

Community Life Together Covenant

Worthington Christian High School (WCHS) is a community of Christians who have joined together for the purpose of spiritual growth, academic progress, and personal development. The purpose of this covenant is to identify those things that will assist us in meeting the spiritual and educational objectives of WCHS. While it is impossible to create a covenant where all boundaries and expectations are totally acceptable to everyone, all would agree that certain boundaries and expectations are necessary to assure orderly life together. **When students, faculty, and parents join the WCHS community, they freely and willingly choose to take upon themselves the responsibilities outlined in this covenant.**

ASSUMPTIONS

1. Loving God and loving our neighbors are the primary motivations for all relationships and behavior.
2. The Bible is our authority; it provides the essential teachings and principles for personal and community conduct.
3. It is normal for the Christian to desire to be guided by the Word of God and to be led by the Holy Spirit in all aspects of life.
4. Satan does not play fairly, and members of our community will be under constant spiritual attack by the world, the flesh and the devil himself.

RESPONSIBILITIES AND RELATIONSHIPS

Within our community, the greatest expression of fellowship and the highest principle for relationships is love. Jesus said:

³⁷ “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.” ³⁸ This is the first and greatest commandment. ³⁹ And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ ⁴⁰ All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.” (Matthew 22:37-40)

We often wonder what “love” looks like. The following are specific identifications of love and provide the basis for understanding the essential elements of our relationships.

*Love builds us up**

We expect each member of the community to strive to maintain relationships, which support, encourage, and help others. "We who are strong ought to bear with the failings of the weak and not to please ourselves. Each of us should please his neighbor for his good, to build him up." (Romans 15:1-2 NIV). Our

* Throughout this handbook, an asterisk (*) indicates that the section marked contains either new material, or material that has been changed or clarified in the 2005-2006 edition of the handbook.

words have power to build up or tear down, we should expect the Holy Spirit to lead us in what we do and do not say to others. Gossip and sarcasm, even if we are “just kidding” is unloving. (Proverbs 26:18-19) *We value communication that builds up others .*

Love is patient

Because of our humanness, difficulties in relationships can occur. In such cases, we are to respond as the Scripture states: “. . .clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another," (Colossians 3:12, 13a NIV). We should expect the Holy Spirit to lead us as we interact with those who have made unwise or immature choices. *We value patience with each other’s weaknesses and occasional poor judgment.*

Love helps us bear each other’s burdens

We are responsible to come alongside those experiencing grief, discouragement, illness, tragedy, or other personal trials. Expressions of bearing one another's burdens include comfort, encouragement, consolation, and intercession. "Carry each other’s burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ," (Galatians 6:2 NIV). We should follow the Spirit’s promptings to express our love and concern for each other, especially during hard times. *We value supporting each other.*

Love is truthful

Speaking the truth to each other with love will strengthen our community. "Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to his neighbor, for we are all members of one body" (Ephesians 4:25 NIV). We should follow the Spirit’s leading to speak to each other about struggles, choices, and issues that if left unaddressed, could lead to bigger problems. “Looking the other way” is unloving. *We value productive, loving, solution-oriented interaction.*

*Love reconciles, restores and makes restitution**

Healing broken relationships is necessary for a healthy community. When relationships have been harmed, regardless of the reason, individuals should reach out to one another, forgive one another, restore relationships, and make restitution whenever possible or necessary. We understand that reconciliation and restoration do not equal “getting off the hook.” We understand that in a school setting, some actions, because of their harmful or dangerous nature, will have consequences. (See “School Disciplinary Procedure” section of this handbook) II Corinthians 5:18-19 NIV states: "He [Christ] gave us the ministry of reconciliation . . . and He has committed to us the message of

reconciliation." *We value forgiveness and restoration of relationships. We must seek the leading of the Holy Spirit in all matters that pertain to healing and restoring broken relationships.*

Implementing the above expressions of love in relationships requires continual sensitivity to the Holy Spirit on the part of students, faculty, staff, and administrators.

RESPONSIBILITIES FOR BEHAVIOR AND ATTITUDE

Biblical Expectations*

- Scripture teaches that the Holy Spirit will produce "love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Against such things there is no law," (Galatians 5:22-24 NIV). This "fruit of the Spirit" energizes our relationships.
- Certain behaviors are expressly prohibited in Scripture. Members of the body of Christ, not just the WCHS community, should abstain from and flee from these things. They include theft, lying, dishonesty, gossip, slander, crude, vulgar and profane language, sexual activity and/or gratification outside of the bonds of marriage, intoxication, immodesty, and occult practices (see Galatians 5:10-21). WCHS is concerned about the life of the student on or off campus before, during, and after school.
- In keeping with Scriptural admonitions to bring ourselves under the authority of government, members of the WCHS community are expected to uphold the laws of the local community, the state of Ohio, and the nation to the extent that obedience to such laws does not require disobedience to God.

Institutional Expectations*

In addition to the above biblical expectations, members of the WCHS community voluntarily commit themselves to the following standards of behavior. This commitment grows from the conviction that these standards serve the good of the individual as well as the school. These standards are not necessarily set forth as absolutes or as an index of spirituality. They do, however, define the parameters that govern life in the WCHS community. **Violations of these standards are regarded as a serious breach of integrity within the community. Therefore, the following standards apply to students, faculty, staff, and administrators at Worthington Christian High School.**

1. **Regarding Sundays:** While some in our community worship on Saturday, WCHS recognizes Sunday as a day set apart primarily for worship, fellowship, ministry, and rest. While activities such as recreation may be a part of the day, "business as usual" relative to school programs,

games, rehearsals, and student services will not be sanctioned or encouraged except where absolutely necessary.

2. **Regarding “The Gathering”:** Corporate worship, fellowship, and instruction are essential for our community. Therefore, students, faculty, and administrators are expected to attend WCHS’ weekly "Gathering" and act in a manner appropriate to the setting.
3. **Regarding Substances:** The community recognizes the danger to one's physical and psychological well-being in the use of certain products. Therefore, members of the community are to refrain from the illegal use of tobacco in any form, alcoholic beverages, hallucinogenic drugs and substances (including marijuana), or narcotics not authorized by a physician. WCHS recognizes that there are laws governing the use and distribution of these products. At no time are members of the WCHS community to be in violation of those laws on or off the campus.¹ None of the above substances are ever permitted to be used or possessed on the WCHS campus or at any event or activity in any way connected with WCHS. Members of the community may not share or abuse prescription or non-prescription drugs or medications.
4. **Regarding Gambling:** Gambling (exchange of money and/or goods of any sort by betting or wagering) is viewed as an unwise use of God-given resources and therefore is not acceptable in any form on school grounds or at school activities.
5. **Regarding Dancing:** In deference to those Christians who believe social dancing is morally wrong, the preference of the school is to avoid such activities at school sanctioned events. The community does not desire to place a student in a position where s/he must choose between honoring a church and/or family conviction and participating in a school activity.
6. **Regarding Discrimination and Harassment:** Because of our concern for the worth and dignity of persons, each member of the community is expected to be sensitive to special needs existing in our society and on our campus. Therefore, discrimination against, or harassment of, others on the basis of race, national origin, sex, or disability is not acceptable.
7. **Regarding Violation of Individuals:** Any kind of demeaning gesture, threat of violence, physical attack or overt, unwelcome sexual advance directed toward another person of the same or opposite sex will not be tolerated.
8. **Regarding Vandalism:** Vandalism or violence against property is not tolerated.
9. **Regarding Pornography:** The pornography industry exploits people. Further, the use of the industry's products is immoral. Therefore,

¹ Parents should note that so-called “safe houses,” where teens gather to drink or smoke under the supervision of someone’s parent or older sibling, are illegal. In Ohio, under-aged persons may consume alcohol and tobacco products **only** with the permission and **IN THE PRESENCE** of their **own** parent or guardian.

pornographic products or materials of any sort are not to be used, possessed, or distributed on or away from campus.

10. **Regarding Cheating:** Members of the community are subject to the demands of academic integrity such as honesty and giving credit to sources. (Refer to Honor Code elsewhere in the handbook and to the WCHS Style Manual.)
11. **Regarding School Rules:** Compliance with the routine day-to-day policies and procedures of WCHS is expected from members of the community. These routine items are listed elsewhere in the handbook or are made known to students, faculty, staff, and administration through normal channels of communication. Likewise teachers must establish clear guidelines for procedures and conduct in their classrooms that are consistent with this covenant. Students must abide by those guidelines.
12. **Regarding legal status and marriage:** While marriage is an honorable institution, ordained by God, all WCHS students, regardless of age, must remain unmarried and living with a parent or guardian while enrolled as students. Regarding other legal matters; parents must sign all school forms and school releases, regardless of the student's age.
13. **Regarding pregnancy:** Pregnant female students and male students who have fathered a child, will be unable to take part in any WCHS related activities during the duration of the pregnancy. Pregnancy resulting from legally defined rape or incest will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Readmission to WCHS subsequent to the pregnancy will also be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Conclusion*

The intent of this covenant is to identify expectations that assist Worthington Christian High School in functioning as a Christian community and in achieving its goals as a secondary school operating in the State of Ohio.

All employees of WCHS are responsible to abide by the Life Together Covenant as long as they are under the employment of the school. All students of WCHS are likewise responsible to abide by the Life Together Covenant as long as they are enrolled as students. **The very nature of this covenant implies that it will reflect our lives at all times (including vacation and non-school hours).**