, they will be suspended from school for one school day. Any demerits for which merits were awarded will not be counted toward this total. Therefore, students who receive Behavioral

Demerits are strongly encouraged to correct their behaviors and pursue a merit in a timely fashion. The administration reserves the right to pursue further disciplinary action in the case of a serious offense.

If a student wishes to appeal a demerit, he or she must do so in writing within 48 hours of it being issued.

Merits

When a student does not exhibit/participate in the demerited behavior for a given period of time (based on the demerit level), the student has the opportunity to merit the demerit by completing a Merit Application. Once the Merit is approved by the homeroom teacher and signed by the Principal, the Demerit is no longer counted against the student. (See sample Merit Application in section 608)

210. SAFETY POLICY

Holden Christian Academy intends to work in partnership with parents, and desires to maintain a Christ-centered educational environment that is safe and secure for everyone. In the spirit of this partnership we empower our teachers with the authority to ensure a safe classroom. To that end, the teacher may confiscate, for the balance of the school day, any item that the teacher judges to be unsafe or that is used in an unsafe manner. School faculty or staff may also search student belongings if there is a concern for the safety of the student or school.

For **Severe Disruption** such as:

- ❖ Defiant disobedience
- ❖ Verbal threats
- ❖ Unsafe behavior
- ❖ Physical violence of any kind

The student will be removed from the classroom and sent to an administrator. A parent will be contacted.

Suspension

The administrator may choose to ask the parent to remove the child from school for a given amount of time based on the severity of the situation. Suspensions may not be appealed.

Expulsion

As a last resort, HCA reserves the right to expel a student when necessary to protect the health, safety, and learning environment of other students. Parents may appeal to the School Committee any decision to expel a student, if the appeal is made in writing, to the School Committee Chairman, within 72 hours of the parent's notification.

211. STUDENT ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY

Holden Christian Academy (HCA) recognizes the importance of technology use in education as a tool to prepare students for further education and future employment. For this reason, HCA encourages the responsible use of computers; computer networks, including the Internet; and other electronic resources in support of the mission and goals of Holden Christian Academy.

Because the Internet is an unregulated, worldwide vehicle for communication, information available to staff and students is impossible to control completely. Therefore, HCA requires students to agree, by the signing of this form, to be trained in the appropriate use of technology and responsible digital citizenship as outlined below.

What measures will HCA take to keep students safe with technology?

Holden Christian Academy strives to maintain an environment where students are safe from harm. The school promotes ethical and responsible behavior in all online activities by staff and students and will safeguard students in their use of technology for school by:

1. Initiating new user accounts and removing unused accounts on the network.
2. Monitoring the use of online activities while at school, as observed in real time and/or through network history. *Although it is not possible to monitor all accounts at all times, HCA will monitor student technology use 'over the shoulder' while in person and conduct regular, random checks of student network history.*
3. Protecting the identity of students. HCA will not publish photos with student names on websites that are the responsibility of Holden Christian Academy. HCA will not use pictures of students without annual parental consent in any online content. This includes the Holden Christian Academy's website, Instagram, and Facebook accounts.
4. Providing an Internet safety filter.
5. Determining who will have access to HCA-owned equipment and the internet use through such equipment.
6. Providing guidelines and annual training materials for staff and students in digital citizenship, acceptable use and policies governing online communications. Digital citizenship training will begin no later than grade 3 with age appropriate content viewable by parents.
7. Limiting Google Classroom access to the intended HCA community members by disabling the use of invitation codes on Google Classroom.

What are students' responsibilities?

Use of the electronic media provided by Holden Christian Academy is a privilege that offers a wealth of information and resources for research and learning. In order to maintain the privilege, users agree to learn and comply with all of the provisions of this policy. **Students who do not abide by Holden Christian Academy's Acceptable Use Policy or other policies governing the use of school facilities, equipment, and materials will have technology privileges suspended for a time period to be determined by the administration.**

Acceptable Use

1. Student use of the Internet is acceptable when it is with staff permission to authorized sites for educational purposes assigned by staff. Violations, including visiting unauthorized sites,

social media, or changes to equipment settings will result in loss of technology privileges and/or disciplinary action.

2. Student use of phones is permitted for academic purposes at the teacher's discretion. When phones are not in use for academics, they should be kept in the student's backpack with power off. If a phone is outside of the backpack and/or in student use without permission, the phone will be placed in the main office until a time when a parent/guardian can sign it out.

3. Language and behavior on the network is expected to honor God, HCA, and family. Let God's Word be your guide:

"Do to others whatever you would like them to do to you. This is the essence of all that is taught in the law and the prophets," (New Living Translation, Matthew 7:12).

"Don't use foul or abusive language. Let everything you say be good and helpful, so that your words will be an encouragement to those who hear them," (New Living Translation, Ephesians 4:29).

Unacceptable Use

1. Giving out any personal information about another person, including home address and phone number, is strictly prohibited without prior authorization.

2. Users shall not intentionally seek information on, obtain copies of, or modify files, other data, or passwords belonging to other users, nor misrepresent other users on the network.

3. Hardware and/or software shall not be destroyed, modified, or abused in any way.

Malicious use of the network to develop programs that harass other users or infiltrate a computer or computing system and/or damage the software components of a computer or computing system is prohibited.

4. Hate mail, harassment, discriminatory remarks, cyberbullying and other antisocial behaviors are prohibited on the network. Cyberbullying is bullying through the use of technology, including impersonating another person or distributing materials (ie.photos, texts, emails) about another person that:

(a) cause physical or emotional harm or damage to property;

(b) places the person in reasonable fear of harm or damage to his or her property;

(c) creates a hostile environment at school for the person;

(d) infringes on the rights of the person at school; or

(e) materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

Cyberbullying will result in formal consequences for the aggressor as determined by the administration. According to Massachusetts State Law, cyberbullying that occurs at home or at school can result in consequences at school *"if the bullying creates a hostile environment at school for the victim, infringes on the rights of the victim at school or materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school," (2010).*

5. The unauthorized installation of any software by students for use on HCA computers is prohibited.

6. Use of the network to access inappropriate material is prohibited.

7. Downloading, copying, or distributing copyrighted materials without the specific written permission of the copyright owner is prohibited.

8. Use of the network for any unlawful purpose is prohibited.

9. Use of profanity, obscenity, racist terms, or other language that may be offensive to another user is prohibited.

Disclaimer

System administrators have access to all student email accounts and will monitor messages as feasible. Messages relating to or in support of illegal activities will be reported to the appropriate authorities.

212. ALCOHOL POLICY

While HCA and its leadership do not condemn the personal use of alcohol in moderation, the school does take the position that alcohol should not be served or consumed at any HCA-sponsored event, either off-site or at a private residence. This includes events that are initiated or sponsored by the school, including weekend or after-hours events, field trips, committee meetings, etc.

The mission of Holden Christian Academy goes beyond academic instruction to spiritual formation. We are called to partner with parents to shape students' character and guide them to a growing relationship with Christ. Children are prone to emulate the adults in their lives, so it is our intention to set an example in speech and action. Therefore, the School Committee has instituted this policy and are asking all staff members and HCA event attendees to cooperate with it.

But if you cause one of these little ones who trusts in me to fall into sin, it would be better for you to have a large millstone tied around your neck and be drowned in the depths of the sea.

Matthew 18:6, NLT

But you must be careful so that your freedom does not cause others with a weaker conscience to stumble. For if others see you—with your “superior knowledge”—eating in the temple of an idol, won’t they be encouraged to violate their conscience by eating food that has been offered to an idol? So because of your superior knowledge, a weak believer[a] for whom Christ died will be destroyed. And when you sin against other believers[b] by encouraging them to do something they believe is wrong, you are sinning against Christ. So if what I eat causes another believer to sin, I will never eat meat again as long as I live—for I don’t want to cause another believer to stumble.

I Corinthians 8:9-13, NLT

And don't get drunk with wine, which leads to reckless living, but be filled by the Spirit.

Ephesians 5:18, CSB

STUDENT LIFE

301. DRESS CODE

Within the HCA community, our desire to follow scriptural truth affects even the way we dress. Varied life experiences lead to varied preferences in how we dress. A degree of sensitivity and tolerance of these variations is important.

Guiding principles are necessary and yet need not place a disproportionate emphasis on how we dress. In reaching a generally accepted code of dress, HCA addresses Biblical guidelines on modesty and simplicity, a concern for neatness and orderliness, and a common sense approach to attire suitable for the activity, whether in the classroom or on the playground.

General Guidelines... Clothing and accessories shall be neat, clean, in good taste, and in good repair. No hoods are to be worn in the building, and no hats in chapel. No exposure of underwear.

Clothing should also be modest:

- no clothing that looks like lingerie or pajamas
- no shorts or skirts shorter than finger-tip length
- no exposed midriffs
- no bra straps
- no cleavage
- no overly tight or revealing clothing

If a teacher or staff member feels that a student's attire is distracting to the learning environment, the student will be sent to the office and given a large t-shirt to wear for the day. The student will be expected to return the shirt, laundered, to the office on the next school day.

Off campus...

All students are required to wear their HCA polo shirt, when appropriate, for off-campus school activities, such as field trips.

Outdoors.... All students should expect to go outside during the school day for either outdoor learning or recess. Please dress according to the weather forecasted for the day. This may include rain boots or snow boots, hats, mittens, coats, etc. Students without the necessary outdoor clothing may be asked to call home for appropriate gear, or in less extreme weather asked to participate anyway.

302. SNACKS/LUNCH

Each student is responsible to bring his/her own snacks, lunch, and water bottle. HCA is not able to provide refrigeration or microwave heating for student meals.

Morning snacks should be healthy, and something that the student can eat neatly within the fifteen-minute snack period or thirty minute lunch period. Helpful snack and lunch guidance can be found in section 610. Soda, energy drinks, or candy may not be consumed during school hours, or in the After School Program. Please use your best judgment when packing food, or helping your children pack food for school.

303. BIRTHDAYS

Student birthdays are an opportunity for the student to be celebrated and to be acknowledged for the blessing they are to those around them. Each class will choose to do this in their own unique way and in a way that represents the uniqueness of each student. Please check in with your child's homeroom teacher to find out how he/she intends to celebrate birthdays in your child's class this year.

To simplify for parents, HCA asks that you do not send anything in for student birthdays outside of teacher guidelines. To remain consistent with our Food for Life principles, please do not send in pizza, cupcakes, or goody bags. Just a child ready to be celebrated for who God created them to be!

*If there will be a party for friends outside of school, please only distribute invitations in school if the whole class (or all of the same gender) are invited. Thank you for your help in avoiding the sadness that is a result of being 'left out.'

304. PLAYGROUND

The playground is available to students during recess times and is supervised by a staff member and monitors. Students are not allowed on the playground during school hours unless accompanied by an adult. The playground is open at 2:45 p.m. daily, with parent supervision (all school rules apply). In the spirit of kindness, children should always make an effort to include others whenever possible.

Playground Rules

- ❖ Students must play within view of adults at all times. They may play on the field, playground equipment and hard top within the cones. Woods, stone walls, in/behind the Outdoor Classroom, and behind the Youth Center are not within the boundaries.
- ❖ Do not throw snow, ice, rocks, sticks or anything else that could injure a person. Moving/dragging rocks and sticks is acceptable.
- ❖ Use all equipment the way it's supposed to be used. For example, please sit on swings, no jumping off equipment, no standing on top or hanging upside down, etc.
- ❖ Any eating must be done while sitting at a bench or picnic-table and all trash must be picked up before playing.
- ❖ No hurtful language; use uplifting words and be kind!

- ❖ No bullying.
- ❖ When recess is over, the Recess Monitor will blow his/her whistle and students must immediately stop playing and run to line up.
- ❖ In the event of interpersonal conflict, students must follow the principles God sets forth in Matthew 18. Go to the person who offended you directly. When this step doesn't yield reconciliation, then students may seek out the Recess Monitor for help.
- ❖ HAVE FUN!!

305 SCHOOL PRAYER & CHAPEL

Here at HCA we have the freedom to come before the Lord through prayer at any time during the school day. Each day begins with a school-wide prayer and scripture, as well as a chance to pray for our prayer buddy. Each class day will begin with a short devotion in each homeroom. The teachers and students will be at liberty to enter into prayer during the school day as opportunity arises, i.e. preceding lunch, an exam, or for any specific need that may arise during the day. If you have a prayer request that you would like to share with the staff, please email info@holdenchristianacademy.org to share that need with us.

Chapel services will be held weekly on Monday mornings, or Tuesday morning in the case of a Monday holiday. If there is a snow day on a Monday, chapel is not held that week. Local pastors, teachers, and missionaries are scheduled as guest speakers each week. This is a time for us to worship together as a student body. Parents are welcome and encouraged to attend. Chapel begins at 8:45 a.m.

306. LIBRARY

All students are given the privilege of using the school library. Library time is scheduled on a class-by-class basis. Books will be checked out. In the case of overdue books, the student may not check out more books until overdue books are returned. If a book is lost, parents are responsible to replace the book or pay a replacement charge of \$20 per hardcover/\$10 per paperback.

The class that is scheduled to use the Library has priority over other students. Students may use the Library if they are quiet and do not disturb the class. The teacher in charge can ask any disruptive student to leave.

307. FIELD TRIPS

Field trips provide students with a meaningful and educationally rich off-campus experience. They enhance student learning and provide opportunities for our students to enter into the learning process by seeing, hearing, touching, tasting, and participating in ways that may not be possible on campus. Because HCA is a small school, many times a field trip will be most cost-effective when students are transported in parent cars. Parents with a valid Driver's License, acceptable vehicle insurance (a policy with \$100,000/300,000 collision coverage), and a current CORI will be allowed to drive and chaperone students. When a teacher (or team of teachers) plans a field trip, they will communicate all the trip details to the parents using a Field Trip

Permission Form (either a paper form, when no payment is required, or using a digital FACTS form when payment is required for the trip). Parents should return or submit the form to indicate permission for the child to attend, authorization for FACTS payment (if applicable), as well as to indicate if they are available to volunteer as a chaperone. *If a parent indicates they can chaperone on the field trip permission form, their participation will be anticipated and they will not be notified.* Parents may not chaperone a group of students, and may not receive School Service hours, if they bring an infant, toddler, or younger non-HCA student. In some cases, the field trips are conducive to allowing additional siblings to attend, and parents are encouraged to discuss this with the Teacher or Field Trip Coordinator. Payment for students and chaperones will be billed through FACTS accordingly.

Transportation details, student safety, daily schedule information will be reviewed with students and chaperones by the Teachers, Principal or Field Trip Coordinator on the morning of each field trip. Field Trip Uniforms will be required by all HCA students, which includes a royal blue HCA logo polo.

ACADEMICS

401. HOMEWORK

Homework is important to reinforce classroom skills, to study for tests and quizzes, and to work on research projects. As a general rule, most students will be given some homework to complete each night starting in first grade. A rule of thumb for expected amounts is ten minutes per grade. That means first graders can expect ten minutes, second graders 20 minutes, and seventh graders 70 minutes per night. *Nightly reading is not included in these totals. Each student in the school is expected to read every night. Amounts depend on the grade but somewhere between 15 and 45 minutes is expected.*

Naturally many factors influence the amount of time students spend each night. Some of these variable factors include:

- ❖ Natural aptitude of the student in the subject
- ❖ Focus/concentration levels
- ❖ Use of class/study hall/WIN time during the school day. Many diligent students can get a good start on their homework by making good use of these opportunities
- ❖ Health/Emotional issues
- ❖ Environment in which homework is done
- ❖ Learning Disabilities

If your child has worked diligently for the time suggested above, is exhausted, sick, or unable to complete the night's work, please write a note to the teacher, and every consideration will be given to the individual needs of the child.

In the case of a learning disability or other extenuating circumstances, homework can be modified. The individual specifications of modifications will be determined at a parent/ teacher/ principal conference.

The classroom teacher will determine the consequence for late and/or missing homework. Any questions concerning homework assignments should be directed to the individual teachers.

In the case of absence, the school should be called and homework requested. If requested, the teachers will collect assignments, books etc. and send them home with a person designated by the family. Students have the equivalent of their sick days to turn in missed assignments.

See section 603 for *Homework Help by Parents*

402. GRADING SYSTEM

The grading system used for grades 3-8 is as follows:

98-100 A+	88-89 B+	78-79 C+	68-69 D+
93-97 A	83-87 B	73-77 C	63-67 D
90-92 A-	80-82 B-	70-72 C-	60-62 D-
Below 60 = Fail			

Students in Preschool, Kindergarten, and Grade 1 & 2 will receive report cards indicating their developmental progress and educational benchmarks in a variety of areas, and will not receive letter grades.

Incomplete: An incomplete will be given on a report card when extenuating circumstances* prevent a student from completing the required assignments in a given term. Instead of a zero for such assignments, the student may complete the assignment for **partial** credit if the assignments are handed in by the agreed upon time. If a student receives an incomplete on their report card and completes missing work, their grade will be recalculated and reflected on the next term's report card.

*Allowing an incomplete is at the discretion of the teacher in consultation with the Principal and the parents.

403. REPORT CARDS

Report cards are issued to students four times a year. PK report cards will be sent home as a hard copy; Grades K-8 will be delivered digitally via email. Report cards sent electronically should be viewed and printed within 2 weeks.

404. PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES

Teachers or parents are at liberty to request a conference at any time during the academic year. At the end of the first and third terms we will hold Parent-Teacher Conferences where the report card will be given to the parents and progress and concerns will be discussed. Middle School teachers may choose to only hold conferences with specific students' families, and ask that the student attend the conference. Parent Teacher Conference days are half-days, with dismissal of all students at 11:30am. There is no After School Program on half-days.

405. PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Physical education is an important aspect of the growth of young people. All children are expected to participate in these classes. A note from home is needed for a student to be excused.

All students are required to wear their HCA logo t-shirt on their PE day, as well as comfortable/athletic pants or finger-tip length shorts. Please avoid wearing long or dangling jewelry on PE days. Athletic/running sneakers are also a part of the PE uniform. Long hair should be tied back. Proper PE attire will be factored into each K-8 student's participation grade.

406. STUDENT RECORDS

When students graduate or transfer to a different school, HCA will transfer their records upon written request signed by a parent/guardian. Please send requests to the school office and allow one week's processing time or longer during the summer.

407. GUIDANCE

The teachers and administration work with students in their eighth grade year, to ensure that they have the necessary paperwork including grades and recommendations as requested, and that they have the information necessary for a successful high school transition.

TUITION, PROGRAMS, & FEES

501. TUITION AND FEES PAYMENT

All families, whether paying in full or monthly, will enroll with FACTS as part of the enrollment process. All tuition, fees, and incidental charges (field trips, School Supply fees, After School program, etc.) are billed through this system. FACTS charges a yearly fee determined by and paid directly to FACTS. These fees are outlined in our re-enrollment information each year.

Each spring, HCA will publish the following school year's tuition rates, as well as information regarding financial aid. Families will update their enrollment online; this will consist of updating demographic and emergency information, indicating agreement to policies, and choosing a tuition payment plan for the upcoming school year.

If a family chooses monthly payments and does not make payments starting in June, they will be responsible to make the total of June through August payments through FACTS before their child can start the school year.

Delinquency of tuition payment will result in late fees and eventually jeopardize the child's ability to continue in the school program. There is a fee for any checks returned, equal to the amount charged by HCA's bank.

Holden Christian Academy is committed to consistently deliver the school program, whether in our building or remotely, dependent on circumstances such as government mandates. If the

building is closed due to any unforeseeable circumstances or events, including, but not limited to, any earthquake, fire, flooding, hurricane, tornado, any other "act of God", war, action or order by any governmental or civil authority, act of terrorism, epidemic, pandemic, state of emergency, or any other event beyond the control of Holden Christian Academy, remote instruction will be delivered as soon as is reasonable, practical and safe under the circumstances.

In order to continue the program, and meet all areas of the school budget, it is imperative that all families commit to necessary remote learning activities, and continue to make regular tuition payments.

In the event Holden Christian Academy's building is closed for a period of time and must deliver course work remotely due to event under this clause, Parent agrees that Holden Christian Academy is under no obligation to cancel, waive, or refund any portion of tuition that has already been paid, or is due and owed, to Holden Christian Academy.

Extenuating personal circumstances can be brought to the School Committee for consideration, allowing for delayed payment dates, postponing payments or restructuring payment plans. If payment is not made, Parent is considered to be withdrawing their child(ren) and it is understood that immediate enrollment in another K-8 educational program is required by the state.

If a family needs to withdraw from HCA, they will simply need to submit a written notice of withdrawal to the school office or click the "will not enroll" button in the FACTS Family Portal if the re-enrollment period is currently open. Re-enrollment for the following school year begins in January. HCA recognizes that family plans change. For any unique circumstances such as the following, families withdrawing after May 31 will be exempt from the tuition penalty:

- moving/Relocation 25+ miles away from HCA
- educational needs for the student can no longer be met at HCA, as determined by the HCA Special Ed. Team including student's parents
- student withdrawal at the request of HCA
- other circumstances as approved by the School Committee

Tuition Penalties:

- If a family withdraws their child from the school during the academic year, the family is responsible for the full tuition for the semester in which the child is participating. Semester break is at the end of Term 2, in late January.
- If a family withdraws their child(ren) from the school during June, July, or August, before school begins, they will be responsible for monthly payments through the month of notification of withdrawal.
- Exceptions to this policy will only be granted in the case of extreme hardship, subject to unanimous approval of the School Committee.

502. BEFORE/AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAMS

Your child's safety is a priority at HCA. It is therefore imperative that children are supervised at all times. Fees will be updated on our website and parents will complete a registration agreement form at the beginning of each school year.

Early Drop-off Policy and Fee

You may sign up for Before School Care using the web form found in your FACTS Family Portal. BSC is available from 7:30-8:00 a.m. in the gym for \$5 per student. This care will be provided in the gym, and parents should ring the doorbell at the Student Entrance Door to alert a staff member of their presence. Parents should not leave their child until he/she has been placed in the care of an HCA staff member.

Schedule for After School Care, Monday through Friday

The After School Program is available on a first-come-first-serve basis. Parents must make a reservation by 12:00pm daily, by signing up through the web form found in your FACTS Family Portal. You may also sign up in advance for the whole school year, or certain days of the week. ASP runs 3-6pm Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday, and 2-6pm on Wednesday. After School Care Fee: the following fees will be charged per day (billed monthly):

	<u>Pick up by 4:30 p.m.</u>	<u>Pick up by 6:00 p.m.</u>
1 Child:	\$25 pickup by 4:30pm;	Pickup by 6:00pm \$30
2 Siblings:	\$35 pickup by 4:30pm;	Pickup by 6:00pm \$40
3 Siblings	\$45 pickup by 4:30pm;	Pickup by 6:00pm \$50
4 Siblings	\$55 pickup by 4:40pm;	Pickup by 6:00pm \$60

\$5 per minute per child from 6:01pm on.

Late Policy: Parents will be charged for after school care based on actual pick-up time. If a child leaves after school care past 4:30 p.m, the 6:00 p.m. fee will be charged. For each child who leaves after school care past 6:00 p.m., a charge will be assessed of \$5 per minute late.

For any child not picked up by 3:00 p.m, and not signed up for ASP, parents may be charged \$1/minute, billed on a weekly basis. If they are not picked up by 3:15pm, they will be enrolled in our After School Program for that day, and charged according to the schedule above.

Payment Policies: You will be billed for the days your child(ren) are checked in to ASP or BSC, and all charges will be added weekly to your FACTS account. Late pick up charges will be added to FACTS accounts weekly.

503. FINANCIAL AID - *Needs-based, applications yearly*

All families who are awarded assistance will be required to actively participate in activities to raise funds for the following year's recipients. Participation in these activities will factor into award considerations in subsequent applications.

Applications and supporting documentation required by FACTS Grant & Aid are due by the third Friday in April to be considered in the first round of financial aid awards. If families miss this

initial deadline, they may apply and provide supporting documentation by the third Friday in May for consideration in the second round. Please be aware that the majority of financial aid monies will be awarded during the first round. Applicants can apply at <https://online.factsmgt.com/aid>. There is an application fee of \$35. This fee is paid directly to FACTS Grant and Aid, who processes our applications. Award decisions are made by the HCA School Committee and will be reviewed on an individual basis.

504. LATE PAYMENT POLICY

Holden Christian Academy is committed to making the financial obligations of a Christian education both clear and affordable to families. The fees, tuition deposits, and payment schedules are carefully explained and structured to enable HCA to pay its operating expenses and salary obligations in a cost-effective and timely manner. It is, therefore, very important that families take seriously the need to pay fees and tuition on time. HCA recognizes that a private Christian education is a challenge to a family budget. It is therefore the policy of the HCA School Committee to work with families who contact the Committee in writing when circumstances arise that prevent them from paying on time, in order to find a solution that honors God and these obligations.

- **FACTS** - HCA uses the FACTS program to evaluate families Financial Aid needs and generously supports families who qualify in accordance with the program guidelines and budgetary allowances.
- **Insufficient Funds** - In the event that funds are not available on the scheduled day of FACTS withdrawal, the family is charged an administrative fee by FACTS and the account is placed in “delinquent” status. After a total of 3 unsuccessful withdrawal attempts which occur over a period of 20 days (each time with a FACTS fee), the FACTS account is placed in “unresolved” status. This can be avoided if the HCA Office is contacted by the family prior to the scheduled automatic withdrawal date to request an extension or provide new account information.
- **30 Days** - On a monthly basis, the HCA Office will check to see if any families are in “Unresolved” status. These families will be contacted by phone with a request that they provide updated account information or other details of why they are unable to pay. They will be informed that they will need to meet with the School Committee if their account reaches 60 days in “Unresolved” status.
- **60 Days** - In the event that fees and/or tuition payments are overdue by 60 days, without previously contacting the Committee, a letter will be sent to the family reminding them of the overdue obligation and requesting a family meeting with the School Committee to establish a payment plan.
- **120 Days** - After 120 days, in the absence of an approved plan, the Committee will notify the family in writing that their child(ren) are withdrawn from HCA. HCA reserves the right to apply any re-enrollment, fees or tuition deposits towards the accrued debt.
- **Re-enrollment** - Families will not be able to re-enroll their children for the next school year until any past due money has been fully paid or they are adhering to a payment plan authorized by the school committee.

- **Collections** - HCA reserves the right to seek collection of past due amounts using a third-party collection agency or other means.

ADDENDUMS

601. SPECIAL NEEDS PHILOSOPHY

At HCA we believe that we are all created in the image of God and therefore reflect God in many ways. As humans we are creative, inquisitive, social, emotional, and can possess a myriad of attributes of our heavenly Father. We also realize that we live in a fallen world and that everything in it is imperfect in some way, including us. The ramifications of this are many in an educational setting. Therefore at HCA we believe the following:

1. No one is a perfect learner.
2. Everyone has strengths and weaknesses.
3. We all need to share our strengths and ask for help with our weaknesses.
4. We all need each other.
5. When one's weakness causes learning issues, we
 - a. investigate it with parents.
 - b. help it with modifications.
 - c. strategize to compensate for it for life.

As a small private school we have our own strengths and weaknesses when it comes to meeting the needs of those who learn differently and/or have special needs.

Weaknesses

1. We have a small Special Needs Department.
 - a) a. We do not have the ability for 1 on 1 instruction.
 - b) b. We do not have the staffing for instructional aides in the classrooms.
 - c) c. We do not have "pull out" instruction other than reading.
2. We do not have a formal ELL (English Language Learner) program.

Strengths

1. We can and do pray with, for, and about our students.
2. We can partner with parents systematically as needed (weekly, monthly or quarterly).
3. We are free to name issues and deal with them head on by educating all parties involved.
4. We can create a classroom environment of love, understanding, and compassion.
5. We can enlist the help of other students who understand the issues if requested.
6. We can strategize with parents and the students and all work closely together to meet the needs of the student.
7. Most of our staff have Special Needs training and are able to employ a variety of strategies in the classroom.

8. Many of our staff have successfully dealt with special needs in their own families and are willing to personally share their stories and encourage parents and students.
9. The average number of students is 10-12 per classroom, so automatically students receive more attention.
10. We have a reading specialist who is a certified Wilson Instructor. (Wilson is a premier multisensory program for struggling readers.) She is able to take small groups for reading as well as provide one on one tutoring for an additional fee.
11. Teacher may be able to provide afterschool supplemental tutoring (fee) or provide an extra help class for any student in need.
12. Teachers use differentiated instruction, integrated instruction and project based learning on a regular basis in the classrooms (all of which are proven to be helpful to struggling learners).

Strategies:

When issues become apparent we,

1. Meet with the parents to determine if a formal evaluation or a team contract is necessary.
2. If an evaluation is deemed necessary, the parent will request an evaluation from the public school the child would attend in their district.
3. Have the parents, teacher and principal attend the TEAM meeting at the public school where the test results are discussed with the testers and a determination is made of the issue.
4. The group decides if there is a specific learning disability, if so an IEP (Individual Educational Plan) is created.
5. Another meeting is called at HCA with the parents, teachers and principal to discuss the IEP. HCA honestly relates what we are and are not able to provide at HCA. Parents and staff then make decisions as to the best placement.
6. If HCA is determined to be the best fit, we then draw up a Three Way Contract that clearly delineates the responsibilities of the teachers, parents and students.
7. A schedule is created to review progress and tweak the contract as necessary.

All students must be able to comply with the admission expectations (see separate document) in order to be accepted and have continued enrollment at HCA.

602. THE INCLUSION OF THE STUDY OF MYTHOLOGY IN THE HCA CURRICULUM

The Importance of Teaching about Mythology

The curriculum design of HCA has three basic distinctives. It is, first of all, concept based rather than fact based. Students are taught to formulate universally true concepts and then are enabled to illustrate the truth of those concepts by the evidence of pertinent facts.

Secondly, it is a spiraled curriculum: single concepts are taught several times and at different grade and developmental levels, always building on groundwork laid previously and preparing for future enrichment.

Thirdly, it is integrated: it seeks to enable students to make connections between otherwise artificially compartmentalized disciplines, in all facets of learning.

The study and understanding of ancient and modern cultures and civilizations is basic and integral to this curriculum design. Literature, mathematics, language, science and religion are variously fostered and nurtured or repressed and neglected in their historic and sociological contexts. For example, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob revealed himself in history by creating and appointing the nation of Israel as the guardians of his law.

The study of ancient and modern civilizations and cultures not only allows the spiraling and integration of concepts necessary to our curriculum, but also provides a classical framework for independent inquiry.

One of the most important reasons for the study of history is to learn from the past. The lessons of the past are either positive or negative. The relationship between the religions practiced by various civilizations and the historical fate of those civilizations is a fertile area of study when attempting to teach the lessons of the past to elementary school students.

Mythology, reflecting the religious beliefs and the connecting with nature that was central to the ancients, is an essential element to the study of many cultures. An attempt to study these cultures without exploring their myth telling would be shallow and inadequate. A people's myths tell more about them, perhaps, than their scientific or mathematical achievements.

The Teaching of Mythology at HCA

Notwithstanding their value, it is imperative that these religions/myths are described from the appropriate (i.e., Christian) perspective. Their teachers unequivocally verify that these myths are taught in the following manner:

- ❖ These myths are not presented as the truth about the way the universe came into being or how the cosmos is governed.
- ❖ Mythology does not overshadow the teaching of biblical truth.
- ❖ The difference between mythological tales and biblical truth is clearly drawn for the student.

It is also imperative the HCA students are acquiring an appropriate (i.e., Christian) perspective on mythology. It is to this end that the HCA teachers routinely ask the students the following questions:

- ❖ Are the mythological gods real Gods?
- ❖ Were they ever real Gods?

- ❖ How do you know they are not real Gods?
- ❖ Who is the true God?

Conclusion

The study of ancient religions and myths is an important part of the integrated curriculum taught at HCA. A study of history or sociology would be catastrophically incomplete without the study of religions and myths. The teaching at HCA about the religions and myths of various cultures is clearly from a Christian perspective. The students at HCA are gaining knowledge and understanding about various religions and myths. Without exception, this knowledge and understanding reflects a Christian perspective.

603. HOMEWORK HELP BY PARENTS

Levels of Assistance: How much is enough? When is it too much?

These are common questions at any school and not easy ones to answer. All children need extra help at times but when is it too much or too little? At HCA we have students at a variety of academic levels, often the same child is at differing levels in different subjects. We want to work together in partnership with parents to help the child when needed in an appropriate manner. In order to best answer your questions we have drawn up this little form so that the student will receive the amount of help needed for an assignment and both the parent and teacher will know the level of help needed to complete an assignment. If too many students need more than level one assistance from home, the assignment may need to be changed. If one student is continually in need of higher level help in order to be successful, it may be indicative of learning issues that need to be addressed. Communication between parent and home is imperative!

Our goal is to start at the level of student need and work together toward level one. Skill levels, frustration levels, and academic ability will be our guides as we work together. Clear documentation of assistance level is important for true assessment of skill and knowledge for the student, parents, teachers and future teachers.

All of these levels are appropriate if they are truly warranted. Level 3 and 4 assistance should be reported to the teacher on the homework by the parent.

☐ **LEVEL 1** (appropriate and expected amount of parental help)

The parent

- ☐ Checked assignments
- ☐ Clarified instructions
- ☐ Pointed out issues with mechanics, wording, answers, etc. on completed assignment
- ☐ Checked corrections

- ☐ Quizzed student from study sheet, notes, text

☐ **LEVEL 2**

The parent

- ☐ Did the level one help PLUS
- ☐ Was available during assignment and was called upon more than twice for ideas, suggestions, help with skills, clarification & motivation

☐ **LEVEL 3**

The parent

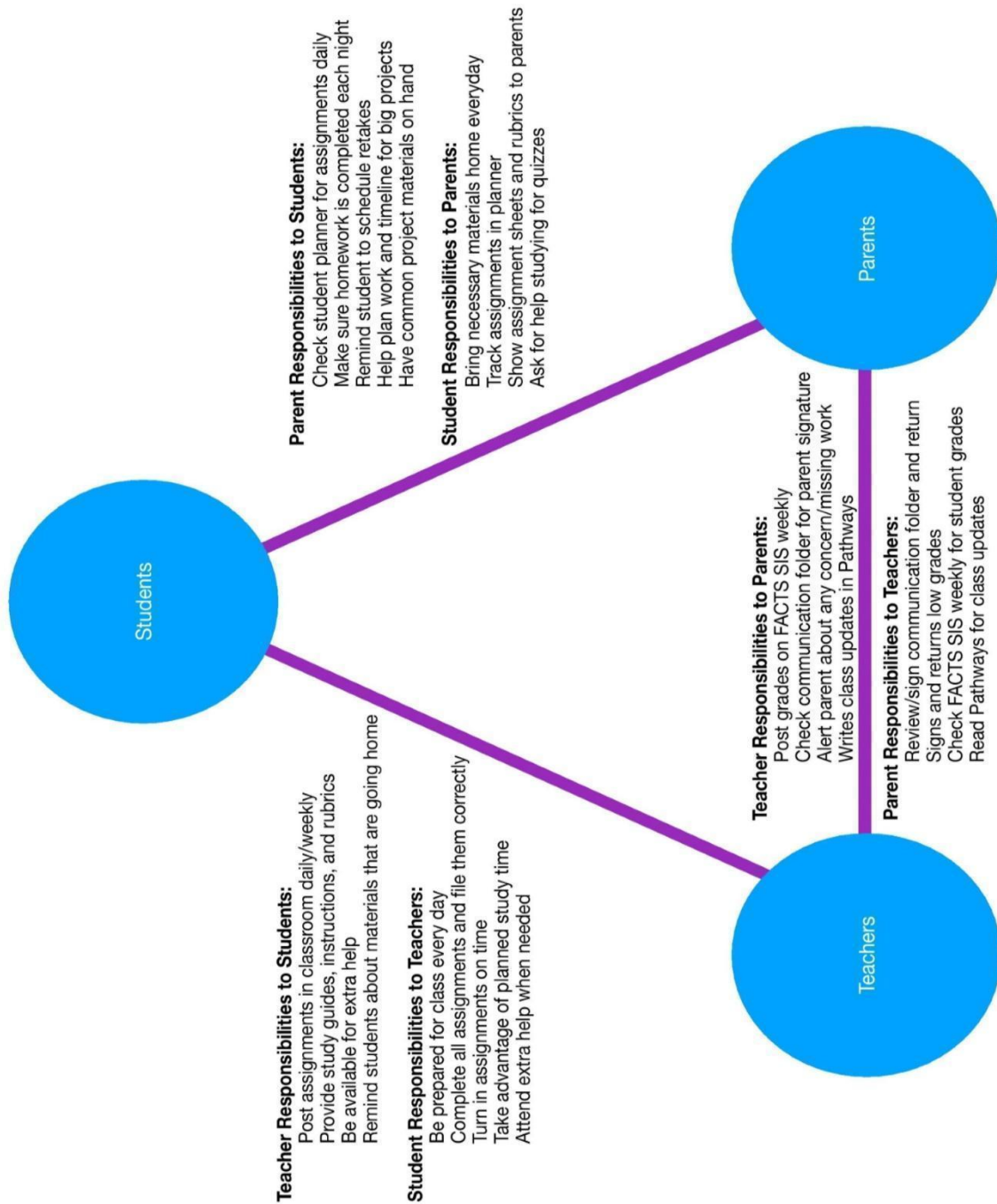
- ☐ Did levels 1 & 2 help PLUS
- ☐ Read the text/literature with/for the student
- ☐ Created methods/games/study sheets with /for the student
- ☐ Was actively involved in the completion of assignment
- ☐ Needed to continually push/motivate/distress student

☐ **LEVEL 4**

The parent

- ☐ Did levels 1 & 2 & 3 PLUS
- ☐ Walked student through entire assignment
- ☐ Made repeated suggestions, clarifications & helped with wording at every step
- ☐ Present and helping at all times
- ☐ Tutored student through the entire assignment

604. TEACHER, PARENT, STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES



605. SAMPLE CLASSROOM BEHAVIOR REPORT

I would like to make you aware of _____'s behavior in class today:

- **inappropriate** language
- **interfering** with a lesson
- showing **disrespect** to others
- **refusing** to do any work
- **not cooperating**
- coming to class **unprepared**
- making distracting **noises**
- **damaging** classroom material
- **arguing** with a teacher
- **leaving the classroom** without permission
- **refusing to leave** the classroom
- wearing **offensive or inappropriate clothing**
- **hurting** another person, **fighting**
- inappropriate **rough** play

other: _____

Disciplinary Measures Taken: _____ warning given _____ momentarily removed from classroom _____ sent to the office

Teacher: _____ Date: _____ Class: _____

Student Signature: _____

Parent Signature: _____ Date: _____

I was not prepared for class today.

Student's name: _____ **Date:** _____

Class name (circle): Bible History/Social Studies Geography

L.A. Science F.F.L. Math

Please check all that apply:

- I did not have the required materials for class today (ie: textbook, binder, planner, pencil, etc.)
- I did not have my homework completed by the beginning of the school day.

Missing Assignment: (please be specific)

Parent-Student Handbook 40

Please provide an explanation for your unpreparedness today.

Student Signature

Date

Parent Signature

Date

Teacher Signature

Date

Action taken: _____

606. SAMPLE ACADEMIC NOTIFICATION

To be returned to the homeroom teacher the following school day

Student's name: _____

Date: _____

Class name: _____ **Teacher:** _____

Please check all that apply:

- I did not have the required materials for class today
(for example: textbook, binder, planner, pencil, etc.)
- I did not have my homework completed by the beginning of the school day.
- I was not prepared for the scheduled activity
(for example: not dressed appropriately, not prepared for class discussion, etc.).
- I did not return a document that required a signature from my parent.

Teacher comment:

Student improvement plan to avoid in the future: (2-3 sentences)

Student Signature

Date

Parent Signature

Date

Teacher Signature

Date

607. SAMPLE BEHAVIORAL DEMERIT

Student: _____ Date of Issue: _____

Your child is receiving a behavioral demerit as a result of:

Level 1 Misbehaviors (students may apply for a Level 1 Merit two weeks from the date of the demerit)

- Inappropriate response to correction
- Out of area (when a student is not where he/she is supposed to be)
- Visible or ringing cell phone, or use before 3:00pm (or 6:00pm if in the After School Program)
- Bringing electronic devices to school without written permission from a staff member
- Mild inappropriate language or distracting noises
- Inappropriate rough play or behavior (potentially dangerous)
- Arguing with a staff member
- Deceitful behavior - forgery, plagiarism, lying, cheating, hiding communications

Comments: _____

Level 2 Misbehaviors (students may apply for Level 2 Merit 4 weeks from the date of the demerit)

- Rude, inappropriate, hurtful, or disrespectful language or behavior (swearing, etc)
- Destruction of school property
- Bullying/intimidating other students

Comments: _____

Level 3 Misbehaviors (Warrants immediate suspension from school through the following school day)

- Physical violence
- Possession of a weapon or other dangerous object at school (gun, knife, fireworks, etc.)
- Sexual harassment
- Bringing pornographic material to school
- Major disruptive behavior

Comments: _____

Your child has _____ behavioral demerit(s). If a student accumulates three behavioral demerits (of any level), a meeting will be scheduled within 72 hours that includes parents, student, and administration to create a behavior plan. If a meeting cannot be scheduled within this time period, the student will have an *in-house suspension until a meeting occurs. In any situation, the administration reserves the right to pursue further disciplinary action, including Behavioral Probation, Suspension, and/or Expulsion depending on the number of offenses and/or severity of the situation.

*A student with an in-house suspension will be separated from other students for the day while continuing to complete school work.

Signature of Issuing Teacher/Staff _____
Signature of Parent/Guardian _____

Please sign this demerit and return it to your child's homeroom teacher within two school days.
If a student wishes to appeal a demerit, he or she must do so in writing within 48 hours of issuance.

608. SAMPLE LEVEL 1 MERIT APPLICATION

Procedure:

1. Two weeks after the last Level 1 Behavioral Demerit was issued, a student is eligible to apply for a Level 1 Merit if his/her behavior has improved.
2. Applications for merits are available from the homeroom teachers.
3. Student completes the first section and submits form to the homeroom teacher.
4. The homeroom teacher may then sign, signifying that there have been no more demerits **and** there has been a positive change in the student's behavior.
5. The teacher then leaves the the application in the office for the principal to sign.
6. Once signed, the principal returns the merit to the homeroom teacher. The teacher will then attach a copy of the merit to the original demerit, deleting the demerit from the tally, and return the original merit to the student to take home.

Student's name: _____ Date: _____

Date of last behavioral demerit: _____

Student: *I believe that my behavior has changed for the better and that I deserve this merit.*

Student's signature: _____

Teacher: *It is my opinion that this student is worthy of this merit because two weeks have passed since the last behavioral demerit and there has been a positive change in this student's behavior.*

Teacher's signature: _____ Date: _____

Congratulations! You have have received a Level 1 Merit. Keep up the good work!

Principal's signature: _____ Date: _____

As of today, you have _____ Behavioral Demerits on record.

SAMPLE LEVEL 2 MERIT APPLICATION

Procedure:

1. Four weeks after the last Level 2 Behavioral Demerit was issued, a student is eligible to apply for a Level 2 Merit if his/her behavior has improved.
2. Applications for merits are available from the homeroom teachers.
3. Student completes the first section and submits form to the homeroom teacher.
4. The homeroom teacher may then sign, signifying that there have been no more demerits **and** there has been a positive change in the student's behavior.
5. The teacher then leaves the the application in the office for the principal to sign.
6. Once signed, the principal returns the merit to the homeroom teacher. The teacher will then attach a copy of the merit to the original demerit, deleting the demerit from the tally, and return the original merit to the student to take home.

Student's name: _____ Date: _____

Date of last behavioral demerit: _____

On an attached sheet (typed or neatly handwritten) please write a one-page essay that includes the following:

- 1) A brief explanation of the behavior that caused you to receive a demerit
- 2) Steps you took to prevent this behavior from happening again
- 3) A Biblical application. For example, find a verse or two that points out why your behavior was wrong, and apply it to your situation.

If your behavior injured or offended another person (student, teacher, staff member), have you apologized? _____ How did you apologize? _____

What was the outcome? _____

Student: *I believe that my behavior has changed for the better and that I deserve this merit.*

Student's signature: _____

Teacher: *It is my opinion that this student is worthy of this merit because four weeks have passed since the last behavioral demerit and there has been a positive change in this student's behavior.*

Teacher's signature: _____ Date: _____

Congratulations! You have have received a Level 2 Merit. Keep up the good work!

Principal's signature: _____ Date: _____

As of today, you have _____ Behavioral Demerits on record.

609. SAMPLE DISCIPLINARY ACTION FORM

To the parent/guardian of:

Student Name: _____ Address: _____

Regular Education: _____ Special Education: _____

Phone#: _____ Email: _____

Date parent was notified and how: _____

In accordance with 603 CMR 53.00, your child:

- Has been assigned to after-school detention for a period of _____ days.
- Is being suspended from school for a period of _____ days.
- Has been placed on a parent-conference suspension and cannot return to school until a parent/legal guardian has a conference with a school administrator.

The reason(s) for the action taken include:

Your child:

- Has been recommended for expulsion pending a hearing. You will be contacted with the date of the hearing. Parents have the right to view all of the evidence to be presented by the school at the expulsion hearing.
- Can return to school after the last suspension date. The suspension will start on _____ and end on _____. Your child can return to school on _____. Educational services will be provided to your child by the school from _____ to _____ during this period of time.
- Can return to school after a parent has a conference with a school administrator.
- Must complete detention days or a 3-day suspension will be given. After school detentions will start on _____ and end on _____.

For after-school detentions and suspensions, your child must wear school attire, report on time, stay until _____, refrain from talking or eating during the detention/suspension session, refrain from sleeping, and complete all school work given to them.

We regret that it has been necessary to take disciplinary action. If you desire further information concerning this matter, you may contact the school at (508)828-4418.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Cleveland, Principal

610. HCA SNACK & LUNCH IDEAS

Dear Parents, we know packing your child's lunchbox can be a challenging task. Your kiddo likes grapes one week, but not the next. You scour ingredients lists then realize you sent something that may contain nuts. You spend tired minutes packing lunches to have them come home hardly eaten. We are here to support you with some ideas, simple guidelines, and perspective.



Love, The HCA Teachers

The Main Goal: Pack foods that will satisfy hunger and fuel your child for learning.

Guidelines to Keep in Mind:

- No candy, soda, or energy drinks
- Small dessert items are allowed and students will be able to eat them after lunch
- Items cannot be reheated at school (unless otherwise specified by the teacher)
- HCA's nut free policy which includes anything that "may contain nuts"
- Classroom and/or team specific policies due to a severe allergy in the group
- Reusable or disposable utensils should be sent in
- Teachers partner with you by not allowing students to throw any food away at school

Ideas: Pick and choose things that may work well for your child/family...

- Pack lunches the night before or for a group of days at once (example: pack Monday- Wednesday lunches on Sunday afternoon)
- Provide your child with a checklist of categories or lists of approved items and allow them to pack their own lunch
- Heat leftovers in the morning and send to school in a thermos
- Skip the idea of the main course and simply pack lots of healthy sides

Snack & Lunch Inspiration

PROTEIN

- Meats
- Cold Cuts
- Cheese
- Beans
- Olives
- Eggs
- Seeds
- Seed Butter
- Milk
- Yogurt
- Guacamole
- Hummus
- Veggie Dip
- Non-meat or non-dairy substitutes
- Smoothie
- Protein Bar (check carefully for “may contain nuts”)

FRUIT

- Oranges
- Clementines
- Apples
- Strawberries
- Grapes
- Peaches
- Blueberries
- Raspberries
- Mangoes
- Melon
- Applesauce
- Kiwi
- Fruit cup (in 100% juice)
- etc.

VEGETABLE

- Carrots
- Cucumbers
- Grape Tomatoes
- Edamame
- Snap Peas
- Peppers
- Celery
- Pickles
- Coleslaw

GRAIN

- Muffin
- Sandwich Bread
- Wrap
- Crackers
- Goldfish
- Bagel
- Oatmeal
- Rice
- Rice Cakes
- Pasta
- Pretzels
- Granola Bar (check carefully for “may contain nuts”)

DESSERT

- Fruit strips
- Fruit snacks
- Yogurt
- Cookie
- Chocolate chips or a small chocolate
- Energy Balls

611. PRESCHOOL ADDENDUM

License Exempt Status

The HCA Preschool Program is exempt from MA State Licensing requirements through the Department of Early Education and Care due to its inclusion with Holden Christian Academy, an ACSI accredited private school. HCA Preschool specifically adheres to best practices from the EE National Health and Safety Standards.

Arrival and Dismissal Procedures

Arrival Procedure: *Please drop off your preschooler AFTER dropping off your K-8th grade children in the morning.*

The main door to the church/Preschool area will be locked during school hours. It is set to unlock for 15 minute intervals for Arrival (8:00-8:15am) and Dismissal (2:45-3pm). The Preschool foyer door will be opened by a staff member promptly at 8am and 2:45, during arrival and dismissal times, respectively. Parents are to park under the carport along the curb, or in the lot adjacent to the carport area, and enter through the single glass door. Parents are encouraged to enter the Preschool foyer area to help their child hang up their coat and backpack, but are asked to say their goodbyes at the Preschool 1/2 door.

Dismissal Procedure: *Please pick up your preschooler BEFORE picking up your K-8th grade children in the afternoon. Proceed with caution to the K-8 pick up line.*

Dismissal time is 2:45pm. We ask that all parents arrive 5 minutes before dismissal time. Parents are to park under the carport along the curb, or in the lot adjacent to the carport area, and enter through the single glass door. Children will be called by name to come into the Preschool foyer to be picked up by their parent/caregiver. Students will only be dismissed to parents and people on their “authorized pick up” list. You may send in a note, call the school office, or inform the preschool teacher to make a note giving permission for others to pick up the student. Teachers will ask to see a photo ID *during the first week of school* AND whenever a *person other than the parent is coming for pickup*.

Please be respectful of the dismissal time for both the sake of your child, as well as for our Preschool Staff. Children waiting for a late parent can feel distressed as they see their classmates being picked up. Adequate time is also needed for our Preschool Staff to clean up after the school day and make necessary preparations for the following day. Promptly at 3pm, any remaining children will be accompanied by a Preschool Staff member to the Main Office, where parents will be contacted. The Main Office will charge a fee to parents who are late for dismissal.

If you need to dismiss your child early, or arrive late for any reason, please tell the Preschool Staff or call the Main Office with the projected dismissal/arrival time. When you arrive at the school, park at the church entrance/carport, and call the Main Office (they will inform the classroom); a Preschool Staff member will meet you to receive your child, or bring your child to you.

Wednesday is EARLY Dismissal at 1:45PM for all students Preschool-8th grade.

Before and After School Care

Before and After School care is available from 7:30-8am and 3-6pm daily. This is a multi-grade program including Preschool, supervised all together in a larger space. Parents must *make a reservation for this program in advance* through the HCA website—it cannot accommodate last minute situations or late pick up. Please see the **Before/After School Program* information in the HCA Handbook.

Illness Management for Sick Child Isolation

A sick child (see HCA Handbook Policy for definition) is *isolated* in the Preschool Foyer away from other students and is directly supervised by a Preschool staff until their parent arrives for pickup. The school security camera and the Preschool ½ door left open ensure the staff member and the student are not alone together, providing accountability and safety for both the child and staff.

If only 2 staff members are present, a sick child is isolated within a corner of the preschool classroom away from other students. If sufficient preschool staffing is not available, the student is brought to the K-8 isolation room in the school office.

Nutrition

Nutrition guidelines for healthy snacks and birthday celebrations are followed according to the HCA Family Handbook. Snack and lunch are provided by families with recommendations from our nutrition guidelines. For class celebrations, we align our food choices with our Food for Life Program, offering primarily nutritious celebratory food options and limited treat offerings.

Proper Handwashing

Proper handwashing with soap and water is practiced in preschool and supervised by teachers during these times of the school day:

Upon arrival to school

Before and after eating snack

Before and after eating lunch

After toileting

After nose blowing/using a tissue

Personal Student Medical Needs (allergies and special concerns)

Individual student epi-pens, Benadryl, and inhalers are kept in the locked file cabinet in the Preschool Classroom. The proper documentation for administering student medication, and *Parent-Student Handbook 50*

documentation from their prescribing physician, is also kept in this locked filing cabinet. A Red Alert indicating their allergy or medical need and its accompanying symptoms and treatment are posted exclusively for all staff to refer to.

EE Policy for Toy and Classroom Sanitation (EE Indicator 11)

In the HCA Preschool Program, we follow the Guidelines and Routine Schedule for Cleaning, Sanitizing and Disinfecting, according to the [National Health and Safety Performance Standards](#).

Naptime

Children are provided with at least one hour of quiet rest activities by law in Massachusetts. Three year olds are to be given 1 ½ hours of quiet time (this includes resting or napping on a cot, listening to music or books, looking at books, doing puzzles or quiet table activities).

- Expectations- children are expected to quietly stay on their cot during rest time. Preschool staff watch over the children, and give gentle touch on backs and soothing words as needed.
- Children may bring in a lovey item to bring comfort.
- Preschool staff help children to dress their cots with their rolled blanket mat. This helps prepare them for the transition to naptime.
- After rest time on the cot, a quiet activity is provided - coloring, puzzles, play dough, journaling (some children may still be sleeping at this time)

Technology Use Policy in EE (Indicator 7.4)

In the HCA Preschool Program, we follow American Academy of Pediatrics Early Education technology guidelines, which prioritize limited, purposeful, and active engagement, and generally recommend:

- Less than 30–60 minutes daily for ages 2-5, with a focus on interactive, educational content rather than passive viewing
- avoiding screens during meals
- utilizing 15-20 minute sessions at a time, with teacher introduction and follow up
- content is previewed by staff for overall content and age appropriateness before viewing

When viewing longer content for special occasions, parents will be informed ahead of time in writing.

Preschool Behavior Management Plan

What happens if a child's behavior is not safe?

If a child is not being safe because they are doing something that can harm themselves or is harmful to others (example: throwing a toy, jumping on the couch, climbing classroom furniture, hurting another person out of aggression, etc.), they are removed from the situation. While these behaviors can be typical of preschool development, they are unacceptable in our classroom setting. Children are guided through redirection (including sitting in a chair or the calming corner, holding a teacher's hand or sitting next to a teacher, or spending time engaging in an acceptable expression of movement/sensory input) all with the end goal of helping their bodies and emotions to regulate. Teachers will give the child a clear message that we take safety seriously. If redirection is successful, no further steps are taken.

What happens if a child cannot regulate their bodies and emotions through redirection with teacher guidance?

If a child's behavior continues to be unsafe (repeatedly hitting, kicking, or biting, etc), the child is removed from the room. If that cannot be done safely, then all the other students are removed from the classroom. A staff member stays with the child. If a child cannot regain control of themselves within a reasonable amount of time despite attempts by staff to co-regulate, they will be dismissed for the day. The Principal will be notified and then parents will be called to pick up the child for that day. The teacher will communicate the unsafe behavior to the parents. An incident report will be filled out, signed by the parent at school, and a copy will be sent home.

If unsafe behaviors continue regularly over a 2 week period, a meeting is scheduled with the parents to partner together and to discuss strategies and a plan for the child moving forward. Subsequently, if the child continues to display unsafe behavior in the classroom that requires 1:1 support to navigate the school day, another meeting is scheduled with the parents to offer guidance and further interventions and suggestions with consultation from the Special Education Director. If these interventions are not successful, a meeting will be scheduled with parents to discuss the observations and data and next steps. If the child needs more assistance or interventions than our preschool program can provide, it may be necessary for the child to be dismissed from our program.

Developmental Readiness and Dismissal from Program

The developmental screening process (ASQ and classroom playdate) utilized for admission purposes is a reliable indicator for most students as to their readiness for preschool. However, there is a 6 week trial period where teachers are able to provide ongoing assessment of the child's ability to separate from parents/caregivers, and to engage in the preschool program with occasional appropriate 1:1 support. During this 6 week trial period, the Preschool Teacher will communicate openly with the parents regarding their child's acclimation and adjustment, and request conferences as needed. If a child needs continued 1:1 support throughout the day to

follow directions and classroom routine, sustain attention, engage in positive play, show general self-help and self advocating skills, it may be determined that they are too young developmentally for HCA's Preschool program at that time. A final decision regarding continued admission will be made by the end of the trial period.