

Durham Christian High School



Parent Handbook



Parent Handbook 2021-22

PRINCIPAL'S MESSAGE

I am pleased to present you with this handbook which provides you with information regarding school life at Durham. It is intended as a supplement to the Student Handbook which is also posted on our web site. I ask that you carefully read that booklet so that you are familiar with our policies and guidelines for student life. As you read our handbooks we trust that you will quickly become aware that Durham Christian High School values its Christian character.

Our school exists to provide students with an excellent education for lives of discipleship for Christ. As a community, we work toward this goal, and we hope and pray that you will also do your part toward making this happen. We value the importance of being a school community which enables students to develop their gifts and to be encouraged to explore ways in which they can live their lives as servants of their Lord. As a staff we value the importance of close relationships with students and their parents, and we rely on you to also communicate your love and concern to us as a school community. Durham relies on the grace of God as it manifests itself through the working of His people. In your prayer and work help us as a community to experience that.

**Ms. Shannon Marcus
Principal**

DURHAM MISSION STATEMENT

Durham Christian High School strives to provide an excellent Christ - centred education which enables students to develop their sense of wonder at God's work, their awareness of humanity's role in culture, and their gifts for a life of service to God and others.

Developing Minds - Strengthening Hearts - Changing Lives

HISTORY OF DURHAM CHRISTIAN HIGH SCHOOL

Though Durham has chosen 1967 as its official opening, the school actually developed over a full decade in the 1960's. In 1960 Knox Christian Elementary School added grade nine, in 1967 a separate association took responsibility for running grades nine and ten from Knox, and in 1969 and 1970 grades eleven and twelve were added. In 1977 land was purchased and a building erected just south of Knox Christian Elementary at our present location.

In our fifty-five year history our school has grown increasingly diverse in drawing students from families desiring an excellent education for their daughters and sons. The school is founded on Christian principles and a vision for school that embodies those principles and values throughout the educational program and school culture. The vision of the pioneers of Durham continues to shape all aspects of the school. As it has done throughout the decades, Durham Christian High School continues to prepare students with an excellent education creating opportunity for success in post secondary study and in their growth and development as responsible, ethical Christ-followers.

VISION STATEMENT

As board, staff, parents, and supporting community, we recognize how much we depend on God's grace to:

Provide an academic environment which;

- is embedded in God's word.
- is creative, stimulating, and interactive.
- encourages special gifts and insights.

Establish a community which;

- is conducive to learning.
- provides leadership and discipleship opportunities.
- fosters respect and fairness.

In response, students will;

Grow in their commitment to the Christian faith;

- respecting themselves as image bearers of God.
- understanding the complexity of God's work.
- discerning good and evil in society.

Develop their gifts;

- acquiring solid academic knowledge.
- gaining skill in areas such as technology, arts, science and humanities .

Increase their desire to serve God and humanity;

- displaying integrity in life.
- demonstrating leadership and service.

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

Durham Christian High School is governed by a Board of Trustees. In fulfilling its task, the board of directors appoints people to serve on committees which have been assigned responsibility for various tasks in the school, which report to the Board. The Board and each of the committees elect their own officers.

In the fall of each school year the Board of Directors invites the members to attend a Membership Meeting. Prior to the meeting, reports are distributed. The Membership Meeting provides opportunity for the board to report to the membership on the operation of the school and for the membership to ask questions. The membership votes on major decisions affecting the operation of the school.

Transportation for students is facilitated through the office. Fees are included in tuition.

Durham Christian High School is a member of Edvance Christian Schools Association. This association is comprised of more than seventy elementary and secondary schools in the province. Edvance assists in the coordination of the development of curriculum and school policies and provides a united voice as we interact with the Ontario Ministry of Education. We are also members of Christian Schools International (CSI).

TUITION ASSESSMENT POLICY

In the fall the Board determines the tuition rate for the following school year. Please see the application package for information about payment options. Families who register their children by semester are assessed at 50% of the full amount. A decision to register by semester must be communicated to the principal in advance.

BURSARY PROGRAM

Two bursaries are available to assist families with their financial obligations. The Bridge Bursary exists for families with children both at Durham and at a private Christian elementary school. The Community Bursary is available for those experiencing challenging financial circumstances. Please contact the office for more information and for application forms.

COMMUNICATIONS

You may expect the following communications from the school:

- 1) We employ an internet-based school communication system called EDSBY.
 - The link for Edsby is dchs.edsby.com
 - Teachers post assignments enabling students to access them from home at any time.
 - Daily announcements and the school calendar are posted for parent and student access.
 - All users can set up a forward function for your Edsby messages to your private email. You can find it under Personal Information and Account Settings.
 - If you run into troubles logging on the DCHS office (office@dchs.com) can reset your account for you.
 - There are Edsby apps for your smart phones and tablets.

Parents are expected to regularly check Edsby and to communicate with staff through this tool.

- 2) A regular newsletter to keep you current with the activities of the school. Newsletters are sent electronically.
- 3) A midterm and final report for each semester.
- 4) Communication from the staff or administration when academic or behavioural concerns develop.
- 5) Reports from the board distributed prior to the fall membership meeting.
- 6) A school directory listing the names of the members of the board, the various committees, the staff, and families and students of our school.
- 7) The Student Handbook is posted on our web site and reviewed with students at the beginning of the school year. The policies and procedures concerning student life at Durham as well as a calendar to assist students in their personal planning and organization are included.
- 8) Please ensure the email address you regularly use is the one you have given to the office.

If you have questions and would like more information, please, do not hesitate to call or email the school!

RULES GOVERNING COMPLAINTS

From time to time differences of opinion occur with regard to the actions of the Board, committees, the administration or the staff. “The spirit of conduct in the affairs of the school should be the spirit of love and correction in which problems can be discussed in an open and frank manner, with the proper persons at the proper time and place.” (Board Policy Manual).

DCHS has a “Conflict Resolution Policy” which can be requested at any time.

In general, when a parent has a concern or question, we ask that they first speak to the party involved, and then bring their concern to the principal or school board as needed. For more information, parents can refer to the Conflict Resolution Policy.

SCHOOL POLICIES

Below you will find notes on some school policies. Please read the student handbook for more detailed information.

School Day:

The school day begins at 8:45 and will end at 3:06. Should it be necessary to communicate with your son or daughter, please call the school and leave a message with the office administrator. If you need to speak with your child, we ask that you call the school during the noon break. While students are permitted to use their cell phones during the noon break they are not permitted to do so during class time. PLEASE, DO NOT TEXT OR CALL YOUR CHILDREN DURING CLASS TIME.

Attendance

Regular attendance is one of the important criteria in student success. While there are certain things that need to be scheduled during the school day, please be diligent in scheduling less important activities to other times. While we ask that you read the more detailed policy in the Student Handbook, we also ask that you note the following:

- 1) Please inform the office of the absence of your child by telephone, email or by using the attendance feature in Edsby.
- 2) Please notify the school in advance of extended absences.
- 3) We do not recommend that students are absent for extended periods of time during the school year. Students missing school for vacations are responsible for the

assignments and content missed. Students are to ask a classmate to collect assignments and make a copy of their notes. Students missing tests will have to write them soon after they return from vacation. Students are able to find out about the work they are missing through Edsby. It is not the teacher's job to provide materials or tutoring when the student returns to school because of an absence for vacation.

- 4) Without the permission of the school, students are not to attend, as spectators, school sporting events held during the school day.

Leaving School Property:

Students who arrive after the school day has begun need to sign in in the office upon their arrival. Students who need to leave school early need to sign out in the office.

Students in grades 11 and 12 may leave school property during a spare or noon. Students must either leave school or work in the library, lounge, or a designated class room. Students are not to linger in the halls or disrupt classes.

Students in grades 9 and 10 may not leave school property during the school day.

Should circumstances warrant students in grades nine or ten leaving school during noon, they are to ask for the permission of the principal.

Inclement Weather – Closing School:

The decision to cancel buses is made by the bus service provider. When buses are cancelled due to poor driving conditions, the school is closed. When buses are cancelled because of extreme cold temperatures (but the roads are okay), the school will remain open.

The school will do its best to notify families of the closure by 7am. The information will be posted to Facebook and on Edsby.

Each teacher will post instructions for their class by 9:30am. Learning from home will be asynchronous, but students should expect to do some school work.

School Camp and Toronto 360:

In addition to the typical extracurricular activities such as Athletics, Student Parliament, Drama and Yearbook, students have the opportunity to participate in a three day, school camping trip in September. Also, students in tenth grade participate in a three day Toronto 360 experience in Toronto. This activity is integrated into the subjects that the students take in tenth grade and counts as school time. These activities are highlights of the school year providing many excellent memories of high school. These activities are a student privilege and not a right. Students who have broken trust with the school community or have persistently demonstrated an unwillingness to be co-operative may be denied the privilege to participate.

Ledgers:

The office maintains a ledger sheet for each student detailing amounts owing. Below you will find a list of potential additional fees. Some of these are related to curricular requirements and others are listed as optional activities. The office will add to the ledger of each student the fees incurred for curricular based activities. Fees for optional activities will be added to the student's ledger unless the office is expressly informed by parents/guardians that they do not want us to do this.

A fifty dollar credit is added to the ledger of each student at the beginning of each semester. This credit is included in the school budget and is non-refundable should this amount not be spent by years end. This credit may only be used for curriculum related expenses and not for optional expenses such as Yearbook, Uniforms, Warm-up Athletic clothing etc.

You will find an asterisks (*) behind some of the items listed below as possible ledger additions. This indicates that there may be fund raising activities sponsored by this group as a way of alleviating individual student costs. This at the discretion and initiative of the group involved.

LEDGER AMOUNTS MUST BE PAID PRIOR TO WRITING EXAMS IN JANUARY AND JUNE. If you would like an explanation of ledger amounts owing, please call the school. We will gladly supply you with the details.

Additional Fees (added to ledgers):

In addition to tuition, you will incur costs for things such as:

- September Camping trip (\$170)
- Grade 10 Toronto 360 (\$90)
- Class Trips – cost of transportation and entry fees
- Major Band Tour
- Quebec Trip for students in 4U French (optional) (\$280)
- Field trips during the school day (entry and transportation costs)
- Participation on school sports teams (optional) (Volleyball, Men's Basketball, Women's & Men's Soccer, Badminton, Hockey \$50;. Additional fees may be incurred for extra tournaments and team warm-up shirts.) Should a team progress to the OFSAA level, an additional charge to cover costs will be levied.
- Instrumental Music (Concert Band Class \$20, Jazz Band \$10 to a maximum of \$30 per student and a maximum of \$50 per family)
- Instrument Rental (when a student does not have their own instrument they will be charged a rental fee of \$60)
- Art supplies (\$5 - \$50 depending on course)
- Costs incurred for lost or damaged items such as text books or library books.
- Yearbook (optional) (\$45)

Guidance and Counseling Services

DCHS has a guidance counselor on staff. This teacher is available to assist students with scheduling and academic needs, as well as to prepare students for post-secondary education options.

DCHS is also a member of the Counseling Assistance Program for Schools, through the Shalem network. Students have access to 4 confidential, professional, counseling sessions each school year. The fees are covered by the school's membership with Shalem, who will not pass on student names to the school. The number to reach this program is: 1-866-347-0041. More information about the program will be distributed to students each September.

The Internet and Technology:

While modern technology certainly provides us with many innovative and creative means of communicating and learning modern technology also provides us with challenges and temptations. Throughout our curricular program we are committed to teaching the creative and responsible use of new technologies. Below are listed some of our policies and guidelines as they relate to the use of the Internet and technology:

- 1) Students are not to use cell phones, or other devices during class time. There are times during class when use of electronic devices are permitted by the teacher. Students using their phones or lap tops inappropriately during class time will have their devices confiscated for the remainder of the school day. Subsequent violations will bring about stiffer penalties. On extended school excursions there may be exceptions to this policy as determined by the staff member in charge.
- 2) In our effort to provide a stable, harassment-free environment, students and parents are to note that communications which are threatening, insulting, humiliating, harassing, intimidating or degrading toward students or staff and posted on Internet websites such as, but not limited to, Facebook, text messages or twitter will be dealt with as public communications and subject to school disciplinary action.
- 3) To encourage the responsible use of technologies in the home we strongly recommend that computers with Internet access and televisions be limited to the public areas of the home and not in student bedrooms.

Abuse Policy:

The DCHS abuse policy is entitled Child Welfare Manual – DCHS. Students and parents may access copies in the office, vice principal’s office, guidance office or online. This policy is reviewed with students and staff early in the school year.

No Smoking or vaping Policy:

Students are reminded of the overwhelming evidence of the damage to health which accompanies smoking and vaping, and of the addictive nature of tobacco and cannabis. Smoking and vaping are not permitted by law on school property, within sight of the school, or while students are on school sponsored activities. Smoking includes vaping or the use of e-cigarettes. School activities include staying for sports practices after school. Penalties for smoking infractions may include suspension from school.

In October 2018 cannabis use became legal. The above policy regarding smoking includes any use or possession of cannabis at the school.

Enforcement of the Criminal Code:

It is the duty of the staff of the school to support the enforcement of the criminal code of Canada. Circumstances into which we may invite the law authorities include: abuse, illegal drugs, use of alcohol, theft, harassment, threatening words or behaviour, and wilful damage to property. Students committing such offenses will be suspended from school. Students in possession or under the influence of alcohol during the school day or school sponsored events will be suspended for one week. Students in possession of, or under the influence of, illegal drugs will be suspended for two weeks. A second alcohol or drug offense while a student at DCHS will result in suspension for the remainder of the semester including exams. If a student has committed an offense for which we will involve the authorities, they will be given opportunity to obtain legal counsel.

In October 2018 cannabis use became legal. The use or possession of cannabis during school hours remains prohibited and the above rules will remain in effect.

Student Dress:

Our school uniform has been adopted in recognition of the importance of student dress on the learning environment and the recognition that school has a focussed and educational purpose. We understand that all of our lives, including our dress, bring honour or dishonour to God. We embrace our identity as a Christian school and how we dress impacts our witness for Christ to our community. The expectations for school uniforms are listed on the school web site under uniforms. In addition we ask that you adhere to the following expectations:

- The school uniform is to be worn from the time students arrive at school until they leave at the end of the day.

- The school uniform must be worn on school trips and to away games for sports teams.
- School uniforms must not be torn, have holes, be too tight or too loose.
- Head wear is not permitted in school.
- No spiked jewellery.
- Footwear must be worn at all times.
- Our graduates wear grad gowns during the graduation ceremony.

Extra Curricular Activities:

Durham offers a variety of extracurricular activities. They allow students to use their gifts and talents in special ways. Activities include sports, drama, yearbook, Student Parliament and more. While we encourage involvement, students and parents are encouraged to consider the time and energy commitments that the student will face. Please remember that the primary task of the student is to do as well as possible in their academic program. Staff that sponsor extra curricular activities are asked to monitor the impact of the involvement of students and deal individually with concerns as they arise.

Privacy Protection:

Personal information collected by Durham Christian High will be used for the explicit business functions, promotion, and administration of the school and not shared without the written consent of the member. Reasonable effort will be made to ensure that personal information is accurate and up-to-date and personal information will not be stored any longer than necessary.

DCHS will publish the names of students, parents, home address and telephone number in the School Directory unless expressly informed by parents/guardians that they do not want this information published. The School Directory is distributed only to families with students at DCHS. Please inform the school by September 11, 2020 if this is your wish.

DCHS will include pictures of students and their names in materials promoting DCHS unless expressly informed by parents/guardians that they do not want us to do this. Please inform the school by September 11, 2021 if this is your wish.

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DURHAM CHRISTIAN
— HIGH SCHOOL —

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