



# STUDENT HANDBOOK

## 2024-2025

## **DEFINITION OF CLASSICAL CHRISTIAN EDUCATION**

Classical Christian education is the cultivation of virtue and wisdom by nourishing the soul on truth, goodness, and beauty according to God's Revelation using the classical liberal arts. Its purpose is to train the soul (which is the seat of the mind, will, and emotions) to love that which is worth loving.

The goal of classical education is to teach students to read, think, speak, learn, and love learning. The classically educated student has been exposed to the great books, ideas, and works of art that have retained their value and virtue over time. At Riverstone Classical Academy, we follow the classical three-stage process of instruction to teach the tools of learning - grammar, logic, and rhetoric. First through fifth grade classes emphasize grammar, meaning the foundational skills and concepts that students need to be able to build upon in future studies. In this stage basic reading, writing, and math skills are developed.

Students in sixth through eighth grades attend classes that focus on the relationships and interconnectedness of knowledge and ideas. This emphasis in the logic stage aligns with a child's natural development as students in these grades begin to question and discuss ideas with their peers and mentor teachers.

Students in ninth through twelfth grades attend classes that focus on the structure and style of expression and communication, which is known as the rhetoric stage. By the time students reach this stage, they have built a firm knowledge base and have learned to think and talk about ideas, and now they begin to hone their communication skills by learning to organize their thoughts, support their ideas, and express themselves through speaking as well as through creative and expository writing. To be educated in any discipline, you must: know its basic principles (grammar), reason clearly about it (logic), and communicate its ideas and apply them effectively (rhetoric).

**This handbook contains information pertaining to school policies, regulations for student conduct, and a description of student services. Each student is to comply with the school policies and regulations. Parents and guardians should be fully aware of the guidelines. In enrolling a child in Riverstone Classical Academy, parents and guardians agree to abide by the policies and regulations, recognizing the academy's right to govern student behavior and enforce those regulations. The parents are expected, moreover, to partner with the school in teaching Christian values that lie at the foundation of Riverstone's disciplinary code. Students and parents are expected to read this handbook carefully and to refer to it often.**

**The administration reserves the right to amend the rules, policies, expectations, or procedures outlined in this handbook whenever change is deemed necessary or desirable.**

**Each qualified student, with parental/guardian guidance, has the unquestioned right to decide whether to choose Riverstone Classical Academy or not. Those whose decision is to apply for admission accept the standards, regulations, and requirements of the academy, and the parent/guardian signature on the enrollment contract is considered a binding agreement for families to abide by Riverstone's handbook policies and procedures.**

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

We partner with families to offer students a Christ centered, classical education by blending the best aspects of private education and homeschooling to develop a strong character from a Biblical worldview.

## **OUR STATEMENT OF BELIEF**

1. We believe the Bible to be the inspired, the only infallible, authoritative, inerrant Word of God (2 Timothy 3:15; 2 Peter 1:21).
2. We believe there is only one God, eternally existent in three persons - Father, Son and Holy Spirit (Genesis 1:1; Matthew 28:19; John 10:30).
3. We believe in the deity of Christ (John 10:33); His virgin birth (Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:23; Luke 1:35); His sinless life

(Hebrews 4:15; 7:26); His miracles (John 2:11); His vicarious and atoning death (1 Corinthians 15:3; Ephesians 1:7; Hebrews 2:9); His resurrection (John 11:25; 1 Corinthians 15:4); His ascension to the right hand of the Father (Mark 16:19); His personal return in power and glory (Acts 1:11; Revelation 19:11).

4. We believe in the absolute necessity of regeneration by the Holy Spirit for salvation because of the exceeding sinfulness of human nature, and that men are justified on the single ground of faith in the shed blood of Jesus Christ, God's only begotten Son, and that only by God's grace and through faith alone we are saved (John 3:16- 19; 5:24; Romans 3:23; 5:8-9; Ephesians 2:8-10; Titus 3:5).

5. We believe in the resurrection of both the saved and the lost; they that are saved unto the resurrection of life, and they that are lost unto the resurrection of damnation (John: 28-29).

6. We believe in the spiritual unity of believers in our Lord Jesus Christ (Romans 8:9; 1 Corinthians 12:12-13; Galatians 3:26-28).

7. We believe in the present ministry of the Holy Spirit by whose indwelling the Christian is enabled to live a godly life (Romans 8:13-14; 1 Corinthians 3:16; 6:19-20; Ephesians 4:30; 5:18).

8. We believe that marriage is the uniting of one man and one woman in a single, exclusive union (Genesis 2:18-25); that God intends sexual intimacy to occur only between a man and woman in the bonds of marriage (Matthew 19:4-6).

9. We believe that sexual immorality, homosexual behavior, adultery, fornication, bisexual conduct, bestiality, incest, and pornography are sinful and offensive to God (Matthew 15:18-20, 1 Corinthians 6:18, Leviticus 18:22-23).

10. We believe all human life is sacred and created by God in His image; that He wonderfully and fearfully created the unchanging nature of each person to be male and female. These two distinct, complementary biological sexes together reflect the image and nature of God (Genesis 1:27);

11. We believe we are called to defend, protect, and value all human life (Psalm 139:14).

## **RIVERSTONE COMMUNITY COVENANT**

Riverstone's mission statement is premised upon a partnership between parents, staff, faculty, administration, and the board of directors. Every teacher, staff member, administrator, and board member at Riverstone has entered into the following covenant and will treat it as a trust established between parents and every representative and designee of the school, from the board of directors to every support staff member. Riverstone recognizes the parents' God-given role as the primary educators of their children and commits to serving parents with reverence for their God-given authority over their own children. The school does not take parents' trust lightly, and parents should expect nothing short of the mutual commitment outlined below. This document is a solemn mutual commitment — parent to school, and school to parent. All parents must sign the school's covenant in order to be considered for admission or re-enrollment. May God bless this partnership in Christ-centered classical education.

## **COLLABORATIVE ACADEMIC MODEL SCHOOL STRUCTURE**

Riverstone Classical Academy is a homeschool hybrid program that offers a unique format. We partner with parents in a collaborative educational setting where students are on campus taking academic classes on Tuesdays and Thursdays, and optional enrichment elective classes on Wednesdays. Students are at home the remainder of the week working on assignments and projects not completed in class under their parents' direct supervision. Our goal is to take the guesswork out of homeschooling and support homeschooling families by offering guidance and structure.

The school provides a traditional classroom experience for homeschooling students with teacher-led instruction, small class sizes (10 students maximum per class), curriculum, assignments, assessments, and report cards. The parents' role in this model includes supervising and checking the schoolwork completed at home, tutoring, enriching the coursework with

extracurricular learning experiences, and teaching time management and study skills, all while maintaining the primary position of influence and character building in the child's life. This model serves to enforce and elevate the family unit's role in our student's development. This format has several significant and notable benefits:

- Family matters. We believe no one should have more influence in your child's life than you and that includes their education. The school's unique structure provides extra time for parents to instill the principles of virtue that form a person's character, behavior, and beliefs. Parents are also given the time to provide enriching activities that are not possible in a traditional, five-day, classroom format.
- Students are uniquely prepared to transition to college because the structure of college classes is familiar and students are accustomed to the schedule of attending classes fewer days per week and completing coursework off campus.
- Students have flexible schedules that allow time for them to participate in activities outside of school such as working part time, volunteering, and sports.

## **ACADEMIC CURRICULUM**

Our curriculum is designed to assist in teaching, structuring, and motivating students to do their best. Not only do we provide teaching on the subject, but we also set completion goals for the students to help them learn to work within a time frame. Our integrated curriculum provides accountability, parent involvement and structure which leads to improved student motivation and attitude. We believe our well-balanced curriculum, coupled with teaching from a Biblical worldview, will develop lifelong learners capable of evaluating and discerning a godly approach to wise and productive adult lives. RCA desires to disciple every student we teach, and we want Christ to have first place in their lives (Col. 1:18b).

## **COLLABORATIVE MODEL – SCHOOL ROLE**

At Riverstone Classical Academy, we believe that parents desire an education for their child that is Christ-centered, academically challenging, family-focused, and classically driven. RCA's responsibilities in this partnership include the following:

1. Curriculum Materials - RCA will evaluate and select curriculum materials to be purchased by the parents that align with the school's purpose and student achievement goals. RCA does not supply textbooks or workbooks, but a supply list and book list will be provided timely to allow families time to acquire needed materials.
2. Teaching Staff and Instruction - RCA will hire qualified teachers who will incorporate classical teaching methods in their classrooms, provide meaningful coursework, and build mentoring relationships with their students.
3. Communication - RCA teachers will use Dropbox to share homework assignments online, and email to directly communicate with parents. School administration will also communicate by email as needed.
4. Assessments and Grading - The teachers and school administration choose the types of assessments that will be used to evaluate student mastery. Assessments may include homework, quizzes, tests, papers, projects, journals, notebooks, maps, memory work, presentations, etc. (Tests and quizzes must be taken at school.)
5. Standardized Testing - RCA Academic students will not complete standardized as part of the curriculum on campus nor is it required for grade level advancement by RCA.
6. School Meetings - RCA offers several parent meetings throughout the school year including Fall Orientation. The purpose of school meetings is to support parents by reviewing course guidelines and expectations, answering questions, and providing information and counseling, as students complete their education.
7. Individual Parent Conferences - RCA offers individual parent conferences to provide support for specific student needs, to review student achievement and academic progress at the parents' request.

8. Records, Transcripts, and Transfers - RCA does not keep or maintain formal transcript records. All parents are responsible for organizing their students work throughout the year and arranging for a review as required by the state. A report card will be provided to all students, at the end of each

## **COLLABORATIVE MODEL – PARENT ROLE**

Though the primary responsibility for academic success falls on the students, we believe that parents play an integral part in assisting students to meet their academic potential. Parents are considered co-teachers. Thus, the parents' responsibilities are as follows:

1.State Guidelines - Parents must follow the guidelines of the Florida State Law concerning home study programs by submitting a "Declaration of Intent to Utilize a Home Study Program" before September 1st (annually). This registration is required of our students so that we can meet the State of Florida's attendance policy. The following website will guide you through the process of completing this online form. A copy must be on file with RCA at the beginning of each school year.

**2. Supervising and Assisting Students - It is the responsibility of the parents during the school year to guide their student to complete each day's assignments and ensure that they are prepared for class. If for any reason a student is unable to complete the assigned work, this must be communicated to the teacher by the parent. Continual failure to complete assignments and participate in class could be met with disciplinary action.** The parents' role in the Collaborative Academic School model is that of tutor in the elementary through middle school grades and course monitor moving into the high school years. (If a student has a skill deficiency, it is highly recommended that the parents set up tutoring for their student.) Parents are responsible for purchasing or renting required text/workbooks for their students, but will be given teacher solution guides as needed so they can actively participate in their child's education by grading homework and requiring students to make necessary corrections to their work. Parents will also have access to web-based student assignments, and email access to our teachers. Student success is greater when students are supervised while they are working on class assignments. Even high school students do better when they are accountable to someone for their class work. Parents should never purchase testing materials to "help" students prepare for tests. Integrity is in question when a student studies the test rather than the course material.

3. Communication - If you find you have concerns, questions, or planned absences, we encourage you to contact your student's teachers. We ask the teachers to do likewise if concerns with students arise that can't be solved in class. Teachers may choose not to give assignments in advance of a planned absence. Preparedness of students will dictate this possibility.

4. Attending School Meetings - It is important for parents to attend school meetings so that they stay informed, maintain open lines of communication, and build relationships with the teachers, administration, staff, and other RCA parents.

5. Attendance & Punctuality - In order for the student to achieve the greatest benefit from this academic opportunity, regular attendance and punctuality are essential. Out of respect for our instructors and fellow students, please have students on time (8:50 am). Once students arrive and have dropped off their materials in their first class, they should report to the main room for Morning Meeting. Parents will need to make certain that students are picked up, or if driving themselves, leave immediately following classes. The last class of the day dismisses no later than 3:00 pm. Students should not be dropped off before staff has arrived on campus (no earlier than 8:50 am).

6. Responsible Attire - The purpose of the student uniform dress code is not to inhibit any person's taste in attire, but rather to facilitate the process of education through reasonable guidelines of dress (Uniform Dress Code discussed herein). It is the parents' responsibility to make sure students choose appropriate clothing at all times.

## **ADMISSIONS PHILOSOPHY**

**We seek to enroll homeschooling families who are dedicated to providing their child with an education that is**

**Christ-centered, academically challenging, family-focused, and classically driven. More specifically, we seek families who are not only interested in Riverstone Classical Academy as an educational alternative, but who value and support the philosophy that drives the school's mission to raise up young men and women in faith, character, and knowledge and who are committed to investing the time and effort it will take to accomplish this goal.**

**Our admissions process is designed to evaluate the whole child on the basis of their academic potential, scholastic motivation, extra-curricular interests, and character. RCA reserves the right to deny admission to a student if his or her ability, behavior, or emotional development indicates that he or she could not best be served by our school program. Riverstone Classical Academy admits students of any race, color, national or ethnic origin.**

## **ADMISSIONS PROCESS**

Step 1: Submit an Enrollment Application for each student with required nonrefundable Application Fee of \$50. Family maximum of \$150 for application fees applies.

Step 2: Schedule an Interview- Once your application and letter (s) of recommendation have been submitted and application fee(s) received, we will notify you through email that the application has been received and reviewed. We will contact you to schedule either an in-person interview or telephone conference at that time.

Step 3: Receive Notification of Admissions Panel Decision- Families will be notified of their students' acceptance via email.

## **AFFIRMING BIBLICAL STANDARDS**

We believe that the biblical foundation of Christian community is found in Jesus' two great commandments: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind," and, "Love your neighbor as yourself" (Matt. 22:37-40). We desire to build our community on the principle of Christ's Lordship over all actions and thoughts, and to adhere to all biblical standards for godly Christian character and behavior. However, given the ministry of Riverstone to children, young adults, and their families, we specifically commit to the following:

- honoring and revering God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit by refraining from the use of their names in any irreverent manner;
- viewing the Bible as the revealed and authoritative word of God;
- being a people of love and humility, who treat others with dignity and respect;
- being a faithful, active member of a congregation of Christian believers that recognizes the Bible as the God-inspired guide for life;
- understanding and respecting the interdenominational spirit of unity at Riverstone;
- abstaining from sexual immorality, including the use of pornography, pre-marital sex, adultery, homosexual behavior, and all other sexual relationships outside the bounds of a monogamous marriage between a man and woman;
- embracing ethnic diversity as part of God's design for humanity and offering humility, love, respect and compassion toward all individuals and people groups while seeking righteousness, mercy, and justice for all people;
- being a people of integrity whose word can be fully trusted and whose language is not vulgar or obscene;
- valuing the sanctity of life from conception to death;
- maintaining humility, modesty, generosity, and wisdom in our community with respect to money and material possessions;
- maintaining appropriate relationships with children and adults and avoiding all behaviors and situations that could give the appearance of impropriety;
- protecting ourselves and our students from sins that scripture condemns that are often overlooked, including pride, dishonesty, injustice, prejudice, immodesty, slander, gossip, obscene language, blasphemy, hypocrisy, self-righteousness, legalism, impurity, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, jealousy, selfishness, gluttony, and sexual immorality.

## **ORGANIZATIONAL GOVERNANCE AND LEADERSHIP**

### ***BOARD OF DIRECTORS***

Riverstone Classical Academy is an independent 501(c)(3) organization governed by a volunteer Board of Directors which hires and evaluates school staff. It is comprised of no fewer than five but no more than nine Directors, which are selected by the Directors as prescribed by the Board's bylaws. The Board sets the board policies that ensure Biblical, legal, ethical, and effective delivery of the school's mission through excellent stewardship of the school's resources—financial, human, and otherwise. The Board delegates the management of all day-to-day activities of the school to the Campus Director. Therefore, the Board will be engaged in management decisions when absolutely necessary, but is primarily focused on evaluating the school's progress in its current strategic plan and governs strategically regarding the school's future.

### ***CAMPUS DIRECTOR***

The Campus Director reports to the Board of Directors and is the Board's sole employee, providing the Board with detailed reports on the status of the school's operations and activities in fulfillment of its mission. He provides the Board with all necessary "dashboard" information that helps the Board to fulfill its role in strategic evaluation and planning for excellence in delivery of the school's mission and vision. The Campus Director provides general management of the school by forming a team of professional Christian educators and staff, providing professional development for them, and providing regular evaluation to spur further growth in excellence in classical and Christian teaching. He is the visionary communicator of Riverstone's classical Christian vision for education to the school's families, students, and teachers as well as to the broader community. In his role he leads and manages all other school employees and daily operations of the school.

### ***FACULTY AND STAFF***

For most families, the faculty and staff are the people that they think of when they speak about their school. These roles are the essential day-to-day service providers for students and parents. The term "faculty" is used to refer to the teachers or Riverstone Classical Academy. If an employee or volunteer teaches students in the classroom, on the court or field, in the studio, or on the stage, that employee or volunteer is considered a faculty member.

## **VISITORS**

Riverstone has a mandatory sign-in procedure for all visitors on campus, including parents. Any visitor to campus between the hours of 8:50 am and 3:00 pm must first report to the school office and will be required to furnish a Federal or state-issued photo ID. The visitor's information will be stored in an electronic database to document visitors to the school. Information stored in the electronic database may be used only for the purpose of school security and may not be sold or otherwise disseminated to a third party for any purpose. Visitors must check in with the front office and provide identification each time they visit the school, not just the first.

All parents and visitors to campus must use the bathroom designated for their biological, genetic sex at birth.

## **CONFLICT RESOLUTION POLICY**

Despite all of our best intentions, there will be times when communication fails to measure up to expectations, and there will be times when members of our community are not satisfied with the level of service or excellence provided by others in the community. If an employee is unclear or unhappy about anything in the school community, conversations should be handled in a way that treats all parties with dignity to the glory of God by (1) assuming the best intentions and professional competence of the other, (2) keeping the matter private, (3) seeking first to understand rather than to be understood, (4) speaking the truth with love and grace.

Riverstone Classical Academy believes that most conflicts are best resolved directly between the individuals involved. If a conflict arises, the plaintiff should attempt to first discuss the issue with the other person involved. For conflicts that are sensitive, discussions should occur face-to-face rather than by email or phone call. Timing should always be considered. Most conflicts are not emergencies, and conversations to resolve them can be scheduled at a time that is most likely to enhance each other's ability to listen well, focus, and provide a helpful response. These conversations should be scheduled in advance and should not be impromptu.

**Whenever a conflict arises, refrain from discussing the conflict with others. Gossip is never appropriate nor helpful. If a satisfactory resolution is not achieved, please use the following Conflict Resolution Policy.**

## **CONFLICT RESOLUTION FOR PARENTS**

A. If you have a concern or issue regarding the classroom:

1. Present your concern or issue to the teacher directly through email or schedule a time to meet with the teacher at school.
2. Express your concern promptly as negative feelings can build up and have a detrimental effect on everyone involved.
3. Express your concern clearly with tender mercy and love as both parties work to find understanding and resolution.
4. Bring the concern to the school principal if the problem is not resolved through these steps or if you feel she should know about it.

B. If you have a concern or issue regarding school policy or operations:

1. Present your concern or issue directly to the Campus Director through email or schedule a time to meet with them at school.
2. Express your concerns directly to the Campus Director as opposed to teachers or fellow parents because they are not able to address or resolve the issue. Sharing concerns with others instead of the one who can resolve the complaint can lead to gossip.

**C. If you are told a complaint:**

1. Direct the person with the concern to discuss it with the specific individual in question.
2. Do not repeat complaints to others as that may result in gossip.

## **CONFLICT RESOLUTION FOR STUDENTS**

A. If you have a concern or issue regarding a class or teacher:

1. Discuss your concern with your parents first and ask for their help in navigating the problem.
2. Bring your concern to the teacher's attention with parents present if necessary.

B. If you have a concern or complaint regarding another student:

1. Present your concern or complaint directly to the person involved as opposed to other students because other students are not able to provide resolution. Sharing concerns with others instead of the one who can resolve the complaint can lead to gossip.
2. Include a mediator such as a teacher or administrator for issues taking place at school if you are unable to resolve the problem yourself.

C. If a complaint is made about you:

1. Understand the problem. Talk directly to the person with the complaint and make sure you know exactly what the



complaint is and why it is being made.

2. Give it prompt attention. Talk to the person who is complaining about you as soon as possible and try to reach a resolution because avoidance may make the problem worse.

3. Include a mediator such as teacher or administrator for issues taking place at school if you are unable to resolve the problem yourself.

4. Learn from mistakes and turn them into growth experiences.

**Biblical Teaching on Conflict Resolution (Guiding Principle)**

In Matthew 5:23-24, Jesus tells us, "Therefore, if you are presenting your offering at the altar, and there you remember that your brother has something against you, leave your offering there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and present your offering." We need to resolve disagreements we have with others so that we can bring our praise and offerings to Him with a clean heart. When it comes to conflict with others: 1. Express the complaint promptly; don't let the issue percolate. 2. Express the complaint to the right person, the one with whom you have the complaint. 3. Don't broadcast the complaint. Express it only to the person who should hear it. Unneeded stress, worry, harm and hard feelings result when problems and dissatisfactions are expressed to people other than those directly involved with the problem.

5. Pray about it.

## **HOMESCHOOL DAYS AND ASSIGNMENT SHEETS**

Homeschool days are an essential part of Riverstone's Model. RCA Teachers are partnering with you to educate your children. Co-Teachers (parents) equally share this important responsibility.

1. Teachers will email assignment sheets for the week on Monday and give a hard copy to students on Tuesday.

2. The assignment sheet should indicate which assignments are due and which assignments will be covered in class.

3. Assignment sheets should read clearly to parents and students so that there is no confusion.

4. Sometimes we can provide sufficient time in class for practice as well as for reading and other preparation for the next lesson. Whenever we can do this, we should. As we cannot always get it all done in class, we assign homework.

5. Co-teachers must communicate with teachers if an assignment needs to be modified to meet the student's ability. Teachers may allow for modifications to assignments as long as there is sufficient communication from the parents.

6. If a student continually comes to class unprepared or does not participate in class, this must be communicated to the parent. Co-teachers and students have a responsibility to complete assignments to the best of their capabilities.

## **TESTS**

Because we are a hybrid with minimal class time, Riverstone does not implement regular testing. Teachers may test students to monitor progress if it is absolutely necessary. Tests that take place in class for grades K-2 will be graded at home. All other tests will be for the purpose of monitoring progress for both co-teachers and teachers.

## **BEHAVIORAL PRINCIPALS AND GUIDELINES FOR STUDENTS**

Riverstone Classical Academy seeks to provide an educational environment that is respectful, peaceful, intellectually challenging, and safe. The Bible outlines appropriate behavior, and we expect each and every one to exhibit Christian behavior. These behaviors include, but are not limited to the following:

In Speech: Use wholesome talk; refrain from coarse joking; speak the truth in love; do not gossip or slander others. (Ephesians 4:29, Ephesians 4:15)

In Action: Be kind and respectful; show compassion; be gentle; display joyfulness and self-control; be a peacemaker; be honest and caring. (Galatians 5:22-23, Matthew 5:9, Proverbs 22:21)

In Attitude: Show fortitude and attentiveness; be conscientious and steadfast; push for excellence; show a positive attitude. (2 Peter 1:6, Colossians 3:23, Hebrews 4:12)

## **CHRISTIAN CODE OF CONDUCT**

A godly standard of behavior is required to accomplish the goals of RCA. Students will be expected to demonstrate self-control and godly discretion in their speech, actions, dress, and other forms of expression at all times. Maintaining an atmosphere conducive to academic and spiritual growth, students will be required to adhere to the Code of Conduct.

The following Code of Conduct has been written to inform the students as to the types and range of behaviors that are acceptable or unacceptable; nevertheless, not every specific variation of prohibited conduct has been included. Consequently, students should expect to be addressed for conduct that inhibits the school from operating in an orderly and godly manner. The following are the Christian conduct expectations that are laid out for students enrolled at RCA:

## **STUDENTS' DISCIPLINE RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

**All students are expected to learn and to live by the Riverstone Classical Academy Honor Code:**

- **I will conduct myself in a manner that honors the mission of our school.**
- **I will treat my classmates as I wish to be treated.**
- **I will be honest and hardworking.**
- **I will report to a parent, teacher, or the Campus Director any behavior that threatens the safety and integrity of our school community.**

**1. CODE OF CONDUCT** is based on the idea that the student has certain rights and responsibilities. You, the student, have the right to pursue an education in an orderly environment free of distractions and disruptions by other students. You also have the responsibility to conduct yourself in such a way that other students can also learn in an orderly and respectful atmosphere. You have the right to know exactly what is expected of you, and the responsibility to live up to these expectations.

**2. ATTITUDE** Students shall relate to fellow students with respect and courtesy. Students shall approach their studies in a manner that glorifies God (i.e., assignment completion in a timely manner; preparedness and participation in classes).

**3. SPEECH** Students shall communicate in a Christ-like manner. No offensive language will be tolerated including obscenity, foolish talk, coarse joking, slander, gossip, or threats.

**4. DRESS CODE/UNIFORM:** Students shall dress in a conservative manner adhere to the uniform dress code on academic days, and school spirit t-shirts on enrichment day. The dress code is designed to reduce the likelihood of distraction or disruption to the daily academic focus. It is your responsibility to assure that your guests at school, or a school related function, follow the dress code. If, in the judgment of the administration or staff, a student is dressed inappropriately, the student will receive a first-time warning and be required to change clothing if necessary. Repeated offenses will be addressed through the Disciplinary Plan and with parents. Any student's dress/appearance not specifically stated below which the faculty or staff deems undesirable will not be permitted. Uniform dress code includes dress pants, khaki pants, chino or khaki shorts, uniform skirts, uniform dresses, collared polo uniform shirts in any color. All leg coverings must reach the knee or below or pass the fingertip test. • Undergarments should not be visible at any time. • No leggings, unless worn under a dress or skirt. • No spandex or yoga pants. • Pants, shorts, and skirts should not be excessively baggy, excessively tight fitting, low-riding, ripped, worn, or showing any holes. • Shirts should not be tight fitting, not expose midriffs. • Hats are not permitted • Health regulations and safety factors require that shoes be worn at all times. Close toed shoes are required for playground safety. Bedroom shoes/slippers are not allowed.

**5. ILLEGAL SUBSTANCES** No illegal substances (drugs, alcohol, or cigarettes) shall be possessed or used before, during, or after school hours on school property or at any school function. Students found in violation may be immediately expelled from RCA. School administrators, teachers, and/or their designated representatives are given the authority to conduct a reasonable search of students and their possessions, including the vehicle of driving students, when on school property, on property being used by the school, at any school function or activity, or at any school event being held away from school if it is established there is reasonable suspicion of the student being in violation of a school code.

**6. PHYSICAL VIOLENCE** No physical violence between students will be tolerated. If a student hits another student, that student will be suspended for a period of two days. If both students are found to have hit one another, both students will be suspended for a period of two days.

**7. HONOR CODE** Students shall conduct themselves honestly and honorably during any assignment or testing situation. During tests, students are expected to abstain from taking, receiving, or sharing information. Teachers reserve the right to more specifically monitor and manage the learning environment to maintain the optimal conditions for all students in the class. Acquiring a copy of any test for the sole purpose of studying the test to ensure a passing grade is strictly prohibited.

**8. PLAGIARISM-** Plagiarism occurs when a student copies the writings or ideas of an author or another person and presents the writings or ideas as their own. When using the writings or ideas of an author or another person, a student is required to use quotation marks and a citation (e.g., footnote) to the true author. This includes the use of AI (ex. CHAT GPT) to write essays or complete assignments. All work must be the student's original writing.

**9. ACCOMPLICE** Students found guilty of being an accomplice to any violation of the Code of Conduct are subject to the same penalties as students who are actively involved in committing such offenses.

**10. PHYSICAL DISPLAYS OF AFFECTION** No student shall engage in inappropriate physical displays of affection at school or at a school activity. This includes, but is not limited to holding- hands, kissing, caressing, and similar behavior.

The following are school policies that students are expected to abide by:

**1. ATTENDANCE & PUNCTUALITY** In order for the student to achieve the greatest benefit from this academic opportunity, regular attendance and punctuality (arrive by 8:50 am) are essential. Out of respect for our instructors and fellow students, please be on time for classes and for pick-up (classes dismiss no later than 3:00 pm). Parents are required to make certain that students are picked up, or if driving themselves, leave immediately following class. Morning meeting starts at 9:00 am each morning. Students are required to report to the classroom as soon as they arrive.

**2. CELL PHONES / ELECTRONICS NO CELL PHONES** or electronics are allowed at school. "Electronics" include, but are not limited to: cell phones, computers, tablets, cameras, MP3 players, iPods, earphones, and smart watches. The use of or discussion of social media is not allowed.

**3. FOOD AND DRINK IN CLASSROOMS** Students are allowed to have only water in the classrooms. All other food and drinks need to be consumed in the lunchroom unless permitted by the teacher. Gum is not allowed. Students are allowed a snack and water during the day as set by the teacher for a specific time.

**4. DRIVING STUDENTS** All driving students must use extreme caution while driving in the parking lot. Driving students are not permitted to go out to their car during the school day except when approved to leave campus for lunch.

**5. LEAVING CAMPUS** Once students arrive at school or a school related function, he/she will not be allowed to leave campus alone or with another student. No student will be allowed to walk to any of the surrounding stores or establishments during or following school hours. If a student must leave early, he/she must have parental permission and sign out with the director before leaving campus. APPROVED Juniors and Seniors who are dual enrolled may leave campus for lunch with prior written permission from parents and Administration (pick up form in the office). Students will not be permitted to transport other students to/from restaurants during lunch.

## **BULLYING**

Bullying is unwanted, aggressive behavior among school aged children that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The behavior is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time. Both kids who are bullied and who bully others may have serious, lasting problems.

**In order to be considered bullying, the behavior must be aggressive and include:**

1. An Imbalance of Power: Kids who bully use their power—such as physical strength, access to embarrassing information, or popularity—to control or harm others. Power imbalances can change over time and in different situations, even if they involve the same people.
2. Repetition: Bullying behaviors happen more than once or have the potential to happen more than once.

**Bullying includes actions such as making threats, spreading rumors, attacking someone physically or verbally, and excluding someone from a group on purpose. There are three types of bullying:**

**1. Verbal bullying is saying or writing mean things. Verbal bullying includes:**

- Teasing
- Name-calling
- Inappropriate sexual comments
- Taunting
- Threatening to cause harm

**2. Social bullying, sometimes referred to as relational bullying, involves hurting someone's reputation or relationships. Social bullying includes:**

- Leaving someone out on purpose
- Telling other children not to be friends with someone
- Spreading rumors about someone
- Embarrassing someone in public

**3. Physical bullying involves hurting a person's body or possessions. Physical bullying includes:**

- Hitting/kicking/pinching
- Spitting
- Tripping/pushing
- Taking or breaking someone's things
- Making mean or rude hand gestures

## DISCIPLINARY PLAN

A godly standard of behavior is required to accomplish the goals of RCA. Students will be expected to demonstrate self-control and godly discretion in their speech, actions, dress, and other forms of expression at all times. Maintaining an atmosphere conducive to academic and spiritual growth, students will be required to adhere to the Code of Conduct. Consequently, students should expect to be disciplined for conduct that inhibits the school from operating in an orderly and godly manner.

The school's discipline policy exists to support the mission of the school. The school believes that the student is best served when home and school work cooperatively in these matters. Ideally, the spirit of cooperation among faculty and students will be such that discipline will be self-imposed rather than forced. Riverstone believes that parents are the primary disciplinarians of their children. By sending their children to the academy, parents do not surrender their duties to discipline their children for misconduct that takes place during school hours. The academy will look to the parents to provide the most effective response and discipline to their own children when they misbehave not only out of school but in school. Parents will be invited into the discipline process to help the school to determine the best way to help their children learn and grow into virtuous and wise young people.

Discipline is a vital part of teaching our students to love God and to serve him by loving others. It is therefore intimately related to our school mission and should be embraced. Discipline is a sacred responsibility for every parent and teacher. We administer discipline because we love our students. This is a biblical principle as Proverbs 13:24 declares, "He who loves him disciplines him diligently." God himself disciplines those he loves (Hebrews 12). Education without discipline is incomplete and fails to produce fruitful disciples of Jesus. Disciplinary practices at Riverstone are intended to shepherd the hearts of children, not to control behavior. We will always seek to provide discipline that gets to the heart of the child's actions. Discipline that simply manipulates a child into meeting our expectations does not lead to a disciplined, abundant life after graduation. Most schools use behaviorist models for discipline. While this can create an orderly school, it does not create a pure heart. The scriptures teach that the heart is the wellspring or source of life (Proverbs 4:23). Jesus declares, "No good tree bears bad fruit, nor does a bad tree bear good fruit. Each tree is recognized by its own fruit. People do not pick figs from thorn bushes, or grapes from briars. The good man brings good things out of the good stored up in his heart, and the evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in his heart. For out of the overflow of his heart his mouth speaks." (Luke 6:43-45)

Fair is not always equal. Because we endeavor to shepherd the hearts of students, the discipline given one student may differ from another based upon each student's individual needs. Every child deserves the discipline he or she needs to develop a pure heart. While our discipline policy provides some guide for types of disciplinary responses that may be utilized in hypothetical situations, the school is not bound to those examples since every student is different, and since the motives behind and attitude after any two infractions may vary greatly. We will always endeavor to do what is just for each student when he or she is in need of discipline.

Students are expected to live by the Riverstone Honor Code, which summarizes Christ-centered conduct that complements the mission of Riverstone Classical Academy.

The school has established three levels of misconduct to help students, parents, faculty, and administrators work through discipline situations effectively on behalf of the students and the Riverstone community. Determination of the level of misconduct is at the discretion of the academy, and the descriptions below are just a general guide. The academy reserves the right to classify each incident of misconduct independently of the classification of other incidents and the right to assign consequences that differ despite apparent similarities between incidents. Each incident is full of nuance created by the differences in student motive, maturity, history, detailed circumstances, and immediate and greater context. Fair is not always equal, and the academy reserves the right to use its best judgment in working with parents to prayerfully shepherd individual students and the Riverstone community in partnership with the parents involved with each incident of misconduct.

## **LEVEL 1 MISCONDUCT AND POSSIBLE RESPONSES**

### **LEVEL 1: MINOR MISCONDUCT ON THE PART OF THE STUDENT THAT IMPEDES ORDERLY CLASSROOM PROCEDURE OR INTERFERES WITH THE ORDERLY OPERATION OF THE SCHOOL**

#### **EXAMPLES OF LEVEL 1 INFRACTIONS INCLUDE BUT ARE NOT LIMITED TO THE FOLLOWING:**

1. Classroom or in-school disturbance
2. Repeated classroom tardiness
3. Failure to follow prescribed procedures
4. Repeated inappropriate attire (see Dress Code Policy)
5. Disrespectful language or gestures
6. Inappropriate display of affection
7. Minor unwanted teasing (not bullying)
8. Profanity
9. Occasional minor misuse of technology

Procedure: The teacher will email a Level 1 report to parents, make sure the incident is reported to the Campus Director and documented, and administer a consequence if warranted.

Upon the sixth level one offense, the student may be placed on behavioral probation (see Behavioral Probation) at the discretion of the Campus Director. The decision to place a student on behavioral probation will be based upon the nature of the infractions leading up to the sixth offense and the student's attitude toward discipline.

## **LEVEL 2 MISCONDUCT AND POSSIBLE RESPONSES**

### **LEVEL 2: MISBEHAVIOR ON THE PART OF THE STUDENT THAT TENDS TO DISRUPT AND DETRACT FROM THE LEARNING CLIMATE OF THE SCHOOL**

#### **EXAMPLES OF LEVEL 2 INFRACTIONS INCLUDE BUT ARE NOT LIMITED TO THE FOLLOWING:**

1. Public display of affection
2. Vulgar language and use of the Lord's name in vain
3. Cheating or lying
4. Failure to serve a disciplinary consequence
5. Forgery
6. Gambling
7. Minor intentional irritation of other students
8. Reckless behavior or horseplay
9. Inappropriate pranks
10. Insubordination
11. Repeated or serious misuse of technology
12. Mild violations of the honor code
13. Minor physical scuffles

14. Disruptive behavior
15. Minor or careless vandalism

After four Level 2 infractions, the student may be expelled (see Expulsion) from school for at least the remainder of the school year (by the decision of a five-member committee. Level 2 infractions count as two level one infractions in the progression toward behavioral probation. Two Level 2 infractions may result in behavioral probation.

**NOTE: If after completing the period of behavioral probation, the student misbehaves, he/she will again be placed on behavioral probation.**

### **LEVEL 3 MISCONDUCT AND POSSIBLE RESPONSES**

#### **LEVEL 3: ACTS DIRECTED AGAINST PERSONS OR PROPERTY, WHICH ENDANGER THE SPIRITUAL, PHYSICAL, OR EMOTIONAL HEALTH OR SAFETY OF OTHERS IN THE SCHOOL**

These acts may be considered criminal, and may involve contacting local law enforcement agencies. These offenses are not calculated in the cumulative disciplinary measures taken with Level 1 and 2 offenses. Level 3 infractions are addressed independently of other infractions.

#### **EXAMPLES OF LEVEL 3 INFRACTIONS INCLUDE BUT ARE NOT LIMITED TO THE FOLLOWING:**

1. Fighting
2. Sexual immorality and misconduct, including sexting and use or distribution of pornography
3. Bullying (repeated behavior against peers that is socially, emotionally, physically, or spiritually isolating, hurtful, or harmful).
4. Blatant disrespect for authority
5. Threats to others
6. Sexual harassment of students or employees
7. Assault/battery
8. Any attempt to do bodily harm to a staff member
9. Vandalism (depending on the extent of damages and intentions)
10. Extortion
11. Hazing
12. Repeated/unmodified misconduct of any level
13. Arson
14. Bomb threat
15. Serious or serial violation of the Acceptable Use of Technology Policy
16. Phone tampering/Possession/use/transfer of explosive devices
17. Possession/theft/sale of stolen property
18. Possession/use/transfer of tobacco and smoking materials
19. Possession/use/transfer of dangerous weapons
20. Possession/use/transfer of unauthorized substances and/or paraphernalia (drugs, alcohol, mood-altering substances, etc.)
21. Possession/use/transfer of fireworks

22. Possession/use/transfer of “look-alike” substances

23. Use of cell phone cameras in private areas (lockers, rest rooms, etc.)

Procedure: The student may be immediately removed from the classroom. The Director initiates disciplinary action by investigating the infraction, meeting with the parents, and conferring with staff and parents on the extent of the consequences. The student will be suspended during the investigation and the duration of the discipline committee hearing and may be expelled by the decision of a five-member committee.

**\*\*\*Expulsion or dismissal does not absolve the family of their financial responsibilities to the school.\*\*\***

## **UNIVERSAL SCHOOL RULES**

1. Students will maintain decorum conducive to a productive classroom.
2. Students will treat each other with respect.
3. There will be no running in the hallway.
4. Students will follow teachers' and staff members' instructions and directives.
5. Students will be good stewards of school property.
6. There will be no throwing of any objects other than balls in physical education classes and recess.
7. No student may not go outside the building at any time unless accompanied by an adult.
8. Language used must be wholesome and good for building others up according to their needs.
9. No means no and stop means stop.
10. Students will not go anywhere in the building without permission from their teacher or appropriate staff person.
11. All students must use the bathrooms designated for their biological, genetic sex confirmed at birth.
12. All students will be called by traditional binary pronouns corresponding to their biological, genetic sex confirmed at birth.

## **ORDER OF DISCIPLINE ACTIONS:**

1. Warning / Phone call to parents
2. Conference + Behavioral Probation/Suspension for up to (3) days
3. Dismissal \*Depending on the severity of the violation, a student may be dismissed immediately without going through any other steps of discipline. Behavioral Probation- The director may place a student on behavioral probation if the student's behavior is physically or verbally defiant towards correction. The period of time the student is placed on behavioral probation will be up to the discretion of the director and will be commensurate with the seriousness of the offense. Probation will be skipped entirely for infractions of physical violence and/or verbal abuse. Further offenses during probation period for all other infractions will result in student dismissal.

## **DRESS CODE FOR STUDENTS**

Students shall dress in a conservative manner adhere to the uniform dress code on academic days, and school spirit t-shirts on enrichment day. The dress code is designed to reduce the likelihood of distraction or disruption to the daily academic focus. It is your responsibility to assure that your guests at school, or a school related function, follow the dress code. If, in the judgment of the administration or staff, a student is dressed inappropriately, the student will receive a first-time warning and be required to change clothing if necessary. Repeated offenses will be addressed through the Disciplinary Plan and with parents. Any student's dress/appearance not specifically stated below which the faculty or staff deems undesirable will not be permitted. **Uniform dress code includes dress pants, khaki pants, chino or khaki shorts, uniform skirts, uniform dresses, collared polo uniform shirts in any solid color. Sweaters, cardigans, sweatshirts,**



and jackets must be solid in color with no additional graphics or logos. The RCA spirit sweatshirt is permitted. All leg coverings must reach the knee or below or pass the fingertip test. • Undergarments should not be visible at any time. • No leggings, unless worn under a dress or skirt. • No spandex or yoga pants. • Pants, shorts, and skirts should not be excessively baggy, excessively tight fitting, low-riding, ripped, worn, or showing any holes. • Shirts should not be tight fitting, not expose midribs. • Hats are not permitted • Health regulations and safety factors require that shoes be worn at all times. Close toed shoes are required for playground safety. Bedroom shoes/slippers are not allowed.

## TUITION INFORMATION

All tuition and fees cover one school year and are subject to change from year to year. Tuition and fees are non-refundable and non-transferable. You can find tuition and fees for the current school year on our website and below. Please note that re-enrollment may be denied if your financial account is not in good standing by May 1st.

Tuition and fees for each year will include the following:

### 1. Application/Registration Fee (new and returning students)

- Application fees are due at time of registration for all students

- \$50 application fee and the \$200 registration fee are nonrefundable and nontransferable. (Application Fees family maximum is \$150, and \$500 family maximum for registration fees.)

### 2. Tuition:

Application Fee (due at enrollment) \$50 p/student- max of \$150 p/family

Registration Fee (due at time of acceptance) \$200 p/student – max of \$500 p/family

Multi-Student Discount

10% - 2nd student 20% - 3+ students

## Comprehensive Program

(Drop off Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday)

Academics and Enrichment Classes

\$4,200.00 annually

## Academic Program

(Drop off Tuesday + Thursday)

\$3,200.00 annually

## High School Program

Drop off Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday)

\$4,500

**If you have multiple students enrolled in an eligible program, you can calculate your tuition costs using the discount factors above. See examples below:**

**2 Students:  $\$4200 + (\$4200 \times .90) = \$7,980$**

**3 Students:  $\$4200 + (\$4200 \times .90) + (\$4200 \times .80) = \$11,340$**

Tuition may be paid in one of the three following ways:

1. Plan A ~ Annual (3% Paid in Full Discount on 1st student) - payment in full no later than July 1st
2. Plan B ~ Biannual - two payments paid on Aug 1st and on January 2nd
3. Plan C ~ Monthly - (10) payments due the 1st of each month for the months of Aug- May.)

Processing fees may be assessed by the third party payment processor when using credit cards or Zelle to make payments. A late fee of \$35.00 will be applied for any payments that are more than one week past the chosen payment plan due date. Returned checks are subject to a \$35.00 returned check charge. RCA reserves the right to require the annual payment plan when deemed necessary. \*If a student is not accepted or decides to withdraw his/her application before June 30th, \$50 will be withheld from the Registration fee before refund, and the application fee is nonrefundable. If a student decides to withdraw his/her application after June 30th, the Registration fee will not be refunded.

***\*\*\*If a student withdraws after the start of the school year, no monies will be refunded and you will be liable for tuition and included fees for the entire year.\*\*\****

## **GOVERNMENT SCHOLARSHIPS**

RCA has explicitly chosen after much research and communication with the state NOT to participate in or directly accept any state scholarships/grants due to the intrusive student reporting regulations and burdensome regulatory requirements. RCA believes in unfettered individual freedom and complete parental discretion over their student's education including the keeping of their student records, health certificate autonomy, curriculum choice and testing practices. Participation in any of the state's current educational scholarship/grant programs would force RCA to yield school and parent discretion in these areas of their students' education to the state instead. Therefore, RCA does not appear on any eligibility lists of approved schools or educators with the state of Florida, and is not aware of a way for our students to participate in any of the state's current scholarship or grant programs.

## **NOTICE OF NONDISCRIMINATORY POLICY AS TO STUDENTS**

The Riverstone Classical Academy Inc. 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, or national and ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship and loan programs, and athletic and other school-administered programs.

## **RCA COVENANT**

Riverstone Classical Academy endeavors to partner with Christian families in the home education of their children. The RCA Covenant outlines the blessings in this agreement. We invite the believing parents, parent, or guardian to enter into this covenantal agreement.

1. We covenant to live out our Christian life and witness. Therefore we will endeavor to
  - pray earnestly for one another, the school, and families.
  - worship at a Christian church regularly so as to be fully devoted to God.
  - build a strong Christian community by encouraging others and resolving conflict biblically through respectful and honest conversations with those involved.
2. We covenant to support the school as a "light on a hill" in Manatee County. Therefore we will
  - benefit the school with additional financial support when possible.
  - seek to serve others within the life of the school through volunteering.
  - uphold the name of RCA, bearing a Christian witness both inside and outside the community through thought, word, and deed.

**I certify that my family and I have read the Student Handbook and agree to uphold the policies, mission, and academic philosophy of Riverstone Classical Academy.**

Parent Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Student Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Student Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Student Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Student Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Please submit this page along with the enrollment application to [admissionsrca@gmail.com](mailto:admissionsrca@gmail.com) or mail to:  
1111 51st St. W Bradenton FL, 34209.