

# Veritas Christi Hybrid Academy

## Parent Handbook

This document describes some of the philosophies, policies and commitments for parents at Veritas Christi Hybrid Academy. Please carefully review the Student Handbook with your student.

### Philosophy and Approach

Veritas Christi means *truth of Christ*. As members of the Body of Christ, we seek to discover and discern what is good, true and beautiful in the world around us. We then learn how to articulate what is true, and to express that to others, charitably and effectively.

We take as our model Jesus, who said, *I am the way, the truth and the life*. In Latin, this is expressed as *via, veritas, vita*.

### Guiding Principles

Here are brief statements of some of our guiding principles. Please discuss these with your students.

- We seek to imitate the Trinity and the Body of Christ in our unity, collaboration and charity.
  - o We recognize and respect differences, and are quick to show mercy and compassion.
  - o We seek to listen and understand without having to be in full agreement with one another's views: "unity without uniformity."
  - o We strive for regular, open, direct and charitable communication.
- We operate with pragmatic charity.
  - o We set and aspire to lofty goals, but we're pragmatic about what works along the path.
  - o We're all growing and learning together how to be most effective.
  - o We have a trust among one another that enables us to openly share what's working and what's not, and what we're striving to grow in.
  - o We accept where others are and encourage one another along the way.
- We cultivate a love of learning.
  - o Our focus is on intrinsic values, *i.e.*, what comes from the inside, rather than seeking extrinsic value from others.
  - o We strive to make connections, within a subject or across subjects, to concrete examples and to life experiences.
  - o We inspire in one another a sense of awe and wonder at what God is doing around us.
  - o We work hard to learn and grow, and delight in what we discover.
- We seek to grow in being prepared to be effective in the world around us.
  - o We work backwards from what we need as adults to figure out what skills and attitudes to develop.
  - o We strive to help one another think critically for ourselves.
  - o We help one another on a path of discovery rather than simply seeking pat answers.

### Striving for excellence

Our Lord is glorious! His kingdom reflects His glory. He fashions us so that we might reflect that glory, not for our credit, but for His.

He gives each of us natural gifts. In His infinite wisdom, He gives some more than others. It's not our natural gifts that define who we are; it's what we do with them, in relationship to Him.

He calls each of us to make a habit of striving for greatness, for doing all things excellently, out of love for Him. This affects how we approach all of life, including our school work. The environment at Veritas Christi is designed

# Veritas Christi Hybrid Academy

to foster that growth in academic capability and personal character. Teachers, staff and other students work together at those common goals, as a community of learners.

Students are encouraged to understand their purpose, to set goals, and to work hard toward achieving those goals. Teachers and parents guide and help students, evaluating them along the way and enabling students to do more independent learning as they are ready.

## For parents

### Teacher responsibilities

Teacher responsibilities include the following:

- Providing the structure of a curriculum, syllabus and assignments
- Communicating assignments in advance, online
- Providing regular evaluation feedback on assignments and student progress
- Where appropriate and relevant, raising specific opportunities for discussion at home, particularly around topics where values and perspectives may vary, so that you can provide guidance and form your students according to your own belief system

### Your responsibilities

You are the teacher for 3 days out of each week, and your teaching responsibilities include the following:

- Being aware of your student's assignments, and helping them to complete them on time. You are likely to be asked to sign off, online, on the progress of their work.
- Encouraging your young learner to fully engage, being well prepared, putting in their best effort, and fully participating in school activities.
- Engaging with your son or daughter, asking them about what they are learning, and helping to foster the development of your own family values and shaping them in your own belief system.
- You may wish to tailor the at-home assignments that the teacher provides to your student's learning styles and abilities. We ask you to recognize that any such changes that affect their preparedness for class affect the teacher and all others in the class, so we ask you to discuss any such plans with the teacher. Lack of completion of assigned work is likely to impact the teacher's evaluation of the student.

For the younger grades, end of semester evaluations will be shared with the parent, and it's up to the parent to work those through with their students. In the most senior grades, interactive evaluations are conducted with students directly.

We are a community of learners. We build trust with one another and have open communication. That trust and communication is built on the context of relationships. **We ask all parents to participate in our monthly Community of Learners meetings**, where parents and teachers gather to discuss the vision of the school, what's working and what's not, and specific logistics issues. We also expect to make learning and growing together part of those meetings. The times of those meetings will be posted on the school calendar. While we understand that specific meetings may be missed, that should be an exceptional situation, since this is a critical part of making this school work well.

### Computer access

We rely heavily on using computers for communication. We do all of the following online, rather than on paper, wherever possible:

- The syllabus, homework, readings and other resources are communicated from teachers to students and parents
- Assignments are made by teachers. It's up to the teacher whether the assignment documents are edited by students online or printed out and turned in as hard copies.

# Veritas Christi Hybrid Academy

- Teachers give parents answer keys, for at-home grading.
- Teachers and parents can communicate about how students are doing. Questions can be raised and answered.

In many classes, such as literature, composition and humane letters, the teacher will create and post a document for students to complete. The student will need to edit that document. The teacher can offer feedback and suggestions on that document online. As students revise the document, the teacher will be able to see what the revisions were, and can get notifications upon the changes being made. This saves time, effort and paper. It's a proven approach to achieving effective and timely communication.

We'll do everything we can to make things easy. We'll walk students and parents through each step, and we'll make sure that everyone knows how to do what's necessary. Two key things are vitally necessary: a Google account for one or both parents, and a Google account for each student. Here are a couple of notes about Google accounts:

- We are totally respectful of whatever guidelines you have for your student about use of computers and email. If you choose to have all online communications go through you as parents, and can do that in a timely and effective way, we're fine with that.
- Most email accounts can be set up as a Google account, not just accounts @gmail.com.
- Any adult can set up additional accounts in their own name, and these can have different passwords. Those are fine. We don't care what the username is; if the student's name is obvious from the email that may make things easier for teachers to figure out, but it's not necessary.
- Google's policy is not to let students under 13 sign up for Google accounts of their own. But again, adults can set up accounts on their behalf, since their ages are 13 and older.
- Access rights to specific documents will be associated with Google accounts, making it possible for students to see and edit their own work, and for parents to access documents like answer keys while students cannot.

Here's how document access will work:

- Open a browser, like Internet Explorer, Chrome or Firefox
- Browse (go) to google.com
- In the upper right, you'll see a link to *sign in*. Click on that and you'll be prompted for the username and password for your Google account, e.g. [JohnnyStudent@gmail.com](mailto:JohnnyStudent@gmail.com) and JohnnyPassword. Once you've already signed in, you can log out and sign in again. After signing in, you'll likely see a letter in the upper right of that screen with a picture associated with your account, or the first letter of your account name.
- Browse (to) to [VeritasChristiHybrid.org/Members.htm](http://VeritasChristiHybrid.org/Members.htm). Scroll down to the parent portal and click the link. This will lead you to a page where you can click on your student's name, which leads you to a parent's sheet with lots of links. You can follow links to a read-only folder for parents, e.g. with answer keys, a read-only class folder for assignments, and a writable folder for each student that the teacher may request students to use to turn in work. Students have a similar portal that leads them to their work areas, but their documents do not lead them to the parents' folder with the answer keys.
- Browse (go) to [drive.google.com](http://drive.google.com). Look for "Shared with me" at the left of the window, and click on that. You'll see folders that have been shared with you, e.g. those from the school.

