



**A Home Education Cooperative
for Morally Responsible, Biblically Responsive
Parents and Their Children**

Informational Handbook

2009-2010

Dear Fellow Sojourner:

On September 4, 1996, twenty-nine families of like-minded faith pioneered a new spiritual and educational quest--the opening of The Community School, Rockford. We were drawn together, first out of a desire for Biblical and moral excellence in our homes, and second out of a desire for our educational opportunity to be an extension of that moral and Biblical standard.

As the school completes its thirteenth year, we are grateful for the work our God has done. God has led us all the way. Many ideas have shaped, and continue to shape the direction of our school. We have revised and reworked and revised again. Our school has been a success beyond most of our dreams. Yet we are not finished; we are still a work in process. We are pioneers--discovering our way in a territory that is only now becoming familiar. Although it is difficult at times, we press on. We do it because we are on a mission to raise ambassadors for Christ and we want to prepare them to the best of our abilities.

That is what our school represents--the best of our abilities. Collectively, we started our school and collectively we will carry this school into the future. We will count on all of you, whom God has called, to join us in making The Community School all that He intends it to be and all that we desire for our children.

Serving HIM with you,

*Lauria Johnson
Administrator*

*Michael Lacny
School Board President*

THE COMMUNITY SCHOOL, ROCKFORD

Our Vision

To see a community of Christian families and educators providing an excellent spiritual, moral and academic context for educating their students and preparing them to become leaders and defenders of the faith by equipping them with a Biblical worldview with which to meet the challenges of our times.

Our Mission

To provide an educational opportunity for Christian home-educated families who are committed to biblical and moral excellence. Continuing parent education in community is essential to accomplishing our mission.

Our Philosophy of Community

We are drawn together as a community by how we define *church*, *home*, and *school*; and in which order of priority we place these institutions. The decisions we make as a community are based on the spiritual and philosophical congruity represented in our faith, our families and our educational choices.

First, we are a community of Christian believers. We represent many different churches and denominations, but we agree on the essentials of the historic Christian faith, and we hold in common a personal declaration of the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

Second, we are a community of people who have made a commitment to the building of strong family identity. We believe that parents are responsible for the spiritual and moral training of their children, and we are actively involved in the pursuit and practice of Biblical principles of parenting in our homes.

Third, we are a community of home educators committed to a high level of involvement in our children's education. We value the input of Christian teachers and are committed to a relationship with them as co-instructors for the benefit of our children's academic excellence.

Our Philosophy of Teacher as Mentor

The dictionary definition of a mentor is "a wise and trusted teacher," and we seek to have teachers as mentors to our children. Our desire is to place teachers with exemplary moral character in a position that would influence the minds of our children for Christ. Our teachers will maintain strict moral standards in the classroom and hold each child accountable for their actions. We expect to keep the teacher/student ratio at 1:15 to enhance this opportunity.

Statement of Faith

1. **The Scriptures:** We believe the Bible to be the infallible Word of God, the supreme and final authority for all faith and life.
2. **God:** We believe that there is one God, eternally existent in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and that there is one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus. (1 Tim 2:5)
3. **Jesus Christ:** We believe in the deity of our Lord Jesus Christ, His virgin birth, His sinless life, His miracles, His vicarious and atoning death through His shed blood, His bodily resurrection, His ascension and His imminent bodily return in power and glory.
4. **Man:** We believe that man was created in the image of God but fell into sin and is therefore lost, and only those who put their faith in Jesus Christ alone can be saved.
5. **Salvation:** We believe that salvation is the gift of God brought to man by grace and received by personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, whose substitutionary death on the cross paid the penalty for man's sin.
6. **The Holy Spirit:** We believe that the ministry of the Holy Spirit is to convict men, indwell, guide, instruct and empower the believer for godly living and service.
7. **Unity:** We believe in the spiritual unity of believers through our common faith in Jesus Christ and that individual doctrinal differences which may exist should not hinder our unity.

We ask that members of our administration, faculty, and staff teach and proclaim only those doctrines not in disagreement with our Statement of Faith. We desire to glorify God by being zealous about the things that truly build up the body of Christ and clearly communicate the gospel of Christ to a lost world, speaking the truth in love.

School Structure and Format

The **SCHOOL BOARD** oversees the direction and policy formation of the school. The final work and decision-making on major matters rests in the hands of the School Board, who reserves the right to make any change, which seems necessary for the general welfare of the school.

The **ADMINISTRATOR** is responsible for the daily operation of the school. The Administrator is on campus during school days, arriving before the school day opens and staying until all business is finished on that day. Although the Administrator has no voting rights, he/she does may give input on policy and decisions made from his/hers first-hand knowledge of the day-to-day operations of the school. The Administrator then carries out those areas under his/her responsibilities.

The **PRINCIPAL** is responsible for the daily management of the school. The Principal is on campus during school days, arriving before the school day opens and staying until all business is finished on that day. Although the Principal has no voting rights, he/she does influence policy and decisions made from his/her first-hand knowledge of the day-to-day operations of the school. The Principal then carries out those areas under his/her influence. The oversight of family, student and staff relations along with training and strategic plan implementation is the responsibility of the Principal.

Our **TEACHERS** supplement home school efforts by providing instruction that focuses on the core curriculum areas of Language Arts (reading, spelling, grammar, vocabulary, & writing), Geography, History, Science, & Math. This instruction will take place on Mondays and Wednesdays from 8 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Our teachers give written, daily plans, which are taught at home on Tuesdays, Thursdays, & Fridays. Parents may supplement with any other material they desire. There is also a monthly parent meeting in which parents and the teacher gather together to discuss the next months lesson plans and anything else that the teacher feels needs to be discussed.

Grade Combinations

K – 8th GRADE: The school reserves the right to combine classes subject to enrollment. Combination classes work well for us and we see many advantages to them. We like the intimacy, the community, and the individual attention offered in a school our size.

Parental Involvement

Parents are welcome to observe the classrooms, but as a courtesy to the teacher, advanced notification is requested. Preschool siblings are not allowed in the classrooms.

The school is run by a cooperative effort of those families attending and therefore needs the involvement at some level of each family. There are a variety of "mom-sized" jobs that you will need to sign up for. These range from secretarial duties to administrating cleanup, from field trip organization to special projects. The biggest mom job is four hours each week, most of them are much less than that; many are monthly or quarterly commitments.

School Cancellation

In inclement weather, please listen to WQFL (101.1) or WGSL (91.1), or watch WREX for school cancellation information. If we do cancel school because of the weather, please complete all work on the lesson plans for that day. Send completed work to school on the next day that classes meet.

Discipline Policy

Morning Tardiness: Parents are expected to honor one another by having their children to school by 7:50 a.m. Students are tardy if they are not in their classroom by 8:00 a.m. The Community School holds to the principle that unexcused tardiness is an immoral act because it steals another person's time. When a student is responsible for the tardiness, he/she should ask forgiveness of the teacher and the class for taking time that rightfully belongs to the teacher for instruction and the class for learning. If the parent is responsible for the tardiness, the parent owes an apology to the teacher and the class, as well as to his/her child for the embarrassment caused by being tardy.

Excused tardiness includes medical appointments, family emergencies, extreme traffic conditions, etc.

Unexcused tardiness includes waking up late, prolonged use of the restroom, not knowing what time it is, irresponsibility, etc.

Pick-Up Tardiness: Students are to be picked up by 2:30 p.m. There is a five (5) minute grace period where after 2:35 p.m. a \$1.00 per minute late fee is charged. We will strictly adhere to this policy.

Absences: If your child must be absent from their class for any reason, you are required to notify the school office. Please call or leave a message for the Principal before the start of class. For your child's comfort and the safety of other children, your child should be kept at home if he or she is ill. However, please keep in mind that when students miss a day of group classes at The Community School, they miss a lot more than they would in a five-day program. It is very important for the success of this model that attendance on group academic days be consistent. It is important that you schedule your vacations, mission trips, family conferences, etc., with their school attendance in mind. Please do not schedule trips at the end of the semester, which would require that your student miss final testing. If a trip is unavoidable, please fill out a "Leave of Absence" form (available in the office) at least one week prior to your leaving so that you can work out a plan with your teachers for tests, assignments and projects due during your absence.

Philosophy of Correction: We believe that parents are called by God to discipline their children. We also realize that our children are a work in progress. We do not want to lower the standard, but we want to be sensitive to the Holy Spirit's working in a child's heart. Community School staff will not administer corporal punishment. A parental communication tool called an "Uh-Oh Gram" is used to inform parents of behavior issues, missing class work, dress code issues, and punctuality. Teachers and families in The Community School see Uh-Oh Grams as welcome opportunities to develop and refine character in our precious children.

*Discipline your son,
and he will bring you peace;
he will bring delight to your soul. Proverbs 29:17*

Good Conduct Code: Students are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that is respectful of teachers and other students, and reflects the Biblical principle of considering the "preciousness of others." A priority at The Community School is to provide an atmosphere in which both teachers and students practice affirmation of one another, both in language and in action. The basic guide for behavior is to demonstrate love and respect for one another.

Student Conduct Towards Adults: All members of the school staff and all teachers are in positions of responsibility and authority over the students, and must be obeyed and respected at all times. In addition, any adult on campus, including parents of other students and any member of the church staff, must be treated with respect at all times. If there is a misunderstanding between a student and any adult other than those directly associated with The Community School, the Principal must be notified and appropriate steps toward resolution will be taken.

Student Conduct Toward Other Students: All students will treat each other with respect, and honor the God-given preciousness that belongs to each student. There is never to be any hitting, pushing or shoving anywhere on campus.

Just as parents are parts of a community and can benefit from mutual support and encouragement, so students are taught to be in community with their peers. Students will be encouraged to find ways in words and actions to support and affirm their peers. Behaviors that undermine this principle, such as teasing, gossiping, forming cliques, etc., will be noted, discussed and discouraged.

Classroom Conduct:

“Obey your earthly masters with respect.” Therefore, we will obey and respect authority. (Ephesians 6:5)

“Consider others better than yourselves.” Therefore, we will look to one another’s needs and never hurt those around us. (Philippians 2:3)

“He delights in men who are truthful.” Therefore, we will always tell the truth. (Proverbs 12:22b)

“You shall not steal.” Therefore, we will respect other people’s property and reputation. (Exodus 20:15)

“Prepare your minds for action; be self-controlled.” Therefore, we will keep our bodies and our language under control. (1 Peter 1:13)

Disciplinary Guidelines

1. The Principal has the right to suspend the student for any level offense if the conduct continues despite corrective actions, or if student or parent exhibits gross disrespect for authority during the corrective process.
2. Parents are to carefully consider this Discipline Policy and discuss it with their children. A parent signature on the “Handbook Acknowledgment” in the application form is an indication of approval from the parent and an agreement that both the students and parents intend to comply with all the rules and regulations of the school.
3. A “trust relationship” is established between home and school when a child is enrolled with The Community School. This means that school staff trusts that parents are faithfully engaging in moral training at home with their children and will, therefore, be both responsive and responsible during the disciplinary process at school. Likewise, parents trust that members of the school staff will carry out the disciplinary process with their children with integrity and wisdom.
4. An important principle of The Community School philosophy is that parents are primarily responsible for their children’s moral training and discipline. The school’s role is to reinforce and maintain a high standard of behavior that is practiced in the home. Continuing behavior problems at school will require parents to provide the school with a written, specific action plan to correct the student’s behavior, and may require that parents be present in their child’s classroom until the behavior is corrected to the satisfaction of the school.

Level I Offenses

Examples of violations relating to character and attitude:

Poor attitude exhibited by:

- Arguing
- Teasing
- Lack of courtesy
- Complaining
- Sulking
- Rolling the eyes

Poor self-control exhibited by:

- Inappropriate language
- Talking or being out of seat without permission
- Rowdy behavior
- Handling another person's property without permission
- Possession of distracting items not required for schoolwork
(Radios, tape players, toys, etc.)

Actions to be taken in response to Level I offenses:

Within the student's regular classroom, teachers follow their own Classroom Management Plan. Parents are informed at the beginning of the year about positive reinforcements and negative consequences. The following disciplinary action sequence will be in effect when violations occur;

1. The teacher will complete an Uh-oh gram detailing the offense, send the student to the school office and send home a copy of the form for the parent to sign and return. The principal or administrator will counsel with the student to make sure they understand the "moral reason why" their behavior was a poor choice and accompany the student while apologizing and asking for forgiveness.
2. Teacher or other staff member meets with the parent, student and Principal to resolve the issue.
3. Parent, Principal, student and Pastoral Advisor meet to resolve the issue.
4. Student is given a one-week suspension and home study with the appropriate parental corrective action.
5. Student is referred to the School Board, where other creative resolutions may be recommended.
There is the possibility of longer suspension and/or expulsion from the school for continued, uncorrected poor behavior.

Level II Offenses

Examples of major violations requiring discipline:

Direct disobedience

Refusing to comply with a direct order from any adult.

Gross disrespect

Responding to an adult's corrective action with excessive or repeated discourtesy or belligerence.

Leaving campus or skipping class without permission
Being in an unauthorized part of the building without permission
Cursing, lying, stealing, cheating, forgery, plagiarism

Actions to be taken in response to Level II offenses:

1. Conference with student, parent, teacher and Principal.
2. Conference with student, parent, Principal and Pastoral Advisor.
3. Two-week suspension and home study with the appropriate parental corrective action.
4. **Referral to the Board. There is the possibility of expulsion from the school for continued or repeated Level II offenses.**

Level III Offenses

Major violations warranting immediate suspension and/or expulsion:

Violence toward self or another person
Vandalism
Possession of illegal drugs, tobacco or alcohol
Possession of a weapon
Inappropriate physical touching or sexual harassment
Conduct deemed of a serious enough nature for Principal and Board to issue a suspension and/or expulsion.

Actions to be taken in response to Level III Offenses:

1. Immediate suspension until further action may be taken.
2. Referral to legal authorities, if required.
3. Referral to Board. Depending on context of Level III offenses, student may be suspended from school up to one month with home study and appropriate parental action.
4. **Student will be expelled from school for possession of illegal drugs, weapons, tobacco or alcohol.**

Dismissal

There are three levels of dismissal from The Community School. Although this is not a pleasant topic, it is important that the parameters are clearly defined.

Expulsion: Expulsion is the immediate removal of a student from the school usually due to a serious breach of policy (such as a Level II offense), or safety by either the student OR the parent(s). A student that has been expelled has their enrollment terminated and their transcripts and records marked accordingly.

Suspension: A student may be suspended for a Level II offense or other offense deemed serious enough to warrant such action by the teaching staff and/or administration. Suspension is off-campus and results in the student missing a certain number of classes. Consequently, any work that is missed due to suspension cannot be made up. A student's enrollment is NOT terminated during a suspension.

Dismissal: A student may be dismissed from their enrollment on academic or disciplinary grounds, or at the discretion of the Principal when it is apparent that this school is not a “good fit” for the student, the family structure, or in cases of extreme financial irresponsibility.

Academic Dismissal: A student may be dismissed from the school, if after working with the teacher(s) and administration they still receive failing grades in core courses, or has an overall GPA below a 2.0. Continual low grades are a major indicator that the academic program of The Community School is not right for the students. A student dismissed for academic purposes has their enrollment terminated.

Disciplinary Dismissal: A student may be dismissed from the school due to an accumulation of disciplinary problems which may include but are not limited to chronic absences, disobedience, chronic dress code violations or any Level I or II offense. If a student exhibits a pattern of breaking classroom policies it can rob a teacher of his/her effectiveness, and brings the morale of the class down. A student dismissed for disciplinary purposes has their enrollment terminated.

Discretionary Dismissal: A student may be dismissed from the school at the discretion of the Principal. There are times that it becomes apparent that the student’s or the family’s needs are not being best served by The Community School program, or that the family is not able to adequately support the student in this academic model. This could be due to a number of issues, including but not limited to, insufficient supervisions of home schooling days, learning disabilities that can not be accommodated in the classroom, student’s inability to manage his/her own behavior in a group setting, or a lack of commitment and/or participation in school agenda on the part of the parents.

Occasionally it may be determined that a student’s needs would be best met through traditional home schooling in a one-on-one instructional format and we will recommend that the family move to this setting.

A student may also be dismissed from the school at the discretion of the School Board in the event of the family’s extreme financial irresponsibility. As stated in the Financial Agreement, a student may not continue in classes if tuition payments are more than 30 days past due and no financial agreement has been made between the family and the School Board. In the absence of a separate financial agreement that addresses the family’s financial crisis, tuition must be paid in full at the end of each semester in order for students to be allowed to continue in the school program.

Dress Code

Students enrolled at The Community School are expected to follow the precepts of I Timothy 4:12 in respect to dress and grooming. "Let no man look down on your youthfulness, but rather in speech, conduct, love, faith and purity, show yourself an example of those who believe."

Purpose: The purpose for a dress code is to set guidelines which will ensure a neat and modest appearance that will serve us in representing our Lord, our school and our family well. When we dress modestly, we encourage each other toward a high standard. We believe that training in modesty should start when children are young, and continue throughout the teen years when issues of sexuality must be discussed and understood from a Biblical perspective of purity.

Another purpose for the dress code is the issue of appropriate apparel for an academic environment. We recognize that there is an increased attitude of respect and honor toward the process of learning and being taught when we dress in a more formal way. We show teachers respect, and we show other students respect when we are neatly, modestly and professionally dressed.

Our students should dress their best, look their best and do their best. All clothing must be clean, neat, and properly fitted. If a child is deemed to be wearing inappropriate attire, the parent will be notified and a change of clothing may be required for attendance that day. If in doubt about the appropriateness of an article of clothing, check with the school office before purchasing. Good judgment exercised at home will be a learning activity for the child that will help to avoid embarrassment or wasted time at school. Decisions about the appropriateness of apparel may be referred to the Administrator or Principal, whose judgment will be final.

Teachers and Parents: Adults must dress neatly and modestly to reflect Christian character and professionalism. Ladies must take special care to avoid low necklines, short skirts and tight pants. Dresses, blouses and tops must cover the shoulder area adequately so that underwear does not show. **These guidelines should be followed any time you are on campus as well as at any Community School functions.**

BOYS' DRESS CODE

Boys' Shirts: Solid-colored, red, white or navy blue, collared, knit *polo shirt* (two or three buttons) short or long-sleeved **OR** long-sleeved knit *turtleneck* in red, white or navy blue **OR** white oxford button-down *dress shirt*, short or long-sleeved. All shirts must be worn tucked in and should have no obvious logos or trims, except The Community School logo. Long sleeve crew neck t-shirts in red, white or navy blue may be worn underneath polos. No layered undershirts may show at the waistline.

Boys' Sweaters: *Vest*, *Sweatshirt* (nice and neat), *Cardigan* or *Pullover* (crew or V-neck); solid-colored, in red, white or navy blue and worn over a turtleneck, polo or dress shirt. Sweaters or sweatshirts do not need to be tucked in. A belt still needs to be worn. All sweaters should have no obvious logos or trims.

Boys' Ties: Neckties in red, white, or navy blue may be worn.

Boys' Spirit Wear: Gray, navy, or red hoodies with no embellishments. Hoodie may have a zipper.

Boys' Pants: Navy blue or khaki uniform slacks, comfortably fitted, neat in appearance and not dragging on the ground. Pants should have belt loops (exception K-2 may have elastic waist) and a belt must be worn. No obvious trim.

Boys' Shorts: Navy blue or khaki walking shorts with belt may be worn. Shorts should be mid-thigh but not below the knee -- no short, tight or sloppy shorts allowed. Elastic waist shorts are allowed on K-2. The gym-short look is not acceptable.

Boys' Footwear: All children must wear shoes and socks.

Boys' Hair: Hairstyles must be neat and of a natural and conservative nature. Hair should be no longer than the top of the shirt collar. No fad hairstyles or colors will be allowed.

Boys' Jewelry: They may wear one watch. A Christian-identification necklace and bracelet are allowed. No other jewelry is allowed. Jewelry should not be distracting.

No tattoos, temporary or permanent. This includes pen and ink drawings on the skin.

GIRLS' DRESS CODE

Girls' Shirts: Solid-colored, red, white or navy blue, collared, knit *polo shirt* (two or three buttons) short or long-sleeved **OR** long-sleeved knit *turtleneck* (not ribbed) in red, white or navy blue **OR** red or white *dress-blouse* with collar, short or long-sleeved. All shirts must be modest in appearance, not form fitting, worn tucked in and should have no obvious logos, trims, except The Community School logo. Shirts do not need to be tucked in when wearing the approved plaid skirt. No layered undershirts may show at the waistline. Long sleeve crew neck t-shirts in red, white or navy blue may be worn underneath polos.

Girls' Sweaters: *Vest*, *Sweatshirt* (nice and neat), *Cardigan* or *Pullover* (crew or V-neck); solid-colored, in red, white or navy blue and worn over a turtleneck, polo or blouse. Sweaters and sweatshirts do not need to be tucked in. A belt still needs to be worn. Sweater must be modest in appearance, not form fitting, and should have no obvious logos or trims.

Girls' Spirit Wear: Gray, navy, or red hoodies with no embellishments. May have a zipper.

Girls' Pants: Navy blue or khaki uniform slacks or capris, comfortably fitted, neat in appearance. Pants and capris should have belt loops (exception K-2 may have elastic waist) and a belt must be worn. They should not have any obvious trims or decorations.

Girls' Shorts: Navy blue or khaki walking shorts with belt may be worn. Shorts should be mid-thigh but not below the knee -- no short, tight or sloppy shorts allowed. Elastic waist shorts are allowed on K-2 students. The gym-short look is not acceptable.

Girls' Skirts or skorts: Navy blue (no denim), khaki. An approved plaid option is available in the French Toast Catalog (Color code: NARP). All skirts must be no shorter than 3" above the knee.

Girls' Jumpers: Navy (no denim) or khaki, twill or similar weight fabric. Length must be mid thigh or below.

Girls' Footwear: All children must wear shoes and solid red, white or blue socks or tights.

Girls' Jewelry: Girls may wear one simple pair of earrings, one necklace, one ring, one bracelet and one watch. No other jewelry is allowed. Jewelry should not be distracting.

Girls' Makeup: No makeup is allowed except that which is natural and conservative. Fingernail polish should be a solid light color.

Girls' Hair: Hairstyles must be neatly combed or styled and of a natural and conservative nature. No fad hairstyles or colors will be allowed. Girls may wear unobtrusive coordinating hair accessories.

No tattoos, temporary or permanent. This includes pen and ink drawings on the skin.

T-Shirt Day

The first Monday of each month is designated as T-shirt day. On this day, students have the option of wearing their Community School T-shirt with the school uniform pants, shorts or skirts. Please check with the office if you need to order one for your students.

Clothing suppliers

School clothing may be purchased from:

Land's End

1-800-469-2222

E-mail: landsend.com/school

French Toast

730 E. Church St.

Martinsville, VA 24112

1-800-373-6248

www.FrenchToast.com

Facility Policies

We are the guests of Northeast Christian Church of Rockford. We wish to establish and maintain an excellent relationship with the church, to the mutual benefit of both parties. Please note the following regulations, and commit to training your children to them as well. Don't forget to teach the "moral reason why" when you're teaching your children to respect other's property.

1. No running at any time, except in supervised play in the gym or outdoors.
2. No gum chewing at any time.
3. No food eaten at any time except at snack time or lunch time. Food must be eaten under the supervision of an adult and immediately cleaned up upon completion.
4. No sports equipment (balls, bats, etc.) allowed, except in the gym or outdoors when supervised by an adult or teacher.
5. All children must stay with their teachers in the classroom or gym at all times except when given permission to use the restroom or drinking fountain.
6. No shouting or yelling in classroom or hallways before, after, or during classes.
7. Children must clean up after themselves in the restrooms, keeping them neat and clean.
8. Students and parents are not to use the church office for anything unless given permission to do so.
9. Students will assist the parents and teachers in clean up at the end of each day, being careful to leave the room in excellent condition.
10. Parents and teachers will supervise activities so as not to destroy church or school property. If property is destroyed, it will be cleaned, repaired, or replaced by the responsible party.

Visitors

Prospective students may visit the Community School classrooms to observe if prior arrangements have been made with the School Administrator. Visiting students must be accompanied by a parent or legal guardian for the entire length of their stay.

Parking

Staff, faculty, students and parents associated with the school should **not** park in the spaces closest to the front entrance. Those spaces should be reserved for people who have business at the church during the day, many of whom are elderly. Community School students are asked to park in the parking lot closest to Riverside Blvd.

Building Clean-up

Children in the Community School take responsibility for cleaning up the building at the end of each day. Half of the students are issued a chore that they must complete for half of the school year, before leaving the building each day. Parents receive notice of that chore in late August and are responsible for training their child to do it until he/she can do it with excellence. Children switch chores in January at which time the remaining students will receive a chore and be trained to excellence by their parent. They will have this chore until the end of the school year.

Curriculum

Students in the Community School must use the curriculum chosen by the school. Parents are free to supplement additional curriculum if they desire, but may not substitute curriculum in a given area for The Community School curriculum. In other words, if a parent wants to use an A Beka spelling book, they may use this book at home, but must also do the full spelling curriculum required by the school.

Grades K-3 use a variety of curriculum, including Positive Action Bible curriculum, A Beka, Bob Jones, Writing & Spelling Road to Thinking & Reading and Sonlight.

Grades 4-8 primarily use Sonlight Curriculum, a literature-based, unit study curriculum whose stated purpose matches our desire for our children, "to inspire and educate effective ambassadors for Christ here in the U.S. and around the world." Through the use of award-winning novels, biographies, historical fiction, science fiction, and poetry--our children will be exposed to a cornucopia of the finest literature and most fascinating discovery books on the market. And because it focuses its attention on heroes of the faith and other world leaders through the centuries, it grips students with an intellectually and spiritually challenging view of the world.

Augmenting Sonlight, we use Positive Action Bible curriculum and other common tools of the trade for home schooling such as Bob Jones, A Beka, Understanding Writing, Easy Grammar, etc.

Evaluations

Teachers fill out an evaluation three times each year and meet with parents twice each year (November & February) to track the progress of the student. Due to the uniqueness of our Community School, parents and teachers are partners in the education of the child. Our teachers have endeavored to design a report that will accurately reflect the child's rate of progress based on the twice-weekly contact and evaluation by the teacher. Parents are required to fill in the attendance days, sign the report card, make a copy for their files and leave the card at the office to be placed in their student's cumulative file.

In Kindergarten and first grade some letter grades are given, but for the most part the grading system is:

E= Excellent G = Good S = Satisfactory N = Needs Improvement N/A=Not Applicable

Second grade through eighth grade will be graded on their progress by percentage grades:

A = 100 – 90 B = 89 – 80 C = 79 – 70 D = 69 – 60 F = 59 - 0

Late Work: Work that is not turned in on the due date will result in a 0% grade unless parental communication has been received.

Illness/Emergency Absences: When there is an illness or an approved absence, two in school days will be given to turn in late work with no penalty. Any work not turned in during this grace period will be given a 0% grade.

Planned Absences: It is the responsibility of the parent to give the school notice at least one week in advance of attended absence. Arrange with the teacher to receive any required materials for continued school performance during the absence.

It is not the teacher's responsibility to collect late assignments from the student. Any special circumstances may be discussed with the administrator.

Parent/Teacher Communication:

1. Ask your teacher for the preferred way to schedule a conference.
2. When possible, please communicate in writing.
3. As co-instructor with your teacher, please communicate as clearly as possible and as often as necessary to facilitate academic progress for your child.

Some Don'ts to Remember:

1. Please don't try to discuss your child's needs with the teacher during school hours. Teachers are available for scheduled conferences after school hours.
2. Please don't bring a classroom problem to the Principal until you have first tried to work out a solution with the teacher.
3. Please don't talk with other parents or teachers if you have a problem with your child's teacher. Go directly to the teacher first, and if the problem is not resolved, bring the issue to the Principal. Use this scripture as a guideline: **“Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.”** (Ephesians 4:29) Likewise, if someone comes to you with a complaint that does not concern you, please respond with integrity and gentleness in refusing to listen. A great way to do that is to simply offer to pray with the person on the spot, and lovingly encourage them to go to the person directly involved.

Field Trips

We place a high value on Field Trips and take advantage of many opportunities each year. We have Field Trip Coordinators who look for pertinent places to go that will enrich learning in the areas in which the class is studying.

Immunizations, Physical & Dental Exams

Physical and dental examinations are required by state law for all students in public, private (including home school), or parochial schools prior to or upon entrance into Kindergarten, sixth grade, and ninth grade. In addition, every student must be kept up to date on his/her immunizations. In taking the advice of Home School Legal Defense regarding our school, all children entering Kindergarten and sixth grade in the fall will need current physicals. We are requiring copies of these documents for our files. They will need to be obtained from your child's physician & dentist and turned in to us within 30 days of the first day of school.

Healthcare Policy

1. Students who come to school ill or become ill while at school will be taken to the office and parents will be called to pick up the student.
2. No student with a temperature of 100 degrees F. or above will be allowed to remain in school. **PLEASE DO NOT SEND YOUR CHILD TO SCHOOL IF THEY ARE SICK.** Parents are asked to cooperate with the school in minimizing the spread of communicable disease among the students and staff.
3. If a student must take medication during school hours (temporarily), you must sign a permission form for the office staff to administer the medication. Medicine must be in the original container or it will not be given. Community School will not be responsible for the administering daily medication to students.
4. A First-Aid kit is available in the office for minor cuts, bruises or burns.

Admissions Requirements

The Community School is open to all Christian families who are able to agree by philosophical assent and support by lifestyle, the manner in which The Community School defines and prioritizes the three basic institutions of church, home, and school. Specifically, we require that:

1. Families attend regularly and are active in a local Christian church.
2. Parents attend an informational meeting at the school.
3. Parents are able to schedule adequate home time to properly supervise their students' home education and participate in their parent job(s).
4. All families of Kindergarten - 8th grade students must complete their prescribed continuing education course.

Enrollment Process

1. It is suggested that families complete the “Growing Kids God’s Way” course prior to enrolling in the Community School; however, if they have not completed the course prior to enrolling in the Community School, they must become active in a class before the end of the first trimester of the year.
2. Interested parents can call the school for an application. They may also request to visit the school, sit in on a class, or speak with the administrator.
3. Applications must be completed in their entirety, and turned in with the application fee, which is non-refundable unless there are no spaces available in a classroom for the child when the application is received. In this case we can either hold the check and put the child on a waiting list, or return it, depending on the desire of the parents at that time.
4. A Moral Interview will be conducted with the child. This interview is designed to evaluate the moral readiness of the potential student.
5. Parents will take part in an informal discussion with designated board members to discuss the needs of their child and any areas of concern from the Moral Interview, review the application, and confirm the family's commitment to moral excellence and the Community School.
6. Children will meet with their prospective teacher to confirm grade level readiness and ability to be in a classroom setting.
7. Following the family interview, parents are notified within one week of their acceptance into the school. It is the decision of the Principal and/or the Board to deny or accept the application of families seeking enrollment in The Community School. The \$100 enrollment fee is due at this time.

Re-Enrollment

Re-enrollment is open to all current students of The Community School whose family is considered in “good standing.” Your family is in “good standing” if:

1. All financial obligations with regard to The Community School have been met;
2. Your family has completed your Continuing Education between August 1 and May 31 of the current school year or has made other arrangements with the school office prior to May 31; and
3. The student you wish to re-enroll is in good academic standing and both parents and school staff agree that enrollment in The Community School is beneficial to the student’s academic progress and in their best interest.

Re-Enrollment Process:

1. Return the Re-application form and the application fee.
2. Observation Interview: We have a working “tool” called an Observation Interview which will help you evaluate how your child actually applies what he has learned when he interacts with others away from you. This interview will be done for all first year students. The interview will be optional for all other students. If you would like your child interviewed, you may request this with the Principal. This interview serves as a helpful “progress report” to aid you in training your child. The interview is conducted at school toward the end of the school year.

Priority for Registration

- | | |
|--------------|---|
| 1st Priority | Students currently enrolled at the Community School |
| 2nd Priority | Siblings of students currently enrolled at the Community School |
| 3rd Priority | New incoming students |

Fees and Tuition

Tuition:

Tuition is based solely upon our need to meet current year expenses, and therefore is determined each year by the number of classes and teachers needed and by the number of students enrolled. An exact figure is not available until several months before the beginning of each school year. Tuition for the 2009/2010 school year was \$185 per student per month. Kindergarten tuition was \$170 per student per month.

Application and Enrollment Fee:

New students: \$180 per student (\$80 application fee and \$100 enrollment fee).
Returning students: \$80 application fee per student per year

Curriculum Fees: The Community School may periodically order pieces of a student’s curriculum or loan a book for a small fee. These fees will be invoiced and payment is expected upon receipt of invoice.

Late Fee: Tuition is due by the first of each month and a late fee of \$20 per student will be assessed on all payments not postmarked by the 7th. Please add the late fee to your check if you are late. Checks received earlier than the 1st will be deposited with all other checks on the 7th, so you can send them in early if you would like.

In the event of a **financial crisis**, a written agreement must be submitted by parents and approved by the Board who will prayerfully consider each family’s situation separately and carefully. It will be the decision of the Board how to proceed with each situation. If monthly tuition is more than 30 days past due and no financial agreement has been made between the family and the School Board, the student will not be allowed to attend classes until the account becomes current or a financial agreement has been reached. In the absence of a separate financial agreement, tuition must be paid in full at the end of each trimester in order for students to be allowed to continue in the school.

Any **student withdrawing** from The Community School for any reason during their first month of enrollment will be responsible for the tuition for that full month including curriculum fees. If you withdraw your student after the first month of enrollment, you will be financially responsible for that

trimesters remaining tuition and any late fees incurred in that trimester. Application fees are not refundable. No tuition credit will be given for missed classes for any reason including withdrawal, sickness, suspension or expulsion.

Family Continuing Education Requirements

All families are required to complete an approved continuing education class each year that they are enrolled at the school. Classes are to be taken with at least one other couple and with an approved leader. This fosters a sense of community among current families and provides a means of assimilation for new families. We understand that simply taking a parenting course does not guarantee responsible parenting or perfect children; however, the heart of this requirement is that our families be recognized as people who are actively striving toward a standard of moral excellence in their homes.

The mind of the prudent acquires knowledge, and the ear of the wise seeks knowledge.
Proverbs 18:15

Please Note: In order to remain in good standing, each parent must meet the continuing education requirement each year; failure to do so will result in the loss of good standing status for that family and ineligibility to re-enroll students for the following school year. Any special concerns or questions can always be submitted to the School Board by means of the standard appeal process; i.e., a written letter detailing the concerns may be forwarded to the Board through the school office for consideration.

Expectations:

Classes and facilitators/leaders must be pre-approved by the administration each year. The administration will set forth available classes, which are approved at the beginning of each year.

Parents must notify the office to sign-up for a class that meets the Continuing Education requirements for that family. Failure to participate and meet the standards set forth in the class covenant will result in a family not being in good standing. This covenant includes homework, attendance, participation and application in their own lives as well as their families.

Class leaders/facilitators must be members in good standing, who have been trained to lead and have covenanted to uphold the standards for participants and leadership.

Class Participants standards are detailed on the printed covenant that is distributed at the first session of each course. Husbands and wives must sign individually; signatures demonstrate that each class participant agrees:

- ❖ To attend all class sessions; (if extenuating circumstances arise, the class leader must be informed.)
- ❖ To come to each class session prepared (chapters read, homework completed, etc.)
- ❖ To strive to implement course principles in family life

Contact the school office when enrolling in a Continuing Education (C.E.) class. This procedure ensures that parents/families are eligible for the course requested and that necessary records are kept in the office to track each family's compliance with the C.E. requirement.

Sequence of Classes

New Families

- *1st year: Growing Kids God's Way
- *2nd year: Reflections of Moral Innocence
- *3rd year: Growing Kids God's Way or Shepherding a Child's Heart

Parents can move down the sequence if they have already taken "Growing Kids God's Way," and begin "Currently reviewing this curriculum requirement."

Current Families:

After the above requirements have been met, a continuing education class will need to be taken each year (between August and May) for a family to remain in good standing.

Suggested courses include:

- *Growing Kids God's Way by Gary Ezzo
- *Reflections of Moral Innocence by Gary Ezzo
- *Preparation for Adolescence by Gary Ezzo
- *Reaching the Heart of Your Teen Way by Gary Ezzo
- *Growing Families International Parenting and Leadership Conference
- *Shepherding a Child's Heart by Ted Tripp
- *Homebuilders – Guiding Your Teen by Dennis Rainey
- *Value Packed Parenting – by Dr. Kevin Leman
- *Love and Respect – by Emerson Eggerichs

At its discretion, the Board may consider alternatives that explicitly pertain to marriage and family. To best meet your family's needs at a given time, you may petition the Board with a specific request to fulfill your continuing education requirement. The school board reserves the right to approve or disapprove such petitions.

Academics

Parents are responsible for co-teaching with the classroom teacher on home school days, and making sure that all work is completed on time. It is very disruptive to the program for students to come to class unprepared, especially when they are in group classes only two times each week. Discipline and structure in the home school environment is imperative for this educational model to work effectively. The parent must review all lesson plans and schoolwork done at home. The parent must initiate communication with the teacher regarding any questions or misunderstandings concerning the course work or lesson plans.

Curriculum: Average cost is approximately \$200-400 per child depending upon grade, parent's willingness to use discount booksellers, and availability of used curriculum. We will give you a book list and suggestions of where you can purchase the books for a discount. This curriculum is partially non-consumable, and may be sold or kept for future use with siblings. The school also group orders some pieces of curriculum for the students. These items will be invoiced and payment is expected by the invoice due date.

Community Meetings: All parents, faculty and staff are required to attend a monthly Community Meeting held the fourth Monday of every month. We meet at 7 p.m. at Northeast Christian Church. Some classes meet prior to or after the corporate meeting at 7:00 p.m. for their Parent/Teacher Meeting. Please check the school calendar to confirm meeting dates.

Board Members

Bill Holliday

Bill and his wife Kathy have five children and have been home schooling since 1999. Bill is Vice President of Finance at JL Clark..

Mike & Deanna Lacny

Mike and Deanna have three children and have been home schooling since 2001. Mike is the Senior Sales Representative at FMA.

Natalie Rynne

Natalie and her husband Gardiner have three children and have been home schooling since 2005.

Teachers

Vickie Anderson has a B.S. in Elementary Education from Valparaiso University. She has taught at The Community School since 1996 and taught at Christian Life School prior to joining us. Vickie and her husband, Don, have four children that they have home schooled.

Julie Bartel has a B.S. in Elementary Education from Grace College. She has been teaching at The Community School since 2004. She has taught five years at Christian Life School and has also substitute taught at Rolling Green School. Julie and her husband, David, have two children.

Nanette Brown has a B.S. in Secondary Education from Baptist Bible College. She has taught at Kishwaukee Baptist School and Christian Life School before coming to us in 2007. Nanette and her husband, Tom, have 4 children that they have home schooled.

Erin Glovinsky has a B.A in Elementary Education from Rockford College. She did her student teaching at Marsh Elementary. Erin and her husband, Josh, have one child.

Julie Pripps has a B.A. in Elementary Education from Northern Illinois University. She has taught at The Community School since 2002. Julie and her husband, Doug, have five children that they have home schooled.

Mary Sheker has been a tumbling instructor since 1978 and owns her own tumbling business. She started teaching PE in 1994 and has been a wonderful addition to Community School since 2003.

For more information, or for an application,
please call The Community School at 229-7661
on Mondays or Wednesdays from 8 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.

**NOTICE OF NONDISCRIMINATORY
POLICY AS TO STUDENTS**

The Community School, Rockford, admits students of any race, color, national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national and ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship and loan programs, and athletic and other school-administered programs.