

HOPE ACADEMY
STUDENT HANDBOOK
2023-2024



Revised June 2023

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Hope Academy Vision, Mission and Purpose

Vision

To educationally equip the hearts and minds of young people with biblical truth and empower them to critically think and speak with virtue as they represent Christ in the world.

Mission Statement

At Hope Academy of Stephens County, we believe that the heart of education begins with a Christ-centered approach to learning. Essential to this component is the partnership of Christian families and teachers working together to foster a love for learning and the development of virtuous character in our students.

Philippians 4:8 (NIV) - "Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable - if anything is excellent or praiseworthy - think about such things."

Purpose

The purpose of Hope Academy of Stephens County is to provide a safe, constructive atmosphere of learning that seeks to assemble students for the purpose of worship, Christian fellowship and service to Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior.

SCHOOL OFFICE INFORMATION

School Mailing Address..... P.O. Box 1466, Duncan, OK, 73534-1466
School Website.....www.hopeacademyok.org
School Phone Number.....580-252-7775
School FAX Number580-252-7779
School Secretaryoffice@hopeacademyok.org
School Administratorkwhitlock@hopeacademyok.org
Office Hours.....8:00 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

PRIVACY OF STUDENTS INFORMATION

Hope Academy of Stephens County is committed to preserving the privacy of information for your students and their families. Any parent or legal guardian may request information regarding their student(s). However, others will only be given information with written parent consent. Parents wishing to give consent to release private student information may do so by signing an Authorization Form in the school office. At that time the parent will specify the type of information which can be released, as well as the person or persons authorized to receive the information. Hope Academy personnel are mandated reporters of child abuse or neglect.

ARRIVAL TIME & PROCEDURES

Arrival time7:30 - 8:00 a.m.
School begins8:00 a.m.

Please do not drop off your child before 7:30 a.m. unless prior arrangements have been made. When dropping off students, drive up parallel to the glass door entrance just to the west of the main front doors and fountain, and have students exit the vehicle on the passenger side to avoid entering the flow of traffic. This lane is for unloading only. If you need to park or come into the building, please park in spaces that do not obstruct the flow of traffic..

DISMISSAL TIMES & PROCEDURES

Pre-Kindergarten, Kindergarten and 1st grades.....2:55 p.m.
2nd – 5th grades.....3:00 p.m.
6th - 12th grades3:05 p.m.

Students must be picked up by 3:30 p.m. (on early dismissal days, 2:00 p.m.), unless prior arrangements have been made. Dismissal/pick-up will be on the west side (playground side) of the building under the covered area. Please make a single line heading north, where passenger doors open up to the exit doors of the building. For safety, students will remain in the building until their ride is present. Please adhere to your child's pick-up time so that the dismissal process runs as smoothly as possible. Parents who have children to pick up in multiple grades will be allowed to arrive at the dismissal time of the youngest sibling for group loading. If you need to park or come in, please use a parking space so as not to interrupt the flow of traffic.

PARENTS AND VISITORS

Parents are a vital part of our school and are encouraged to visit the school, classroom & eat lunch with their child. Please make prior arrangements with the classroom teacher for any classroom visits. All doors on campus, including the middle school and high school building, will be locked during all hours. Anyone wishing to enter the building after morning drop-off time, may push the buzzer, located at the main entrance & a staff member will unlock the door remotely. We ask that all visitors (including parents) sign in/out on the clipboard and get a visitor's badge located in the office. This includes anyone who is eating lunch with their child or just wanting to spend time with them at recess.

The school has been equipped with numerous security cameras and is monitored before, during, and after regular school hours.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Teachers will keep a record of daily attendance.

TARDIES – Prompt arrival at school is expected of all students. Late arrival disrupts the class and causes loss of instructional time. Any student that arrives after 8:00 is considered tardy and must report to the office for a tardy slip. If your child will arrive late, please call the school and let them know if they will be eating a hot lunch that day, so as to prepare an accurate count for the kitchen staff.

ABSENCES - Please notify the school before 8:15 a.m. if your child will be absent. It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to notify the office or teacher concerning absences. When a student is absent and parent/guardian contact has not occurred, the school will attempt to make contact to determine the reason for the absence. If no contact is made, this will be considered an “unexcused” absence. If a student is absent for 2-3 ½ hours the student is counted absent for ½ day. If they are absent 3 ½ hours or more it will be counted as a full day. If a pattern of tardiness or absences is apparent, the parents will meet with the school administrator and teacher to develop an improvement plan.

EXCUSED - All Excused Absences will fall within the following categories: • Illness or disability of the student • A doctor’s note will be required for continued absences • Professional appointments for medical or legal reasons • Serious personal or family problems • Approved school related activities • Other circumstances, including but not limited to vacations, which satisfy the following conditions: Arrangements to make up missed work have been made with the respective teacher(s) and principal prior to the absence; At most, five consecutive days will be missed; No more than two events in this category of excused absences in an academic year.

UNEXCUSED - When a student is absent from school, and parental or guardian contact is not made with Hope Academy, the absence is deemed unexcused. If your student’s absence falls into one of the categories above, your student will receive an unexcused absence, until contact has been made and approved with the administrator.

MAKEUP WORK- All school work shall be made up in a prescribed time. Prearranged absences need to be communicated with your students' teacher and makeup work needs to be done according to policy. Students with unexcused absences are to complete makeup work within one school day after returning to class. Students with excused absences are to complete makeup work within two school days after returning to class. Students with prearranged excused absences shall be required to submit completed work upon return to school. Failure to make up assignments may result in receiving a 0 on the daily work. Exceptions and special arrangements may be allowed with the approval of the teacher.

TRUANCY - According to Oklahoma law, a number of conditions can constitute truancy. A student is truant if they are between the ages of seven and 18 and missed three consecutive days in a row without an excuse, five unexcused absences in a semester or seven unexcused absences in a school year. A student who meets any of those conditions can be reported for truancy.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Parents are asked to report any changes of address, telephone number, email, etc. immediately to the school office, in writing. This will insure the school’s ability to contact parents in case of an emergency.

SCHOLARSHIPS

Hope Academy of Stephens County currently has a very limited scholarship program in place. It is our goal to be able to expand scholarships in the future.

TELEPHONE CALLS

Should it be necessary to get a message to a student, the office staff will contact the teacher, who will in turn give the message to the student. Under no conditions should a student be contacted by a parent, guardian or friend during school hours on the student's communication device. We feel very strongly about not disrupting a child's classroom day. If a parent needs to speak with a child's teacher, a message will be given to the teacher to return the phone call at his/her earliest convenience.

COMMUNICATION DEVICES

Students who bring communication devices to school must leave them in the care of their teacher on silent mode. Permission must be obtained from a teacher or principal before any student can receive a phone call or make a phone call while on campus. (One exception to this rule is for field trips days - students in grades PK-5th may wear a smartwatch or take a phone with them for the sole purpose of an emergency and parent ability to track the student's location. Students are not allowed to be on them for texting, phone calls, games, etc.). Any student using a communication device under any other circumstance while on campus, will have the device confiscated and returned directly to the student's parent or legal guardian. Communication devices may not be used for any immoral or illegal purposes while the student is on campus. The school reserves the right to inspect the content of a device to determine the possible use for illegal or immoral activity. This also includes smart watches of any kind. Students (grades 6-12) will be given scheduled phone breaks throughout the day. Additionally, students in grades 6-12 will be allowed access and use of his/her phone during field trips, within the parameters of acceptable use.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Parents and students are asked to use caution while using social media. Hope Academy recognizes the fact that social media falls under our constitutional right for freedom of speech. However, the Hope Academy School Board reserves the right to expel any student for a period of time as determined by the board, for comments made by a student or parent that do not show good Christian character or directly slander the school. Ephesians 4:31-32: Get rid of all bitterness, rage, anger, harsh words, and slander, as well as all types of evil behavior. Instead, be kind to each other, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God through Christ has forgiven you.

PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES

Communication is the key to a student's success. Parent-Teacher conferences will be held twice during the school year. Teachers will schedule a conference time with each parent at a mutually convenient time. If you are unable to attend the suggested conference time, please notify the classroom teacher and another time will be scheduled. If additional meetings are required they will be scheduled at the teacher's and parent's convenience.

BREAKFAST/LUNCH

Hope Academy of Stephens County believes that all children learn best when they are well fed. Breakfast will consist of a “grab-n-go” type meal (i.e., milk, juice, cereal, toast, muffin, yogurt, etc.). All student breakfasts and lunches are provided at no additional cost to the student, as part of their monthly tuition. **Beginning with the 2023-2024 school year, students will be responsible for bringing his/her own lunch on Fridays.** A monthly breakfast/lunch menu will be available on the Hope Academy website as well as a paper copy provided to each student.

EMERGENCY DRILLS/SAFETY PRECAUTIONS

An emergency evacuation plan is posted in the classroom. Practice drills for various types of emergencies, such as fire, tornado, intruder on campus and other threatening situations, will be conducted periodically in accordance with state statutes. The drill procedures will be explained to staff and students at the beginning of each school year.

CANCELLATION OF SCHOOL

Hope Academy of Stephens County will normally adhere to the cancellation of classes by surrounding area schools in the event of inclement weather. The safety of our families, students, and staff are priority. However, the Administrator or Governing Board may also elect separately to close due to weather conditions. If a parent or legal guardian considers weather conditions unsafe, he or she may choose to request dismissal of their children. School will be canceled when significant safety risks have been determined. School closings will be announced through the following media:

- KSWO Channel 7 News
- KFXI Foxy 92
- hopeacademyok.org
- Hope Academy Facebook account
- My School Worx

STANDARDIZED DRESS CODE

Based on guidelines of modesty, simplicity, neatness and safety, a standardized dress code is in place for all students (“Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought with a price. Therefore honor God with your bodies.” 1 Corinthians 6:19-20).

It is the responsibility of students, under parental supervision, to dress according to this policy and the responsibility of Teachers and Administration to enforce it. The Administration reserves the right to prohibit certain items as necessary during the school year, and the Governing Board reserves the right to modify the dress code as needed. Clothing must be neat, clean and in good repair.

Shirts

- Traditional short or long sleeve shirts in polo, oxford or turtleneck, in any solid color. Contrasting trim is not permitted.

Sweaters, Sweatshirts, and Jackets

- Approved styles are zip-down cardigan knitted sweaters and sweatshirts, crew neck sweaters, sweater vests, sweaters, sweatshirts, and fleece pullovers.
- Sweaters and sweatshirts must be worn over a dress code shirt. (see "Shirts"). They must be no longer than waist/hip length, with the majority of the exterior of the sweater, sweatshirt or jacket being one solid color.
- Outerwear garments (coats, etc.) can be in any color or style desired, but may not be worn in the classroom.

Pants, Shorts, Skorts, Jumpers and Skirts

- Approved colors: navy and khaki (a shade of tan).
- Pants must have a hem and may not drag on the ground.
- Clothing must be free of stains, holes and fading.
- Pants or shorts may not be worn below the waist.
- Short length should be closer to the knee than mid-thigh. Judgment of appropriate length is at the school Administrator's discretion.
- Capris, cargo pants/shorts and corduroys are allowed.
- No blue jeans, except for the last day of the school week, blue jean shorts, short overalls, spandex, stretch pants, or overalls.
- Shorts or leggings must be worn under skirts and dresses, if not already built in.
- The last day of each school week will be our Hope Academy t-shirt day, worn with blue jeans (no holes) or either navy blue or khaki pants, shorts or skorts. Hope Academy t-shirts will also be worn on field trip days.

The following guidelines are always in effect:

- Eyelid, lip and/or tongue body piercings are not permitted.
- Girls are permitted to wear modest amounts of makeup and modest earrings.
- Boys are not permitted to wear makeup, earrings or fingernail polish.
- Limited and appropriate jewelry is permitted.
- Boys and Girls must keep their hair neat and combed (brightly-dyed hair is not permitted).
- Hoods and hats may not be worn in the building.

SCHOOL-WIDE DISCIPLINE PLAN

A record of behaviors requiring correction will be kept by the student's teacher, however, any staff member may report infractions. This infraction record will be in effect for the entire school year. Each parent and student will sign an acknowledgement of understanding for this policy each school year.

Behavior Examples Leading to Consequences (**not limited to those listed**):

Disrespect to Adults/Peers:

- Talking back
- Put downs
- Name calling
- Disruptive behavior
- Disrespectful gestures or body actions
- Inappropriate comments
- Refusal to comply with instructions

Fighting:

- Hitting
- Biting
- Kicking
- Any use of weapons

Verbal Assault:

- Threats
- Obscene language or gestures
- Stealing
- Lying
- Cheating
- Not Accepting Responsibility for Own Actions
- Ridicule
- Bullying
- Failing to be prepared to learn
- Blaming others for own misconduct
- Destroying property

Discipline Steps

Teachers and the Administrator may **choose to skip steps in the plan, depending on the severity of the infraction involved.** The Administrator may choose, at his/her discretion, to discuss any specific student issue with the Governing Board at any step.

First Violation.....Handled at teacher discretion. Teacher may choose to counsel with the student privately. Depending on the severity of the action, the teacher may determine that a greater consequence is warranted.

Second Violation.....The teacher will make parent contact and the student will use classroom free time to fill out a “think sheet” and describe which of the following virtues was violated and why: Temperance (self-control); Prudence (wisdom); Fortitude (courage); and Justice (learning the true, doing the good, loving the beautiful).

(The classroom teacher will scribe student answers in Pre-Kindergarten through First grades).

Third Violation.....The student will be referred to the administrator and the parent will be called. Logical consequences should match the misbehavior.

Examples may include:

- If a student is caught stealing, he/she may be asked to assist with cafeteria clean up for an entire school week.
- Students caught cheating may have to read books about the subject to students in lower grades.
- If a student decides to destroy someone’s property, he/she may be asked to come in early or stay after school to help clean, so as to make restitution for the negative behavior.
- Students fighting may have to sit together during chapel and at lunch every day for a week

(These are just examples of logical consequences that may occur. Hope Academy tries to refrain from loss of recess privileges because each student needs the opportunity to run and play in order to promote better physical and mental health. Students, however, may be asked to sit out periodically if other methods have been exhausted to improve student behavior)

Subsequent violations may be any of the following:

- Counseling or extra work
- In School Suspension
- Out of School Suspension
- Meeting with the Board of Directors**

* **In this case, the Board will decide an appropriate remedy for the behavior, which could include counseling, extra work or expulsion. The decision of the Board is final.

PARENT/STUDENT GRIEVANCE POLICY

Hope Academy of Stephens County staff is open and available at mutually agreed conference times to discuss any issue of concern with parents or students. All contacts should be made during school hours to set a convenient meeting time. Please follow the Biblical principle as taught in Matthew 18:15-17, "If your brother or sister sins, go and point out their fault, just between the two of you. If they listen to you, you have won them over. But if they will not listen, take one or two others along, 'so that every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.' If they still refuse to listen, tell it to the church; and if they refuse to listen even to the church, treat them as you would a pagan or a tax collector."

Issues could involve parents or students having questions, comments or complaints. Another possibility is where a teacher or principal needs to discuss questions, comments or complaints with a parent or other individual concerned with the school. In any case, the following procedure should be followed:

1. The concern should initially be addressed with the person most responsible. Example: classroom issues should begin as a discussion with the teacher. Building/Policy issues should go to the Principal/Director first. Concerns regarding student or parent situations will be discussed with the parents involved.
2. A time should be scheduled to meet face to face. Electronic communication should be avoided. Common courtesy suggests that calling a teacher or the principal at home to complain is an intrusion of their family time, therefore, these requests should be made during school hours.
3. Everyone is encouraged to set a mutually agreed upon time and an appropriate, private place to hold these discussions.
4. If a teacher issue is not able to be resolved with the teacher, the director should be contacted to mediate a meeting with the involved parties. If unable to resolve the issue at that level, a written statement of grievance from the parent/guardian will be submitted to the Principal/Director and forwarded to the school board for further review.

HOPE ACADEMY OF STEPHENS COUNTY BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The Hope Academy of Stephens County Board of Directors holds meetings on the first Monday of each month, at 6:30 p.m. at the school. These are closed meetings at this time.

IMMUNIZATION POLICY

It is our practice to follow the guidelines for immunizations outlined by the Oklahoma State Department of Health. If parents choose to seek an immunization exemption for medical or other reasons, they may do so by submitting the exemption application to be reviewed by the Official Board. www.ok.gov/health

RE-ADMITTANCE FOLLOWING CONTAGIOUS DISEASE

Parents and school personnel are requested to follow the guidelines for re-admittance following certain illnesses. Students not following the guidelines will be sent home until it is acceptable to return to the classroom. Parents are also requested to report to the school a student's exposure to a communicable disease or illness. Staff members can then observe students for symptoms and carry out necessary isolation.

Fever – 100 degrees or above; a child should be free of fever for at least 24 hours before returning to school.

Vomiting – may return after the vomiting has ceased for 24 hours and has returned to pre-illness condition.

Chicken Pox – 6 days out of school from the onset of the illness; and/or all skin lesions must be dry prior to the return of school AND must have a signed permit from a doctor.

Head Lice – may return to school only after completing treatment and all nits removed.

Pink Eye (Conjunctivitis) – may return 24 hours after treatment AND when discharge from the infected eye has ceased.

Influenza – may return 5 days after testing positive for influenza, or as determined by a physician.

Permits are required from a physician for any student who has been absent from school for the following conditions:

- **Diphtheringococcal meningitis**
- **Staph Infection**
- **Mononucleosis**
- **Strep infection**
- **Tuberculosis**
- **Poliomyelitis**
- **Typhoid**
- Fever**
- **Ringworm**
- **Scabies**
- **Smallpox**
- **Whooping Cough**
- **Mumps** (After swelling has gone down – usually 10 days)
- **Measles, Rubeola or Rubella**
(Usually 7 days after rash appears)

MEDICATIONS

Hope Academy of Stephens County has the following policy regarding student medications.

1. Before any prescription medication or OTC (over the counter) medication can be self-administered, an "Authorization for Administration of Medication" form must be on file in the office.
2. Medications must be in the original properly labeled container.
3. If the medication is for the treatment of, or management of, asthma, diabetes or anaphylaxis episodes, the health care provider must provide a written plan for medication use by the student during school hours in addition to the above items.
4. All teachers responsible for the student's supervision shall be notified that permission to carry medications and self-medicate has been granted.
5. The parents of the student will comply with any requirements imposed by Hope Academy concerning this self medication.

PARENT-TEACHER FELLOWSHIP (PTF)

Hope Academy of Stephens County is a firm believer in the active involvement of parents. Parents and teachers working together will improve relationships and the success of the students in our school.

Parent-Teacher Fellowship (PTF), serves the school, teachers and students through different social, financial, and service avenues. Meetings will be held to accommodate working parents and to maintain active input from all. All are invited to attend and help this very important group. PTF organizes a few school wide fundraisers throughout the year (typically 2 major fundraisers) to provide classroom money for teachers, purchase P.E. equipment, classroom equipment, school parties, field trips and much more.

LIBRARY POLICY

Hope Academy of Stephens County is in the early stages of growing its own student library on campus. In the meantime, students may be periodically transported to the Duncan Public Library, where they will be allowed a two-book (maximum) check out. Students are allowed to take them home to read during the week, but must have them with them to return on his/her scheduled library day, in order to check out new books for the week. At least one parent must have an existing library account at the Duncan Public Library and provide written permission to Hope Academy for their child to check out books using the account. Other options for library books will be made available to the students should a parent not agree to this program.

Hope Academy of Stephens County accepts donated books for our student library. When donating to the library, please donate only books in good repair. Since many of the books in the library come through donations to the school, there may sometimes be a book that appears objectionable to a parent. If a parent objects to a book, the book is to be returned to the school with a brief note stating the reason for the objection. The book will be reviewed by the director and, if necessary, presented to the governing board.

INTERNET ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY

Hope Academy of Stephens County believes that the internet has much to offer students in its wide variety of resources. It is our goal to educate students about efficient, ethical and appropriate use of these resources. Within the context of our mission statement as a school, the Internet connection will be used to meet the goals in our curriculum.

In order to protect the innocence of our students while using the Internet, we use KellPro online software to filter sites that are objectionable for content, language or a variety of other things that the Governing Board has defined as inappropriate.

It is to be understood that Internet access for the students is a privilege, not a right. All users of the Internet will agree to adhere to the following Code of Ethics:

I will strive to act in all situations with honesty, integrity, and respect for the rights of others and to help others to behave in a similar fashion. I will make a conscious effort to be a good testimony to my fellow students, faculty members, and others I communicate with, on the Internet. I agree to follow Hope Academy of Stephens County's rules.

I will strive to apply Philippians 4:8 to my electronic communication: "Finally, brothers and sisters; whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable - if anything is excellent or praiseworthy, think about such things."

(As part of enrollment, all students in grades 4-12, as well as their parent/guardian, will be required to read and sign Hope Academy of Stephens County's Acceptable Internet Use Agreement.)

