

The Academy Tutorial

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HANDBOOK

REVISED OCTOBER 2023

Mission Statement:

To offer tutorial classes for grades 7-12 that will support homeschooling parents as they prepare their students to do college level work, to encourage students to take responsibility and initiative, and to do this work in a community-centered environment that encourages relationship and inclusion.

<http://www.theacademytutorial.org>

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The Academy Tutorial is a college preparatory program for home-schooled students in grades 7 to 12. We provide high-level, rigorous classes one day per week, designed to prepare our students for acceptance and success in quality colleges and universities. Our tutors represent a wealth of experience and expertise and are committed to the students' success. Class offerings cover the totality of required courses for high school graduation in Tennessee, with the exception of physical education, as long as there is sufficient demand for the classes. Students are provided inspiration, critical information about what and how to learn, and the chance to discuss in a group setting the best of what the week's work has produced.

We are NOT a school, and our tutorial model assumes three things:

- a. Parents are primarily responsible for the education of their students.
- b. A student's academic success is most effective with the active participation and involvement of the parents.
- c. The Executive Director and a Board of Directors work together to make administrative decisions, determine policies and oversee the tutorial's day-to-day operation .

When these classes were first organized in 1990, a dedicated core of families shared the vision that we could be unified in academic pursuits for our children and our shared Christian faith without getting into areas of controversy about doctrine. We wanted a group where tolerance for each person's faith would be assured. The spontaneous expression of our faith flows through our classrooms, but religious doctrine is rarely a formal part of instruction.

We believe that devotion to God should enhance, not hinder, the pursuit of academic excellence. Faith and intellect are not mutually exclusive. **We agree that as our children mature, we want to expose them to ideas that might challenge their faith later in life, introducing these ideas while our children are still within our sphere of influence. We want to help them recognize and counter worldviews that deny God's power in the universe and in His relationship with man. Teaching mature students to think critically, to seek Truth and to foster curiosity remains a primary concern, which informs our decisions regarding curriculum for classes, including literature books and other supplemental academic resources.**

The format for our tutorial is very simple. Our tutors provide a 32-week lesson plan that is the backbone of each course. Objective work (daily homework) is checked at home under the supervision of the parents. This requires that parents buy student texts and teacher's texts/keys for some classes. Classes that meet for one hour once a week cannot satisfy academic credit or provide adequate instruction unless the parents and students work together to complete what is required outside of class.

We recommend our program to students with an established record of academic excellence and the ability to work independently. **This tutorial is not for students who need remedial work or who are not highly motivated.**

We are looking for students who want to be a part of an intimate academic and social group that is non-traditional in several ways. Since the adults and students get to know each other very well, we develop a bond akin to that of a large family. As in a family, all ages eat and play together. We do not tolerate any form of social rejection. Students who can only survive in a clique are not welcome. We expect kindness and acceptance to be practiced, and we address any lapses immediately.

Tutorial classes meet for 32 weeks from mid-August to mid-May. We break for one week in the fall, one week at Thanksgiving, three weeks at Christmas and one week during the spring with an additional week added if we do not need to take a snow day in the winter months. Classes are primarily held on Tuesdays, with a few exceptions: additional biology, physics and chemistry labs may meet at different locations on days other than Tuesday. Optional study sessions for biology, chemistry and some math classes are held on Fridays.

Tuition per class, in most cases, is \$352 for the year for a 55-minute class. Book costs, which can run from \$50-\$100 per class, are not included in the tuition fees. Administrative fees may fluctuate from year to year, depending on expenses and the number of families enrolled in the program. This year, each family's yearly, non-refundable confirmation fee will be \$100 - \$175, and we anticipate that the administrative fee will be \$400 per family. For each first-time applicant, we charge a \$50 non-refundable processing fee. These application, confirmation, and administrative fees fund our rent, stipends for our staff and administrators, cleaning costs, telephone costs, postage, insurance, office supplies, and miscellaneous expenses. Fees for future terms are subject to change.

We require:

1. a year-long commitment and the payment of the upcoming year's full tuition in April. **These fees are non-refundable.** Families who need a payment plan can be accommodated, but we must have post-dated checks and a written contract. We are hiring teachers for a full year and must be able to guarantee their salaries; therefore, tuition is non-refundable. Private schools require a full year's tuition in advance, and so must we.
2. students to take **a minimum of three academic classes each school year.** Students in grades 7-11 must choose a minimum of three required courses from the academic core for their grade levels. (Academic core courses are math, literature, composition, science, social studies, and foreign language). We need committed families who are involved enough to become cohesive members of our tutorial and who will support our tutors and our program. Two of the three classes are required to be from our Tuesday course options.
3. signed liability releases forms.
4. previous home school experience.
5. Students need to be 12 years old by September 1st. Exceptions would be subject to Board approval.

NON-DISCRIMINATORY POLICY:

The Academy Tutorial admits students of any race, color, faith, national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students in our group. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, faith, national and ethnic origin in the administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, and other group-administered programs.

1. We are looking for students who want to be a part of an intimate academic and social group that is non-traditional in several ways. Since the adults and students get to know each other very well, we develop a bond akin to that of a large family. As in a family, all ages eat and play together. **We do not tolerate any form of social rejection.** Students who can only survive in a clique are not welcome. We expect kindness and acceptance to be practiced, and we make every effort to address any lapses immediately.
2. **Our applicants must live with the homeschooling parent or guardian and the family must have had at least one year of homeschooling experience.** The transition from the teacher-driven system of a traditional school to the independent study format in our tutorial is too dramatic without the interim experience of homeschooling.
3. We are looking for college-bound students. Our curriculum is college preparatory and therefore more demanding than the average high school course of study. We are preparing students for major universities.
4. **We seek students who have maintained a B average in all academic work for the last two years.** There should be no need for remedial work in any subject.
5. Due to the rigors of our program, **we also prefer students who are not dividing their time and energies between two tutorial groups.** Juggling course loads from two tutorials and belonging to two groups adds undue stress and means that on one of the four days that an Academy tutor assigns work, the student will not be at home to complete it.
6. Every student has an individual style of learning, but students who have diagnosed learning disabilities will have greater difficulty with our curriculum and our class format. Our program is not equipped to meet the needs of students with learning disabilities and it is the family's responsibility to meet any extra needs of the student due to his or her disability. Parents need to disclose their student's disabilities when applying. We will consider each situation on a case by case basis.
7. Our program is designed for highly disciplined self-starters. Students who procrastinate and who have to be made to do homework will not succeed in our program. By the time parents realize there is a problem, failure may be difficult to forestall. We only offer an overview of study skills in the junior high years, and we assume and expect that all students are able to employ good study habits
8. **Personal commitment to our program must come from the student.** Parents do a grave disservice to their child and to us if a student pretends a commitment they do not make in earnest. Because we value relationships and continuity, we seek those students who intend to remain with us throughout their high school years.
9. We do not recommend that seniors apply.
10. Students who insist on their rights and privileges as a first order of business will not be happy in our group. **We do not want to deal with students for whom respect for authority is an issue.**

Our educational goal is to provide a quality college preparatory tutorial for families and students. To accomplish this, **we must have families who are cooperative and supportive of our policies. We are not equipped to provide solutions for every family's educational challenges.** We are not attempting to be all things to all people. And because many board members and administrators of our group are themselves homeschooling families, **we do not have the resources, nor is it our responsibility, to deal with high-maintenance or combative families. Continuing disagreements or disruptive drama will be an obvious signal that this program is not for your family. In such cases, the Director and board reserve the right to expel and remove such families from the Academy, with no refunds.**

ABSENCES: Because of the nature of our program, we cannot offer make-up classes following student absences. The student will have the syllabus from the tutor, and students may call a friend to get notes. If the absence is planned, ask a friend to record the class and work out missed work with the tutor **beforehand**. When a student is absent, he needs to check with the tutor outside of class about missed quizzes and assignments. Further, absent students must find another student willing to do their set-up/clean-up chores and notify the Set-up/Clean-up Coordinator of this change or a \$10.00 fine will be assessed.

ACADEMIC PROBATION: Any student whose grades fall below a C in any class for first semester will be placed on academic probation for the second semester. If grades do not improve, the student may not be invited to return the following year. Representatives of the board will meet with the student and his/her parents to see if he/she will be allowed to return. In addition, any student who receives a C in any class due to failure to complete/turn in all assignments will be placed on academic probation. Every year we turn away too many excellent students who wish to be admitted into our program and have the opportunity to do all assigned work. **Our current students must demonstrate their desire to remain in our group by working to their full potential.**

CHEATING: This is a serious offense that we will not tolerate under any circumstances. It may include copying another student's work or allowing another student to copy yours, inappropriate use of an answer key, failure to take tests in accordance with a tutor's instructions, or any other dishonest way of obtaining information or answers. In addition to damaging one's character and reputation and breaking trust with tutors and classmates, cheating will result in the following: **First offense: an F for the assignment or test. Second offense (same class): an F for the course. Second offense (different class): an F for the assignment or test. Third offense: expulsion from our program.** In regard to **PLAGIARISM**, it is the act of stealing and using another person's ideas or words, passing them off as your own. It can also consist of simply neglecting to appropriately cite quotations and thoughts of others as well as using any form of AI. It is a form of academic cheating and will be handled as follows: **First offense: an F on the paper. Second offense: an F for the semester in that course. Third offense: an F for the course. Students who demonstrate a pattern of plagiarism will be expelled from the program.** Plagiarism is a serious offense that colleges and universities will not tolerate; neither will we.

DIGITAL CITIZENSHIP

Students are to demonstrate digital citizenship at all times. In other words, they are to behave responsibly online, no matter where they are or what device they are using. Students that participate in online bullying, harassing, indecent or inappropriate behavior outside Academy hours may be disciplined by the Academy board if the behavior results in a disturbance to the learning and community environment of the Academy Tutorial. Students should recognize they are creating a digital footprint that could remain with them beyond their 7th -12th grade school experience with potentially permanent and irreversible results.

Academy students have the right to Free Speech but only within the bounds and purposes of the school program. Whether shared in person, in writing, or in electronic form, students will not be protected if their speech brings embarrassment or shame to themselves or the school, or if their speech negatively impacts the reputation of the student or the school.

Examples of non-protected speech include:

- any illegal activity;
- any non-illegal activity that is lewd, vulgar, obscene, indecent, or that portrays any conduct done in a manner whereby the community learns of such activity;
- or any activity that degrades, demeans, or disparages any tutor, staff member, parent, or student.

The Academy reserves the right to assign discipline to students that violate the above categories of non-protected speech.

DISCIPLINARY ACTION: Our program does not have a set of rules so rigid that we have a penalty that applies to each offense. Negative consequences will increase with the repetition and severity of offenses and may result in expulsion at the discretion of the tutorial board. A student who is expelled relinquishes the right to any tuition refund.

DISTRACTION RULES: Many of our rules were initiated at least partly in order to reduce distraction on the one day of week that we are together as we must make every minute count. They are not meant to make a judgement on how you live the rest of the time. The ability to focus while we are together is crucial. Dress code standards and use of electronic devices are examples.

DRESS CODE: We are guests at our host church, and our appearance should never offend the staff or the visitors of our hosts. To this end, please read the Dress Code as outlined under the "Commitments from Students" section. Any tutor who notices that a student has violated the dress code should make that complaint to the acting Director, who will call and ask the student's parent to bring more suitable clothing. If necessary, we will provide the student with a t-shirt to be worn until the student has left campus. **The second time that same student disregards the dress code, the student will be sent home for the day and the parents will have to come for a consultation with the Board.**

DRIVING STUDENTS: Students who drive themselves to classes and want to leave the premises for part of the day must have the signed Permission to Leave the Building Form on file with the sheriff, signed by parent. They must specify with the Director when they will leave and when they will return, and they must have a 2-hour block free of classes. These students must sign out and in every week. Students who return late or who fail to sign out/in will lose the privilege of leaving campus.

Students who drive do not have permission to leave campus during the lunch hour unless there is a 2-hour block free of classes. Parents may leave with their own children or even do fast food runs for others, but our student drivers may not leave unless they have a study hall adjacent to lunch.

ELECTRONIC EQUIPMENT: Because our goal is to promote interpersonal relationships, educational fellowship, and stimulating dialogue, we ask students to leave all electronic equipment—headsets, gaming devices, laptops, smart phones, iPod, etc.—at home or in your cars (parents may, of course, request exceptions for special circumstances). Students may, however, bring cell phones under these conditions: they are turned to “airplane mode,” if you use them without permission, we take them; if they ring during class, we take them. Students are always welcome to use the Academy Tutorial cell phone to make any necessary calls.

If your class requires a computer, the computer must be stored in the classroom.

GRADING SCALE: We have adopted the TN State Board of Education Uniform Grading Scale, mandated on April 15, 2005, as follows:

GRADE	Percentage Range
A	93 – 100
B	85 – 92
C	75 – 84
D	70 – 74
F	0 – 69

Tutors should always give numeric grades for each assignment, quiz, or test.

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE: If students and/or parents have a complaint about a policy stated in the handbook, a conflict between students, or a criticism of a tutor or a classroom situation, we offer a series of steps to resolve problems. We suggest a similar procedure for tutors and administrators.

1. Do not discuss the problem with anyone who is not involved directly. Gossip is an unholy practice that increases tension and complicates resolution.
2. Phone or go to see the person with whom you have the problem, the same day if possible. If an incident occurs in class under a tutor's supervision, you owe it to the tutor to allow him/her the chance to be the FIRST person to hear any concerns you might have. Often the tutor will offer information that will immediately clear any misunderstanding.
3. If the student or parents feel that this step has left the problem unresolved, call the Director(s) or another Board Member. We will be willing to mediate, but we will insist that all parties directly involved meet face to face in order to hear both sides of the situation. We want to restore relationships and protect reputations, even if we cannot agree on every point.
4. Tutors who have a problem develop during class should send the offending student to the acting Director if he/she disrupts class and persists in that disruption. As soon as is possible after class, the tutor will meet with the student to resolve any conflict. Parents will be called and asked to come to the tutorial if needed. Any unresolved problems should be reported to the Director(s) or a follow-up meeting.
5. Our final step repeats the first. We are a fellowship of Christians and are all a part of the body of Christ. We are bound in our relationship with Him to extend grace as He extends grace to us.

"Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all of these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity." Colossians 3:13-14

GUESTS: Guests may visit classes only after obtaining permission from the directors; guests without prior permission will be asked to leave. Alumni and their families are invited to drop in at lunch unannounced. Parents of our current students are family, not guests, and are welcome to come by at any time. A parent who wishes to sit in on a class needs to let the Director(s) and the tutor know before the class day.

HOMEWORK: Students will have assignments in every course for the four days that classes do not meet. Parents must ensure that their students do what is required. The minimum commitment for a class is 4-6 hours a week unless students can master the material and produce excellent work in less time. Because every tutor is required to supply a syllabus for every class, parents always know what is assigned. Changes in the syllabus should be clearly communicated in writing: email, online, having students amend syllabus in class, handed out, etc.

LOST AND FOUND: Check the Lost & Found tub if you have lost an item. Quarterly, we will dispose of all unclaimed items. Never call the church office for help in locating a missing item. If items are left that must be retrieved in order to complete assignments, please come by on Friday between 9:00 and 2:00.

MAILBOX: Each family and tutor have a mailbox in the study hall room. **Check it without fail at the end of classes every week.**

PICKING UP STUDENTS AT THE END OF THE DAY: Pick-up time is 3:30 p.m. unless enrolled in a course that required later dismissal. If your student wants/needs more fellowship/play time, you may arrive at 3:30 and remain with him/her outside the building until 4:00 p.m. Everyone should be gone promptly by 4:00 p.m. Parents, there will be grace for the first late pick-up, but after that we will charge \$10 for every ten minutes that we must stay after 4:00 p.m., waiting for you to arrive.

REPORTING OF GRADES: All student grades are now posted online; parents are responsible for printing out their own students' grades.

SNOW POLICY: If there is a chance of snow for a Tuesday, we will make a decision to hold or cancel classes once we have watched the weather report at 5:00 a.m. **WE WILL THEN SEND OUT A GROUP EMAIL.** If you receive the announcements, you will receive the weather email. Since we don't necessarily follow Metro school closings, it is imperative that you check your email before leaving the house on wintry mornings! If snow is already on the ground and road conditions are not expected to improve, we **may** be able to make the decision about classes and notify you via email on the prior evening.

Our first **two** snow days will be "digital learning" days which means tutors will send out emails to students and parents instructing them how to continue with their classes so that no time is lost.

If a third snow day is needed, it will be made up using our snow make-up day in March.

STUDY HALL: In reality, study hall at The Academy is a social hour for many students. Students who need to study may need to ask the study hall monitor for assistance finding a quiet place to work. Students who need to study together for a class they share will be accommodated. No electronics will be permitted in study hall, including computers and phones, unless permission is granted by the sheriff. Food and drink will be allowed as long as students clean up after themselves and do not create problems for others or for the study hall monitor. If students do not need to study, study halls may be used for outside play as long as an adult is present. Musical instruments are permitted as long as they are not deemed disruptive by the sheriff or a tutor. The Academy is not responsible for lost or damaged equipment. Students must be supervised at all times while at the tutorial.

TERRITORIAL LIMITS AND RESPECT OF PROPERTY:

- Our hosts have asked that we come and go through the study hall (Youth Entrance) doors for security purposes.
- If you have muddy shoes, wipe them on the doormat. If they are exceptionally muddy, remove and stow them in our designated area.
- Please maintain a quiet environment.
- Always be respectful of the facility and all property, including classroom materials, pianos, books, plants, etc. The sanctuary contains fragile sound equipment; therefore, we ask everyone using that space to be particularly cautious.
- Students are to eat lunch in the study hall or outside in the grass area and in the sectioned off section of the parking lot. You may not eat or drink in any other room without permission.
- You may not play the piano, unless you are receiving a piano lesson, without permission from the sheriff. An adult must be present. The main parking lots are off-limits for gathering or skateboarding or rollerblading.
- In summary, students should never be any place without adult supervision.

PHONE PROTOCOL: Sara Wood is our Academy Director. She can be reached using the Academy Phone number of **615-933-9699**. This is the number to use if you need to reach us on Tuesdays. Please add it to your contacts.

TOBACCO / ALCOHOL / DRUGS / SEX: Bringing tobacco, alcohol, drugs or weapons in any form to the tutorial or to any Academy Tutorial function will not be tolerated. The Academy Board will meet to determine appropriate consequences. Further, we expect our students to practice total abstinence in the areas of tobacco, alcohol, drugs and sex, and we also expect them to keep their conversations clean and healthy regarding these topics.

STUDENTS, in the area of **ACADEMICS**, we ask that you

- accept fully that you are responsible for all academic work and honor that commitment above any commitments to jobs, sports, or other extracurricular activities.
- work at least 4-6 hours per class per week at home unless you can master the material and produce excellent work in less time.
- contact tutors if you are struggling with an assignment so that all work will be completed before returning to class. Do not wait until Monday evening to call your tutor. Remember, however, that our tutors are paid only for their classroom time. They are not reimbursed for class prep or travel time. **If you ask a tutor for a lot of extra help, pay his/her hourly tutorial rate.**
- communicate with tutors if you are going to be absent and make arrangements for completing all work.
- participate actively and positively in class.
- adhere to the highest code of honor in all coursework: never use answer keys inappropriately; ask your parents to administer all tests according to each tutor's instructions; never copy another student's work or allow another student to copy yours; never plagiarize another's ideas or words.

In the area of **ATTITUDE**, we ask that you

- be courteous and respectful to staff and tutors and guests.
- do all to the glory of God.
- pursue excellence with a cheerful heart.

In the area of **DRESS CODE**, we ask you to accept that

- At The Academy, we want everyone to be comfortable and to be able to dress with a degree of your fashion personality intact, but use common sense and don't dress in a way that would make others uncomfortable or distract them from their studies.
- We are guests at our host church. Our appearance should never offend the staff or the visitors of our hosts.
- Please remove hats during prayer and also during class if they are deemed distracting by the tutor or cover a student's eyes...we want to see all those baby blues, browns, greens and hazels.
- Clothing with inappropriate logos or slogans, tight or sheer clothing, or bare midriffs are inappropriate at the tutorial.
- If you stand up straight and hold your arms shoulder high, no skin should be visible at your waist. Apply the "no skin" test to active bending over and sitting down. Undergarments should not be visible through tight or thin fabrics. Necklines should never expose cleavage; apply the "bending over in front of the mirror" test. No stripping to the waist to play sports.
- Dresses, skirts, and shorts must come below your fingertips when your arms are at your sides; not only must dresses or skirts come below your fingertips when your arms are at your sides, but if the hemline is above the knees, opaque leggings or biker shorts must be worn under them. These shorts must **also** come below your fingertips when arms are at your sides.
- Leggings are not pants; leggings can only be worn under appropriate length skirts, shorts, or blouses / t-shirts longer than fingertips. Leggings are also not opaque tights.
- Modest sleeveless blouses or shirts are acceptable; strapless shirts are not allowed and tank tops may only be worn under other acceptable garments.

This dress code is in effect for all functions that are directly a part of the tutorial: the Walk-Thru, dances and social functions, field trips, drama performances, and any classes or labs that meet in other locations or on another day.

In the area of **PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY**, we ask that you

- fulfill your set-up/clean-up duties each week or find a substitute if you are going to be absent. **Notify the Set-up/Clean-up Coordinator of this change.**
- log-in to online grading frequently to check for missing assignments or work that needs correcting.
- pick up after yourself and check to make sure you have all of your belongings before you leave from The Academy.
- check your mailbox every week before you leave.

In the area of **RELATIONSHIPS**, we ask that you

- welcome new students warmly.
- make every effort to include others.
- always talk to the person you have a problem with before discussing your problem with anyone else. If you talk to someone else first, you are gossiping.
- focus your attention on building solid friendships, not romantic relationships.

In the area of **TERRITORIAL LIMITS**, we ask that you

- limit building use to our designated classrooms.
- enter/leave the building through the door by the Upper Room for security reasons.
- never use the front or side doors during our class day except when a tutor is present.
- respect all property of our host church. This includes worship instruments.
- never play on the pre-school playground.
- eat lunch in the study hall or on the lawn.
- remember that food or drink is never allowed in the rooms without permission.
- do not sit in parked cars.
- do not go near the Annex where the church has their offices
- SIGN OUT AND IN if there is a change in your normal schedule and you leave the premises.
- never go any place on the church property where there is no adult supervision.

On the following page, we have included a copy of the Honor Code and Personal Commitment for Academy Students that all students sign and submit with their applications each year. We keep these in our files, but we want you to remember what you have agreed to do or not to do.

- I have re-read the The Academy Tutorial handbook. I understand fully the purpose of The Academy Tutorial and agree to support the stated principles.
- I will make every effort to be prepared and to participate actively and positively in class.
- I make a personal commitment to our host church to protect the church property and to remember that I am a guest.
- I will be an accepting, supportive friend to all students at The Academy Tutorial. I will be a peacemaker. I will not gossip about others. I will guard my tongue and my actions in and out of class. I will make every effort to include anyone who wants to be a part of my circle of friends.
- I accept fully that I am responsible for my academic work. I will not attempt to shirk that responsibility or excuse myself should I fail to do so. My commitment to my academic work precedes my commitment to my job, sports and other extra-curricular activities.
- I will be prepared to spend at least 4 to 6 hours per class per week at home to complete assignments for these classes. I will do whatever is necessary to be fully prepared for classes.
- I promise to adhere to the highest code of honor in my schoolwork. Even though I may have access to answer keys, I will not use them inappropriately in doing homework or take-home tests. I will ask my parents to administer all tests according to my tutors' requirements. I will never copy another student's work nor plagiarize when I have failed to do my own work or make my work available for another student to copy.
- I promise to abstain from tobacco, alcohol, sex, drugs or any other illegal activities. I will also keep my conversation clean and healthy regarding these topics.
- I will demonstrate digital citizenship at all times (as outlined in the handbook).
- I will cheerfully do my part regarding set-up and clean-up assignments each week.
- I will make every effort to give more than I take in both academic and social settings in this group.

Policy of Disciplinary Action

Our program does not have a set of rules so rigid that we have a penalty that applies to each offense. Negative consequences will increase with repetition of the offense and may result in expulsion at the discretion of the tutorial board. A student who is expelled relinquishes rights to any tuition refund. We retain the right to take any reasonable disciplinary action to maintain this environment for all students.

SENIORS, you are mentors and role models for the younger students. Never forget that someone is watching you and following in your footsteps. We want to honor you and reward you for the important position you hold in our program.

SENIOR PRIVILEGES and EVENTS:

Exam Exemption: Seniors who have maintained an (A) average in a class for both semesters may be exempt from taking the FINAL exam in that class. Seniors can, of course, choose to take an exam they are qualified to miss. (Every exam experience is that much more practice for college.)

Off-Campus Privileges: On the first Tuesday of each month, seniors will be allowed to leave campus to get lunch if they have a written note from parents on file specifically approving this privilege. Seniors must sign out before they leave and sign back in upon their return. Any senior who is late one time risks losing the privilege for the rest of the year.

Senior Toast: In the spring, about one month before graduation, we invite our senior high students, our tutors, and the parents of our seniors to a themed event. Seniors each have a chance to speak and tutors prepare a special toast/blessing for each senior. We need maximum participation from our junior class to make this event meaningful, because our seniors each have a charge to give to the classmates to whom they are passing the baton.

SENIOR REFERENCES:

When seniors ask a tutor to provide a reference for college, they should provide the tutor with

1. a list of all the classes they have had with that tutor and the grades that the parent sent to the umbrella school for those classes,
2. a reference form from the college, which is filled out properly by the student before giving it to the tutor (If there is no reference form, the senior should prepare a sheet giving the tutor information about what is needed for the reference letter.),
3. an accompanying stamped envelope correctly addressed to the office at the college that is the recipient of the reference,
4. a written deadline for the tutor to be certain when the reference is due, and
5. an informal resume of outside interests, accomplishments, activities, and awards that might be helpful to the tutor who is writing the reference.

The student should give the reference material to the tutor **at least four weeks before the deadline**. Any pertinent information related to the requirements of the reference should be provided to the tutor so that the reference can be as precise as possible. In short, if students invest a little bit of time in preparing reference material before they give it to the tutor, the tutor will be able to write a better reference.

You have enrolled your students in a one-day-a-week program that cannot succeed without a major commitment of time and effort from both parents.

PARENTS, in the area of **ACADEMICS**, we ask you to

- read all information sent home at the walk-thru, each course outline and 32-week syllabus carefully.
- make sure your student comes to school the first day with all texts. If you fail to order texts in time, find someone who has the text who will let you photocopy the part you need. Students who do not have texts will not be given grace for late assignments.
- check syllabi far enough ahead to be certain that students have all materials needed for classes.
- set up a plan every Wednesday for the next week's work. Some students benefit from a weekly calendar of assignments broken down into 4 or 5 days of class work listed by subject. It is your responsibility as a parent to make certain that all assignments have been completed and checked for accuracy. Incomplete assignments are a signal that your student needs to contact the tutor for assistance before your next class.
- check the testing schedule for each class. Always administer tests according to the directions provided by tutors.
- never relinquish your job of daily checking your student's work with a solutions manual. Maintain strict control of solutions manuals. Nothing will undermine a student's ability to actually learn the material for a course as much as getting a quick answer from an answer key. It is not fair to place this type of temptation within the reach of even the most honorable student.
- recognize that if a student needs extra tutorial help, it is your responsibility to arrange this. It is nearly impossible for some students to thrive in some of our more difficult classes without regular (weekly) extra tutorial help. Upper-level science and math classes require extra tutorial help for almost all students. To meet that need, optional study sessions have been added on Fridays for most of these classes. We recommend that parents recognize this from the start and prepare accordingly.
- log-in to your online grading system frequently to check for any assignments your students are missing and to remain aware of their progress and their grades in each of their classes.
- make sure your students are familiar with all academic requirements as outlined in the "Commitments from Students" section of the Handbook and are following those guidelines.

In the area of **COMMUNICATION**, we ask that you

- not call the Directors for phone numbers. Download the Directory to all your computers. **Never use any of the contact information in our Directory for business purposes or share it with anyone outside our group!**
- **make it a habit to check your email regularly for announcements and important communication from tutors.** We use email as our primary method of communication.
- communicate with tutors and board members in the least obtrusive way. Use email whenever possible. If you make a phone call, please leave phone numbers and specific messages to save time.
- make appointments if you want to be certain of time alone with a tutor or Director.

In the area of **PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY**, we ask that you

- become thoroughly acquainted with our Handbook (posted on our web site in the Forms/Policies section). Make sure you know what it says. Go through it with your students before the first day of class. Review it periodically for updates or revisions.
- require your children to adhere to our Dress Code as outlined in the "Commitments from Students" section of the Handbook. There is also a short summary on the website under Forms/Policies. Ask them to model their behavior according to all of the principles in that section and to abide by the Honor Code.
- keep track of set-up/clean up duties for your children and pay fines immediately.
- sign up to volunteer for two (2) events in addition to the All-Day Parent responsibilities. Sign-up sheets are available at registration in the spring.
- **know when it is your turn to be an All-Day Parent;** arrive promptly at 7:30 a.m. and plan to stay until the last unsupervised student has been picked up. It is your responsibility to find a replacement if you are unable to fulfill your commitment and to notify the director. All-day parents should adhere to the same Dress Code guidelines as the students on this day. (Note: Children who are not enrolled in the tutorial may not accompany you on the day you are here from 7:30 – 4:00.)
- pick up your students promptly at 3:30 p.m. Remain with them on the premises if they stay for fellowship or play, but vacate the premises by 4:00 p.m. Exceptions include after-school labs.
- replace any destruction of property that your student has caused.
- never call the church office if your student has left something behind. We have a lost and found tub in the study hall. Encourage your student to check it regularly. After items, have languished in the Lost and Found for 8 weeks, we will give them away.

- remind students to check their mailboxes every Tuesday to bring home returned papers and the occasional memo.

In the area of **RELATIONSHIPS**, we ask that you

- guide your student to maintain friendships within our group and not to involve themselves in romantic entanglements. While we do not expressly prohibit dating, we prefer that our Academy days be dedicated to academics and friendships, not the complications and exclusivity associated with dating. We will consistently plan social functions that do not revolve around couples.
- follow our Grievance Procedure. If there seems to be a problem between your student and a tutor, please contact the tutor first. Most problems are resolved by talking. If the problem is not resolved, discuss it with our Directors or another Board member. Further, if a tutor does not seem to be fulfilling the commitments outlined in our program, please ask them to explain.
- be an active part of our group. Come to lunch. Encourage tutors. Pray for them. Pray for the students and families in our group.
- actively participate in answering the questions on the Course Feedback each semester for each class that your student takes. This should be a shared task between students and parents.

Our tutorial is only as successful as the quality of our tutors. And while we do not want to standardize the special genius that each tutor brings to his/her classes, we do want to clarify our expectations. Tutors may have personal preferences that are variations of the following guidelines, but we ask them to uphold the standards of our college-preparatory tutorial.

TUTORS, in the area of **PREPARATION**, we ask that you

- provide a one-page Class Description for each course you teach. You may design your own format, but we require the information listed on our Class Descriptions on the website.
- provide a 32-WEEK SYLLABUS for each class or list the assignments clearly online. Weekly assignments should specify all reading assignments, writing assignments, research papers, tests, maps and projects. Take-home test dates should be listed. Classes may be numbered and not dated in the syllabus to avoid reprinting the syllabus every year. Students can insert dates to clarify when an assignment is due. Remember, any changes in the syllabus should be handed out in written form or listed clearly online.
- distribute each course syllabus with at least the first 8 weeks assignments at the Walk-Thru in August. Give students an assignment for the first day of class.
- assign only one normal week's work over any holiday break. Holidays are not intended to be a time to pile on academic work.
- develop a contingency plan in the event of illness or another emergency. Locate qualified substitutes you can pay (a minimum of \$25) to take a class if you must be absent. Let the director know by email what you have arranged.

In the area of **CONDUCTING CLASSES**, we ask that you

- BEGIN CLASSES ON THE HOUR AND TEACH FOR EXACTLY 55 MINUTES. Even if some students are late, begin on time. Quizzes during the first 5 minutes create a natural consequence for tardiness and help focus attention. Never dismiss students early. Families deserve their money's worth.
- dismiss classes promptly at 5 minutes before the hour out of consideration for both students and other tutors. This requires careful planning and organization.
- accept the standards outlined in the Handbook for our tutorial and require your students to obey those standards. Uphold the unity of the tutorial standard.
- never let students disrupt class or behave disrespectfully. Send disruptive students to the Sheriff so the rest of the class does not suffer. In the event that a student continually disrupts a class or does not complete assignments, speak with that student's parents and the tutorial administrators. **You have the right to refuse to tutor a student who behaves inappropriately or does not complete course work.**

CONDUCTING CLASSES continued:

- limit discussions to material pertinent to class.
- limit the amount of class time used for testing. Any quiz taking longer than five minutes on a weekly basis detracts from instruction time.
- allow parents who request it to sit in on a class. No adult visiting a class should be allowed to participate. Teach only the children who have paid the tuition.

In the areas of **TESTING and GRADES**, we ask that you

- send tests home to be administered by parents. All tests should be distributed in class. (Please DO NOT place them in student Mailboxes.) You may choose to distribute them in sealed envelopes to be opened by parents. Provide clear instructions so that parents know what you expect them to do.
- administer semester and final exams to junior high students only if they are enrolled in a class that gives high school credit.
- during exam weeks, limit your homework to give students adequate study time for other courses.
- make your tests teaching tools, not merely a regurgitation of facts. Tests should be varied in format, containing both essay and objective questions, so that one learning style/ deficiency is not unfairly penalized.
- grade and return tests and quizzes and post scores online within two weeks.
- use the Uniform Grading Scale listed in the "General Rules" section of our Handbook. Provide each student with a numeric grade for every assignment and test. To convert letter grades to numbers, we suggest the following ranges:

GRADE	Percentage Range
A	93 – 100
B	85 – 92
C	75 – 84
D	70 – 74
F	0 – 69

- have a clear, fair grading system with several grades to be averaged each quarter. Tests should not account for more than 1/3 of the quarter's grade. A possible mix for a literature course might be 20% homework; 20% daily quizzes; 20% composition; 20% tests and 20% midterm or final. A similar mix for a science course might include percentages for homework, quizzes, tests, and labs.

TESTING and GRADES continued:

- give failing grades when a student makes no attempt to do the work. Place "0"s (for missing) online until the student turns in the assignment. Find ways to reward honest effort so that students don't get so discouraged that they give up.
- **make sure all student grades are posted online.** Late assignments should always bear a penalty unless there is an excused absence or a pre-arranged agreement between the tutor and the parent. Include your late policy and penalties in a clear manner. (letter, email, online, etc.) Discuss exceptions with the director to verify if a student has a pattern of being late with work in other classes.
- provide separate grades for each semester. For the Semester Average, we recommend that each semester count 80% and the exam count 20% of the total.
- keep a record of final grades for both semesters for at least 5 years after graduation. When writing college references for students, the reference should reflect the grades the student earned in your class. Ask for copies of grades from the umbrella school to be sure that parents have reported the grade you assigned.

In the area of **SUPPLIES / TEXTS**, we ask that you

- pass all possible expenses along to the students who benefit. All purchases for classes made out of administrative funds must be approved in advance.
- purchase your own personal textbook for your class.
- Finally, **CHECK EMAIL FREQUENTLY in case students, parents, or administrators need to communicate with you!**

Parents, we encourage you to assist your students in choosing classes. As you plan the courses they will need to graduate, check with your umbrella school to make sure you have met all required core classes. Because each umbrella school may have different required courses for graduation, be advised that some of those graduation requirements may not meet college entrance requirements.

TENNESSEE STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

Requirements for Students Beginning High School in Fall 2009
Total Credits Required: 22
Math: 4 Credits - Including Algebra I, II, Geometry and a fourth higher level math course
Science: 3 Credits - Including Biology, Chemistry or Physics, and a third lab course
English: 4 Credits
Social Studies: 3 Credits
Physical Education And Wellness: 1.5 Credits
Personal Finance: 0.5 Credits
Foreign Language: 2 Credits
Fine Arts: 1 Credit - May be waived for students not going to a University
Elective Focus: 3 Credits - Math and Science, Career and Technical Education, Fine Arts, Humanities, Advanced Placement (AP) or International Baccalaureate (IB)

Please do not rush your student through these classes. Although your student may be academically ready to take some courses, be sure that he/she is emotionally ready to handle the course load and subject matter.

The courses we offer are listed by disciplines and have the suggested grade levels we think appropriate for each class. According to the TN State Department of Education, if students take any required high school courses prior to ninth grade, they will receive credit for having taken these courses, but those credits will not count toward the 22 credits needed to graduate. Please check with your umbrella schools for their policies on this issue. In addition, our Guidance Counselor is ready to help you with questions about courses and planning for graduation/college entrance.