"Come and See"

John 1:39, 46

SACRED JOURNEY academy

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2026-27 STUDENT & PARENT HANDBOOK

2026-2027 Student & Parent Handbook

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WELCOME TO SACRED JOURNEY ACADEMY

The intent of this Student & Parent Handbook is to establish guidelines for a consistent program throughout the school year. It is impossible to cover every situation, but basic policies and operational procedures are generally covered in this manual. It is imperative that the home and school cooperate and work together to provide the best educational and spiritual opportunities for our child(ren). Together, we commit to operating in an atmosphere of grace, respect, and love.

We know that seeds planted at Sacred Journey Academy (SJA) will be used by God to grow your child and your family. Our desire is to instill a love for Jesus and a passion for following Him in the heart and life of every student in our school. We can't wait to see how this school year transforms your child's character and learning experience!

HANDBOOK POLICY STATEMENT

The following policies and procedures cover a broad range of topics. They represent the most recent expression of Sacred Journey Academy and provide for equitable and consistent treatment of enrolled students.

To ensure that Sacred Journey Academy achieves and maintains the purpose of this handbook and to ensure the organization's continued ability to meet its needs and those of its constituents under changing conditions, Sacred Journey Academy reserves the right to modify, augment, suspend, or revoke any and all policies, procedures, practices, and statements contained in this handbook at any time.

This Student & Parent Handbook does not contractually bind Sacred Journey Academy. Any changes made during the school year will be published in school communication and/or on our website.

*Addresses and personal information listed in this handbook are not to be used for solicitation or improper use.

GENERAL SCHOOL INFORMATION

- Address: 1877 Aga Drive Suite 100, Alexandria MN 56308
- Email: info@sacredjourneyacademy.org
- Phone: 320-391-0410
- Website: sacredjourneyacademy.org

GRADE LEVELS

Sacred Journey Academy offers classes from Kindergarten through 12th grade, with class sizes capped at 16 students per grade.

HOURS OF OPERATION

Office Hours

The school office is open Mon.-Thurs. 7:45 am until 3:15 pm and Friday 7:45 am until 1:00 pm. Summer office hours are flexible. Messages may be left and calls will be returned within 24 hours.

Staff Hours

Teachers are usually available at the end of each school day. Please call ahead if you desire to visit with a teacher.

School Hours

Students may arrive any time between 7:45 am and 8:00 am. School begins at 8:00 am. Depending on the weather conditions, morning supervision for these students will be either on the playground or in the school building.

The school day ends at 3:15 pm. Monday-Thursday. On Fridays, the school day will run 8:00 am-1:00 pm. Please be prompt in picking up your child.

INCLEMENT WEATHER CLOSINGS

Sacred Journey Academy will announce closings or late openings/closures due to weather through Praxi School via text and on Facebook. We will follow weather decisions made by District 206, including closing early, which will be at the latest dismissal time within the district. If a 2-hour late start should occur on a Friday, SJA will close for the entirety of that day.

Late arrival due to hazardous driving conditions will be treated appropriately.

SCHOOL GOVERNANCE

Sacred Journey Academy operates as a ministry in the corporate form of a non-profit religious organization, governed by a Board of Directors responsible for the overall direction and long-term planning of the school.

Under the direction and authority of the Board, a Spiritual Advisory Committee provides advice and guidance regarding all religious matters. The Spiritual Advisory Committee serves the ministry by encouraging and developing the school's spiritual life, providing prayer coverage, Godly counsel, and encouragement to the leadership, staff, volunteers, and constituents.

The Chief Executive Officer serves as the Head of School, who is supervised by the Board of Directors and implements the policies and decisions made by the Board. The Head of School is responsible for the day-to-day operation of the school. The Head of School also serves as the Chair of the Spiritual Advisory Committee, advancing the Kingdom of God through the ministry.

MISSION

We are a Microschool community that offers a unique education experience based on truth and creativity; a culture that operates in freedom and joy; and identity transformation in and through Jesus Christ.

VISION

Raising up kids with purpose, godly wisdom, and spiritual discernment.

VALUES

Truth

Sanctify them by your truth; your word is truth. John 17:17

Identity

For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise

you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well. Psalm 139:13-14

Wisdom

Blessed are those who find wisdom, those who gain understanding, for she is more profitable than silver and yields better returns than gold. Proverbs 3:13-14

Courage

Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go. Joshua 1:9

Character

Rather, train yourself to be godly. For physical training is of some value, but godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come. 1 Timothy 4:7-8

Worship

Clap your hands all you nations; shout to God with cries of joy. Psalm 47:1

Love

Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength. The second is this: Love your neighbor as yourself. Mark 12:30-31

Freedom

So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed. John 8:36
It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery. Galatians 5:1
Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. 2 Corinthians 3:17

SCRIPTURE VERSION

Sacred Journey Academy will use the New International Version (NIV) Bible translation for consistency in all marketing materials. The English Standard Version (ESV) Bible translation may also be used in worship and in the classroom.

STATEMENT OF FAITH

Holy Bible:

The Holy Bible, and only the Bible, is the authoritative Word of God. It alone is the final authority for determining all doctrinal truths. In its original writing, the Bible is inspired, infallible, and inerrant (see Prov. 30:5; Rom. 16:25, 26; 2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Pet. 1:20, 21).

Trinity:

There is one God, eternally existent in three persons: Father, Son (Jesus), and Holy Spirit. These three are co-equal and co-eternal (see Gen. 1:26; Isa. 9:6; Matt. 3:16, 17; 28:19; Luke 1:35; Heb. 3:7-11; 1 John 5:7).

Jesus Christ:

Jesus Christ is God the Son, the second person of the Trinity. On earth, Jesus was 100 percent God and 100 percent man. He is the only man ever to have lived a sinless life. He was born of a virgin, lived a sinless life, performed miracles, died on the cross for humankind and, thus, atoned for our sins through the shedding of His blood. He rose

from the dead on the third day according to the Scriptures, ascended to the right hand of the Father, and will return again in power and glory (see Isa.9:6; John 1:1, 14; 20:28; Phil. 2:5, 6; 1Tim. 2:5; 3:16).

Virgin Birth:

Jesus Christ was conceived by God the Father, through the Holy Spirit (the third person of the Trinity) in the virgin Mary's womb; therefore, He is the Son of God (see Isa. 7:14; Matt. 1:18, 23-25; Luke 1:27-35).

Redemption:

Humanity was created good and upright, but by voluntary transgression, it fell. Humanity's only hope for redemption is in Jesus Christ, the Son of God (see Gen. 1:26-31; 3:1-7; Rom. 5:12-21).

Salvation:

We are saved by grace through faith in Jesus Christ: His death, burial and resurrection. Salvation is a gift from God, not a result of our good works or of any human effort (see Rom. 10:9, 10; Acts 16:31; Gal. 2:16; 3:8; Eph. 2:8, 9; Titus 3:5; Heb. 9:22).

Repentance:

Repentance is the commitment to turn away from sin in every area of our lives and to follow Christ, which allows us to receive His redemption and to be regenerated by the Holy Spirit. Thus, through repentance we receive forgiveness of sins and appropriate salvation (see Acts 2:21; 3:19; 1 John 1:9).

Sanctification:

Sanctification is the ongoing process of yielding to God's Word and His Spirit in order to complete the development of Christ's character in us. It is through the present ministry of the Holy Spirit and the Word of God that the Christian is enabled to live a godly life (see Rom. 8:29; 12:1, 2; 2 Cor. 3:18; 6:14-18; 1 Thess. 4:3; 5:23; 2 Thess. 2:1-3; Heb. 2:11).

Jesus' Blood:

The blood Jesus Christ shed on the cross of Calvary was sinless and is 100 percent sufficient to cleanse human kind from all sin. Jesus allowed Himself to be punished for both our sinfulness and our sins, enabling all those who believe to be free from the penalty of sin, which is death (see John 1:29; Rom. 3:10-12, 23; 5:9; Col. 1:20; 1 John 1:7; Rev. 1:5; 5:9).

Jesus Christ Indwells All Believers:

Christians are people who have invited the Lord Jesus Christ to come and live inside them by His Holy Spirit. They relinquish the authority of their lives over to Him, thus making Jesus the Lord of their lives as well as Savior. They put their trust in what Jesus accomplished for them when He died, was buried and rose again from the dead (see John 1:12; 14:17, 23; 15:4; Rom. 8:11; Rev. 3:20).

Baptism in the Holy Spirit:

Given at Pentecost, the baptism in the Holy Spirit is the promise of the Father. It was sent by Jesus after His ascension to empower the ministry to preach the gospel throughout the whole earth (see Joel 2:28, 29; Matt. 3:11; Mark 16:17; Acts 1:5; 2:1-4, 17, 38, 39; 8:14-17; 10:38, 44-47; 11:15-17; 19:1-6).

The Gifts of the Holy Spirit:

The Holy Spirit is manifested through a variety of spiritual gifts to build and sanctify the

ministry, demonstrate the validity of the resurrection and confirm the power of the gospel. The lists of these gifts in the Bible are not necessarily exhaustive, and the gifts may occur in various combinations. All believers are commanded to earnestly desire the manifestation of the gifts in their lives. These gifts always operate in harmony with the Scriptures and should never be used in violation of biblical parameters (see Rom. 1:11; 12:4-8; 1Cor. 12:1-31; 14:1-40; Eph. 4:16; 1Tim. 4:14; 2Tim. 1:5-16; Heb. 2:4; 1Pet. 4:10).

The Ministry:

The ministry is the Body of Christ, the habitation of God through the Spirit, with divine appointments for the fulfillment of Jesus' Great Commission. Every person born of the Spirit is an integral part of the ministry as a member of the Body of believers. There is a spiritual unity of all believers in our Lord Jesus Christ (John 17:11, 20-23; Eph. 1:22; 2:19-22; Heb. 12:23).

Creation:

Because we believe the Bible to be God's written Word, true in all it teaches, we believe God created the heavens and the earth, the sea and everything that is in them (Ex 20:11) out of nothing (John 1:3) by His Word (Jesus the Son- John 1:1, Col 1:16). We believe God created the historical Adam out of dust and formed the historical Eve from him, both uniquely bearing God's own image (Gen 1:26-27). While the Bible does not necessarily enumerate the specific mechanics of creation (process, duration, etc), it does clearly teach God's direct, active, purposeful, orderly creation of all that exists. Thus, our school rejects an evolutionary worldview while adhering to a biblical worldview.

Sanctity of Life and Marriage:

We believe God specially and directly created human beings in His image. Human life is sacred and begins at the time of conception. God created mankind male and female and has ordained marriage as a union between one man and one woman. (See Gen. 1:27; 2:18-25; 5:2; Jer.1:5; Eph. 5:31-32). We believe that God wonderfully and immutably creates each person as male or female. These two distinct, complementary sexes together reflect the image and nature of God (Gen. 1:26-27). Rejection of one's biological sex is a rejection of the image of God within that person.

Resurrection:

Jesus Christ was physically resurrected from the dead in a glorified body three days after His death on the cross. As a result, both the saved and the lost will be resurrected- they that are saved to the resurrection of life, and they that are lost to the resurrection of eternal damnation (see Luke 24:16, 36, 39; John 2:19-21; 20:26-28; 21:4; Acts 24:15; 1Cor. 15:42, 44; Phil. 1:21-23; 3:21).

Heaven:

All believers in the gospel of Jesus Christ will dwell eternally in perfect union with God. (see Matt. 5:3, 12, 20; 6:20; 19:21; 25:34; John 17:24; 2 Cor. 5:1; Heb. 11:16; 1 Pet. 1:4).

Hell:

After living one life on earth, the unbelievers will be judged by God and sent to hell where they will be eternally tormented with the devil and the fallen angels (see Matt. 25:41; Mark 9:43-48; Heb. 9:27; Rev. 14:9-11; 20:12-15; 21:8).

Second Coming:

Jesus Christ will gloriously return to earth for the second time to establish His kingdom. This will occur at a date undisclosed by the Scriptures (see Matt. 24:30; 26:63, 64; Acts

1:9-11; 1 Thess. 4:15-17; 2 Thess. 1:7, 8; Rev. 1:7).

GENERAL PHILOSOPHY OF OUR APPROACH

We believe that all things should be done according to the Scriptures. As Christians, we are to honor God and His creation. People are created in the image of God; therefore, part of honoring Him entails respect for people and respect for their property. Since discipline is a part of the Christian life, the goal is to lead students from merely having outward constraints to having inward control through the filling of the Holy Spirit as evidenced by the fruit of the Spirit. (Galatians 5:22-23)

God has set the example for a parent. He loves us too much to allow us to do something that will hurt us. That is responsible love. With this motive, we seek to fairly and firmly discipline our students in love to enable them to obey man whom they can see, so that they may learn to obey God whom they cannot see.

At Sacred Journey Academy, the teachers maintain standards of behavior in the classroom through kindness, love, and a genuine regard for their students. The application of rules and regulations is necessary for the efficient, orderly functioning of any organization. At SJA, we believe the Bible establishes the best framework for social interaction ever provided in the form of what has become known almost universally as the Golden Rule of Matthew 7:12, "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." This includes an atmosphere conducive to studies and free from disruption, as well as making school a place where students feel loved and accepted.

Sacred Journey Academy strives to train students in Christ-likeness by encouraging them to consider one another precious and to esteem others above themselves. (Philippians 2:3-5; John 13:34-35; Proverbs 22:6) This is the foundation for the rules at SJA. They are established with the respect, safety, and well-being of each individual at the forefront of their purpose, as well as to build character in each student. The administration is committed to these tenants and will undertake every effort to ensure the manifestation of these God-glorifying goals.

Parents/guardians are asked to take all questions concerning disciplinary matters to the individual(s) directly involved first, then to the administration. This procedure will help build proper communication and avoid hindering vital relationships necessary for your child's training.

This process is in accordance with the principles of restoration found in Matthew 18, which says: "If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you." (Matt. 18:15) When conflict occurs, resolution should be sought in a way that glorifies God and contributes to a community of peace.

The school and the home must be in agreement on disciplinary outlook. The administration and/or teachers may set up conferences with parents/guardians concerning discipline or academic concerns if necessary. Parents/guardians and students should realize that in determining the proper action for any offense, the seriousness of the offense and the circumstances surrounding the offense will be taken into consideration. We trust the Holy Spirit to lead us in truth and understanding as such situations arise.

EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY

Sacred Journey Academy operates as a microschool.

Microschool Definition:

- class sizes typically 5-20 students; defined as student body of less than 125 students
- community-centered approach
- mixed-grade classrooms
- personalized, student-centered learning
- flexibility in the classroom and as a school body to make learning mobile
- a bridge between private schools and homeschooling

Benefits of this approach:

- parents take ownership of the education of their children under the authority God has given them
- students will be registered in their respective districts as homeschooled
- this allows for participation in district sports, art, and music activities
- greater flexibility for family time and planning

SJA will offer three enrollment options for the 26-27 school year:

- 3 days/week: SJA offers a 3-day school week for students in grades K-10. The set schedule for 3-day students is:
    - Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday 8:15- 3:15 pm
    - 3-day students are allowed to join SJA on Xperience days for an additional $25 fee, which can be paid in the lunch payment section of the Parent Portal.
    - Parents are responsible for executing lesson plans for days not in school. Teachers will provide the lesson plans needed.
- 5 days/week: K-10th regular SJA programming and schedule
- 5 days/week: PSEO students attending on a half-day schedule

Extracurricular activities:

- Students participating in their district's activities will need to make up missed work
- Parents are responsible for transportation of their student(s) to activities

Additional information:

- SJA will help facilitate time and space to execute necessary district paperwork and standardized testing

The Core of Our Program

Sacred Journey Academy is more than a biblically based curriculum. It is more than classics of literature, long-time proven teaching strategies, or cutting-edge pedagogy flowing from modern research. We embrace all of these, but these alone do not capture the core of Sacred Journey Academy.

At its core, Sacred Journey is a culture. It is a set of core values and principles that teachers and staff collectively and firmly believe – and students come to believe. Our

foundation is that students are image-bearers of God, and therefore have great potential (Psalms 8:4-8).

In contrast to notions of "moralistic therapeutic deism" vaguely held by many, we firmly believe that God is actively working in the world today (John 5:17). Partnering with God and properly prepared, we believe Sacred Journey students can and will do much to serve and lead in our increasingly uncertain world (Matthew 9:37).

Our Culture Begins with Our Values

To understand our culture, start with our values which are based on the Word of God. Society norms may change but Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever. (Hebrews 13:8)

As educators, we know that no external strategy, methodology or curriculum can motivate young people more than they can motivate themselves – when the right kind of nurturing educational environment is in place.

Educational research shows that fear, shame, anger, and anxiety all repress student learning (and overall human functioning). And God knows this. From antiquity, the Bible addresses fear and anxiety over 500 times! And hundreds of times God's Living Word invites all Christ-followers to live in PEACE. Note that Jesus administers to PEACE even in the most unimaginable circumstances, such as his own crucifixion and resurrection (John 20:19).

For over a thousand years, the Christian church primarily believed that Jesus' death and resurrection liberated all mankind from bondage to sin, death, and the devil. (Colossians 2:15, John 12:31-32). This, in addition to God's atoning work through the cross (1 John 2:2), lays the foundation for living, learning, and loving in a community of FREEDOM:

For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm, therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery. (Galatians 5:1)
Live as people who are free, not using your freedom as a cover-up for evil, but living as servants of God. (2 Peter 2:16)
Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. (2 Corinthians 3:17)

What does this freedom look like? It is freedom to learn unencumbered by the sins and cares of this world that so easily entangle and immobilize us (Hebrews 12:1). It is freedom to learn with higher purpose – as God's chosen people (1 Peter 2:9) empowered by His Grace (Ephesians 2:10).

Christian education based on this freedom does not imply a lack of structure, rather it is a different kind of structure.

PROCEDURES

ADMISSION

Non-Discrimination Policy

Subject to the Constitution of the United States and all applicable state and federal laws, Sacred Journey Academy does not discriminate against applicants or students

on the basis of race, color, and national or ethnic origin in its admissions or in the administration of its education policies, programs, or activities. In addition, subject to the Constitution of the United States and all applicable state and federal laws, Sacred Journey Academy does not discriminate in its employment practices.

Admission Procedure

Each child is considered on an individual basis. Before admission to our program, a personal interview between the parent/guardian, child, and Head of School will be required to determine if the child's individual spiritual, physical, and emotional developmental needs can be met. Private Christian Education is a privilege, not a right. It is at the discretion of the Head of School to enroll students mid-year pending availability and possible child assessment.

Enrollment for the following school year begins in February. Enrollment forms will be processed in the order received so please make sure to submit them as soon as possible. Please note that an online application or enrollment form submission does not guarantee your admission to the program. It is the parent's responsibility to know and understand the admission procedures and deadlines. Student applications for re-enrollment will not be approved until outstanding account balances are paid in full.

All students seeking admission to Sacred Journey Academy must submit:

- Online enrollment form
- Copy of any Individual Education Plans (I.E.P.) or 504 Plan
- Copy of previous school transcript (if applicable)
- Pastor reference letter indicating participation in regular community and/or personal testimony on behalf of the student and family
- $225.00 application fee (per family; non-refundable) $275.00 after early bird registration
- Birth certificate (due within 60 days of enrollment acceptance)
- Immunization records or exemption (due within 60 days of enrollment acceptance, and by the first day of school)

At least one custodial parent or legal guardian must acknowledge Jesus Christ as personal Lord and Savior, and agree with, uphold, and be in support of our Mission Statement and Statement of Faith. Before a student will be admitted, parent(s) shall be required to sign a Parent Commitment form.

Once enrollment is approved, the administration will contact families regarding the next steps.

Sacred Journey Academy reserves the right to not enroll or admit a child:

- Based on the school's assessment of the school's ability to meet the needs of the child. An evaluation by school personnel is required for the enrollment or admission of any student.
- Whose family is not committed to living and teaching the values, beliefs and mission of the school.

Kindergarten:

All children entering kindergarten for the first time must be five years of age on or before June 30.

First Grade:

All children entering first grade for the first time must be six years of age on or before June 30 unless they have completed Kindergarten in another state.

A TRANSFORMATIONAL APPROACH

All academic areas are taught using a biblically-integrated and proven curriculum from Portals Academy. Portals provides lesson plans, project ideas, and ensures Minnesota graduation requirements are met. Content may include materials from Sonlight (Social Science), IEW (English), Apologia (Science), and Math-U-See (Math). We recognize the need for phonics-based reading instruction, and the overall program will be reading-intensive.

However, Sacred Journey's educational culture breaks with more traditional approaches in at least eight key ways:

Daily Worship and Prayer

We begin each day with a full 30 minutes of worship, or longer as the Holy Spirit leads. Each day, "soaking" worship is a powerful way to bring alive God's Word (Colossians 3:16) and God's Holy Spirit (Ephesians 5:18, John 4:34), and helps students be in a place of prayer (1 Thessalonians 5:16) and praise (Hebrews 13:15) throughout their day. During this time, students and teachers pray for each other, and Biblical truths are shared. Students learn how to minister with their unique spiritual gifts (1 Corinthians 12). Sacred Journey Academy will be a house of worship, reflecting the beautiful legacy of the Judeo-Christian faith for over 3,000 years (e.g. Psalm 150, 66:4, 34:3, 33:8, 104:33)

Four+One School Week

The usual academic program is taught 4 days a week, with one day a week reserved for project-based learning, field trips, service opportunities or mission projects. The goal is to activate and put into practice what is learned throughout the week.

Minimal Compulsory Homework

We want our students engaged with their families, not distanced from them due to homework requirements. If students are doing something related to Sacred Journey Academy outside of school hours, it is because they want to go deeper into an interest or passion. Occasionally students who are not managing their time well at school will be required to bring work home (just like the "real world" of work.)

Real World Grading

As much as possible, grading decisions will be based on a student's ability to apply lessons to new situations, which is the real-life test. Project-based learning does this best; other grading possibilities are written materials and focused conversations with students.

In fact, traditional testing does not add to the learning process very much at all, it simply assesses learning at a point in time. For retention of knowledge, understanding, and wisdom, deeper learning is far superior to broad "inch deep" learning.

Reading Rich

Our curriculum is widely renowned for its "classic literature" approach to children and young adult literature. Leaders are readers, and the key goal of our program is that students learn to love to read. In reading, phonics-based skills are clearly necessary – and will be taught. But more importantly, we want great ideas to come alive in the minds and hearts of our students.

Great books and stories are powerful learning tools for children (and adults) of any age. Our prayer is that the love of reading will naturally flow into a love and hunger for the

word of God as well.

World-Focus

While more than fulfilling the requirements for United States and Minnesota history and civics requirements, our curriculum is notable for its world-centered themes and focuses. Our students have a much broader understanding of God's entire creation, and the many ethnicities that live in it. We are raising up World Christians.

Biblically Integrated and Spirit-Led

All of our instruction and curriculum is biblically integrated. For God's Word is to be alive and active (Hebrews 4:12), it is wise to follow where the Holy Spirit is leading. All teachers will have daily lesson plans in all curricular areas. Yet these can and will change from time to time, as the Holy Spirit moves among us. Worship could go long, important dialogues continuing, or times of ministry extended as God leads.

Focus on Community Engagement

One day each week we prioritize Xperiences either in school or out of school. For our InXperiences, we bring in people and businesses that offer valuable training, hands-on learning opportunities, and interactive skills teaching. Our OutXperiences are done as a school body. We travel to a variety of locations (local and statewide) to connect learning with real-life application.

By integrating our school into our community and beyond, students see and understand more about the people around them and the gifts God has put inside of each person that impact the area they live in.

CURRICULUM DESCRIPTION

SJA partners with Portals Education for our lesson plans and curriculum planning. Portals Education is a Christ-centered approach to learning rooted in the belief that education is about forming the whole person—wisdom, character, skill, and faith—not simply acquiring information. It is built around the rhythm of **Read. Think. Do.**, inviting students to encounter great ideas, engage in meaningful conversation and reflection, and apply what they are learning through projects, experiences, and real-world work. Rather than relying on worksheets, busywork, and memorization alone, Portals emphasizes active learning, curiosity, relationships, and the lasting understanding that comes from doing. Teachers and parents serve as mentors who guide students through rich learning experiences, asking questions, encouraging thoughtful discussion, and helping students make connections across subjects and life. Through this approach, Portals seeks to cultivate students who are not only knowledgeable, but thoughtful, capable, faithful, and eager to keep learning.

Bible

Portals Bible is designed to place God's Word at the heart of education, with students engaging directly with Scripture each day and studying the whole counsel of God from Genesis to Revelation. All knowledge begins with God's revelation, so students focus on understanding the character of God, the gospel, and the continuity of Scripture while growing together through meaningful discussion, application, and faith-filled learning. Across the full K–12 experience, students encounter every word of the Bible twice, while educators are equipped with the questions, resources, and guidance they need to confidently lead their students in biblical study.

Apologia (Science/Social Science)

Apologia emphasizes the wonder of creation from a young earth creationist point of view. Progressively advanced concepts written in a conversational style. Many hands-on activities. Challenging, exciting, and rewarding, the curriculum constantly draws students toward a higher order of values and facts. It is a true blessing to be able to define and teach scientific mysteries of the universe to our children from a foundational Biblical worldview.

Portals (History/Literature)

Portals History invites students to explore the people, events, cultures, and ideas that have shaped our world, viewing history through a Christ-centered lens. Through rich historical readings, thoughtful discussion, and hands-on projects, students move beyond memorizing dates and facts to understand cause and effect, recognize patterns, and consider how the past shapes the present. Students are encouraged to see history as a meaningful story of God's world and humanity, developing the perspective and discernment to engage thoughtfully with their own time.

Portals Literature immerses students in great stories and the ideas they contain, using literature as a means of developing wisdom, imagination, and empathy. Rather than simply analyzing books for comprehension or completing worksheets, students read deeply, discuss meaningful questions, and make connections between literature, faith, and their own lives. Through a Christ-centered approach, students learn to recognize truth, beauty, and goodness in literature while developing the ability to think critically and engage thoughtfully with the world around them.

IEW (English)

Institute for Excellence in Writing: SJA uses Fix It! Grammar, which encourages students to apply new grammar knowledge in every lesson while continuing to practice what they already know. As students hunt for and correct errors in the story, they learn additional comma rules, various phrasal/clausal constructions, quotation punctuation, and indefinite/demonstrative/reflexive pronouns. In addition, SJA uses IEW's theme-based writing curriculum, allowing students to experience world history through cultural literature and study famous people and events while learning to write using the Structure and Style® writing method.

Math-U-See

Sonlight's recommended math program – comprehensive math – elementary through calculus. Student-paced mastery. Manipulatives, workbooks, videos. Multi-sensory and easy-to-understand concept presentation for different learning styles: Visual, auditory, and kinesthetic. Conceptual understanding approach with a logical sequence of skills mastery – students advance as quickly as they are able. Focuses on explaining concepts in an easy-to-understand way.

Physical Education, Art, and Music Classes

Physical education classes are an important part of the educational program at Sacred Journey Academy. All students are expected to participate in P.E. classes and events unless the teacher has a written note from home or a doctor's excuse. A note from home is good for three days only. After this, a doctor's excuse is required. Alternative assignments will be given to students who cannot participate in P.E. classes and events.

Students must wear tennis shoes in P.E. classes. This is a safety precaution. Tennis shoes must be clean.

Art will naturally be included in our project work with individual instruction being offered

throughout the year. SJA values creative expression and believes that art is a critical part of the overall learning experience.

College/PSEO

PSEO offerings will be offered through Crown College by our partnership with Portals Academy. If accepted into the program, college courses will be available beginning in 11th grade.

Grading

Kindergarten through eighth grade students will receive a Student Evaluation report at the end of each semester. Evaluations will be based on class participation, one-on-one discussions, papers, and projects.

Beginning in ninth grade, Sacred Journey Academy students will receive letter grades on their annual transcript. These grades indicate, as accurately as possible, a student's achievement level. Grades reflect class participation, one-on-one discussions, papers, and projects.

Each student will take an annual standardized test in May beginning in first grade. The results of the test will be provided to parents and SJA as soon as they are received.

Portfolio Progress Review

Parents and students will meet with their teacher in the fall for a one-on-one conference. In February and May, SJA will host Portfolio Night, where parents are invited to hear and see firsthand how what they have learned is impacting their understanding of the world, themselves, and their walk with the Lord. These presentations will showcase the fruit of their child's labor, as they share what they have learned, completed, composed, and constructed for all subjects.

Parent-Initiated Inquiries

The staff at SJA believes that the child comes first. If a parent would like to inquire about their child's progress or express comments/concerns we ask to please contact the teachers by leaving a voicemail or emailing them to set up a mutually agreed upon time.

Please avoid having a conference with the teacher at the door at the beginning or end of the day. During those times, teachers are attending to children and are unable to pay full attention to the parents.

Staff are expected to return phone calls/emails within 48 hours; emergencies will be handled the same day. We ask that you please respect communication boundaries by utilizing official school channels. In the event that parent communication is excessive or disrespectful toward staff, a parent incident report will be sent to the Board of Directors.

Each fall, parents and teachers will visit one on one to discuss struggles, and achievements of their student(s) to ensure we are working together towards the same goal. This is an important time to not only touch base on a student's academic and spiritual progress, but to build greater relationships between the body of Christ within the school.

ATTENDANCE

Students are expected to attend school each day and be on time for classes, except in cases of documented emergencies. Being on time is very important. Effective learning requires class attendance. Accordingly, the following parameters are established to ensure the student is prepared for subsequent academic challenges:

Absence From School

Follow these procedures if an absence occurs:

1. Call or text the school office if a student is going to be absent or tardy.
2. A message from the parent/guardian is necessary for any absence. The message is required the day the student returns to school. It is the responsibility of the student or the parent to request the opportunity to make up for missed classwork.
3. The School Secretary will verify notes documenting absences, tardiness, and early departures. All notes must include the following information: student name, grade, date(s) of absence, reason for absence, parent/guardian work and home numbers, and parent/guardian signature. SJA will keep record of attendance for both 3 and 5 day students, aiding parents in their recordkeeping.

Late Arrival/Tardiness

It is crucial for parents to get their children to school on time. When a student misses our time of worship it impacts the tone and focus of the learning day. Tardiness is defined as arriving after 8:20 am. If the student arrives late, they are to go directly to the main entrance to check in. If your child is coming to school late, please call/text the School Office or have your child bring a note giving the reason for being tardy.

Early Departure

For security and safety reasons, students may not be excused without a note/text written by the parent/guardian. Students must enter and exit through the main entrance.

Make-Up Work

When a student is absent due to illness or other excused absences, the student and parent are responsible for contacting their teacher(s) to determine what needs to be made up.

BUSING

Sacred Journey Academy will be utilizing busing transportation for frequent field trips. Students are expected to follow SJA's policies and rules, including the student code of Christian conduct, on the bus and fieldtrips.

CELEBRATIONS

Birthday Celebrations

Birthdays are a special time of year for any child! Instead of bringing class treats, we celebrate birthdays (including half birthdays) as a school once a month with a birthday cake or treat. Please note that birthday party invitations may not be distributed at school and should be sent out in the mail or emailed directly to families. Feel free to reach out to the administration for this information if needed.

Holiday Celebrations

Sacred Journey Academy celebrates holidays throughout the year. Holidays and celebrations may include Thanksgiving, Christmas, Valentine's Day, Easter, and the last day of school.

Teachers will communicate directly with parents regarding any volunteer opportunities surrounding these celebrations.

Out of respect for differing parental and staff beliefs, SJA does not celebrate Halloween, St. Patrick's Day, the Easter Bunny, the Tooth Fairy, or Santa Claus. We appreciate your cooperation and understanding in this matter.

CHARACTER, CONDUCT, & DISCIPLINE

To be most effective, the school and home must work together. Scripture tells us that children are to be loved and respected and their limitations clearly recognized. Children should learn to respect the Lord, parents/guardians, other adults, and one another. Jesus said "Permit the children to come to Me, do not hinder them, for the Kingdom of God belongs to such as these." (Mark 10:14).

SJA wants your child to be able to follow the expectations and be joyful and content here. We try to prevent situations from happening by being observant of what is going on, redirecting inappropriate behavior, setting limits and expectations, being godly role models, recognizing successes, and teaching responsibility. In most circumstances, the teacher on duty will deal immediately with any wrong behavior. In some situations, we may need to use further discipline and/or contact you.

Students are expected to cooperate with basic Christian standards of behavior. (Ephesians 4:22-32) Each student enrolled at SJA must commit to abiding by the following expectations, both in and out of the classroom:

- Maintain a positive attitude.
- Exercise good manners.
- Refrain from inappropriate and offensive language and demeanor.
- Refrain from offensive language and behaviors including gambling.
- Submit to all school authorities (administration, teachers, and staff).
- Respect and cooperate with fellow students to create an encouraging school culture.
- Treat the school campus and its property and materials with respect and care.

Peer Relationships

As a school, we desire to foster and prepare students for relationships that honor God and one another. To aid in this process of maturation and growing peer-to-peer connections, Sacred Journey Academy holds a no-dating policy until students reach high school.

Care of School Property and Financial Responsibility for Damages

Sacred Journey Academy provides a significant investment in educational facilities, equipment, and materials for the benefit of all students. The care and maintenance of this property is the responsibility of all members of the school community, including students, parents, and staff.

Students are expected to respect and care for all school property, including, but not limited to, buildings, furniture, textbooks, library books, computers/devices, and athletic equipment.

Damage, destruction, or defacement of school property, or the personal property of a school employee, due to a student's willful, malicious, or inappropriate behavior is unacceptable and will result in disciplinary action and financial restitution. Parents are responsible for repairs or replacement costs of damaged school property.

Classroom Management

Behavior Expectations:

- Listen and follow directions.
- Raise your hand before speaking or leaving your seat.
- Keep your hands, feet, and objects to yourself.

Behavior Consequences:

- Verbal Warning.
- Take a Pause (calm, reflect, re engage).
- Visit with Admin for correction and /or consequences.
- Admin determines if parent communication is needed.

Academic Expectations:

- Complete work as instructed.
- Stay current on in-class assignments.
- Personal progression.
- Class participation.

Academic Consequences:

- Stay inside during recess to complete assignments.
- Parents notified; stay after school to complete assignments.
- Parents notified; miss next scheduled field trip to complete assignments.

Guidance and Discipline

We guide and encourage children toward self-control and personal growth in self-discipline using the following techniques:

- We set clear limits.
- We model and encourage expected behavior.
- We redirect behavior to allow for alternative choices.
- We encourage cooperation, negotiation, and communication to solve interpersonal problems.
- We allow children time and opportunity to regain self-control.
- We encourage parent/teacher communication.
- We schedule parent/teacher and or administrator conferences when needed.

The above techniques are designed to encourage open communication between home and school while fostering self-control and positive self-esteem for the child. Teachers will provide documentation to support their guidance and give families tools to practice at home to encourage Christ-like behavior. There are many guidelines to follow in God's word:

Care for Others

Matthew 7:12 "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you."

Authority

Romans 13:1-5 "Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God."

Be an Example

I Timothy 4:12 "Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith, and in purity."

Seek Excellence

Philippians 4:13 "I can do everything through Christ who gives me strength."

Be Honest

II Corinthians 8:21 "Providing for honest things not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men."

Be Truthful

Ephesians 4:25 "Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to his

neighbor, for we are all members of one body."

Practice Clean Speech

Ephesians 4:32 "Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouth, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen."

Reflect Jesus

Philippians 4:8 "Finally, brother, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is admirable-if anything is excellent or praise worthy-think about such things."

Discipline Policy

Discipline at Sacred Journey Academy is designed to be gentle, just, and consistent. It is administered in the context of Christian love and guided by the direction of the Holy Spirit, with the goal of restoring each student to a state of grace. Discipline is intended to maintain order, provide correction, and build godly character. Attendance at Sacred Journey Academy is a privilege, not a right, and students are expected to treat that privilege with respect and appreciation.

Sacred Journey Academy follows these uniform guidelines in its approach to classroom discipline:

1. Students will be disciplined with kindness, understanding, and a spiritually grounded approach.
2. Second, consequences will be appropriate to the situation. We emphasize personal accountability and do not practice group punishment.
3. Consequences will not involve or be associated with food.
4. No disciplinary measures will be used that frighten, humiliate, or demean a student.
5. Students will not be subjected to verbal remarks that belittle or ridicule them or their families.
6. Only adult staff members with direct or supervisory responsibility may administer discipline.

Discipline will follow a progressive sequence when warranted:

- **Level 1: Minor Misbehavior (Teacher-Managed)**
  - **Goal:** to redirect behavior and teach expectations
  - **Examples of Behavior:** Talking during instruction, not following class rules, mild classroom disruption, using electronic devices.
  - **Interventions:** Verbal reminder or redirection, restating expectations, loss of privileges
- **Level 2: Repeated or Moderate Misbehavior (Parent Involvement)**
  - **Goal:** to address ongoing issues and involve problem-solving
  - **Examples of Behavior:** repeated level 1 behavior after redirection, disruptive behavior interfering with learning, disrespectful behavior toward peer or staff, minor defiance
  - **Interventions:** conference with student, parent contacted
- **Level 3: Serious Misbehavior (Administrative Involvement)**
  - **Goal:** to correct behavior and prevent further incidents
  - **Examples of behavior:** Multiple level 2 behaviors, inappropriate or threatening language, bullying or harassment (verbal, social, or digital), disruption requiring removal from class/group activity
  - **Intervention:** administrative conference with student and parent, behavior contract, suspension, or loss of privileges
- **Level 4: Severe Misbehavior (Board Involvement)**
  - **Goal:** to protect safety and address significant violations

- **Examples of behavior:** physical aggression, fighting, serious bullying or harassment, vandalism or destruction of property, threatening behavior
- **Interventions:** immediate removal from school, suspension, safety plan to return or referral to counseling, as well as a conference with parent/student/admin, and board chair

Most disciplinary concerns will be addressed at the classroom level. Sacred Journey Academy will notify parents of all significant offenses and actions.

All disciplinary practices will comply with child abuse and neglect laws, including prohibitions against excessive or unreasonable physical discipline and any act involving a sexual offense, as defined by law.

School Culture:

On occasion, the atmosphere or conduct within a home may be in opposition to the Biblical lifestyle the school teaches. This includes, but is not necessarily limited to the following:

- Vulgarity
- Sexual immorality
- Sexual orientation
- Substance usage
- Inability to support the moral principles of the school

If a student and/or family is found to be struggling with one of the above items, a meeting will be requested with the Head of School and a Spiritual Advisor. The purpose of the meeting will be an effort to grow in understanding, to seek encouragement/conviction from the Word of God, and to commit to being held accountable as the body of Christ is called to do. If opposition continues, the matter will be turned over to the Board of Directors for further action.

Student Dismissal

Every effort will be made to ensure that your child has a successful, positive experience. If, in spite of a good faith effort on everyone's part, a child continues to experience behavior problems, as a last resort, these important steps will be taken:

- Documentation is reviewed by the teacher and family on behavior concerns.
- After all discipline techniques have been tried and the behavior continues to have a negative effect on the emotional or physical well-being of others, a meeting with parents, teachers, and administration will occur. Parents may be given referrals to outside agencies.
- After the meeting between parent, teacher, and administration, the school may set conditions for continued enrollment or the dismissal of the student.

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

Sacred Journey Academy is committed to a school environment in which students are free from bullying. Administration shall take appropriate steps to prevent bullying and shall deal promptly and decisively with reported incidents of bullying. Students, staff, and parents share the responsibility for an orderly and safe school environment.

The definition of bullying is noted below. A copy of the definition of bullying statement regarding prohibition of bullying and the consequences should be provided to all parents, students, and employees before the beginning of the school year.

Definition of Bullying

Bullying is a form of aggressive, harassing, and manipulative behavior in which the behavior is intended to harm or upset. There is an imbalance of power between the bully and the victim. This power can be derived from physical size, strength, verbal skill, popularity, or sex. It involves repeated acts of physical, spiritual, emotional, or social behavior that are intentional and controlling. All terms are defined consistent with SJA's

beliefs.

Direct bullying is usually seen and felt readily. Indirect bullying (deliberate exclusion, name-calling, etc.) is much more difficult to identify and is often more difficult to remedy.

- Physical Bullying: harm to someone's body or property.
- Spiritual Bullying: harm to someone's spirit with the intent to demean their walk with Jesus.
- Emotional Bullying: harm to someone's self-esteem or feelings of safety.
- Social Bullying: harm to someone's group acceptance.
- Cyberbullying: involves transmission, receipt, or display of electronic messages and/or images to harass or intimidate someone else.

Cyberbullying using SJA computers or other wireless devices in school or on school property will not be tolerated. Cyberbullying occurring off school grounds and/or does not involve the use of SJA internet or computers may also result in disciplinary action if it threatens the safety or mental/physical well-being of students or staff, or threatens the safety of school property.

Examples of Bullying Behavior

- Physical Bullying: expressing physical superiority; making threatening gestures; defacing, damaging, or destroying property; pushing/shoving/tripping; taking small items from others; threatening physical harm; stealing; starting fights; scratching or biting; assaulting; practicing extortion such as taking lunch money; threatening to keep someone silent; exhibiting physical cruelty.
- Spiritual Bullying: a critical or judgmental spirit that attacks another's expression of faith, biblical knowledge, and/or imposes condemnation on another's intimate journey with Jesus Christ.
- Emotional Bullying: insulting remarks, insulting family; name-calling; teasing giving dirty looks; holding nose or other insulting gestures; harassing phone calls; defacing or destroying school work or other personal property such as clothing, locker, or books, jewelry; writing graffiti with bias against race, gender, disability, etc.
- Social Bullying: starting or spreading rumors; teasing publicly about clothes, looks, and relationships; ostracizing using notes, email, etc.; Ignoring someone and excluding them from a group; playing mean tricks to embarrass someone; arranging public humiliation.

Reporting Bullying

Students

Any student who is being bullied or any student who has witnessed a bullying incident is encouraged to report the incident by talking to an administrator or staff member or completing the Bullying Complaint Form. If the bullying behavior continues after a report has been filed, another report should be made to the administrator. Students should feel free to report bullying incidents without fear of retaliation from the accused. Any attempt of retaliation shall be addressed by appropriate corrective actions up to and including expulsion.

Parents

Parents who are aware that bullying behavior has occurred should report the incident to the administration.

Administration

The administration will report bullying incidents to parents regardless of whether disciplinary action is taken or not. Any act that may constitute a criminal offense must be reported to the parents of any minor student who is the victim of such an act and the local law enforcement agency. Incident reports will be filed and available for review by

the Board of Directors at any time.

Staff

School employees should document and report to the administration any complaints of bullying behavior and any witnessed incidents that occur on school grounds either during the school day or at any school-sponsored activity.

Note Writing Among Students

Unsupervised notes, written or electronic, among students is not permitted.

CHILD ABUSE REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

A mandated reporter, who in his or her professional capacity, or within the scope of his or her employment, has knowledge of or observes a person under the age of 18 years whom he or she knows or reasonably suspects has been the victim of child abuse or neglect must report the suspected incident. The reporter must contact a designated agency immediately or as soon as practically possible.

COMMUNICATION POLICY

Sacred Journey Academy commits to communicating effectively and regularly with families regarding school activities and student progress. Administration, teachers, and staff will communicate with each family with honesty and respect and will do so at appropriate times and places. SJA requests that all families uphold these same standards in their communications with school employees.

In any relationship, one of the primary keys to success is positive, open communication. One of the most important, ongoing tasks we have is to foster and encourage open communication between students, parents, the administration and staff, and the governing board of Sacred Journey Academy. We ask that you, as parents, make an effort to establish a good line of communication between yourselves and those involved with your child's education.

It is important for the staff to understand situations at home, which may influence the typical behavior of your child. Please feel comfortable discussing this with the teacher. We want to make the school a warm, loving, and accepting place for you and your child.

On some occasions, questions or concerns arise. If during the school year, you have a concern, the school board asks that you follow the appropriate guidelines:

- Bring it to the attention of your child's teacher as soon as possible. Make an appointment with the teacher or write a note to ask the teacher to call you concerning the matter. The teacher should be given a fair opportunity to resolve the concern.
- If, after discussion with your child's teacher, you feel your concern has not been resolved, we ask that you then discuss the matter with the administration.
- If there is still concern after these two avenues have been pursued, please contact a school board representative. Communication with the board may be made in writing to the Head of School for consideration of possible action.

Parent suggestions or ideas are always welcomed and we look forward to meeting you. The board guarantees that anyone seeking to express their concerns and seeking remedy through appropriate channels will not be subject to harassment or retaliation of any kind against students or parents.

School Communication

It is our mutual responsibility to communicate on a regular basis. We utilize PraxiSchool to send group messages via cell phone or email. In order to best meet the needs of your

child(ren), we ask that you also communicate with us.

Please call or email the school office with general questions or comments at info@sacredjourneyacademy.org.

This includes any concerns you may have with SJA or the care your child is receiving. If you suspect child abuse or neglect, contact the Department of Family Services or a local law enforcement agency.

CONFIDENTIALITY STATEMENT

Sacred Journey Academy complies with all applicable state and federal confidentiality laws. All facts learned about children and their relatives shall be treated as confidential by the faculty, staff, and the Department of Family Services.

DRESS CODE

All policies are subject to change by actions of the Board of Directors and/or Administration. It is the desire of Sacred Journey Academy to do all things in a manner that will please and glorify the Lord (Colossians 3:23). We recognize that true Christianity is a matter of the heart and not the outward appearance. However, it is true that appearance is important. By our dress and actions, we represent the feelings and thoughts of our hearts, therefore our clothing and the way we wear it should represent our desire to please God and honor Him.

Our #1 partner in the enforcement of SJA dress code expectations is the home. Parents/guardians, please ensure that your child(ren) is in accordance with the dress code policy before they leave the house to come to school:

- Student clothing must meet the following standards: it must be conservative, neat, clean, and modest.
- When weather calls for outer garments, each garment must be labeled with the student's name.
- Shirts should not advertise any offensive brands or products.
- Shorts should be a minimum length of shoulder to fist at your sides.
- No midriff/crop top shirts; no bra straps should be shown.

XPERIENCES

On occasion, we will need drivers or additional supervision when taking field trips. *All parents/guardians who drive for field trips must have on file in the office a valid copy of their driver's license and proof of automobile insurance.*

Field trips will be a regular part of the education program at Sacred Journey. Parents are required to sign an annual field trip permission slip and provide a completed Emergency Contact Form for each student before a child may participate in a field trip. Parents will be notified weekly of any scheduled outings. Adults attending SJA Xperiences should only post pictures on social media that have been reviewed and approved by the administration.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

MN State Statutes for non-public schools require the completion of fire, tornado, and lock-down drills each year. The number of occurrences and procedures are listed below.

Fire Drills (5 times per year)

- Fire alarm sounds.
- Teachers locate physical or electronic copies of the student roster and keep it in hand.

- Teachers calmly line up students in their classroom and quickly move in a single line to the designated safe area.
- When the class arrives at the designated safe area, students remain silent and line up facing the campus building in a single file line.
- A safe area is the out the main entry door of the school, in the grass between the Kemps building and SJA. Teachers check rosters to be sure all students are accounted for.
- Administrative staff will check all bathrooms and study areas to be sure they are clear.
- Administrative staff or teachers will whistle to give the all-clear to return to class.
- In the case of an actual fire, Fire Official directions are followed.

Tornado Drills (1 time per year)

- Staff will be alerted via EBS or weather radio for severe weather announcements.
- Staff will move all students to the worship room, away from windows.
- Teachers locate physical or electronic copies of the student roster and verify every student is accounted for.
- Administrative staff or teachers will notify classrooms all is clear, and students return to class.

Unwelcome Intruder-Safety Drill (5 per year)

SJA practices the Run, Hide, Fight model for Unwelcome Intruders. Our first defense is to evacuate. If that is not feasible, our next action is to lock-down in our space. Faculty & staff should do the following if a lock-down is ordered:

- Lock all doors and windows immediately. If a door can't be locked, attempt to quickly block the door with heavy items.
- Never open doors or windows unless ordered to do so by a safety or school official. Always ask for documentation from an official to confirm their identity.
- Turn off all lights, and close the blinds or curtains.
- Instruct all students to stay low and away from the windows and doors.
- Keep students inside of the classroom.
- Silence televisions, cell phones, and other electronics.
- Clear hallways, bathrooms, and any area or room that cannot be thoroughly secured.
- Teachers locate physical or electronic copies of the student roster and verify every student is accounted for.
- Assist those with special needs.
- Remain indoors and under lockdown until you receive an "all clear" from an authorized person.

Students should abide by the following rules during a school lock-down:

- Alert a faculty member or staff if you know that someone is simply pulling a prank.
- Remain quiet, still, calm, and alert.
- Follow all instructions.
- Only use cellular devices if it is an emergency or if instructed to do so.

Recess Time–Unwelcome Visitor/Watcher

- Recess aide watches for unusual cars watching children and in parking lots.
- Recess aide blows on whistle and brings the children in immediately.
- Recess aide calls the administration and gets a license number if possible.
- Administration calls the local police department with license number/description of person/vehicle.
- Proceed with a lock-down process as needed.

Missing Student

- The teacher identifies the missing student and immediately informs the administrative staff.
- Administrative staff checks all classrooms, bathrooms, etc.
- Calls are made to the police and parents.

GIFT POLICY

While there is no expectation of giving gifts to school employees, there are occasions when a family may wish to honor or recognize a staff or faculty member with a small token of appreciation. Gifts of a personal nature given directly to an individual must not exceed $25 in value.

HEALTH POLICIES

Sick Policy

Keep your child home if he/she:

- Currently has a fever or has had one during the previous 24-hour period. A fever is defined as at or above 100°(orally) or 99°(underarm),
- Has a yellow or green nasal discharge
- Has symptoms of a possible communicable disease (sniffles, reddened eyes, sore throat, headache, abdominal pain, fever),
- Has diarrhea, or is vomiting.

The student may return to school when symptom-free for 24 hours.

It is the responsibility of the parent to report to the school if their child tests positive for COVID-19. The staff will work with the parents and health officials to determine the next steps for the family, students, and staff.

Health

A student's health and safety are of vital importance to parents as well as the staff at Sacred Journey.

During the school day, the staff attends to children's minor health needs and occasional emergencies in your absence. We request that all parents read carefully and adhere to the requirements and procedures described in this section.

Occasionally, a child becomes ill or meets with an accident at school. When parents cannot be reached, it is necessary to have the name of a relative or friend to be called. It is vital that accurate records be kept of all phone numbers. This includes their place of employment, current home phone, your doctor's phone number, and any other emergency numbers. Please notify the office of any changes with the above information. You may also update your contact numbers in PraxiSchool.

Illness and Injury

When a child becomes ill during school, parents will be called to arrange for the student to be picked up. If your child receives a minor injury at school (bumps, cuts, scrapes) the proper first aid treatment will be applied with judicious care and an incident report will be sent home. We will notify you by phone concerning head injuries, no matter how minor they are.

Self Harm

When there is concern regarding a student causing self-harm SJA will take the time to gently and discreetly inquire and engage in grace-filled conversation with the student. We will avoid harsh judgment and assumption allowing the student to build trust with the staff member. Our primary focus is the well-being of the student. If there is an immediate threat to the safety of the student, steps will be taken to ensure they get the help they need for the specific concern, and the parent/guardian will be notified.

Contagious Illness

A child who contracts an illness that is contagious, should not be sent to school until the family physician advises that it is safe to return to school. Examples include chicken pox, strep throat, scarlet fever, conjunctivitis, head lice, impetigo, pinworms, measles, mumps, and ringworm. Notify the office immediately if your child has a communicable disease so that we may inform others of this possible exposure.

Allergies and Special Needs

Please be sure your child's teacher is aware of any allergies and special needs your child may have.

Medication Policy and Procedure

Parents may request that the school district administer medication to their child when it is necessary for the medication to be administered during the school day. The following procedure must be followed:

- Over-the-counter medications such as Acetaminophen, Ibuprofen, Benadryl, cough drops, etc can be given with parental consent. Please verify medication permissions annually during the enrollment process and notify the school office of any changes during the school year. A log will be kept in the student's file of medication doses given during school hours.
- A written physician's order listing medical diagnoses must accompany each medication to be dispensed. No medication is administered by health services personnel without specific written instructions from a physician.
- Parent/guardian and prescribing health care providers must sign the Authorization to Administer Prescription Medication Form, for prescription medications given during the school day by staff. Contact the school office for a copy of this form.
- Medications must be delivered in pharmacy containers clearly labeled with the child's name, name of the physician, date of prescription, name and telephone number of the pharmacy, name of medication, dosage, and frequency of administration. OTC meds must be in their original containers.
- All medications brought to school must be kept in the health services office. An exception would be medication kept with the student once approved by the school nurse with proper physician's orders, i.e. inhalers or in the middle/high schools for analgesics if requested (see above). For the safety of all students, all medications should be brought to the Health Office by an adult. Students should not bring medications to the Health Office.

Student Health Records

All students enrolled at Sacred Journey Academy must have current records of required immunization or exemption statements on record with the school office prior to their first day of school. The immunization schedule can be found here:
https://www.health.state.mn.us/people/immunize/basics/readykidswhento.pdf
Minnesota Immunization record/exemption form can be found here:
https://www.health.state.mn.us/people/immunize/basics/imzform.pdf

Please note that non-medical exemptions must be signed and stamped by a notary.

CLUB ACTIVITIES

We see value in teamwork, personal growth, and leadership skill development through extracurricular offerings. However, oftentimes such activities take precedence over precious family time and can become idols in our hearts. As an alternative, SJA may offer Club Activities to our middle and high school students. These activities are included as part of the school day and provide opportunities to grow in a variety of skills including sports, cooking, the arts, etc.

INTERACTIONS WITH STUDENTS

Sacred Journey Academy employees, interns, practicum students, parents, and volunteers work together to help nurture and educate students. As part of this cooperative educational process, SJA requires all adults who interact with students during school hours, whether on or off-campus, and/or at school-sponsored events to support in word and action the mission and objectives of the school. This includes abiding by each of the policies and rules in the Student & Parent Handbook.

Additionally, SJA requires all adults who have direct, unsupervised contact with students during school hours and/or at school-sponsored events to submit to a criminal records check. Together, these requirements help promote a consistent and safe educational environment for all students.

LIABILITY RELEASE

Sacred Journey values the health and safety of all students. As in any public setting, the possibility of injury is a reality. Families assume all risk for death, injury, or personal loss to their child at school, school-sponsored events, and any time on campus. Further, families will forever hold harmless Sacred Journey Academy, its employees, and representatives against loss, damage, or expense from any and all claims, demands, or actions that may be brought against any or all of the said parties because of accident or occurrence.

FOOD PROGRAM

General Rules for the Lunch Period

General SJA behavior guidelines apply for the lunch period. Students should always be polite and use good manners. There is no candy allowed at school and no sharing of food. Lunch will be offered four days a week and is included in tuition. If your student decides to bring a cold lunch please notify the school office.

Snacks

Parents are responsible for sending daily snacks with their students.

Visiting Friends/Relatives During Lunch

Friends and relatives who wish to eat lunch with students at SJA can do so but must first sign in at the office. For reasons of possible food allergies, SJA would also ask that if food is brought in, it only be provided for students that are specifically being visited.

OUTSIDE AND PLAYGROUND SAFETY

We want students to play safely during recess and other outdoor times. We also want the students to exit safely during afternoon dismissal. Once outside, students may not re-enter the building, unless given permission by the teacher. It is the guideline of SJA to have students in grades K-10 outdoors for recess when the temperature is above 0° and the wind-chill is above -10° F. Parents are responsible for sending appropriate weather gear for the Minnesota seasons. Extra items may be available should a student forget something, but these are not guaranteed by the school.

- Students must stay within the visibility of the supervising teacher at all times.
- Students should play actively without pushing, shoving, punching, pulling, or hitting other children.
- Students must stay away from dangerous areas such as drains and trash receptacles.
- Students may not throw wood chips, sand, rocks, snowballs, etc.

REQUEST FOR STUDENT RECORDS

The school maintains a permanent file for each student. The material in each student's file is confidential and will be accessible only by permission of the school administration. Enrollment and financial papers are a contract between the enrolling parent/guardians and the school, as such they are not available to other family members. Records pertaining directly to the student will be available to all custodial parties. Requests for copies of student transcripts must be made in writing and will be available after 72 hours after receipt of the request.

In order for SJA to release student records to another school, an official records request form from that school must be submitted to the school secretary. The request must be signed by the parent/guardian. Provided that all financial obligations have been met, SJA will forward the student's records directly to the other school within 48 hours (unless teacher recommendations are required).

SEXUAL HARASSMENT POLICY

Sacred Journey Academy is committed to providing a learning environment that is free from harassment in any form. Harassment of any student by any student or employee is prohibited. The school will treat allegations of harassment seriously and will review and investigate such allegations in a prompt, confidential, and thorough manner.

SJA requires all students, employees, and family members to treat fellow members of the SJA community with dignity and respect, consistent with Galatians 5:16-26. Sexual harassment is a form of misconduct that undermines the value and integrity of a fellow human being. All SJA students and staff have the right to be in an environment free from all forms of sexual harassment.

Sexual harassment is defined as any unwanted physical, verbal, written, or visual advances, and any other sexually-oriented conduct that is offensive or objectionable Physical harassment is defined as unwanted physical touching, contact, assault, deliberate impeding or blocking movements, or any intimidating interference with normal work or movement. All SJA employees and students are required to notify a teacher and/or administrator if they witness any form of sexual harassment.

A charge of harassment shall not, in and of itself, create the presumption of wrongdoing. However, substantiated acts of harassment will result in disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.

Students found to have filed false or frivolous charges will also be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.

It is the responsibility of Sacred Journey Academy to:

- Implement this policy through regular meetings with all administrators ensuring that they understand the policy and its importance.
- Make all faculty, staff, students, and parents aware of this policy and the commitment of the school toward its strict enforcement.
- Remain watchful for conditions that create a school environment free from discrimination, intimidation, or harassment.

Complaint Filing and Investigative Procedures

The following procedures must be followed for filing and investigating a harassment claim:

- The student (parent/guardian) must first choose to tell the individual causing the

harassment that his/her conduct is offensive and must stop. If the objectionable behavior does not cease immediately, the student must report the harassment to the administrative staff or to a teacher who will report it to the administrative staff, or to the school board, if the administrative staff is the subject of the allegation. Additionally, in the case of sexual harassment allegations, the student is free to raise the issue with another, same-sex administrator if he/she prefers to do so.

- The student (parent/guardian) alleging harassment will be asked to complete a formal, written complaint. The claim will be investigated thoroughly, involving only the necessary parties. Confidentiality will be maintained as much as possible.
- The investigation will include a meeting with the person alleged to have harassed, sharing with that person the nature of the allegations as well as the name of the person bringing the allegations. If appropriate, the alleged harasser will be placed on administrative leave during the course of the investigation.
- Once the facts of the case have been gathered, the administrative staff, in conjunction with the school board, if appropriate, will decide what, if any disciplinary action is warranted. The disciplinary action will relate to the nature, context, and seriousness of the harassment and can include all disciplinary actions up to and including expulsion (termination).
- If the complaint is against a non-employee or non-student, such as a parent, volunteer, or vendor, the school will take reasonable steps, within its power to investigate and eliminate the problem.

TECHNOLOGY USE

Computer/Internet

The use of school computers, internet networks, and other technological resources is a privilege, not a right.

Students and parents are required to sign and submit a Technology Agreement. Sacred Journey Academy will not be responsible for the safety/security of any personal electronic devices brought to school.

Electronic devices used inappropriately will be collected and kept in the school office until the end of the school day.

Praxi School

Sacred Journey Academy uses a program called PraxiSchool to manage student data including enrollment, attendance, and grade records. A new Praxi School account for a parent and student will be created during the enrollment. Questions about PraxiSchool accounts may be directed to info@sacredjourneyacademy.org.

Deledao

Sacred Journey Academy uses a program called Deledao to manage student internet activity including live classroom monitoring and management, real-time AI filtering, YouTube management, and visibility into user digital habits. Deledao flags student activity that is offensive or inappropriate in nature. SJA will notify parents if their student was flagged for high-level activity by Deledao. Staff will continue to monitor medium and low flags and will notify the board of trends and repeated flags. Questions about Deledao may be directed to info@sacredjourneyacademy.org.

Repeated offenses of prohibited behavior will result in more serious consequences, as defined in the discipline policy, in accordance with SJA beliefs. We utilize Bark for Schools to monitor students' internet activity on school-issued accounts.

General Technology Policies

Sacred Journey, including all staff, faculty, administration, and Board of Directors, reserves the right to suspend or revoke the use of any technological resources, including access to and use of internet networks, as a result of inappropriate use.

Individuals who damage, destroy, vandalize, or steal any technological resource that belongs to Sacred Journey will be held personally and/or collectively liable for the incurred cost of repair and/or replacement of the damaged media.

Any technological resource supplied for the use of the administration, faculty, and staff is not intended for general student use. All technological resources, including hardware, software, files stored on the school-owned property, user accounts and passwords, and data on internet networks as well as any software, web pages, and paper media developed by a member of Sacred Journey are considered intellectual and/or physical property of Sacred Journey Academy. Users should not expect any guarantee of privacy.

SJA reserves the right to monitor, review, and search any and all technological resources. Users of technological resources realize that failure to comply with any of these policies may result in loss of privileges to use technological resources or other disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal, as decided by the Administration of SJA.

Students are prohibited from using the Sacred Journey name, posting pictures of SJA administration, faculty, or staff, or making derogatory comments about the school and its personnel. Discipline is handled on a case-by-case basis; however, inappropriate use of technological resources will typically result in suspension and a family meeting. Violators of certain aspects of this policy may be subject to criminal and/or civil litigation.

Electronic Devices

No cell phones, smart watches, or other electronic devices are allowed during school hours. If student cell phones, smart watches, or other electronic devices are brought to school, they can be dropped off with the school secretary in the business office at the beginning of the day and be picked up after school.

The school phone number (320-391-0410) is to be used if a parent and student need to communicate during the school day.

If a student is found using a cell phone, smart watch, or other electronic device during class time, the teacher/staff member will confiscate the phone and give it to the administration. The student can retrieve the item at the end of the school day.

TUITION

Enrollment Fee

A $225 enrollment fee is due upon enrollment submission. The fee is per family unit not per student and can be paid online or via check. Checks can be mailed to: Sacred Journey Academy, 1877 Aga Drive, Suite 100, Alexandria MN 56308. The fee after early bird registration is $275 per family.

Tuition Rates

Tuition rates are released in February when enrollment opens. Please contact the Head of School for information regarding the current school year’s rate.

Payment Methods

Tuition will be set up on automatic payments through PraxiSchool. We offer credit card processing and pre-authorized payments that are deducted from your checking or savings account. If necessary, a custom payment plan can be arranged if approved by

the administrator. Monthly tuition payments are due by the 10th of each month. Each family must have a bank account on file. Families will be responsible for the 3% credit card processing fee or 1.50 per transaction fee for ACH.

Tuition and Fees

Tuition is based on an annual fee and is due per your agreement. Families may elect to pay in 12 monthly payments*, with the first payment due by July 10th. Families may also elect to pay on an annual (1-payment) basis. Annual payments are due by August 10th.

- Tuition payments received are non-refundable regardless of tuition payment method. In the event of early withdrawal or termination of enrollment, families are contractually obligated to pay the balance owed for the month of withdrawal, after which the contract is considered null and void.
- A $40 late fee will be assessed each month if a payment is received after the 10th of the month.
- Families that choose to submit an early withdrawal form, will be charged an early withdrawal fee depending on the month of withdrawal:
    - Jul - Sept $3000
    - Oct - Dec $2250
    - Jan - March $1500
    - April - June $750
- Prices are per student. This applies to all enrolled students regardless of whether they are receiving financial aid or are paying full tuition.
- *PSEO student tuition is paid in 10 monthly payments starting in August and ending in May.

Financial Aid Policy

Sacred Journey Academy offers a set amount of financial aid each school year. Any family may apply for financial aid by completing a financial aid application online (see the school office). Sacred Journey Academy utilizes FACTS, a third-party organization specializing in financial aid and tuition management for private schools, to determine the amount of financial assistance each family receives.

Families must apply for financial aid each year, even if they received financial aid in previous years. Applications must be submitted by August 28th for consideration for the 26-27 school year. Financial Aid will be awarded as applications are received. The FACTS application is $45/family and takes approximately 25 minutes to complete.

Families receiving aid are required to contribute volunteer hours equal to 15% of aid received, calculated using the federal volunteer rate (currently $34.79/hour).

Families receiving aid that experience delinquency during the school year, are responsible for establishing a written repayment plan with the Head of School prior to the 60-day past due mark. If communication with a repayment plan is not provided, forfeiture of the financial award for the past due months and the remainder of the school year will occur. Repayment plans will be approved by the Board of Directors.

VISITORS

Parents and guardians are welcome to visit the school during school hours. Teachers and Administration are happy to provide information and assistance to Parents and Students as needed. However, if a Parent or guardian needs to speak with a specific Teacher or Administrator for more than five minutes, SJA requires the Parent or guardian to make an appointment prior to the visit.

Student Visitation Policy

Sacred Journey Academy welcomes non-SJA students to visit campus. Student visitors must be potential students who are seriously considering enrolling at SJA and must

receive permission from the Administrative staff at least one day before the visit.

Visitor Policy

Parents and all other visitors must sign in and out at the office and receive a visitor badge. At no time are parents or visitors allowed on campus without going through the office.

WEAPONS /DRUGS/ ALCOHOL/ CIGARETTES

Weapons, illegal drugs, cigarettes (including e-cigarettes or vaping paraphernalia), marijuana, or alcohol are not allowed on the Sacred Journey Academy campus (including the parking lots) at any time. Use of these by students is in violation of SJA's code of conduct. In accordance with the discipline policy, violators will be suspended or expelled.

TECHNOLOGY POLICIES

Regarding Student Acceptable Use of Technology:

As educational partners, the school and home shall be aligned regarding what is acceptable technology use. Above all else, student interaction both in-person and online should be marked by respect, empathy, and kindness, rooted in the Gospel value of 'doing to others as you would have them do to you' (Lk 6:31). Ultimately, parents are responsible for setting and conveying the standards their children should follow when using all media and technology sources at home, while the school will enforce appropriate use of technology during class and school-related activities. Unacceptable, or immoral, technology use at home and school includes, but is not limited to:

- Social media posts, emails, texts, or other forms of electronic communication that may include, but not be limited to, harassment, threats of violence, pornography, profane language, or similar unacceptable or unlawful conduct
- Intentionally accessing inappropriate material on the Internet
- Using inappropriate language to harass, insult, or attack others
- The unauthorized use of email
- Taking any action that will deny the use of the network to other users
- Damaging any computer equipment or intentionally wasting resources
- Violating copyright laws and any law of the United States, State of Minnesota, or local authority, or assisting another person in such behavior
- Fraudulently representing Internet users or students' identity, or anonymously communicating in a manner that violates this policy or the student behavior code
- Using another student's password, trespassing in another person's folders, work, or files, or any other violation of the student behavior code
- Using school network resources for commercial purposes

Disciplinary action:

The use of the online services and technology equipment is a privilege, not a right. Failure to adhere to any of these policies may result in disciplinary action at the school level, according to Sacred Journey Academy's disciplinary procedures or legal action as deemed prudent by the administration. This includes the inappropriate use of technology at home that in any way negatively impacts the culture of the school community and/or the safety of the student and the student body. If Sacred Journey Academy staff are made aware of material in violation of these standards, both parents and the Board of Directors will be notified, and an action plan will be formed at that time. The school reserves the right to deem what is "inappropriate use," and their decision is final. The goal of disciplinary action is to allow the light to expose the darkness, give space for the Holy Spirit to convict, and bring students to repentance and freedom in Christ.

Use of the School Network:

The school network is provided for students to complete class work, conduct research, and communicate with others. Access to network services is provided to students who agree to act in a considerate and morally responsible manner, who have signed the Student Handbook, and whose parents have signed the Student Handbook.

All internet usage at school will be monitored. Safeguarding features may include, but

are not limited to, filters, remote desktop monitoring, and limited access.

Student work will be generated and stored on the Sacred Journey Academy computer network and/or cloud-hosted tenant(s). Network administrators may review files and communications to maintain system integrity and to ensure that students are using the system responsibly. Users should not expect that files stored on school-managed networks and/or tenants will remain private.

Regarding School-Issued Devices (e.g., Chromebook):

A Chromebook may be provided for the student to complete classwork, conduct research, and communicate with others. The Chromebook is provided to students who agree to act morally and ethically. Students are not allowed to bring Chromebooks home with them.

Parental permission is required to use this Sacred Journey Academy Chromebook. Students shall agree to follow the Student Acceptable Use of Technology policy as well. Parents agree to assume financial responsibility for any damages to school equipment up to the replacement cost of $300 and for any legal or financial liabilities incurred by their child. Further, parents agree that they will waive all liability against Sacred Journey Academy and all its employees, regarding any use of the school-issued Chromebook or any exposure to the Internet at all by their child. Bark and Deledao search filters are in place for your child's account, which flag inappropriate use.

Chromebook Care:

- Students are responsible for the general care of the Chromebook they have been issued.
- Only use a clean, soft microfiber cloth to clean the screen; no cleansers or liquids of any type.
- Cords and cables should be inserted carefully into the Chromebook to prevent damage.
- Do not lean on or place anything on top of the Chromebook when it is closed.
- Do not place anything in the carrying case that will press against the cover.
- Keep food and beverages away from the Chromebook.
- Do not place your Chromebook into your backpack with any liquids or items that can cause damage.
- Chromebooks should remain free of any writing, drawing, stickers, or labels.
- Chromebooks should not be taken outside to lunch or break. They should not be left in the hallway. Chromebooks should never be left in any unsupervised or unsecured area.
- Students are responsible for plugging in their Chromebook at the end of each day so that it is charged and ready for school the next day.
- Students should not share their Chromebooks. If the Chromebook is damaged due to sharing, costs for repair/replacement will be the responsibility of the student who was issued the Chromebook.

Regarding Student Use of Personal Technology Outside of Normal School Hours:

Ethical and acceptable online behavior on personal electronics extends to all school-sponsored extracurricular activities outside of normal school hours. These include but are not limited to dances, lock-ins, sporting events, practices, riding school buses to and from school, and other activities (collectively referred to hereafter as "Activities").

Unacceptable or immoral technology use on personal devices during these Activities includes but is not limited to:

- Sending social media posts, emails, texts, or other forms of electronic communication that may include, but not be limited to, harassment, threats of violence, pornography, profane language, or similar unacceptable or unlawful conduct
- Intentionally accessing inappropriate material on the Internet
- Using inappropriate language to harass, insult, or attack others

Disciplinary action:

Failure to adhere to any of these policies during these Activities may result in disciplinary action at the school level or legal action as deemed prudent by the coach, teacher, instructor, and/or administration. In the event that Sacred Journey Academy staff are made aware of material in violation of these standards, both parents and the Board of Directors will be notified, and an action plan will be formed at that time. The school reserves the right to deem what is "inappropriate use," and their decision is final. The goal of disciplinary action is to allow the light to expose the darkness, give space for the Holy Spirit to convict, and bring students to repentance and freedom in Christ.

Regarding Parents and the Use of Technology at Home:

Partnering with parents, the primary educator, in a student's use of technology at school and home fosters collaboration, transparency, and informed guidance. It's essential for parents to observe and align with school policies regarding technology usage when at home, promoting consistency and reinforcing Christian values and responsible technology use.

Recognizing the vital role that parents and home culture play in the students' formation, we highly encourage parents to carefully weigh their children's access to screens and the internet at home, and particularly to social media. **Technology use at home can undermine the patience, prayerfulness, silence, and focus that the school is seeking to inculcate.** Just as we seek a "match" between the family's and school's commitments to the Faith, so also, we depend on a "match" between home and school in a commitment to a strictly limited and disciplined approach to technology.

Parents are expected to refrain from texting, calling, or messaging their students during the school day. Parents needing to contact their students can do so by calling the school office. Failure to comply with this policy will result in consequences at the school level, such as the personal device being confiscated. Parents will be notified to claim the device from the main office.

Parents might want to visit Protect Young Eyes (https://www.protectyoungeyes.com/) for trusted resources that help parents create safer digital spaces at home.

As a note, teachers will generally require minimal to no computer use at home for homework. An exception to this can occur for longer writing and research assignments in the middle and upper grades or for virtual classes.

Regarding Artificial Intelligence (AI):

Sacred Journey Academy seeks to equip our students' minds and nurture their hearts to transform the world for Jesus with an understanding that we should do so in a way that prepares them to be responsible and moral stewards of technology. We recognize the

growing presence of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Natural Language Processing (NLP) tools. This policy aims to ensure that students use AI tools morally, responsibly, and in compliance with academic integrity standards. It is essential to promote a culture of academic honesty while also fostering prudent and wise use of all technological resources. All AI content should be verified for accuracy and analyzed through a biblical worldview lens for truth.

Students shall not utilize AI tools in an unethical manner—in a way that misrepresents their comprehension of the course learning standards. Additionally, they should not utilize AI tools in an immoral manner - in a way that is deceptive or dishonest. The Sacred Journey Academy administration holds the right to determine unethical use of AI tools and apply disciplinary measures per the Student Handbook. Violations of academic or moral integrity related to the use of AI tools will be subject to the same disciplinary actions as other forms of academic misconduct or dishonesty.

Students are expected to develop their own knowledge, skills, and understanding of course material rather than relying solely on AI tools, and they are encouraged to ask their teachers when they have questions and/or need assistance.

Below is further guidance to help provide clarification on the moral and ethical use of AI Tools:

- **Terms and conditions:** AI sites such as ChatGPT, MS Copilot, Google Gemini, Meta AI, or Grok are designed for individuals 13 years of age and older or as required by law.
- **Permission:** Students shall obtain expressed permission (e.g., written, in a syllabus, assignment description, etc.) from the teacher before using AI on any type of assignment. Use of AI for original work without expressed written permission could be considered plagiarism, and related academic policy consequences would apply to the situation. Teachers can and will use AI detection devices as a counter to plagiarism. (Brisk Teaching.)
- **Research assistance:** Students should first formulate their own ideas, no matter how rough. Students should clearly acknowledge and cite the use of AI tools in their academic work.
- **Data analysis:** AI tools can be used to help students analyze, understand, and interpret large amounts of data, such as text documents or social media posts. This can be particularly useful for research projects or data analysis assignments (e.g., scientific experiments).
- **Language translation:** AI tools can be used to translate texts or documents into different languages; however, language translation tools should not be used to do the work of students, i.e., in a foreign language class.
- **Accessibility:** AI tools can be used to help students with disabilities access and understand written materials. For example, text-to-speech software can help students with specific learning disabilities or visual impairments to read texts, and AI-powered translation tools can help students with hearing impairments understand spoken language. Allowable AI tools should be listed in the students' educational plan.
- **Writing assistance:** See the following chart:

AI/NLP Writing Tool Spectrum of Use[1]		
1	Permitted	The student does all work without any assistance from AI, the internet, etc.
2	Permitted[2]	Student gathers stats/research via AI but creates all content on their own

3	Maybe	Student consults the internet/AI for writing ideas, but creates content on their own
4	Prohibited	The student writes all the content, but asks AI for feedback to improve
5	Prohibited	Student writes a draft; AI writes a draft; student adds the best AI ideas.
6	Prohibited	Student creates content until stuck; asks AI for help to get "unstuck."
7	Prohibited	AI guides students through the writing process as a "writing coach."
8	Prohibited	A student writes bullet points to include in their writing, but AI writes the draft
9	Prohibited	AI generates multiple drafts; the student chooses the best parts of the AI drafts
10	Prohibited	Students rewrite AI-generated content with their own improvement ideas
12	Prohibited	AI writes content, but the student edits it based on learning in class
13	Prohibited	AI does students' work for them with no thought from the student

1 See the following link for further elaboration: https://ditchthattextbook.com/ai-cheating/
2 Using AI as a direct source is not permitted. We don't let students count Wikipedia and Google as sources of information. They're summaries of what the source said. Likewise, AI tools like ChatGPT aren't the actual source.

Regarding Using AI for Feedback on an Essay:

<u>When It Is Okay to Use AI for Essay Feedback:</u>

1. **To ask questions that prompt deeper thinking**, such as:
    a. "What parts of my essay might be unclear to a reader?"
    b. "Does my thesis statement seem clear and focused?"
2. **To identify areas for improvement**, such as:
    a. Highlighting grammar errors or awkward phrasing.
    b. Pointing out sections where ideas might need more evidence or explanation.
3. **To get feedback on grammar or mechanics**, such as:
    a. Identifying common grammar errors, like subject-verb agreement or punctuation mistakes.
    b. Highlighting areas where sentences might need better flow or clarity.
4. **To get questions to prompt you to make revisions**, while still deciding how to make changes yourself.
5. **To ask for feedback based on the assignment rubric**, such as:
    a. Checking whether your essay meets the criteria for organization, argument strength, or evidence use.

b. Asking how well your essay aligns with specific rubric categories, like clarity, tone, or formatting.

When It Is NOT Okay to Use AI for Essay Feedback:

1. **To rewrite sentences for you**. AI can point out common grammar errors or sentences that are unclear, but the actual writing must be your own.
2. **To reorganize your ideas.** Structuring your essay is a critical part of learning to communicate effectively, and this must come from your own effort and reasoning.
3. **To generate or write content**. Your essay should reflect your original thoughts, not ideas written by AI.

Using AI is considered plagiarism in educational contexts when it involves the following:

1. **Submitting AI-Generated Content as Your Own:**
   If a student uses AI to write entire essays, sections of an essay, sentences, or generate ideas that they then present as their own original work, it is considered plagiarism. The work is not the student's own intellectual effort, and using AI in this way misrepresents their skills and abilities.
2. **Rewriting Sentences or Paragraphs without Proper Understanding:**
   If a student asks AI to rewrite sections of their work, it is considered dishonest. The student is relying on AI to do the work for them, rather than making revisions based on their own analysis and understanding.
3. **Using AI to Generate Ideas without Attribution:**
   If AI is used to generate entire ideas or arguments that are then presented in the student's essay without acknowledging the use of AI or clarifying that the ideas originated from a tool, it is considered academic dishonesty.

***Never put sensitive information into the chat!**

Why These Guidelines Matter:

Using AI appropriately helps you grow as a writer and thinker. It's a tool to assist your learning, not a shortcut for doing the work. Following these guidelines ensures your work is honest, ethical, and a true reflection of your abilities.

Above all, we are Christians. How we act in the world reflects what we value. Thus, may all we do be guided by Biblical wisdom and discernment. Scripture tells us lying (and stealing) is a sin (Proverbs 12:22). Scripture tells us that God delights in those whose ways are upright and seek righteousness (Proverbs 11:20, Proverbs 33:5, Romans 2:7). We are reminded that "whoever knows the right thing to do and fails to do it, for him it is sin" (James 4:17). We also know that we are called to be people who work diligently to His glory: "Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters" (Colossians 3:23). These scriptures speak to our spiritual formation, guiding how we live both inside and outside the classroom—and yes, they apply to how we engage with technology.

May you exercise wisdom and honesty in your use of technology, both in and out of school.

Examples of Approved Prompts When Requesting Essay Feedback:

Start your prompt with: Without rewriting my essay, please provide feedback on the following question:

1. **Thesis and Focus:**
   - "Does my thesis statement clearly express my main argument or idea?"
2. **Organization:**
   - "Is the structure of my essay logical and easy to follow?"

- "Are my paragraphs well-connected with clear transitions?"
- "What is the main idea in each of the paragraphs?" (Reflect on the LLM's response to this question: Is what the tool understands what you intended, or is something off?)

3. **Clarity and Coherence:**
   - "Are there any parts of my essay that might be confusing to a reader?"
   - "Do I explain my ideas clearly, or are there areas that need more detail or examples?"
4. **Evidence and Support:**
   - "Do I provide enough evidence to support my main points?"
   - "Is my evidence relevant to my main idea in this paragraph?"
5. **Grammar and Mechanics:**
   - "What are the grammar errors I consistently make?"
   - "Can you point out any grammar errors, awkward phrasing, or punctuation mistakes?"
   - "Without using sentences from my essay or about The Crucible, provide sample sentences to teach me how to correct my common grammar errors."
   - "Do my sentences flow smoothly, or are there areas where they could be clearer?"
6. **Alignment with Rubric:**
   - "How well does my essay meet the requirements of the assignment rubric?"
   - "Suggest one area for me to focus on for improvement based on this rubric."
7. **Reader Engagement:**
   - "Is my introduction engaging, and does it effectively set up the essay?"
8. **Tone and Style:**
   - "Is the tone of my essay appropriate for the audience and purpose?"
9. **Strength of Conclusion:**
   - "Does my conclusion effectively summarize my main points and leave a strong impression?"
10. **General Feedback:**
    - "What are the strongest and weakest parts of my essay?"
    - "Explain what my main idea is and my main supporting points" (After receiving the LLM's feedback, consider if this is what you were aiming for. If not, time to revise!)
    - "Provide 10 areas on which I can improve my essay" (or provide any specific number)

Other tips: Assign the LLM a role ("You are a high school English teacher speaking to a student") + an action ("provide feedback in the form of questions to help me improve my essay").

Sample Prompt:

I am a high school student working to improve the clarity, consistency, tone, grammar, and justifications for the positions taken in my essay. Assume you are a high school 10th-grade English teacher providing helpful feedback on my essay, which is a response to the following prompt from my teacher:

"Choose a character from The Crucible and explore how their actions, motivations, and development throughout the play help us to better understand a specific theme. Consider how this character's experiences and choices reflect the larger ideas presented by Arthur Miller, such as integrity, hysteria, or reputation, for example. Use specific examples and quotes from the text to support your analysis and demonstrate why you believe Miller included this character."

Provide clear, concise, and comprehensive feedback on my essay, providing specific examples of ways I can improve it to meet the criteria to receive an "A" grade as defined by the grading rubric. Attached are two documents: one is a grading rubric for the essay; the other is my essay. Do not rewrite any part of the essay for me.

Your tone should be nurturing, encouraging, positive, and authoritative.

Regarding Cyberbullying and AI Deepfakes:

At Sacred Journey Academy, we prioritize protecting the inherent dignity of every child, made in the image and likeness of God, in all forms of communication, including digital interactions. Cyberbullying, defined as any form of harassment, intimidation, or malicious behavior conducted online, is strictly prohibited. The proliferation of applications and websites that allow for images of others to be altered requires specific mention.

- AI Deepfakes: Creation or distribution of AI-generated deepfake photos or videos of any individual with malicious intent, or inappropriate impersonation, is expressly forbidden. Students shall not manipulate digital content to deceive, embarrass, or harm others.
- Reporting Procedure: Students are encouraged to report any instances of cyberbullying, including the sharing of deepfakes, to school authorities promptly.

Regarding What Technology is Used in the Classroom and For How Long:

On the following pages, you will find a guide listing apps and programs our students and teachers use in the classroom. Generally, our K-2nd-grade students spend approximately 15 minutes a day interacting with technology; our students in grades 3-5 may spend approximately one hour a day (depending on projects, typing, writing assignments, etc.); and grades 6- 10 may spend up to 2 hours a day (depending on projects, typing, writing assignments, etc.). The school updates this listing at the start of each school semester.

SJA Schoolwide Technology Expectations

	Kindergarten - Second Grade
How is technology being used in the classroom?	TV screen for the whole class to watch educational videos to enhance learning.
What programs and/or apps are students using?	Students do not directly use technology in the classroom.
What programs and/or apps are Teachers using?	YouTube, Spelling Stars, Teachers pay Teachers, Portals, Google Suite (Classroom, Gmail, Calendar, Docs, etc.)
How much time are students using technology throughout their school day?	Under 15 minutes daily
	Third - Fifth Grade
How is technology being used in the classroom?	TV screen for the whole class to watch educational videos to enhance learning. Students use individual Chromebooks to write stories and access learning apps.
What programs and/or apps are students using?	Math-U-See, Typsey, Muzzy, and Google Suite (Classroom, Gmail, Calendar, Docs, etc)
What programs and/or apps are Teachers using?	MathUSee, Muzzy, YouTube links from Portals, BibleStoriesOnline from Portals, and BlueLetterBible for Bible class, Google Suite (Classroom, Gmail, Calendar, Docs, etc.)
How much time are students using technology throughout their school day?	Maximum 1 hour a day (time will vary depending on projects, research, etc.)
	Sixth - Eighth Grade
How is technology being used in the classroom?	TV screen for the whole class to watch educational videos to enhance learning. Students use individual Chromebooks to write stories and access learning apps.
What programs and/or apps are students using?	MathUSee, Canva, NASA, Setera, Typsey, Muzzy, Google Suite (Classroom, Gmail, Calendar, Docs, etc)
What programs and/or apps are Teachers using?	YouTube, MathUSee, Canva, NASA, Setera, Typsey, Muzzy, Teachers pay Teachers, Portals, Google Suite (Classroom, Gmail, Calendar, Docs, etc)
How much time are students using technology throughout their school day?	Up to 3 hours a day (time will vary depending on projects, research, etc.)

SJA Schoolwide Technology Expectations

	Ninth - Tenth Grade
How is technology being used in the classroom?	TV screen for the whole class to watch educational videos to enhance learning. Students use individual Chromebooks to write stories and access learning apps.
What programs and/or apps are students using?	MathUSee, Canva, NASA, Setera, Typsey, Muzzy, Google Suite (Classroom, Gmail, Calendar, Docs, etc)
What programs and/or apps are Teachers using?	YouTube, MathUSee, Canva, NASA, Setera, Typsey, Muzzy, Teachers Pay Teachers, Portals, Google Suite (Classroom, Gmail, Calendar, Docs, etc)
How much time are students using technology throughout their school day?	Up to 3 hours per day (time will vary depending on projects, research, etc.)

	PSEO
How is technology being used in the classroom?	TV screen for the whole class to watch educational videos to enhance learning. Students use individual Chromebooks to write stories and access learning apps.
What programs and/or apps are students using?	Math-U-See, Typsey, Muzzy, and Google Suite (Classroom, Gmail, Calendar, Docs, etc) Crown College PSEO software
What programs and/or apps are Teachers using?	YouTube, MathUSee, Canva, NASA, Setera, Typsey, Muzzy, Teachers Pay Teachers, Portals, Google Suite (Classroom, Gmail, Calendar, Docs, etc), Crown College PSEO software
How much time are students using technology throughout their school day?	Courses are online so you expect higher screen time

By signing below, I acknowledge that I have received, read, and understand the Sacred Journey Academy Technology and Acceptable Use Policy. I agree to abide by all guidelines, security measures, and standards outlined in this document.

_____

Signature **Date**

_____

Printed Name