

Parent Handbook 2011/2012



**Durham Christian High School
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PRINCIPAL'S MESSAGE

I am pleased to be able 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 Planner/Handbook which is available online. 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 it's Christian character.

Our school exists to prepare the student for a life 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 rely we 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.

**Mr. Fred Spoelstra
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 it's "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.

At present Durham has approximately 130 students and is situated in that building on the northern outskirts of Bowmanville. In the spring of 2002 we purchased 13 acres adjacent to the south boundary of our property for future expansion. We also have two portable classrooms. What is clear is that the vision of the original pioneers of Durham was one that believed that the Lordship of Christ was to be exercised over all areas of life and that the development of Christian elementary schools, high schools, and colleges are part of our faithful response to our God. In trust and reliance on God, Durham began and continues to this day.

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 of approximately twelve members. Trustees are either appointed by operative chapters or appointed by the board. 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. The committees include: Program, Human Resource, Development, Building and Grounds, Finance, and Contract Partnership. These committees report to the board. Usually, the board and committees meet on a monthly basis. The board, and each of the committees, elect their own officers.

In the fall and spring of each school year the Board of Directors calls all of 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 provided through parental groups. For families in Bowmanville area, Oshawa and areas to the west thereof and Lindsay these parent groups are referred to as chapters. For most of the school catchment area, busing is available. Please contact the school for information.

Durham Christian High School is a member of the Ontario Alliance of Christian Schools (OACS). With offices in Ancaster Ontario, this association is comprised of more than seventy elementary and secondary schools in the province. OACS 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) with offices in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

TUITION ASSESSMENT POLICY

At the spring membership meeting the per family tuition assessment is determined for the following school year. Except for families who belong to the Bowmanville chapter, tuition is paid directly to the school. Families that register their children by semester shall be assessed at 50% of the full amount. A decision to register by semester must be stated in writing by October 1; otherwise all families will be considered registered for the full year, and assessment shall be made at 100%.

COMMUNICATIONS

Communications you may expect from the school include the following:

- 1. A biweekly newsletter to keep you current with the activities of the school. Newsletters are distributed to students every second Wednesday and are available on line on the school web site.**
- 2. Durham Developments distributed through Christian elementary schools and supporting churches.**
- 3. Three report cards per semester.**
- 4. Communication from the staff or administration when academic or behavioural concerns develop.**
- 5. Reports from the board distributed prior to the fall and spring membership meetings.**
- 6. Special information sheets providing detailed information regarding special events.**
- 7. A school directory listing the names of the members of the board, the various committees, the staff, and families and students of our school.**
- 8. A Student Planner/Handbook is available online and reviewed with students at the beginning of the school year. The planner contains policies and procedures concerning student life at Durham as well as a calendar to assist students in their personal planning and organization.**

If you have questions and would like more information, please, do not hesitate to call 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). Please adhere to the following protocol as determined by the situation or circumstances:

DISAGREEMENTS ON ISSUES

These disagreements may be about issues such as, but not limited to, the school program, assessment and evaluation policies, the student code of conduct, or the discipline policy.

Process:

- Parent communicates with the principal
- Principal may consult with the teacher(s)
- Principal may refer the matter to the relevant committee
- Principal makes a decision and communicates the decision back to the concerned person.
- Should the concerned person wish to appeal the principal’s decision they may do so in writing to the Board.

DISAGREEMENTS INVOLVING PERSONAL BEHAVIOURS

These disagreements may be about parental disagreement about the education or discipline of their child. Parents advocate for their child by following the steps.

Process:

- Parent and teacher meet to discuss the matter and work toward resolution.
- Either the parent or the teacher may request the principal to attend the meeting.
- If the parent and teacher cannot agree on a resolution, the teacher makes a decision or refers the matter to the principal.
- The parent may appeal the teachers decision to the principal. The principal tries to help the two parties to come to resolution. If necessary, the principal makes a decision.
- The **exception** to this process would involve matters of a very highly sensitive nature or violation of legal statutes. In highly sensitive matters the parent should

contact the principal or board chair first.

In situations in which there has been a violation legal statutes, parents may contact the Board chair, principal, or legal authorities. Parents are invited to ask for a copy of the Board policy *Towards Healthy Relationships: Protecting Teen Welfare, Reporting Teen Abuse* for further clarification on such matters.

COMPLAINTS

Complaints are negative assessments of specific events or persons which, in the opinion of the speaker, require school action. These include, but are not limited to, complaints about policies, operations, students, support staff, teachers, buses, incidentals...

Process:

- Every complaint of this type should be directed to the principal.
- The principal assesses the problem and how it should be solved.
- The principal may determine to resolve the problem or send it to the appropriate committee. The principal to inform the person with regard to resolving the particular complaint.
- The principal to communicate with the appropriate parties and advise them of the resolution when this has been achieved.

THE GRIEVANCE COMMITTEE

The grievance committee is a committee of the Board to provide a vehicle for the confidential, quick, peaceful and ethical resolution to the normal range of non-policy disputes. This committee can be contacted after the above listed protocol has been followed. Contact the principal or Board chair for further information.

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 with home room at 8:43 and will end at 3:15. 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.

Attendance

Regular attendance is one of the important criteria in student success. While there are certain things such as appointments with the doctor 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. By telephone call, email, or note, please inform the office of the absence of your child.
2. Please notify the school in advance of extended absences.
3. Students missing school for vacations are responsible for the work missed. Students are to ask a "buddy" to collect assignments and make a copy of their notes. Students missing tests will have to write them soon after they return from vacation.
4. Without the permission of the school, students are not to attend, as spectators, school sporting events held during the school day.

Inclement Weather Days:

Should weather conditions make it necessary to close school, the principal will make every effort to ensure that a decision is made and communicated to the chapters by 7:00 a.m. The decision to close school will also be announced on CKDO am 1350 and 107.7 FM, announced on our web site www.dchs.com, and communicated through the chapters. If you wish to be contacted about school closures via email please send an email to office@dchs.com. When inclement weather keeps any of our chapters from transporting students to school but school is open, we will post homework on the school web site.

Leaving School Property:

Students in grades 11 and 12 may leave school property during study hall (includes 9th period) or noon, providing they bring a one time note of permission from their parent(s) or guardian(s). 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 but must leave for the entire class when the class begins.

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

The conservation area beyond the soccer fields and the field area around our shed to the south of the school are considered off school property.

Camp Out and Service Education Week:

In addition to the typical extra curricular activities such as Intercollegiate Athletics, Student Parliament, Drama and Yearbook, students have the opportunity to participate in a four day, end of year Camp Out at Whitefish Lake in Algonquin Park. Also, students in tenth grade participate in a week long Service Education Project 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. Both activities involve a tremendous amount of organizational work, volunteer assistance, and co-operation. These activities are a student privilege and not a right. Students that 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. For students to have fees for optional activities added to their ledger, each family is asked to submit a one time note of approval and acknowledgement so as to avoid unpleasant surprises at semester end. Without this note of approval, students will be required to pay cash for fees related to optional activities.

A \$50. 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 school clothing, Student Parliament banquet etc. This credit is transferable within a family.

You will find an * 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 or get you a copy.

Additional Fees (added to ledgers):

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

- **Camp Out (optional)(approximately \$70)**
- **Grade 10 Service Education Week (\$50)**
- **Physical Education (T Shirts \$10 and Shorts \$18)**
- **Major Band Tour**
- **Quebec Trip for students in 4U French (optional) (\$260)***
- **Field trips during the school day (entry and transportation costs)**
- **Participation on school sports teams (optional)* (Volleyball, Men's Basketball, Women's Soccer, Badminton \$40, Men's Soccer \$20. An athlete will not be asked to contribute more than \$100 throughout the year.) Should a team progress to the OFFSA level, an additional charge to cover costs will be levied.**
- **Instrumental Music (Gr. 9 & 10 Music Program \$20, Jazz Band \$10 to a maximum of \$30 per student and a maximum of \$50 per family)**
- **Instrument Rental (where applicable, a range of fees depending on instrument to a maximum of \$125)**
- **Art supplies (\$5 - \$50 depending on course)**
- **Costs incurred for lost or damaged items such as text books or library books.**
- **Yearbook (optional) (\$40)**
- **Shakespearean play at Stratford (optional) (\$40)**
- **Student Parliament activities such as Spring Banquet and Dances (optional) (\$7 - \$35)**
- **Student Parliament sponsored DCHS wear (optional) (\$20 - \$50)**

*** Indicates possible fund raising activities to alleviate costs**

No Smoking Policy:

Students are reminded of the overwhelming evidence of the damage to health which accompanies smoking, and of the addictive nature of tobacco. For that reason smoking is not allowed on school property, within sight of the school, or while students are on school sponsored activities. School activities include staying for sports or drama practices after school. Along with required service hours, those that violate this policy will be suspended for one day for the first offense, three days for the second offense and five days for the third offense.

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 willful 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 counsel.

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, MP3 players etc from the time they arrive at school to the time they leave at the end of the day. There are times during class when use of electronic devices is permitted by the teacher. Such devices are to be left in lockers or in school bags and be out of sight for the day. Students violating this policy will have their devices confiscated for five school days (full days) not including weekends. 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, MSN, MySpace or chat rooms 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 abuse policy of DCHS is entitled Towards Healthy Relationships–Protecting Teen Welfare and Reporting Teen Abuse. Students and parents may access copies in the office, vice principals office, library, guidance office or online. This policy is reviewed with students early in the school year.

Student Dress:

Dress must be modest, consistent with a Biblical lifestyle, demonstrate respect for one's sexuality, not create discomfort among fellow students and staff, and reflect the recognition that school has a focussed and particular purpose which is different from, for example, socializing with friends on the weekend. Expectations:

- 1. Shorts and skirts must be as long as the fingertips as they reach down the thigh.**
- 2. Logos or wording which is suggestive or offensive, or advocates a product or lifestyle considered offensive by staff are not permitted.**
- 3. Hats, toques or other forms of head wear are not permitted in school or class trips.**
- 4. Pants must be worn up around the waist so that underwear is covered completely. Pants with rips and holes are not permitted.**
- 5. Tops must be long enough to touch the top of your pants or skirt when your arms are raised.**
- 6. The straps of tank tops must be two inches in width.**
- 7. No spiked jewellery.**
- 8. Shoes must be worn at all times.**
- 9. No logos or printing on the back of pants.**
- 10. No pyjama type clothing.**

These expectations apply from the time students enter school in the morning until they leave for the ride home, all school outings and events including those that are sponsored by Student Parliament. Students violating these expectations will receive a detention for the first offense and will be suspended for one day for subsequent offenses.

Students are expected to wear gowns during the graduation ceremony. The purpose of this policy is to reduce the high cost incurred by the "need" to purchase different outfits for the grade twelve prom and for the graduation ceremony.

Extra Curricular:

Durham offers a wide variety of extra curricular activities. They are part of the "spice of life" at school and allow students to use their gifts and talents in special ways. Activities include many sports, drama, yearbook, Student Council and many 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 9, 2011 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 9, 2011 if this is your wish.

revised August 8, 2011