

BLACKBURN STUDY CENTER

2026-2027

Family Handbook



Blackburn Study Center Family Handbook

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A CLASSICAL AND CHRISTIAN HOME SCHOOL STUDY CENTER

Vision

Our goal is to glorify God by equipping students with the tools necessary for a lifetime of learning and encouraging them to live and think within a Christian worldview grounded in the Old and New Testament Scriptures.

Mission Statement

Our mission is to support and enhance the efforts of home schooling families by providing classical and Christian tutorial services emphasizing the methodology of the trivium, the educational foundation of our Western culture.

Christ-Centered

In all its levels and teaching, Blackburn Study Center seeks to:

1. Teach all subjects as parts of an integrated whole with the Scriptures at the center, helping students to love God with all their minds and hearts.
2. Provide a clear example of biblical Christian life through our staff and Board members.
3. Encourage every child to begin and develop his relationship with God the Father through Jesus Christ.

Classical

In all its levels and teaching, Blackburn Study Center seeks to:

1. Emphasize grammar, dialectic, and rhetoric in all subjects. (See definitions below.)

Grammar: The fundamental facts and rules of each subject, and basic data that exhibit those rules.

Dialectic: The ordered relationship of particulars in each subject

Rhetoric: The coherent, articulate expression of truths learned in the grammar and dialectic stages.

2. Encourage every student to develop a love for learning and live up to his academic potential.
3. Provide an orderly atmosphere conducive to the attainment of the above goals.

EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY

1. God enjoins parents, not the Church or State to “bring children up in the training and admonition of the Lord.” (Ephesians 6:4.) Therefore, we seek to honor and assist, not usurp, the role of parents in teaching their children.
2. We believe that God’s character is revealed in His Word and in every facet of creation. Therefore, we teach that all knowledge is interrelated and instructs us about God Himself.
3. God commands us to love Him with our minds as well as with our hearts. (Matthew 22:37.) Therefore, we seek to individually challenge children at all levels and teach them how to learn, through the centuries old classical method.
4. We want to help parents teach their children that all they do should be done “heartily, as unto the Lord.” (Colossians 3:23). Therefore, we seek to encourage quality academic work and maintain high standards of conduct.
5. Above all, our highest goal is to provide a rigorous educational environment that challenges our students to live and think from a Christian worldview.

STATEMENT OF FAITH

The following statements are the basic elements of Christianity that will be taught, and which the policies and practices of Blackburn Study Center shall reflect, at all grade levels.

1. We believe the Bible is the Word of God, inspired by the Holy Spirit, inerrant in the original writings, infallible and the final authority in faith and life.
2. We believe that there is one living and true God, eternally existent in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. We believe the God we serve is the creator and sustainer of all things, and the source of all truth. He is holy, righteous, good, loving and full of mercy.
3. We believe that God upholds, disposes and governs all creatures, actions and things, and that God, in His ordinary providence, makes use of means, yet is free to work without, above or against them at His pleasure.
4. We believe that because of Adam's sin all mankind is in rebellion against God. For the salvation of such lost and sinful men, regeneration by the Holy Spirit is absolutely necessary.
5. We believe in the true deity and full humanity of our Lord Jesus Christ. We believe in His virgin birth, in His sinless life, in His miracles, in His vicarious and atoning death through His shed blood, in His bodily resurrection, in His ascension to the right hand of the Father and in His personal return in power and glory.
6. We believe that salvation is by grace through faith alone, and that good works, done in obedience to God's commandments, are the fruits and evidences of a true and lively faith.
7. We believe in the present ministry of the Holy Spirit, by Whose indwelling the Christian is enabled to live a godly life.
8. We believe in the resurrection of both the saved and the lost; those who are saved to the resurrection of life and those that are lost to the resurrection of damnation.

We (I) acknowledge and agree that all classes offered by Blackburn Study Center will be taught in a manner consistent with Blackburn Study Center's Statement of Faith. (Signed by both parents.)

Father's Signature Date

Mother's Signature Date

Are there any points in Blackburn Study Center's Statement of Faith that are inconsistent with your convictions?

_____.

If so, please explain:

STATEMENT OF NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

Blackburn Study Center is a private educational institution. It does not discriminate on the basis of age, race, color, sex, physical disability, or national or ethnic origin in the administration of its educational policies, admission policies and other administrative policies.

COMMUNICATION POLICY

We consider it a great privilege to assist families in educating their children. We are committed to upholding and supporting parental authority in the lives of students. We also recognize that ours is a learning community, where families are working together to fulfill shared goals. These relationships require, and we strongly encourage, prompt and clear communication.

In the event of conflict, communication should follow the biblical standards set forth in Matthew 18 and James 3. In all matters, conflict should be handled discreetly and carefully, while believing and speaking the best about each other. The failure to follow those biblical standards can be deeply harmful to individuals and institutions, and may result in action by Blackburn Study Center, up to and including expulsion, at the Board's discretion.

Please respect the time of Board members and tutors at the study center or at home. If you have a question or idea that you would like to discuss with a Board member or tutor, **please make initial contact via e-mail** even if you see that Board member or tutor at the study center that day. Initiating the contact by e-mail respects Board members' and tutors' time, provides an opportunity for the entire Board to consider the question, and ensures the question will receive a more thoughtful response. If a phone consultation is necessary, please e-mail to schedule a mutually convenient time

- **Parents to Tutors:** If an issue should arise regarding individual tutor rules or procedures, the parent should initially e-mail the tutor their concerns. If a meeting is necessary, please e-mail and ask when a mutually convenient time may be scheduled. This should be done prior to discussing the matter with those in authority over the tutor (the administrators and Board).
- **Parents to Administrator:** If an issue should arise concerning school rules, procedures, school programs, finances, facilities, curriculum, or tutors, parents are encouraged to send an e-mail to Blackburn Study Center's Administrators. Parents may also submit matters by e-mail to Board members for consideration at regularly scheduled Board meetings (directorsbsc@groups.io).
- **Tutors to Parents:** If an issue should arise concerning a student's learning or behavior, tutors should e-mail the parents directly before discussing with the Board. If a meeting is necessary, the parties should e-mail and ask when a mutually convenient time may be scheduled. Generally, tutors will attempt to respond to parental concerns via e-mail within 72 hours.
- **Tutors to Students:** Outside of the classroom, tutors will only contact students via e-mail and a carbon copy must be sent to the parents (see tutor/student relationships section that follows).

Please note that no meetings should go on at the center without prior consent from both parties. This is disruptive to the academic program.

TUTOR/STUDENT RELATIONSHIPS

Tutor and student relationships should establish and maintain professionalism. The tutor's authority will be maintained as described in the Family Handbook Student Code of Conduct and Communication Policy.

Students should not communicate with tutors by phone, texting, or through social media. If a tutor agrees, students may communicate with the tutor by e-mail. Parents must be copied on such student-tutor e-mails.

Physical contact should be limited to socially and age-appropriate greetings, e.g. handshake, high five, fist bump.

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

Although parents of Blackburn students have employed tutors to help meet their goals, they retain the primary responsibility for the education and upbringing of their children. *Blackburn Study Center strongly recommends and encourages close parental involvement.* Each family is expected to participate in the following ways:

- Pray for children, their tutors, and the direction of their education.
- Oversee your children's class work, and work with them on any assignments to be completed at home.
- Provide diligent instruction on non-study center days and in the additional subjects that comprise the balance of your children's curricula.
- Attend all parent-tutor conferences. Informal conferences may be held if necessary at the request of the parent or tutor.
- Be aware of your child's progress, both through daily work and tutor's comments (iGrade/email), and encourage his/her academic growth.
- Read and respond (when necessary) to all e-mail and paperwork sent home by Blackburn Study Center. This is essential to the efficient running of the Study Center.
- Serve as Parent of the Day on a rotational basis.
- Communicate your ideas for improvement. We want to hear from you!
- Volunteer at the study center when needed.

PARENT OF THE DAY RESPONSIBILITIES

As the Parent of the Day (POD), you will be in a position of authority over the children. Your role is to encourage students to follow the Code of Conduct. This includes encouraging the students to walk (not run) in the building, pick up after themselves, speak with kindness and respect, treat the facility with care, and be helpful to you when asked.

The POD must arrive at the study center at 7:30 a.m. on his/her scheduled day.

The POD will stand at the front door, upon arrival, and be ready to open it and assist children and parents as they enter the building.

While most of your time will be spent monitoring study hall, during class time, the POD will be available to assist the tutors as necessary (e.g., helping students, making copies, assisting in discipline, relaying messages, gathering supplies, etc.). In general, the POD's responsibility is to facilitate and maximize the tutors' instruction time. The POD should encourage students to work quietly on schoolwork during study hall. Students are not permitted to chat or play with toys or games during study hall.

The POD is responsible for assisting the on-site Administrator all day and is required to stay until every child is retrieved after regularly scheduled classes end.

The POD's help is also required during lunch times. The POD will assist in keeping order while the children are eating and/or playing. When weather permits, the POD may also supervise the children playing outside. Other duties during and after lunch include: cleaning tables, sweeping floors and cleaning the tutors', boys', and girls' bathrooms.

The week prior to your scheduled POD service, you will receive an e-mail reminder with a tentative schedule for Monday and Wednesday.

Please remember that if we each do our part to keep the facility clean, we can keep costs low by not hiring additional cleaning staff. Thank you for serving as Parent of the Day.

All required Clearances must be on file with Blackburn Study Center prior to service as POD; please plan accordingly. If your Clearances are not provided to Blackburn prior to service, then you will be required to arrange for a substitute POD.

January 26, 2025

MANDATORY CLEARANCES

THANK YOU for volunteering for Blackburn Study Center! In order to comply with Act 153, the Center is asking you to provide the following clearances. After obtaining your clearances, please mail them to Pilar Rodriguez (320 Eagle Drive Cranberry, PA 16066) or put them in her mailbox at the Center. Any questions can be also directed to her at blackburnscfinance@gmail.com.

Clearances are held on file and are valid for 5 years.

If the individual has **been a continuous resident of Pennsylvania for the past 10 years**, the following items are needed:

- **Pennsylvania State Police Clearance**
 - Apply online at <https://epatch.state.pa.us/>
 - **Please note, the **Record Check Status Detail** is **NOT** the actual clearance. Applicants must click on the words **“Certification Form”** in the middle of the screen in order to view and print the actual clearance certificate. The actual Criminal Record Check clearance should have the seal as a watermark on this form.*
- **Pennsylvania Child Abuse History Clearance**
 - Apply online at <https://www.compass.state.pa.us/cwis/public/home>

If the individual has **NOT been a continuous resident of Pennsylvania for the past 10 years**, the following item is ALSO needed:

- **Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) report-PDE**
 - If a volunteer has not been a resident of Pennsylvania for the previous 10 years, but obtained their FBI certification at any time since establishing residency, they may provide a copy of the certification and are not required to obtain any additional FBI certification. If they have not already obtained a FBI clearance then they should follow the information below:
 - [Visit the IdentoGO website to register online](#). **The Service Code for Blackburn is 1KG756.**
 - After online registration, proceed to a IdentoGO fingerprint facility. IdentoGO facilities and hours of operation can be found at uenroll.identogo.com.
 - For FAQs or additional information on fingerprinting services, locations, or scheduling an appointment, visit the [Idemia supplier website](#).
 - Instructions for when you receive the e-mail to get a copy of your FBI Clearance: **You should only access the link from a device that will allow you to download, print, or save your results at that time.** You may access this “unofficial” copy of the results letter securely by clicking on the link in your e-mail and then enter the requested identifiers. **Please note this link is available only for ONE-time access only, and once accessed it will no longer be valid.**
 - Blackburn will reimburse you for the fees required for the clearances. Just submit a receipt for payment to Pilar Rodriguez (see address above).

If you have any questions, please send them to Pilar Rodriguez.

STUDENT RULES OF CONDUCT

This is the basic code of conduct that Blackburn Study Center requires all students to obey.

1. Students are expected to observe Christian standards of behavior and conversation. For example, students must speak honestly, respect their peers and submit to authority.
2. Prompt and cheerful obedience is expected. Talking back or arguing with tutors, administrator or the Parent of the Day is not permitted.
3. Students must comply with the dress code in all respects.
4. In order to avoid litter and distraction, chewing gum and electronic musical devices or games are not permitted.
5. Students are expected to be aware of and avoid the off-limit areas of the church building. Students should not play on or around cars in the parking lot.
6. Running is not allowed in the church building.
7. Students are expected to treat all class materials and facilities with respect and care.
8. Students are expected to treat one another with kindness and respect. Teasing, criticizing, name-calling and other forms of verbal or physical abuse are not permitted.
9. Students are expected to treat prayer and class discussion with proper reverence. Jokes, songs, or behavior that trivialize or exhibit disrespect towards God are not permitted.
10. Public displays of affection in the context of boy/girl relationships are not permitted at Blackburn Study Center. Jokes and teasing on this subject are not permitted.
11. Any missed work due to absences should be completed in a timely manner as set forth in the Home Assignment Policy.
12. Students may not speak out of turn.
13. Clowning around and other forms of disruptive class behavior are prohibited.
14. It is expected that students will work diligently, participate in class discussions and concentrate on their work while in school.
15. It is expected that students will complete all class work with integrity, including, but not limited to, honesty in taking exams at home or at the study center and avoiding plagiarism.
16. Students accept responsibility to complete all homework assignments in a timely manner.
17. Students recognize that they are to be held responsible for their conduct, both in action and attitude, by their parents, tutors and those in authority at Blackburn Study Center.
18. Electronic devices (with the exceptions listed on in our Electronics Policy) are not permitted at Blackburn Study Center. If cell phones must be brought to the Study Center, they must be turned off and stored in a cell phone locker while on the premises. Any phones or other devices found being used will be confiscated and turned over to the Administrator. Please see the Student Electronic Device Policy for complete details.

STUDENT DRESS CODE

Purpose: To create an environment in which students can focus on learning while giving each child a neat, modest appearance.

FOR ALL:

Not Permitted for any aspects of the Dress Code:

- Tight clothing
- Denim or denim looking style or fabric
- Fleece or fleece-looking fabrics
- Jersey or athletic fabric (jersey exception for maxi skirts)
- Velvet, sweat, cargo, carpenter, yoga, skinny jeans, joggers, or athletic pants
- Tattoos or body piercing, with the exception of one pair of earrings (girls only)
- Open toed shoes or strapped heels, platform or high heel shoes, laced or slip-on sneakers or athletic-looking shoes, or boots.
- Coats/jackets or hats during chapel or classes

Pants:

Colors: Solid navy blue, black, gray, or khaki

Style: Corduroy, cotton twill/blend or dress slack material.

Fit: Must be worn at the waist level (not at the hips).

Reminder: Tight clothing of any variety is **not** permitted.

*Can you pinch 1" of fabric at the thigh without stretching or pulling? **If not, the pants are too tight.***

Belts:

Solid color black, brown, or navy belt must be worn with any bottom with belt loops

Shirts:

Colors: Solid navy, blue, black, gray, white, or blue pinstriped

Style: Oxford or polo shirts

Long-, short-, or $\frac{3}{4}$ length-sleeved shirts

Must have collars (pointy, Peter Pan, or Oxford-styled collars are allowed)

Must be plain (no ruffles, lace, trim, etc.)

Fit: Must be tucked in at all times.

Must reflect the dress code, neat, not too tight or oversized

Sweaters:

Colors: Solid white, black, gray, or blue

Style: Crew neck, half-zip, or cardigan

Fit: Dress Code approved shirt must be worn underneath

Must reflect the dress code, neat, not too tight or oversized

Socks:

Colors: Solid white, navy, black, gray, or tan socks

Shoes:

Colors: Solid black, navy, gray, or brown with solid black, navy, gray, brown, or white soles

Style: Closed toe and heel

Please make sure shoes are at or below mid-ankle

Hair: Neat & clean, and out of the face. Natural color only.

For Girls Only:

Skirts:

Colors: Solid navy, blue, black, gray, or khaki

Fit: Must be worn at the waist level (not at the hips)

Must cover the knees

No ruffled, lacy, velvet, chiffon, or eyelet fabric permitted

Jersey fabric permitted for maxi skirt

Tight clothing of any variety is not permitted.

*Can you pinch 1" of fabric at the thigh without stretching or pulling? **If not, the skirt is too tight.***

Other:

Light, natural-looking make-up/nail polish may be worn with parental permission. Unnatural makeup or nail polish is not permitted

Solid white, dark, or neutral-colored stockings or socks

For Boys Only:

Shorts: Seasonally from 1st day of classes - October 31 and the month of May

Colors: Solid navy blue, black, gray, or khaki

Style: Cotton twill or dress fabric only

Fit: Must be worn at the waist level (not at the hips)

Hair: Should not be in the eyes, touch collars, or cover ears (no ponytails, buns, or hair accessories)

Dress Code Discipline Policy

Please note that, subject to the discretion of the On-Site Administrator, deviations from the dress code will generally be addressed in the following manner:

First time violations, with no other violation of the code of conduct (arguing or disrespect shown) will result in a warning, write-up in the student's record and an e-mail to the parents. Subsequent violations will result in the student's removal from class until a parent can bring the proper clothing. Additionally, the incident will be recorded in the student's record and an e-mail will be sent to his parents.

Please bring any clothing choice that you are unsure of to the Blackburn On-Site Administrator for approval.

DISCIPLINE POLICY

We will seek to provide an environment where students are encouraged and challenged to exemplify Christian behavior. It is very important that our children feel safe and secure in a loving and nurturing environment. Actions that jeopardize the safety and well-being of students and staff must be dealt with firmly and expediently.

At Blackburn Study Center, discipline will consist of restitution, apologies (public and private), swift and measured punishment (corporal punishment is left to parental discretion; it will never be administered by the tutor or the POD) and restoration of fellowship. Parents will be made aware of disciplinary action as soon as possible after each incident, as well as any other concerns or warnings given to a student by a tutor or POD.

The tutor will carry out the majority of day-to-day discipline. There are instances, however, where a stronger warning or more severe penalty is needed. The following offenses may necessitate such action:

1. Disrespect shown to tutor or POD;
2. Dishonesty in any situation relating to BSC activities, classes or assignments, including but not limited to lying, cheating or stealing;
3. Rebellion, e.g., outright disobedience in response to instructions;
4. Fighting, e.g., striking in anger with the intention to harm another;
5. Unkind, obscene, vulgar, or profane language as well as using the Lord's name in vain.
6. Continued disruptive class behavior.

If any of the above actions occur, the student will be sent from the classroom to the administrator and will not return for the remainder of that class. At the completion of class, an apology from the student to the offended tutor will be required. Restitution, parental attendance of classes with the child, or other measures deemed appropriate may be requested. In severe cases, where there is no change in the student's actions or assistance from the parents, the child will be expelled for the remainder of the academic year.

1. Suspension: The Board will normally follow the protocol below. In cases where change is evident and the student appears repentant, exceptions are possible. The Board will determine in its sole discretion (in consultation with the tutor(s)), if an exception is to be made. Appeals for exceptions will not be recognized.

FIRST OFFENSE - Warning, restitution/apologies, suspension for one class day. (Missed work must be turned in within one day of suspension or a grade of zero will be recorded.)

SECOND OFFENSE - Restitution/apologies, suspension for two class days. (Work must be turned in within two days of returning to class or a grade of zero will be recorded.)

THIRD OFFENSE - Restitution/apologies, suspension for four class days. (Work must be turned in within two days of returning to class or a grade of zero will be recorded.)

FOURTH OFFENSE - Student will be expelled for the remainder of the academic year.

2. Expulsion: We realize that expelling a student is a very serious matter and should always be carefully dealt with on a case-by-case basis. Repentance, restitution (repairing damage through work, apologies, etc.) and forgiveness are fundamental to our discipline policy. However, should a student and his parents fail to eliminate behavioral problems before a fourth offense occurs, the student will be expelled.

3. Serious Misconduct: Should a student commit an act with such serious consequences that the Board deems it necessary, the protocol defined above may be bypassed and suspension or expulsion imposed immediately. Examples of such serious misconduct may include, without limitation: acts that seriously endanger the safety of other students or staff members; gross violence/vandalism to the facilities; violations of law; or other deliberate acts in clear contradiction of Scriptural commands that threaten serious harm to others. Students may be also subject to discipline for serious misconduct that occurs after Blackburn Study Center hours.

4. Re-admission: Should an expelled student desire to be re-admitted to Blackburn Study Center at a later date, the Board will make its decision based upon the student's attitude and circumstances at the time of re-application.

Plagiarism: Any and all incidents of plagiarism will be reported to the administration. Student will receive an automatic zero for the assignment and suspension for one class day.

FOOD ALLERGY/MEDICATION POLICY

1. Your child must have all of his appropriate medications on his person at all times. You will be solely responsible to determine whether your child needs to have appropriate medications at Blackburn Study Center. If so, you must ensure that the medications are on your child's person at all times while at Blackburn Study Center. We suggest a fanny pack to accomplish this. For these purposes, a backpack/schoolbag will not be acceptable, as they are often times not near the student.
2. Blackburn Study Center is not responsible to store medications of any sort on the premises.
3. In the event of an emergency medical situation involving your child, we expect that a BSC administrator or tutor may respond in a "Good Samaritan" fashion by first calling 911, and second by attempting to administer the medications found on your child's person.
4. Blackburn Study Center will alert tutors that certain students who have food allergies will be carrying the medications on their person, and only on their person, in the event of an emergency.

PHYSICAL PREMISES

In order to offer affordable tuition, Blackburn Study Center leases space from a host church. Maintaining a good working relationship with the host church requires cooperation from Blackburn Study Center families and students. Specifically, we request the following from families in order to help us be good tenants:

- Call the Blackburn cell phone if you need to reach someone at the study center. 412.377.1675
- Always enter the study center using the doors on the upper campus.
- Visitors are permitted only on Wednesdays; they must adhere to BSC dress code and may only visit during lunch and/or breaks. All visitors should request visitation permission from the On-Site Administrator before coming to the study center.
- The North Park Church kitchen is off limits as are the appliances in the tutor area.
- Fundraising by students is prohibited on the physical premises.
- Drop-off takes place between 7:40 and 7:55. Please adhere to "in" and "out" direction of parking lots. Parents may pull up behind the lineup of cars and let out students. If drivers want to walk in students, the vehicle must be parked in a marked parking space.
- Pick-up – Parents/guardians must arrive five minutes before the end of classes and adhere to "in" and "out" direction of parking lots. Park in a marked parking space. Upon departure of the building at dismissal, students are the responsibility of their parents/guardians. Do not allow children to mingle/play around parked cars. If you are going to be late for pick-up, you must notify the On-Site Administrator of your expected time of arrival, and she will send your student(s) to study hall while they wait to be retrieved. All parents late by more than 10 minutes will be charged \$10.

STUDENT ATTENDANCE POLICY

A student enrolled at Blackburn Study Center is expected to be present and on time every day the Study Center is in session.

Blackburn Study Center: Doors will be open at 7:40 a.m. for student arrival. Chapel begins at 7:55 a.m.

1. Short-term Absences: If a student needs to be absent from the Study Center for one to two class days, for any reason, the parents should contact all tutors and the On-Site Administrator as soon as possible. (On days when a student wakes up sick, this should be done by 7:45 a.m.)
2. Long-term Absences: If a student needs to be absent for three or more consecutive class days, the parents should notify the Study Center in writing explaining the circumstances. When extended absences are voluntary (i.e., not due to emergency or illness), students have one week upon return to complete all make-up work or as specified by the tutor(s). There will be no extensions for papers and projects assigned prior to the voluntary absence.
3. Make-up work: Students or their parents should discuss arrangements with the tutor and take the initiative in completing the missed work.
4. Special requests: Assignment sheets and handouts may not be requested prior to the normal issuance date. Families should contact another family to arrange for collection and/or to make their own copies of missed handouts. Assignment sheets are available on a timely basis on Blackburn's website.
5. Tardiness: Students are required to arrive and be ready to begin Chapel and announcements promptly at 7:55 a.m. The Study Center will open by 7:40 a.m. to allow students to arrive and complete any necessary activities to be ready on time.
6. Planned Early Dismissal/Late Arrival: On a day when a student needs to leave the center early or arrive late due to an appointment, the parents should notify the On-Site Administrator by 7:45 a.m.
7. Grade 11 & 12 Drivers: Parents who wish to permit their Grade 11 or 12 student(s) to leave the Blackburn premises during lunch, study hall, and/or free period must request and complete a permission form from the On-site Administrator. The executed form granting said permission will be kept on file in the On-site Administrator's office. It is the responsibility of the parent to discuss with their Grade 11 or 12 student(s) the rules that their family has for leaving Blackburn during the day. A student must inform the On-site Administrator each time he or she leaves and returns to Blackburn during the day.

HOME ASSIGNMENTS

Blackburn Study Center tutors will give home assignments to their students to reinforce concepts taught in the classroom. The principal reasons for home assignments are as follows:

- Students often need some amount of extra practice in new or specific concepts, skills, or facts. In certain subjects, regular practice at home may be necessary for mastery. Therefore, the tutor may assign homework to allow for necessary practice.
- Repeated, short periods of practice or study of new information are often a better way to learn than one long period of study.
- Home assignments enable parents to monitor the current topics of study in class.

LANGUAGE FOR STANDARD HEADINGS

Standard Headings

Blackburn Study Center uses a standard MLA heading for all students when creating a paper as follows:

(On top left of first page)

Name

Class

Date

Centered Title of Paper or Assignment

One inch margins shall be used. 12-point font is required if typed (no script-style fonts and tutor reserves the right to specify a required font). MLA formatting shall be used for all citations. Pagination must begin on the second page and thereafter with last name and page number in the upper right corner.

CLASS PREPARATION, GRADING, AND AUDITING POLICIES

Classes

Blackburn Study Center named classes are referenced as follows:

- Dialectic (Grades 7/8 and 8/9)
- Pre-Rhetoric (Grade 9/10)
- Rhetoric (Grades 10-12 or 11/12)

Grades 3, 3/4, 4/5, and 5/6 are grammar level and are not considered named classes for purposes of this handbook.

Grade 6/7 is sometimes afforded the privileges of grammar level classes and sometimes the privileges of named classes per the guidelines of the Family and Tutor Handbooks.

Assignment Sheets

Tutors will send assignment sheets to assigned “approvers” who will coordinate and then send the compiled assignments to the families via e-mail.

If a tutor makes revisions to the assignment sheets after they have been sent to students by the approvers, tutors will send updates directly to the families. All in-class verbal changes must be followed by an e-mail documenting the change. Tutors, not approvers, will send e-mails with such revisions.

Grades

Parents of grammar-aged and Grade 6/7 children will have access to their child's grades or tutor comments via iGrade. Tutors of grammar stage and Grade 6/7 students may opt out of recording grades; however, if no grades are recorded, then work will be corrected, commented, and returned to students and a comment will be written in iGrade each semester for those students. (Art tutors may simply write comments on artwork that is submitted and do not need to utilize iGrade).

Students in named classes (Dialectic, Pre-Rhetoric, Rhetoric) receive semester and year-end final grades via iGrade. At weeks 16 and 32 of the year tutors will post comments on iGrade if there is something they believe the parents should be aware of. If no comments are posted then parents should assume that the student has made adequate progress and there are no negative issues for the parents to address with the child. Generally, percentage grades are given, with parents being responsible for assigning the letter grading scale.

In order to receive a grade from a Blackburn class, students are required to participate in and turn in all assignments from tutors.

If parents want their Dialectic, Pre-Rhetoric, or Rhetoric student to be able to "opt out" of assignments, parents must request permission for student to audit and, if permission is given, then the student will be listed as auditing the class and no grades will be listed in their iGrade account for that class. The tuition for audited classes is the same as regular classes. (See Auditing a Class below.)

While we are a service to home educators, and desire parents to be in charge of their child's education, Blackburn's Dialectic, Pre-Rhetoric, or Rhetoric courses must not be depreciated by students selecting which assignments to complete. In order to maintain a high standard and to have meaningful grade percentages, the service offered to parents of Blackburn Dialectic, Pre-Rhetoric, or Rhetoric students requires completion of all tutor assignments. Additionally, to avoid grade inflation and students passing to a high academic level without being properly prepared, there will be no participation grades given, except in music or a foreign language.

Unprepared students

Blackburn's tutors will not notify parents if a child is unprepared or misses an assignment. Parents of grammar and Grade 6/7 children will receive input through the iGrade program. The message to parents is that we have high standards and we assume that they do too. Students in Dialectic, Pre-Rhetoric, or Rhetoric classes receive final grades after the completion of each semester. Neither evaluations nor grades should be a surprise to parents.

Unprepared students will not be permitted to hold back the rest of the class. For instance, if one student has not brought to class any necessary materials, the rest of the class will proceed as scheduled. In some classes, tutors assign activities that require the students to know material in order to participate meaningfully. Tutors are encouraged to send unprepared students to study hall.

Parents of students in the grammar stage and Grade 6/7 are asked to e-mail the tutor in advance if a student will not be completing an assignment. For instance, parents may write, "We are handling this assignment at home." This will provide information to the tutor so he or she is not surprised.

Auditing a Class

The tutor of the class as well as Blackburn administration (staff or board) must approve the request to audit. Full payment for the audited class is required. No class work or class participation will be evaluated by the tutor, and no grade for the student will be provided for the audited class. There will be no special treatment for the auditing student. The only requirement of the student is attendance in the class. If the student does not attend class, he will receive a NG (no grade) instead of an AU (audit).

ADVANCEMENT POLICY

Blackburn Study Center generally encourages parents to assert their authority as the primary educators of home schooled students. Our goal is to supplement, not supplant the nurture and instruction provided to students by their parents.

Among other things, home schooling parents must evaluate and make decisions concerning their students' progress. Blackburn Study Center will endeavor to accommodate the decisions that parents make concerning their students' progress. However, if a student is not progressing in his mastery of a subject, the pace and quality of instruction can be adversely affected, frustrating the student, his tutor and classmates.

If by the end of the school year a student has earned less than 70% in a given subject, we will strongly recommend that he not advance to the next level, unless he receives additional instruction during the summer. With respect to grammar stage and Grade 6/7 students, parents will be notified of a lack of progress even though grades are not necessarily recorded on a percentage basis. If the student advances to the next level and is struggling to keep up with the class, he will be moved to a more appropriate level in order not to embarrass the student and/or impede the progress of the other students.

Math students in Pre-Algebra or higher must have a 70% or higher by Oct. 31 to stay in a math class.

All math students must have a final grade of 70% or higher to move on to the next level math class.

Any student who enrolls in Pre-Algebra, Algebra 1, Geometry, Algebra 2, Pre-Calculus, or Chemistry who has not taken a math class at BSC must take a proficiency test (offered by BSC in May and/or August) to qualify for the class. In its discretion, the Board reserves the right to require proficiency testing for any math or science class offered by BSC.

MATH/SCIENCE CONNECTION

In order to progress into **Chemistry**, a student **has to have completed Algebra 1**. So, it is important to be aware of your student's math progress as he ages. This is especially important if your student is on the younger end of the dual-grade class. If you desire for your child to take advanced science at Blackburn, he should fall into this pattern:

Grade	Math and Science Combo
6/7	Saxon 76 (or equivalent) and General Science
7/8	Pre-Algebra and Physical Science
8/9	Algebra 1 and Biology
9/10	Geometry and Chemistry
10/11	Algebra 2 and Physics
11/12	Pre-Calculus and Advanced Science
12	Calculus and Advanced Science

***Astronomy** - Astronomy, when available, is taught every other year when Physics and Biology are offered, and employs elements of mathematics, physics, and other scientific disciplines. It is a rigorous course best suited for: 8th graders who plan on public school for grades 9-12; 10th graders who want to wait for Physics in 12th grade; 11th graders who do **not** want Physics in high school; and 12th graders who have already completed Bio, Chem, Physics, and Adv Chem

STUDENT ELECTRONIC DEVICE POLICY

Electronic Devices (including but not limited to smart watches, E-readers, iPads, laptops, video games, tablets) are not permitted at Blackburn Study Center.

Dialectic, Pre-Rhetoric, and Rhetoric level students may use calculators that meet the standard for SAT exams (e.g., no QWERTY keyboards or PDAs) in math classes.

Possession of cell phones by students at Blackburn Study Center is prohibited. If a cell phone is discovered, it will be confiscated, and the student will be suspended for a minimum of one day. The Board reserves the right to impose harsher penalties in accordance with the Discipline Policy as applicable. If parents determine that their student must bring a cell phone to Blackburn, it must be labeled with family name and put in the phone storage provided by Mrs. Roman upon arrival. It must remain in storage until departure. This is a no-tolerance policy. For example, if a student forgets that his phone is in his pocket, he will be suspended. All tutors have cell phones in case of emergency.

Rhetoric Students in 11th-12th grade may bring a laptop to Blackburn to use during study hall. They may have earphones to listen to a lecture, but they may not play any games, educational or otherwise, listen to music, or watch recreational videos. If that kind of work is to be done, then the student will do that at home. The only kinds of work that may be done are written assignments and listening to lectures. The student will sit near the study hall monitor with the screen positioned in such a way that the study hall monitor may easily see it.

Any prohibited electronic device will be kept in the Administrator's office until a parent retrieves it. Blackburn Study Center is not responsible for any electronic devices brought to the Center. Violation of this policy is considered a violation of the student Code of Conduct and subject to Blackburn Study Center's discipline policy.

KNIFE POLICY

Knives are not necessary at the study center. Please know that if your student brings a knife out of his or her pocket, sock, belt, book bag, or any other place, for any reason, it will be permanently confiscated, and he or she will be suspended.

CLASSROOM MEDIA POLICY

Any media shown or used in class at BSC should abide by all rules of the Student Code of Conduct. Additionally, no R rated media or portions of media may be shown. Tutors will include on assignments information about any media being used or shown in class. Media, videos or movies should not be shared with students outside of the class or outside of instructional purposes without prior board approval.

CLASS MATERIALS

Parents are responsible for purchasing for their student(s) all class materials from the book lists and curriculum lists published each year.

A LA CARTE CLASSES

We strongly recommend that students enroll for all classes offered by Blackburn Study Center for the following reasons:

- As students progress through the learning stages, they will benefit from having been exposed to the full range of classes in previous years.
- Tutorial instruction will be more “seamless” and interactive from year to year if all or most students have taken the full range of classes in previous years.
- It fosters the development of a learning community consisting of entire families who are pursuing classical and Christian education.
- It reduces the administrative burden on Blackburn Study Center and is more economical for BSC families.

However, Blackburn Study Center exists in the first instance to serve home schooling families, and we presume that parents are able to make the best decisions concerning their children’s education. Accordingly, in the event that parents want to enroll their student(s) in less than all classes offered by Blackburn, our offerings are available on an *a la carte* basis.

For all subjects, students who are enrolled in the full range of Blackburn’s classes will be given priority over students who wish to take a class on an *a la carte* basis. Classes which have not yet reached capacity will remain open to full-time applicants through July 1. Part-time applicants who may lose their spot in a class will be notified and given the option of switching to full-time. After July 1, the open spots will be filled on a first-come, first-served basis without respect to full-time or part-time status. In other words, after July 1, no part-time student will lose his spot in a class even if another student wishes to enroll on a full-time basis.

STUDY HALLS AND FEES

Study halls are available for students who don’t take all the courses available during the Blackburn day. Students who carry at least four of the five regular day class periods are considered full-time and do not have to pay for their study hall. Otherwise, study halls during the regular day of classes carry the following fees: \$110/year for a class that meets on both Mondays and Wednesdays, \$55/year for a class that meets once a week, and \$30/year for a class that meets every other week.

During after-hours classes (grammar/math), a study hall is offered free of charge ONLY to students who are siblings of a child in one of the math or grammar classes or someone who is part of a regularly-scheduled carpool with a child taking one of these classes. Families cannot pay to have their child opt into this study hall.

ADMISSIONS PROCESS

Re-enrollment forms are accepted from current Blackburn families until the last Wednesday of February each year. Additionally, siblings of current Blackburn families may enroll at the same time as current students by completing a sibling application and being added to the current student’s enrollment form. Each re-enrolled student and sibling are required to pay a non-refundable \$100 re-enrollment fee. Families who wait to re-enroll after May 15 are required to pay an additional \$100 per student on top of their re-enrollment fee.

Applications are accepted from new families on the date of the first information meeting and will begin being processed the day after the re-enrollment deadline for current families. New families are required to submit completed applications with a \$150.00 (per student) non-refundable application fee. Applications are accepted in the order received. Generally, once a class reaches fifteen students, the class is closed, and future applicants are placed on a waiting list.

Interviews may be conducted for all applicants, even if the class is full, in case of an opening. The family interview will be scheduled for parents and student(s) with Blackburn Study Center board members and/or administrators. The Board will notify each family of the decision to accept/decline admission based on the application, interview, and class openings.

January 26, 2026

2026-2027 CALENDAR
BLACKBURN STUDY CENTER

Thursday, September 10th	Orientation Night
Monday, September 14th	First Day of Classes
November 23 and 25	Thanksgiving Break
December 21 and 23 December 28 and 30	Christmas Break
February 15 and 17	Mid-Winter Break
March 29 and 31	Easter Break
May 26, 2027	Last Day of Classes

SNOW CANCELLATION POLICY

1. With respect to cancellations due to snow and inclement weather, Blackburn Study Center will follow the decision of North Allegheny School District.
2. If North Allegheny School District delays classes due to cold weather, Blackburn Study Center will be open as usual with no delay.
3. If North Allegheny School District delays classes for two hours and the roads are improving, Blackburn Study Center will be open, beginning at 9:00 a.m.
4. In the event of snow forecasted for later during a Blackburn afternoon, an early dismissal may be called prior to the start of classes that day. This will be communicated via e-mail.

FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENT

Blackburn Study Center makes financial decisions based upon its projected annual revenue. Fees and tuition need to be paid promptly in order to make payments to tutors, facilities, and other financial commitments in a timely manner. Therefore, tuition commitments are made for the whole school year and are not refundable unless a withdrawal or dropped class is approved by the Board.

Full-time students:

Full-time tuition is \$2350 before math/grammar for full-time students.

1. Siblings after the first two children in a family receive a 50% discount off regular, full-time tuition. No discount is offered for after-hours classes.
2. Tuition is paid via automatic bank withdrawal. If families prefer to pay by paper check, the payment must be paid in full (one check) by August 1.
3. If tuition payment form is not received by July 1, the student is moved to the wait list and may be replaced by the first paying applicant on the waiting list.
4. The last day to drop a class or withdraw a student without a fee is July 15. Students withdrawn after this date are required to immediately pay $\frac{1}{4}$ of the full year's tuition. Moreover, any full-time student who drops enough classes after July 15 to result in part-time status (see below) will be charged $\frac{1}{4}$ of the year's tuition for each dropped course. Any student dropping a math or Blackburn Essentials class after July 15 will also be charged $\frac{1}{4}$ of the year's tuition for that course.
5. In the event that a student wishes to withdraw from Blackburn Study Center *after* the first day of Blackburn Study Center's school year, but before the completion of the first semester, the student's parents remain obligated to pay one-half of the full year's tuition. In the event that a student, who is registered in Blackburn Study Center on a full-time basis, wishes to withdraw from Blackburn Study Center after December 31, the student's parents remain obligated to pay one-half of the tuition remaining from the date of withdrawal to the end of the school year.

Part-time students:

1. Part-time students are any students taking less than four of the five classes offered during the regular Blackburn Day (not including math or grammar courses).
2. "A la carte" fees and study hall fees are noted on the a la carte schedule (separate document).
3. If tuition payment form is not received by July 1, the student is moved to the wait list and may be replaced by the first paying applicant on the waiting list.
4. The last day to drop a class or withdraw a student without a fee is July 15. Students who drop a class or who are withdrawn after this date are required to immediately pay $\frac{1}{4}$ of the year's tuition for each dropped class. Any student dropping a math or Blackburn Essentials class after July 15 will also be charged $\frac{1}{4}$ of the year's tuition for that course.
5. If the student wishes to drop a class(es) after the first day of Blackburn Study Center's school year, the parents remain responsible to pay Blackburn Study Center one-half of the balance of the full year's tuition per dropped class, in addition to the full tuition for those classes for which the student remains enrolled.

Application preference and waiting list:

1. Students applying for full-time admission will be given admission preference over students who wish to attend on a part-time basis.
2. Historically, we have been able to accommodate all students who wish to attend part-time, and we hope that will continue to be the case.
3. Classes which have not yet reached capacity will remain open to full-time applicants through July 31. Part-time applicants who may lose their spot will be notified and given the option of switching to full-time.
4. After July 31, the open spots will be filled on a first-come, first-served basis without respect to full-time or part-time status. Therefore, no part-time student will lose his spot in a class even if another student wishes to enroll on a full-time basis after July 31.

Waiting List: In the event of a full class, a child may be placed on our waiting list after all other admission requirements have been fulfilled. You will be notified in writing of your position on this list. You may withdraw from the list at any time.