



Student Handbook

1. About Us

Welcome to Hope Christian Academy, we invite you to visit our one of a kind campus to experience for yourself, the vision and values deeply rooted in our school for our students to thrive!

Rooted in Maria Montessori's philosophy, the teacher, child, and environment create a learning triangle. Our teachers encourage students, through individual choice, to explore, learn and problem solve in a safe environment that fosters resilience. The classroom meets the social and emotional needs of the children while they learn, respecting and empowering them as individual human beings and contributing members of society. Hope Christian Academy is an extended family and community of students who take care of one another while showing compassion and respect. No other educational environment is as well equipped to see each student as an individual and to build the skills each student will need to take his or her place in our global community.

2. Academic Honesty Policy (revised May 2008)

It is expected that students will be responsible and honest about completing their own work, achieving their own test results, writing their own papers, and generally taking responsibility for their education. Cheating and plagiarism are unacceptable actions in our community based on respect, trust, and honesty. Cheating and plagiarism are taken very seriously, and incidents will be reported to parents. When students cheat by giving or receiving homework or test answers, they are violating the trust and honor established between themselves and all the other students and high school faculty. When students plagiarize another person's words or ideas without acknowledging the source, they are also violating this trust. Students should clearly give credit to any work that is not their own. It is perfectly legitimate to use the words and thoughts of others, but proper acknowledgment must be given. Plagiarism and/or cheating will result in a zero on the assignment. Plagiarism and/or cheating may lead to suspension for the first offense and expulsion for subsequent offences.

3. Administrative Procedures:

a. Posters/Announcements: All posters and announcements put on the high school bulletin board must be approved by the High School Chair.

b. Lost and Found: The school is not responsible for lost or damaged articles. To claim lost items, the student should check with the office during lunch or after the school day ends.

4. Alcohol, Drug, and Tobacco Policy:

a. Alcohol and Drugs

Our Belief: In healthy adolescent development, the young person's well-being, social awareness, and active thinking enhance and sustain each other. As teachers our work can be effective only when these qualities are nurtured. The use of alcohol and recreational drugs can be physically debilitating, socially destructive, and damaging to the processes of perception and thought. We expect the parents of our students to support our belief and commitment.

Our Commitment: We are, above all, concerned with the health and education of the young people in our care, as well as the legal ramifications of alcohol and drug use. We commit to do what is possible to discourage and prevent the use of these substances among our students and encourage opportunities for intervention.

Our Expectation: We expect each student to make a commitment to abstain from alcohol and drugs while a student at Hope Christian Academy and that every parent will support us in this effort.

Our Policy: No student may possess, use, sell, or exchange alcohol or drugs, or be under the influence of alcohol or drugs on school grounds. Additionally, no student may possess, use, sell, or exchange alcohol or drugs during school hours at any school-related activity, including but not limited to, field trips, dances, sporting events, or performances, either on or off campus. Any transgression of this policy will be subject to disciplinary action and may be grounds for expulsion.

Should a student be found in possession of, using, distributing, or under the influence of alcohol, drugs, or other controlled substances, or in the presence of such students on school grounds or within the vicinity, or during off-campus school-sponsored activities, the following consequences will apply:

- i. Immediate suspension from school and other school activities at the discretion of the high school faculty and the student's sponsor(s). Suspension will be no less than two days and will last until the student is notified that he/she can return to school. Students will be expected to consult with teachers and make up all missed work. Students will not be allowed on campus for any reason during the term of the suspension unless otherwise authorized by the High School Chair.
- ii. Parents or legal guardians will be immediately contacted and asked to take the student home. The Administrative Director and the Pedagogical Chair will also be immediately notified.

- iii. If students are suspected of being under the influence of alcohol or drugs or are found in possession of or distributing alcohol or drugs, their belongings may be searched by the High School Chair, or a person designated by the High School Chair.
- iv. In cases of possession or distribution of illicit drugs, the police may have to be contacted before parents are called, depending on the nature of the situation as determined by the High School Chair, or a person designated by the High School Chair.
- v. Any display of rolling papers will lead to confiscation and parent notification. Display of other drug related paraphernalia will lead to further disciplinary action.

If faculty members observe a convergence of indicators such as excessive tardiness, fatigue in class, inability to concentrate, or a marked downturn in academic performance, social behavior, and/or attitude, a meeting will be arranged with the student and his/her parents, the sponsor(s), the school counselor, and the High School Chair to discuss possible causes, and the student may be asked to have an outside evaluation, which may include drug testing. The school may follow this same procedure if we are told by another student or parent(s) or outside source that one of the students has violated our policies as listed above.

One (or all) of the following actions may apply:

- i. A family meeting with the High School Chair and the student's sponsor(s) will be required for the student and his/her parents or guardians within 48 hours unless, for example, one of the parties is out of town, in which case alternate plans will be specified.
- ii. A substance abuse assessment by a California-certified substance use counselor may be required, to be completed within three weeks at the expense of the parents or guardians, concluding with a written report with the counselor's assessment and recommendation for substance abuse education sessions. The education sessions will take place outside of the school day, and proof of completion must be received by the school for the student to continue at Highland Hall.

The student may be barred from performing, competing, and/or representing the school in any school-sponsored activities for up to 14 consecutive calendar days unless otherwise specified by the high school faculty.
- iv. The student may be required to attend and complete an approved substance abuse treatment program at the expense of parents or guardian, to begin within 3 weeks.

- v. The student may be barred from representing the school in any school-sponsored 4 activities for 28 consecutive calendar days unless otherwise specified by the high school faculty.
- vi. Immediate expulsion

Students using alcohol or drugs who seek help from any teacher or staff member may be allowed to forego the aforementioned consequences for their disclosure. Steps would be taken to ensure that the proper support and intervention is available.

However, continued behaviors that include possession, use, distribution, or being under the influence of alcohol, drugs, or other controlled substances on school grounds or during off-campus school-sponsored activities may result in immediate suspension from classes and the disciplinary procedures outlined in this policy will commence.

Appeal Process:

Students who wish to contest an alcohol or drug disciplinary action must submit a written request for appeal to the Pedagogical Chair within 3 days of the disciplinary action, to be followed by a hearing within two weeks. The case will come before a must be notified. A student may not give another student over the counter or prescription drugs specially designated group made up of the High School Chair, the student's sponsor(s), the administrative director, and other faculty members as deemed necessary. If the student was suspended or expelled, that status remains until the appeal determination is rendered. The appeal decision shall be made behind closed doors and reported to the student within two days of the hearing. The decision is final.

Note: Parents and legal guardians are advised that serving alcohol or providing tobacco or illegal drugs to minors is illegal and can result in arrest, prosecution, and incarceration.

If a student is taking prescription drugs at school, parents should notify the main office and the student's sponsor(s).

b. Tobacco Policy

Students may not use tobacco or vaping products during the school day or at school-related activities. If found using either, the student will meet with the sponsor(s); parents will be notified immediately and asked to take the student from campus for the remainder of the day.

Repeated occurrences may result in a 2-day suspension from school at the discretion of the sponsor(s) and the High School Chair. Any display of cigarettes, tobacco, rolling papers, or vaping devices during school or school activities will lead to immediate confiscation and parent notification. Records of all offenses will be kept. Students found smoking on field trips may be sent home at their families' expense.

5. Attendance

Regular attendance is critical to student success in high school. Absences and/or tardies will affect students' educational experience, their grades and, in extreme cases, their ability to remain at Hope Christian Academy or to graduate.

- a. If a student will be absent for all or part of the school day, a parent or guardian should inform the main office via phone, email, or written note.
- b. Parents are requested to make doctor appointments outside of school time.
- c. Work may be made up after absences at the discretion of the teacher. (See Grading Guidelines, 6-c).
- d. When a student misses a class, it is the student's responsibility to contact the teacher directly or call another student to find out about assigned work. The office is not able to provide assistance with homework requests.
- e. Tardiness: School starts promptly at 8:00 a.m. Frequent tardiness will result in a lower grade. A record showing excessive tardiness and/or absences will be noted by the high school chair and brought to a high school faculty meeting. Excessive absences or tardiness may lead to probation and, in extreme cases, to expulsion.
Note: Missing one-half or more of the class is considered an absence.
- f. Parent Pickup: All students waiting for a parent pickup must wait at the top of the hill. For legal and safety reasons, students may not wait to be picked up at the bottom of the hill.
- g. Leaving Campus: At no time is a student allowed to leave school without first signing out at the Main Office. A student must have a note from a parent or guardian; if not a staff member will call a parent or guardian to obtain permission for the student to leave the campus. **Absence from class may result in a lower grade.** Parents picking up students are asked to wait in the main office.
- h. Students are expected to attend a full day of school to participate in extracurricular activities.
- i. A student who skips class or leaves campus and returns without permission will be sent home after the parents have been contacted. Further possible consequences include on-campus community service, among others.

6. Block Work Deadlines

Main lesson books and/or other final block work are due on the last Friday of the block.

7. Class Trips and Field Trips

Class trips are designed to be social, educational, and fun. All students are required to participate. Class trips generally include experiences in the outdoors and camping. Students must agree to abide by guidelines set up by the high school faculty. Failure by a student to follow these guidelines could result in trip cancellation, either for the class or the whole high school. Behavior and conduct on such trips are the same as at school, with the following additional guidelines:

- a. Use of cell phones or other electronic equipment is permitted only at the discretion of the teachers, for example, on long car/bus trips.
- b. If tents are used on camping trips, no co-ed tents for sleeping are allowed.
- c. Night walks are permitted only in groups and with a responsible adult in charge.
- d. Students are not allowed to walk or hike anywhere alone. Under no circumstances is anyone to leave the group without permission.

Field trips and special activities take place throughout the school year. All school rules apply to those students who participate in the trips and activities.

8. Health & Safety

a. First Aid: The school is not allowed to give students any oral medication, including aspirin and Tylenol, without written permission from their parents. For external first aid, students should report to the main office. In an emergency, students should try to remain calm, not move, and wait for help. Student insurance covers emergency treatment. An Incident/Injury report must be filled out and turned in to the high school office within 72 hours of the accident or injury.

b. Illness: Students who feel ill in class should get permission from the teacher to go to the high school office. In the office, they can make arrangements with the High School Chair and their parents to be picked up and taken home after officially signing out.

c. Medications: Parents must notify the Main Office and the class sponsor(s) if a student is on medication.

d. Earthquake/Natural Disaster: If, because of a natural disaster or inclement weather, there is a question if the school will be open, students and parents should tune to Radio Station KGIL – 1260 AM or check Highland Hall’s website: www.highlandhall.org. DO NOT call the school. In case a disaster or other serious event occurs while school is in session, students will not be allowed to leave the school or evacuation site until their parents pick them up.

9. Discipline

We expect that students will operate from an inner discipline that takes into account responsibility for one’s self, other students, the class, and the school. If discipline is necessary, the following are the general guidelines:

- a. The individual teacher will deal with minor problems with a student. However, continual problems may necessitate a meeting of the student with the High School Chair for appropriate action.
- b. A student who is asked to leave class for disciplinary reasons must report to the main office.
- c. A student who is sent out of any class will receive an absence or no credit on his/her attendance record for that day.
- d. A teacher may serve a disruptive student with a detention slip. The student will report to the College Counselor’s office during lunch on a day to be determined. The student, parents and sponsor will receive a copy of the detention slip. Three detentions will result in a meeting with the parents.
- e. Individual teachers may advocate suspension for one day. Before any action is taken, the teacher must meet with and be advised by the sponsor(s) of the student in question or two other sponsors of the high school. Suspension can occur for the following reasons: cutting class, smoking on campus, fighting, drug possession, rude or anti-social behavior, vandalism, or other offenses that may warrant suspension.
- f. No weapons are allowed on campus at any time.
- g. All serious breaches of community standards or potentially harmful patterns of behavior resulting in suspension or dismissal from Highland Hall are reported to colleges.

10. Dress Code

Students at Hope Christian Academy are expected to dress in a manner that is appropriate for a healthy social environment and does not distract from an academic atmosphere. We expect students to understand what reasonable and appropriate clothing for school is. If a student is noticed by a teacher or staff member as dressing inappropriately, he or she will be sent to the office and asked to change. If the student persists in dressing in a way that teachers perceive as inappropriate, a meeting with the parents will be called.

11. Electronic Devices

Computers and phones should be used only with the teacher's permission. During lunch, students may use phones/computers only in the classroom or the outdoor high school area. Computers and phones used inappropriately will be confiscated for the day with a \$10 fee to retrieve them.

12. Expected Classroom Behavior

The school expects students to maintain a certain standard of behavior while on campus or while attending school-sponsored functions. The following guidelines will help students understand and follow the standards for behavior:

- a. Students must be in the classroom and ready to start class by the time the second bell rings.
- b. Students are not permitted to eat, drink, or chew gum during class time.
- c. Teachers and students are responsible for keeping rooms neat.
- d. Students must remain in the room until the end of the period or until dismissed by their teacher.
- e. Students may not use obscene or anti-social language.

13. Foreign Exchange Program

Hope Christian Academy offers the opportunity for our students to exchange with students from Waldorf Schools in other countries, such as Germany, Peru, Israel, Argentina, Columbia, Switzerland, Austria, the Netherlands, France, and Brazil. A student interested in exchanging must turn in an application, found in the high school office and on the school website, to the High School Chair. The school expects students who exchange to be in good academic standing, have exemplary behavior and positive interpersonal skills, and exhibit the maturity to be away from home for an extended period of time.

While it is possible to exchange later, it is recommended that students exchange in 10th in order to not unduly affect their preparation for college.

Applications for exchange must be received by the High School Chair as early as possible, ideally **before the first day of the school year** in which the student wishes to exchange. The school has on file a list of students who wish to exchange with one of our students. Usually, the foreign student visits Highland Hall first, and then the Highland Hall student goes to the foreign country and stays with the exchange student's family, already knowing at least one member of the family.

14. Fundraising

High school classes often need to raise money for special projects, class trips, etc. All class members are expected to participate in the fundraising projects of their class. All fundraising activities undertaken by an individual student or parent must be cleared through the high school faculty in addition to the Development Office.