

**CHARIS CHRISTIAN ACADEMY &  
BRIGHT MINDS EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM  
JOINT PTF VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK**

*School Year 2017-2018*

## FORWARD

We are honored to have you as a part of the Charis Christian Academy and the Bright Minds Education Program Joint PTF Volunteer Team! Thank you for your interest and commitment in serving our community in this ministry of education. The Lord has placed you here for the special purpose of impacting lives for eternity!

Please familiarize yourself with this Volunteer Handbook. The overall objective of the manuals is to promote unity and consistency as we operate as a team, which will assist in maintaining an educational environment that is safe, pleasant, and effective.

Thank you for making a difference in the life of a child; and thank you for supporting your school!

*“When you welcome a child in My name, you welcome Me.”*

~Jesus (Matthew 18:5)

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## **OUR MISSION**

We exist to partner with parents and their church to educate, equip, and empower its students to pursue and fulfill their God-given destiny and purpose in Christ.

## **OUR VISION**

We seek to affect the Kingdom of God, by the power of Holy Spirit, through students who know God's transforming love, who understand their identity in Christ, and are effective in their family, church, work, and world for the glory of God.

## **OUR PHILOSOPHY**

Parents are a child's greatest teacher. Our school supplements the work of the family by providing its students a biblical foundation and world view through traditional education that is Christ-centered so that they may know the truth, reason in truth, and be persuasive for the truth.

## **OUR CORE VALUES**

- The Preeminence of Christ: to glorify and praise Christ as having first place in all things (Colossians 1:12-27).
- The Life of Christ: to instill the truth of scripture; to walk in faith, hope, and love (1 Corinthians 13); to live and teach grace.
- The Wisdom of Christ: to grow up healthy and strong; to be filled with the wisdom of God (Luke 2:52); to make a difference in this world (Jude 1:22).
- The Integrity of Christ: to live a life that proves to the world that we are God's children (Ephesians 4:1); to obey the ordinances of man for the Lord's sake (1 Peter 2:13-15); to find favor and a good name in the sight of all people (Acts 2:47).
- The Unity In Christ: to be of one mind toward one another in Jesus Christ; to have one mouth in glorifying God; to receive one another as we have been received in Christ to the glory of God (Romans 15:5-7); to be kind, tenderhearted, and forgiving toward one another as God for Christ's sake has forgiven us (Ephesians 4:32).

## **STATEMENT OF FAITH**

We believe the Bible is the written word of God and revelation of God's truth, inspired by Holy Spirit, without error in the original manuscripts, and authoritative in all matters of faith and practice.

We believe there is one triune God, eternally existing in three Persons - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit - each co-eternal in being, co-identical in nature, co-equal in power and glory, and having the same attributes and perfections (Matthew 16:15-17, 28:19; John 14:10, 26; 2 Corinthians 13:14).

We believe the Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, became man, without ceasing to be God, having been conceived by Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary, in order that He might reveal God and redeem sinful men (Isaiah 7:14, 9:6-7; Matthew 1:22-23; Luke 1:35; John 1:1-18; II Corinthians 5:8-21; Galatians 4:4-7; Philippians 2:5-11). We believe the Lord Jesus Christ accomplished our redemption through His death on the cross as a representative, vicarious, substitutionary sacrifice; and, that our justification is made sure by His literal, physical resurrection from the dead (Acts 2:22-36; Romans 3:12-26; Ephesians 1:7; I Peter 1:3-5, 2:24). We believe the Lord Jesus Christ ascended to Heaven and is now exalted at the right hand of God where, as our High Priest, He fulfills the ministry of Representative, Intercessor, and Advocate (Acts 1:9-11; Romans 8:33-34; Hebrews 9:24, 7:25; I John 2:1-2).

We believe that Holy Spirit convicts the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment; and, that He is the Supernatural Agent in regeneration, baptizing all believers into the body of Christ, indwelling and sealing them unto the day of redemption (John 16:7-11; Romans 8:9- 11; I Corinthians 12:12-13; II Corinthians 3:6; Ephesians 1:13-14).

We believe that man was created in the image and likeness of God; but that in Adam's sin the human race fell, inherited a sinful nature, became alienated from God. Man is a sinner and continues to sin by choice and unable to save himself or remedy his lost condition (Genesis 1:26-27; Genesis 3; Romans 1:18-21, 3:23, 5:12, 6:23; Ephesians 2:1-3, 4:17-19).

We believe the Scriptures teach that salvation – everything provided through the finished work of Jesus Christ – has been freely given and made available to all mankind but must be received by a change of mind toward God and a personal faith in the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 2:38; John 1:12; Ephesians 1:7; 2:8-9; I Peter 1:18-19).

We believe in the Genesis account of creation, and that it is to be accepted literally, and not allegorically or figuratively; that man was created directly in God's own image and after His own likeness. (Genesis 1-2; Exodus 20:11; Jeremiah 10:12; Nehemiah 9:6; John 1:3; Acts 4:24, 17:24-26; Romans 1:20; Colossians 1:16-17; Revelation 10:6).

We believe that marriage was ordained by God at creation as the sacred union of one man and one woman. All sexual relations must therefore be reserved for that union. Marriage is a representation of Christ's relationship to His church (Genesis 1:26-28, 2:24, 5:1-2; Matthew 19:1-10; Romans 1:18-32; 7:2-3; I Corinthians 5; 6:9-11; 7:10-16; Ephesians 5:1- 8, 22-33; I Thessalonians 4:1-8).

## **DOCTRINAL DIFFERENCES POLICY**

As an Interchurch ministry that is broadly evangelical, our school contains within its walls a spectrum of doctrinal views and ecclesiastical practices that correspond to the diversity of the Body of Christ. In matters of faith, the school seeks to unify its students and staff around the person and work of Jesus Christ while maintaining a harmonious balance in its representation of non-essential differences in the classroom, and it does so by adopting the following policy:

- All members of the Board of Directors and all school employees shall annually subscribe to the school's Statement of Faith.
- All instruction, student interaction, and internal curricula shall operate within the theological boundary of the Statement of Faith.
- Doctrinal differences represented by school families may generate conversations in the classroom or among students. It may be appropriate, especially in the upper grades, to discuss what those differences are; however, any instruction given by faculty, as to the origins or implications of the doctrinal differences in question, shall be done without maintaining or implying that any one denominational view represents a preferred position.
- Furthermore, the school recognizes that, beyond doctrinal differences, the families of the local faith community engage in a broad variety of specific ecclesiastical practices that stem from the distinctive subcultures of individual churches. The school and its employees shall not offer opinions on the propriety of these practices, particularly where those opinions have the potential to divide and not unify the Body of Christ. On occasion, it may be appropriate to link a particular practice to a specific doctrinal point; however, that representation ought never to become an expression of preference or a critique of one practice relative to another.
- The overarching principles for any sensitive discussion are love, respect, and understanding. Great care shall be taken by school staff to keep such discussions from becoming disputatious or contentious.

In all, we seek to minister to families and their churches by affirming and strengthening a student's faith in our essential and commonly-held Christian doctrines and to illuminate a student's understanding of doctrinal and ecclesiastical differences in a manner that promotes the unity of the Body of Christ.

## **VOLUNTEER RESPONSIBILITIES**

You should:

- Be punctual.
- Notify the school in the case of absence.
- Sign in and out on the time sheet provided in the school office.
- Wear your volunteer name tag while volunteering at the school.
- Be supportive and offer assistance under professional supervision and direction.
- Be willing to have brief conferences periodically with faculty/staff.
- Set a good example of appearance and behavior for students.
- Contact the Administrator if you are not satisfied with your placement or have any concerns.
- Accept faculty/staff members' decision not to utilize volunteers in their classroom.
- Remember that the faculty/staff have responsibility for content and technique of instruction and discipline procedures.

Accentuate the positive. Students who feel loved and accepted can learn to be successful in life. The following guidelines may be observed to help students feel loved and accepted:

- Learn the students' names.
- Let them know they are important; remind them that they are awesome because that is how God made them.
- Praise students for success.
- Always be sincere and honest.
- Listen carefully to what the students tell you; show a genuine interest in each student.
- Spend equal and quality time with all students unless otherwise directed.

## **STUDENT INTERACTION POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

The safety and protection of our students is paramount. The following established policies and procedures are to be observed by the faculty/staff members to ensure the safety and security of the precious lives that have been entrusted to our care. These policies and procedures are designed to protect our students and our faculty/staff members. Please remain consistent with these policies and procedures – even when it comes to the students and families of whom you may be familiar.

### General Policies:

- No volunteer is to ever be alone with a student. No exceptions.
- Respect a student's personal space; physical contact should be age and developmentally appropriate and is only appropriate when done publicly.
- Hugging can only be done if the child initiates the contact. Never allow full contact (body-to-body) hugs. Distance your body from the hug or give the child a side-to-side hug. Sometimes it may be best to initiate a high-five rather than invite a hug. Extended hugging, tickling, or prolonged physical contact of any kind is not appropriate.
- A light touch to a hand, arm, shoulder, or upper back when encouraging is acceptable.
- Do not pat them on the bottom or touch them in a way that would seem intimate, threatening or frightening. Under no circumstances should you treat a child roughly. Do not yell at them, intimidate them, threaten them, grab their arm firmly, shake them, sit them in a chair forcibly, or strike them.
- Lap sitting is only appropriate for children under three years old. If a child is insistent in sitting in your lap, move them to sit next to you.
- Never kiss a child or coax a child to kiss you.
- Never allow a child to touch you in a way that is inappropriate.
- Show respect at all times to a child and their family, and never come between a child and their parents.
- Safeguard the confidentiality of students and their families. Do not ask a student personal questions about themselves or their family. If a student shares personal information about themselves or their family, do not share it with others. Exception to this policy is if the disclosed information concerns the safety and well-being of a child (See “Child Abuse” section below).



Restroom Policy:

- Never allow yourself to be in a restroom alone with a student.
- If a student needs to be escorted to the restroom, take at least one other student along.
- If a younger student needs help with zippers and snaps, help them in the open doorway of the restroom.

Child Abuse:

- Familiarize yourself with the definitions and descriptions of child abuse:
  - Physical Abuse: can be defined as a non-accidental injury, which may include beatings, violent shaking, human bites, strangulation, suffocation, poisoning, or burns. The results may be bruises and welts, broken bones, scars permanent disfigurement, long-lasting psychological damage, serious internal injuries, brain damage or death.
  - Physical/Emotional Neglect: is the failure to provide a child with basic needs including food, clothing, education, shelter, and medical care; also abandonment and inadequate supervision.
  - Sexual Abuse: is constituted through the sexual exploitation of a child by an older person as in rape, incest, fondling of the genitals, exhibitionism or pornography.
  - Emotional Maltreatment: is a pattern of behavior that attacks a child's emotional development and a sense of self worth, such as constant criticizing, belittling, insulting, manipulation. It can also be defined as providing no love, support, or guidance for the child.
- If you suspect that a student is in an unsafe or abusive home environment, or suspect that a student is in danger in any way, or have witnessed a faculty/staff member or another volunteer acting inappropriately toward a student or endangering a student in any way, immediately notify the school Administrator and contact DCFS at 1-800-25-ABUSE. All reports of inappropriate behavior or abuse will be taken seriously, thoroughly investigated, and reported to the proper authorities. Necessary action will be taken to ensure the safety of all students who attend our school.
- Do not interview the student regarding the suspected abuse. This could be considered leading the student.
- Do not discuss the suspected abuse with other faculty/staff members, parents, etc. All information regarding the child should be kept confidential with the school Administrator and the proper authorities.

We do not encourage or sanction volunteer/student contact outside the structure of the school day, building/grounds, or school-related activities; therefore:

- Do not provide your personal contact information to any student and do not ask for the personal contact information of any student.
- Do not offer or agree to transport any student at any time.
- Do not engage in private tutoring sessions outside of the school building, or days and hours of operation.
- If working one-to-one with a student, always do so in a public area.

### **WHEN INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOR OCCURS**

Love and forgiveness is the foundation of discipline. The focus of discipline is to address the attitude of the heart and to promote behavior that is becoming of who we are as God's awesome creation.

Remember: discipline is ultimately the supervising faculty/staff member's responsibility; however, the following guidelines may be observed when inappropriate behavior occurs:

- Follow classroom rules and the supervising faculty/staff member's lead in discipline matters. Only do what the supervising faculty/staff member will allow you to do.
- Expect cooperation and indicate your confidence in the student that good behavior will occur.
- Remain calm and objective; control your own temper.
- Do not embarrass students in front of their peers.
- Speak in private about misbehavior. Avoid power struggles. Never threaten students.
- Do not punish an entire group because of the action(s) of one.

### **WHAT YOU SHOULD DO IF...**

**...a student is injured:** No matter how minor the injury, immediately notify the supervising faculty/staff member. Do not attempt to administer first aid.

**...a student becomes ill:** If a student states they are not feeling well, immediately notify the supervising faculty/staff member. Do not administer any form of medication to the student.

**...you are asked to take the class alone:** Because you are not a paid employee, you are not legally permitted to supervise a class alone. If the supervising faculty/staff member must leave the room, arrangements should be made to have a paid faculty/staff member present.

**...someone asks to see a student:** If anyone asks to speak to or take a student, direct that individual to the supervising faculty/staff member. Under no circumstances should you grant such a request.

**...a problem arises with your supervisor:** If you should encounter any type of problem with your role, please discuss it with the school Administrator.

**...someone asks you how a student is doing:** If you are asked questions about a specific student, or if someone inquires as to a student's progress, please direct that individual to schedule an appointment to speak with that student's teacher.

### **CELLPHONE USE POLICY**

- During school hours, faculty/staff/volunteers shall limit their cellphone to emergency or school use only.
- In some cases, cellphones may be used when important school-related information needs to be immediately (as well as privately/quietly) relayed to faculty/staff/volunteer.
- Taking pictures/videos of students for school use is also acceptable. Faculty/staff/volunteers should take great caution that photographing and video recording students does not impede their ability to supervise the other students in their immediate care or vicinity. (Faculty/staff members must first confirm with the office that a Media Release Form is on file for the students being photographed or recorded.)
- Faculty/staff/volunteers who are on a break and have no students in their immediate care or vicinity may use their cellphone for personal business.
- For safety and security reasons, faculty/staff/volunteers should discourage direct texting from parents/guardians during school hours. All communication between parents/guardians and faculty/staff members and volunteers should be routed through the school office. If a special need requires direct contact, please notify the office of the arrangement.

## **COMPREHENSIVE GRIEVANCE POLICY**

These guidelines are to be followed whenever there is a dispute or grievance concerning any aspect of the school's operations, between any two parties connected in a direct way to the school. Disputes are any disagreement that results in broken fellowship or trust between parties, or that disrupts the lines of authority in the school, or which (in the judgment of either disputant) threatens the successful implementation of the school's objectives and goals. Grievances are any concern about any decision made by one authority, where the concern is large enough to appeal the decision beyond that authority to the next level. A humble and respectful demeanor toward all parties involved shall be observed.

- **Parents/Student to Faculty:** All concerns about the classroom must first be presented to the teacher by the parents or student. If the situation is not resolved, the parents or student (with parents' permission) may bring the concern to the Administrator. If the situation is still not resolved, the parents should appeal the decision by requesting a hearing from the School Board.
- **Parents/Patrons to the Administrator:** If parents or patrons have a grievance or dispute about the general operation of the school (apart from the operation of the classroom), concerns shall be brought to the Administrator. If the situation is not resolved, the parents/patrons should request a hearing from the School Board. This applies to Board members who are acting in their capacity as parents/patrons, and not as representatives of the Board.
- **Faculty/Staff to Administration:** All concerns about the standards of the school must first be presented to the Administrator. If the situation is not resolved, the faculty/staff member should appeal to the School Board in writing and request a hearing.

## **WORKING EFFECTIVELY WITH FACULTY/STAFF**

The following tips and information will help you as you work with our faculty/staff:

- Let the faculty/staff know what types of jobs you are interested in doing and what your special skills are so that your talents may be utilized.
- A teacher may rely upon you to prepare and organize to allow themselves more time to spend with students; make sure you know exactly how the teacher wants the job done. If you are unsure, ask the teacher for clear instructions and/or demonstration on how the task is to be performed.
- Be willing to try new tasks, but only as many as your schedule will allow.
- Be dependable. Come when you say you will come; give plenty of notice when you won't be available for your scheduled time.

**GENERAL RULES AND POLICIES FOR PLAYGROUND**

- Always close and lock gates after entering or exiting the playground.
- On hot days, make sure students have immediate access to water bottles or a water jug/cups.
- There must be a minimum of two monitors present on the playground during recess, one of which must be a faculty/staff member.
- Monitors must not visit with one another while students are present on the playground.
- Monitors must position themselves on the playground so that all corners of the playground are being observed. (It is recommended that one monitor attend the wooden climber at the top of the hill while the other monitor attend the rock climber at the bottom of the hill.)
- Climbers:
  - No more than four (4) students may climb on the rock climber.
  - Students under five (5) years old are not allowed on the wooden climber.
  - Students may not climb up the slides.
  - Students may not jump off of climbers.
  - Toys or balls are not permitted on either climber.
- Swings:
  - Students must swing forward and back; side-to-side motion is prohibited.
  - Students must only swing with their bottoms in the seats; standing or laying on their stomach is prohibited.
  - Students may not be allowed to twist the swings.
  - Only students who can use the jumper independently may use it.
- Students may not climb the fence.
- Students may not climb the balcony.
- Be mindful that other classes may be in progress during recess; screaming excessively, standing in front of windows and doors, knocking on windows and doors, etc. is prohibited.
- Immediately report broken/unsafe toys/equipment to faculty/staff.
- Pickup toys and balls at the end of each day.

**VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK ACKNOWLEDGMENT**

Please return this acknowledgment page to the school office no later than two weeks after receiving the Volunteer Handbook. Please retain this copy of the Volunteer Handbook for your reference.

This Volunteer Handbook is intended to provide you with information about the school's policies and procedures currently in force. No Handbook can anticipate every circumstance or question about policy. As the school continues to grow, the school administration may need to change policies described in this Volunteer Handbook. The school administration reserves the right to revise, supplement, or rescind any policies or portion of the Volunteer Handbook from time to time as it deems appropriate, in its sole discretion. The school administration will keep volunteers informed of any such changes as they occur.

“I acknowledge receipt of the Charis Christian Academy/Bright Minds Educational Program (hereafter referred to as “the school”) Volunteer Handbook. I acknowledge that the Volunteer Handbook supersedes any and all prior handbooks or policies of the school. I understand that the information contained in the Volunteer Handbook constitutes management guidelines only, which may be added to, deleted, or changed from time to time at the discretion of the school.

I recognize that neither the Volunteer Handbook nor any other communication, either written or oral, made at the time of the commencement of volunteer work, or subsequently, is intended to in any way create a contract between the school and myself. I understand that my volunteerism is at-will and entered into voluntarily and may be terminated by the school or me at any time, with or without cause or notice.

I acknowledge that I have read the Volunteer Handbook, and I accept full responsibility for familiarizing myself with the policies contained in the Volunteer Handbook.

I acknowledge that the school does conduct comprehensive background checks on volunteers.

If I have any questions regarding the content or interpretation of the Volunteer Handbook, I agree to bring it to the attention of the school Administrator.”

Volunteer Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_