



**TNCA
PARENT
HANDBOOK**



True North Christian Academy
800 Sunnidale Road, Unit 1
Wasaga Beach, Ontario L9Z 1J7

Letter from the Principal:

I am so very glad that you have chosen to send your child to True North Christian Academy. Our staff truly has a passion for Christian Education - every day at school God is first, demonstrated through prayer, devotions, worship and curriculum. God is celebrated throughout our school day as the creator. Our teachers believe strongly in Christian values and share them in their classrooms. At our school God is the foundation for our character development for our students. High Academic standards are important to us at True North Christian Academy. Not only will your child be taught at Ontario Curriculum standards, we go above and beyond to make sure that your child achieves academic excellence. We value each child and believe that they have been gifted with talents unique to them. We want your child to develop these talents to their full potential. Our curriculum and teachers promote positive social interaction, creative learning environments and a community and global emphasis. And we believe that you – the parents are integral to your child receiving a sound education. Studies have shown time and again that students do much better when their parents are integrally involved in their education. For that reason, there will be many opportunities for you to share in your child's learning experience.

True North Christian Academy is not just a school- we are a community. Our small class sizes, school wide school activities and social events allow students bond with each other in a meaningful way. Our parents get to be involved within that community by working alongside other parents and teachers in our fundraising events and activities. True North Christian Academy is an extended family, and I want to personally welcome you to be a part of it.

The purpose of this Parent Handbook is to give you the information that will help this school year run smoothly. If at any time you have any questions about the school, our policies or clarification about the school day please feel free to speak with me directly. Our Office Administrator is also always willing to answer any questions you may have. The Board of Directors at True North Christian Academy has a Parent Representative that can bring any of your questions or concerns directly to the Board. Our goal is to make True North Christian Academy the best school that it can be. Your feedback as a parent is important in helping us achieve that goal – so we are asking you to please ask any questions or bring any concern to the appropriate staff or Board Member.

Here's to a great year for our students, teachers and parents!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Lisa Cooke'.

Lisa Cooke
Principal

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Mission Statement

True North Christian Academy bases its direction for educating students on God's principles. Our purpose is to provide opportunities for excellence in academic, spiritual, social and physical development to enable students to fulfill God's purpose in their life. True North Christian Academy is a moral compass where high standards are encouraged and integrated with the truth of God's word enabling students to impact the world for His glory.

Goals and Objectives

True North Christian Academy's objectives include:

- Providing a learning environment that meets each student's learning style and allows them to succeed. Teachers are expected to provide individual programming that maximizes the student's abilities and preferences.
- Integrating their faith into their everyday lives. Teachers will be role models for the students that exemplify Christian living.
- Interacting with parents on a regular basis so that everybody is working together for the benefit of the student.
- To do everything with integrity so that the community associates good attributes with True North Christian Academy. It is our desire to be a benefit to our community.
- Having a global impact emphasis so that the students are reaching beyond themselves to bless those less fortunate.
- Striving for excellence at all levels – The Board of Directors, Administration, Teaching and Students.
- Having the necessary and most up to date resources to achieve academic excellence.
- Getting to know each student individually.
- Building self-esteem and self-confidence in each student and communicating that they are valued and important.
- Updating teacher knowledge & practices with current professional development.

Instructional Program

Our school follows curriculum guidelines that meet the goals of Christian education and the Ministry of Education. Our subjects meet and/or exceed those required by the Ministry and follow much of the provincial curriculum. We supplement our course of studies with curriculum resources and textbooks that come from Association of Christian Schools, Bob Jones University Press and various American and Canadian suppliers that meet our needs to provide curriculum that engages students and fosters critical thinking skills.

Our curriculum encompasses studies in Bible, Math, Language Arts, French, Vocal and Instrumental Music, Fine Arts, Physical Education, Science, History and Geography. Students are instructed with many teaching styles to reach the needs of all students. Our classrooms are busy places as students engage in learning in different ways. Curriculum is reviewed yearly and modified and updated as required to meet the current needs of students and the changes to the Ontario Curriculum Standards.

Language Arts

The ability to effectively communicate in different ways – reading, writing, listening, speaking and media is essential to the student's success. The reading program uses varied sources that allow for direct instruction and personal selection. Our reading program is based on phonetic principles integrated with sight words and meaningful context. It is expected that parents are reading with or to their children each night and that reading is being modeled as an enjoyable and meaningful pastime. Expressive writing is implemented throughout the curriculum, as well as the proper mechanics of spelling, grammar and sentence structure. Media literacy is incorporated in all subject areas as students learn to interpret and analyze the different forms of media they are exposed to. Listening and speaking skills are emphasized in the classroom, throughout the school and on field trips.

Mathematics

Our Mathematics program is based on hands on learning. Students are immersed in learning by direct application so that they develop a deep understanding of the Math principles. The Math programs we use are purchased from ACSI and not only meet but exceed Ontario curriculum expectations approved and are supplemented with enriched programs. Students can be supported at home when parents help their children make direct application of the principles they are learning. Parents can also help students learn their math facts by giving short drills.

Science

Our science studies using ACSI programming follow and exceed units set out by the Ontario Curriculum. Students learn to explore God's creation through hands on experiments and field trips. Students perform experiments and make direct application of their learning.

Social Studies/History/Geography

Units are based on the Ontario Curriculum and follow the expectations set out by the curriculum standards. Students in grades 1-6 study two different units each year that allow them to explore Canada as well as the world. Grades 7-8 study Canadian history and the specific principles used by geographers.

French

Our French program begins in Kindergarten with conversational French. In the junior and intermediate grades French is taught as a core subject. Our Extended French Program starts in Grade 5 and includes Extended Core French and Science and Social Studies taught in French. This encompasses 1/3 of their school week in French. Our French program meets and exceeds the Ontario Curriculum Standards.

Bible

While all the subjects integrate a Christian worldview, Bible is also taught as a separate subject for all grades. Students learn to read, interpret and apply the truths found in the Bible. In so doing, they are better able to make value based decisions and to deepen their knowledge of God.

Music

Music incorporates singing, musical instruments, theory and music appreciation. Starting in JK students learn rhythm patterns and vocal music, continuing this in the Primary grades students also start learning smaller musical instruments such as the recorder, bucket drums and boomwhackers. In the Junior grades students continue with rhythm, vocal music and start learning keyboard. Intermediate grades consolidate their Musical skills and theory and begin instrumental music focusing on Brass and Woodwind instruments. Music is part of our core program as students participate all year long and develop a love and appreciation for Music of all forms.

Art/Drama/Dance

Visual Art instruction incorporates both practical and theoretical instruction. Students study art history, different artists and various artist techniques which they can apply to their own work. Visual Arts is taught throughout the year and is brought into many subjects. In Drama students will not only learn how to play a character, but also how to design a set and costumes and put together a production. A Dance unit is taught during one of the three terms by a certified Dance Instructor.

Physical Education

Our Physical Education program consists of both health components and active movement. Students are exposed to many different team and individual sports. Students are encouraged to maintain a healthy and active lifestyle. Research has shown that students who are active on a regular basis do better in their studies.

Differentiated Instruction

Students are assessed continually to determine their understanding of the material. Sometimes curriculum modifications will be made based on the student's preferred learning style, their mastery of the topic or need for enrichment or remediation. Students do not all learn at the same pace and the same curriculum does not work well with all students. Students may be allowed to move ahead a grade or may be required to repeat a grade depending on the needs of the student. None of these decisions would be made without consultation with the parents and careful consideration of what will most benefit the student.

Assessment and Evaluation

Evaluations are determined by the various assessments done throughout the unit or term. Assessments may include observation, work samples, projects, tests, or conferences. Testing may include the Standardized Testing, Levelled Reading assessments, CASI and Math Assessments. The report card is one of the primary ways to communicate the results of evaluations. Report cards are distributed three times per year. Parent-teacher-student communication is an important way to discuss the student's progress. Student-led conferences are scheduled in the first term, but teachers and parents should meet anytime there is a need.

Textbooks

At the beginning of each school year students will be assigned textbooks or e-texts. Students are responsible to keep the text(s) in the condition that they were received. If a student's textbook is lost or damaged beyond re-use it is the parent's/student's responsibility to replace the textbook or reimburse the school to purchase another one. It is the student's responsibility to always have their text available and to take good care of the school's resources.

Grade Determination

It is important that students master the concepts of their current grade in order to progress into the next grade. It is sometimes in the student's best interest to repeat a grade in order to consolidate understanding. Just continuing to move a student along, when they are not prepared to do the next grade does not benefit them.

Grade placement is determined by the teacher and principal along with the parents. For students who are excelling beyond their grade expectations, students may be promoted to the next grade. This will be determined by assessments, work samples and social and emotional maturity. This is done under rare circumstances.

School Hours

7:30-8:30 Before School Program
8:30-8:45 Student drop off – Outside teacher supervision
8:45 Classes enter school – School doors locked down
8:50 Classes Start
10:40 Nutritional and Recess Break
11:20 Classes resume
1:00 Nutritional and Recess Break
1:40 Classes Resume
3:20 Classes Dismissed
3:20-3:30 Student pickup – Outside teacher supervision
3:30 After School Program begins

True North Christian Academy Late Student Pick Up Policy

If your child is being picked up from school after 3:30 pm then you are picking up your child late. The Board has set out important planning time for the teachers between 3:30 pm to 4:00 pm for them to prepare for their classroom lessons and to book communication meetings with parents, other teachers and the Principal. In fairness to the teachers The Board has outlined the following policy to address late student pick up.

- If you are running late for picking up your child from school for any reason, please notify the office as soon as possible.
- Students who are not picked up by 3:30 pm will be brought into the school to sit on the mat and their parent will be called.
- Students who are being picked up from school after 3:30 pm must be signed out at the office.
- The Board recognizes that all our parents are very busy and there are sometimes circumstances that come up that are beyond control. Late pickups will be tracked in the office and the first two will have no consequences.
- On the third pick up from school after 3:30 pm, regardless if there has been a phone call to the office, The Board has decided to charge a late fee of \$5.00 per every 15 minutes the student is at school after hours.

For example: A student is picked up at 3:45 pm and this is the third late occurrence their parent will be issued an invoice for \$5.00 for that day.

Lunch

Students are required to bring a lunch that they can split between the two breaks. Students may bring food that needs to be heated or warmed. Please do not send food that requires cooking times in excess of 1 minute 30 seconds. Students also need to bring their own utensils, bowls, plates etc. We are a nut free facility. Please do not send your child to school with any nut products. Please pack your child with lunches that contain reusable containers and water bottles/drink boxes. Any waste will be sent back home in your child's lunchbox. Students are not allowed to leave the school grounds for lunch unless they are accompanied by an adult that has telephoned or given a note that the student is leaving.

True North Christian Academy has Pizza Day and Hot Lunch programs, serving on Wednesdays and Fridays respectively. Pizza slices are provided by Little Caesar's Pizza in Wasaga Beach and available for purchase by the slice. The Hot Lunch committee prepare Friday lunches in the school's kitchen to serve to our children. Meals will be served with a main, soup or side (salad, vegetable sticks, or fruit) and a dessert.

School Life

Absenteeism

It is important for us to know if your child is going to be absent. Please call the school if your child is sick or send a note if you know when your child will be away. Frequent absences can severely harm the learning process of the child and can be disruptive to the class as well. Please strive to book family holidays so that school days are not impacted. When students become ill at school, parents will be notified. When a parent cannot be reached at home we will try work numbers, cell numbers and then the emergency contact person if it warrants. Please make sure that we have your up-to-date contact information.

Lateness

Please ensure that your child is at school on time. Children who arrive late often miss their classroom devotions. When students arrive late it also disrupts the class. If you know your child will be arriving late or needs to be picked up early, please call or send a note.

Leaving the School Grounds

No child may leave the school grounds unless under the supervision or permission of their parent. Please send a note or call if your child is going to be picked up by someone other than yourself.

Early Departure

Students who need to be dismissed before the end of the school day must be signed out in the Office. In the event of an urgent, unexpected need to have the student picked up early, please call the Office and we will have your child ready to go. It is very disruptive to the classroom to have someone show up at the door unexpectedly and ask to take the student. Should a student become ill during the day the Office Administrator or teacher will contact the parent or guardian.

Health and Safety

Fire Drills

Regular fire drills are held during the year. Two times a year the fire department comes to inspect our fire drills.

Medications

If your child is required to take medication at school please send in a signed note that includes the type of medication and dosage information **every day** that the medication is required. The medication will be kept in the Office during the school day and will be sent home at the end of the school day. Medication will be administered by our Office Administrator, as per your signed written instructions.

Communicable Diseases

Students who suffer from pink eye, ringworm, chicken pox, scabies or other such communicable diseases need to be excluded from school until they are recovered or cleared by the family doctor. Outbreaks of head lice are common in schools. In order to help prevent such outbreaks, please check your child's hair regularly and watch for signs of itching. Students should not share combs or hats. If you detect a case of head lice, please notify the school so we can try to see if there are other students in the class that share the problem.

Student Illness

Parents are asked not to send their child to school if he/she has a temperature, cold, or flu. Illness spreads quickly in the school environment – even to the teachers. It is better for your child to rest at home and this will help them recuperate faster. Please leave your child at home for 24 hours if they have had a fever or have experienced vomiting or diarrhea.

Dress Code

Students are to wear a navy or white plain shirt that has the TNCA logo. If the students want to wear a hoodie in the classroom and school it is to be plain white or navy. It does not need to have a logo. An athletic shirt with TNCA on it will also meet the uniform requirement. Students may wear their choice of clothing on Fridays when they bring in a dollar to support Godfrey. Students who do not wish to contribute to our sponsored child must be in uniform on Fridays. Our Uniform Policy will be in effect for all field trips including athletic events. If the field trip or athletic events falls on a Friday, the Policy should be followed. It is the Board's desire that all families would respect this policy and ensure that their children arrive at school properly dressed. In the cases where a student is not in compliance with the policy a parent will be contacted and they will be given the choice to bring in a uniform shirt or pay \$5.00. It is the Board's position that parents are aware of the uniform policy and it is their responsibility to ensure that their child is wearing the proper uniform regardless of age. It is very important that students come with **proper running shoes** and a **water bottle** on physical education days in order to properly participate in the physical education curriculum.

Class Trips

At TNCA we encourage teachers to plan meaningful field trips with their students. Parents will be notified of the field trip details with permission forms. On some occasions, parents may be asked to assist with transportation. A per student fee may be required to cover admission charges and bus fees for certain programs.

Booster Seat Requirement

Everyone including parents, grandparents, relatives or friends, who drives with a child **under the age of 8** who weighs **less than 36 kg (80 lb.)** and stands **less than 145 cm (4 ft. 9 in.)** tall is required to ensure the child is properly secured in the appropriate child safety seat or booster seat based on his/her height and weight.

Students weighing **9 to 18 kg (20 to 40 lbs.)** are to travel properly secured in a forward-facing child safety seat that complies with CMVSS and must be anchored to the vehicle using the tether strap (usually found on the back of the car seat).

Students **under the age of eight**, who weigh **18 kg or more but less than 36 kg (40-80 lbs.)**, and who stand less than 145 cm (57 ins. or 4 ft. 9 ins.) must travel in a booster seat that meets the CMVSS.

A student can start using a seatbelt alone once any one of the following criteria is met:

Child turns **eight years old**

Child weighs **36 kg (80 lbs.)**

Child is **145 cm (57 ins. or 4 ft. 9 ins.) tall**

Children **over the age of eleven** may ride in the front seat of vehicle with permission from a parent or guardian.

Drivers who fail to secure or who improperly secure children may be charged, and if convicted, will be fined **\$110.00** and have **two** demerit points applied to their driving record.

Your child will not be allowed to attend any given field trip if they do not have the proper car or booster seat. It is important that we follow the guidelines above for our student's safety. Volunteer drivers have the right to refuse to drive your child if they cannot properly secure them.

You will be informed on the field trip permission form if we are using volunteer drivers to transport students. Please insure that you drop off the appropriate car or booster seat with your child on the day of the field trip.

School Cancellation

When the buses in the Simcoe District West Zone are cancelled; True North Christian Academy will be open. We will only close the school if other schools in the Simcoe District West Zone are closed. You will be notified via E-mail, Remind, Facebook and Twitter if our school is closed.

Otherwise our teachers will try their best to continue on with the lessons for that day. We will not teach new curriculum if we do not have at least half the students present. This will be determined for each grade.

Parental Involvement

We know that students thrive in an environment that promotes parental involvement. With this in mind, it is our desire to have all families participate in activities happening within the school as well as fundraising initiatives that help us keep the tuition affordable. We also encourage our parents to use their God given gifts to bless our students. If you are gifted in a particular area (i.e. visual arts, athletic activities, music, culinary arts, baking) please speak to the principal to see if arrangements can be made for you to come and share at the school. **Please note that every volunteer must have a current and valid vulnerable sector police check on file at the school.**

Parents Visiting the School

If you are coming into the school for our Praise and Worship Fridays or any other classroom event, please sign in at the Office upon your arrival. For safety purposes, we need to know every individual in the school at all times. If you are dropping an item off to your child we ask that you drop it off at the Office. Classroom interruptions can be very distracting to students. Parents are asked not to come to the child's classroom for a quick conversation with the teacher during school hours. If there is a need to confer with a teacher, please call or email the teacher to make an appointment during their preparation time or between 3:30 – 4:00 pm Monday through Friday. Appointments can be booked on the phone with the Office Administrator throughout the school day.

School Communications

Each student should have an Agenda or Communication Bag in which all homework and communications will be documented. Parents are asked to read the Agenda each evening, supervise homework, make sure any other instructions are attended to and initial it to verify that you have seen it.

Communication that includes permission forms, order forms and other information is emailed home each Wednesday. You have the option of having printed copies sent home in your youngest child's backpack. Please let the Office know if you are interested in printed copies.

Report Cards are issued 3 times per year. In the first term it is recommended that parents set up a Student-Led Conference at the end of the first term.

A Parent Meeting is held at the beginning of the year. Other meeting will be scheduled if necessary. The purpose of the meetings is to have respectful discussion that will impact the school for the positive.

Regular communication between home and school is very important. We are always available to meet with you if you have any concerns. Just call the office to set up an appointment or write a note to the teacher in your child's agenda. We recognize that you are the most important teacher that your child will ever have. It is our privilege to come along side you and seek the best for your child.

Homework

Homework is a part of school life. Homework provides students with an opportunity to consolidate their learning and to complete work that they may not be able to finish in school. We have developed the TNCA Homework Policy to guide you in determining how much and what type of homework is acceptable.

- ✓ All homework should have a purpose. It should not be assigned merely for busywork or to give a student homework. The teacher should be able to explain the purpose to you.
- ✓ Homework may be given so that the student can practice skills that they have not consolidated. This is one way of differentiating student learning. Students who have mastered the concept do not need to keep practicing. All students learn at a different pace and classroom practice time may not meet all students' needs for mastery.
- ✓ Homework may be assigned because the student chose not to use their class time appropriately and could not complete the assignment in class. In this case we are emphasizing that completing the assigned work is not optional. It will either be completed in school (which is preferable) or on their own time at home.
- ✓ Homework may be required to complete projects where we cannot give enough class time. This is more likely in the higher grades.
- ✓ Homework will never be new concepts. All concepts are taught in school and the student has sufficient resources and knowledge to complete their homework. If the student cannot complete their homework without parent support then they need to speak to the teacher the next day. Parents can certainly read directions, give guidance and clarify directions. Parents should also encourage the completion of homework and help the student set aside time to do this. **Parents should send a note or email** if homework could not be completed due to other circumstances or obligations. This should be a rare occurrence not routine.
- ✓ Homework should never exceed one hour per night (especially not primary grades which should be no more than 20- 30 min). If your child is taking longer than this to complete homework than there are other issues that need to be addressed. Occasionally larger projects in the older grades where they have not used good time management over the length of the project may require a concerted effort to complete their project, but this should be rare, not the norm.
- ✓ There will be times (in older grades) when homework is assigned and the expectation is that it be completed at home even when there was not enough time in class. This may occur because the students have the skills and resources to complete it at home, there have been circumstances that didn't allow for enough class time such as a fire drill or some other interruption or the lesson took longer than expected.

Athletics

All students have regular physical education classes. Throughout the year we will put together teams to compete against other ASCI schools. This will be dependent upon student enrolment each year. When students are attending athletic events, they are required to wear their TNCA shirts and to represent the school by being on their best behaviour.

Discipline

The school needs to be a safe, learning environment for all students. In order to create this atmosphere a discipline plan needs to be implemented and enforced. All students need to clearly understand what the expectations for their behaviour are and what the related consequences for misbehaviour are.

We expect students to be kind and considerate, helpful and supportive of peers and teachers. When a student chooses to disrespect a teacher or peers, then a variety of disciplinary measures may be employed depending on the age of the child, the degree of the severity of the offense and the nature of the ~ 16 ~ child. Discipline may include counsel, loss of privilege, removal from peers, work assignments, referral to the principal, after school detention, parental conference, suspension or even expulsion.

Serious inappropriate behaviour that warrants quick and direct action includes the following: bullying, physical violence, disrespect for authority, vandalism and foul language.

- In-School Suspension – This suspension can be part of a day or up to 3 days in length. The child stays in school, but is separated from the class. Parents are informed by phone or via letter/email.
- Out of School Suspension – Such a suspension is by the authority of the principal and can vary in length, anywhere from one day up to one week. Parents will be notified of the suspension by receiving all the details of the event that lead up to the decision.
- Expulsion – The loss of enrolment privilege at TNCA can result from the blatant act of violence or abuse, as well as the recurrence of negative conduct that is disruptive or offensive. Expulsion is recommended by the principal and approved by the School Board. A letter will follow up or accompany the expulsion. This will only be used in severe cases where there is no remorse or desire to change behaviour or where other students or staff feels threatened. Our goal is always to work with a student towards restitution.

Conduct Guidelines

Playground

- Students will play only in the designated playground areas as outlined by the teachers.
- Students may not bring toy guns, knives or other such items to school.
- The playground equipment must be used in a proper and safe manner as directed by the teachers.
- Students in grades 1-8 are not allowed in the fenced in Kindergarten area unless instructed by a teacher. □
- Play-fighting is not permitted.

Building

- There is no running allowed inside the building
- Students are to stay out of the Office, Janitor's room or Equipment room unless permission has been granted by a teacher.
- Students are not allowed in the upper level or church sanctuary unless accompanied by a teacher or supervisor.

Classroom Conduct

- Students are to raise their hand and wait to be addressed.
- It is not appropriate to speak while someone else is speaking or shout out answers.
- Students may leave the classroom to work in other areas if given permission by the teacher.
- Disruptive behaviour is not allowed in the classroom, eg unnecessary noises, passing notes, leaving the desk
- Drinking from an enclosed water bottle is acceptable in the classroom.

Staff

- Students are to respect all staff members and visitors to the school with a courteous manner.
- Disputes during recess will be resolved by the teacher outside and are not to be brought inside the school, unless the student is sent in by the teacher due to misconduct that is beyond normal recess conflicts.