

Academic Program for Onsite/Virtual Students

The K–12 curriculum follows the *Core Knowledge* sequence combined with the Barney Charter School Initiative Program and Guide. Our curriculum is a knowledge-rich curriculum sequence that effectively builds in students the grammar of each subject area preparing them for more advanced studies in later grades. Core Knowledge and the BCSI Program Guide are built upon the following ideas:

1. there is a common body of knowledge all students should learn, i.e., cultural literacy that enables societal cohesion,
2. reading comprehension is dependent upon solid academic background knowledge, and
3. students must be better prepared to become more informed and responsible citizens of our republic.

Enhancements in elementary grades include additional novels in some grades and the study of Latin and Greek root words in grades 3–5. Methods and resources from Access Literacy are used to teach explicit phonics, spelling, writing, and English grammar. *Singapore Math* is used in grades K–7 to teach math concepts. Instruction in Latin begins in seventh grade and continues into high school, and Logic instruction begins in seventh grade.

While the Core Knowledge sequence ends with 8th grade, the knowledge-rich spirit of CK will continue in the high school curriculum at the Classical Academy through the BCSI Scope and Sequence. One difference is the instruction will be more dialectical in both the middle and high school grades, and the process of learning rhetoric that begins in the early grades will reach advanced stages in high school. The high school grades will feature an advanced arts and sciences curriculum. Students will learn content in a more in-depth manner, and the focus will be decidedly more coordinated to Western Civilization. In the humanities, priority will be given to original sources and great books as opposed to textbooks. Math and science will offer rigorous training in fundamentals and theories in these disciplines, including both logical methods of inquiry and the scientific method. Fine arts are promoted from the start with CK and will continue through high school with both in-school and extra-curricular opportunities in art, chorus, drama, and orchestra.

Progress Reports

Progress Reports will be sent home mid-way through each marking period. Parents, however, are expected to regularly monitor student planners, notebooks, and grades. Generally speaking, Progress Report grades should not come as a surprise to parents.

Report Cards and Grading Policy

A student may be promoted only on the basis of academic achievement or demonstrated proficiency in the subject matter of the course or grade-level. To earn credit, a student must demonstrate mastery on grade-level standards and meet school requirements for attendance. In addition, students at certain grade levels will be required to pass the state-mandated assessment test as a further requirement for promotion.

Report Cards are issued every nine weeks.

One of the main purposes of grading is to determine levels of student academic mastery. Grades will be assigned in all classroom subjects. The grading scale below is used for all grades except kindergarten and first grade. Incompletes will only be given under special circumstances as determined by a classroom teacher in coordination with the headmaster.

- A – Mastery
- B – Proficiency
- C – Sufficiency (Competence)
- D – Insufficiency
- F – Failing

In addition to these general parameters, we will be using a 4.0 grading scale. For all academic classes in grades 1–12, the following Arkansas Uniform Grading Scale and numeric values will be used for assigning grades and for computing student grade point averages (GPAs):

Grade	Regular/Honors/Pre-AP	AP
90–100	A – 4 Points	A – 5 Points
80–89	B – 3 Points	B – 4 Points
70–79	C – 2 Points	C – 3 Points
60–69	D – 1 Point	D – 2 Points
50–59	F – 0 Points	F – 0 Points

In order for students to be awarded the quality points for AP courses, the student must complete the full-year course and sit for the AP exam. (Grading policy includes educational objectives only.)

Class Rank, Valedictorian, Salutatorian

Class rank will be determined at the end of the third nine weeks of the senior year.

The following is the selection method to determine the NWACA valedictorian and salutatorian:

1. The student who is selected as the highest-ranking graduate eligible to receive the Honor Graduate Certificate will serve as valedictorian, with the second highest ranking graduate serving as salutatorian.
2. Both the valedictorian and salutatorian must have been enrolled in the school for no less than three calendar semesters.
 - a. By the date of graduation, both the valedictorian and salutatorian must have met all Arkansas State Graduation Requirements applicable to him or her, including meeting all state assessment requirements.
 - b. The student with the highest cumulative grade point average will be selected as valedictorian, with the second ranking student serving as salutatorian. All calculations for this honor will be conducted at the end of the spring semester (before graduation) each school year.

To account for different levels of rigor at other schools, the following system is put into place so more accurate head-to-head comparisons can be made.

1. Students who attend Classical Academy full time for four years will have their cumulative GPAs compared.
2. Students who attend Classical Academy full time for three years will have their cumulative GPAs compared to the three-year averages (sophomore to senior) of the above students.

Students who attend Classical Academy full time for two years will have their cumulative GPAs compared to the two-year averages (junior and senior) of the above students.

End of the Year Awards

Students receive End of the Year Awards to recognize academic achievement, attendance, and

character. The following awards are given each year:

K-8

All A Honor Roll – students must earn all As in every class each 9 weeks (on all four report cards)

A-B Honor Roll – Students must earn all As and Bs in every class each 9 weeks (on all four report cards)

Perfect Attendance – Students must be present for the full day each day of school.

Character Awards – In grades K-4, five students in each homeroom class are recognized for demonstrating our Student Honor Code of Honor; Respect, Service, Excellence, Perseverance. In grades 5-8, five students are recognized in each grade level.

9-12

All A Honor Roll – High School students must earn all As each semester (4.0 for the year)

A-B Honor Roll – High School students must earn all As and Bs each semester.

Perfect Attendance – High School students must be present for each class period each day of school.

Lamp of Knowledge – Available to Juniors and Seniors, the Lamp of Knowledge Award recognizes students who have earned at least a 3.5 for three consecutive semesters at Classical Academy.

Academic Honesty

Students are responsible for academic behaviors and are expected to produce their own work at all times. Students found to have engaged in academic dishonesty shall be subject to grade penalties on assignments or tests and disciplinary penalties (refer to school club and athletic policies for additional consequences). Academic dishonesty includes cheating or copying the work of another student, plagiarism, and unauthorized communication between students during an examination. The determination that a student has engaged in academic dishonesty shall be based on the judgment of the classroom teacher and headmaster, taking into consideration written materials, observation, or information from students. Members of National Junior Honor Society and National Honor Society will also be

subject to a review by the society honor review board.

Academic Textbooks and Supplies

Northwest Arkansas Classical Academy desires the best in learning resources for its students. Books and other resources loaned or given to students are to be treated appropriately. Students are responsible for these materials. If resources given to a student are lost, the student must pay for any necessary replacement. If loaned resources are lost or damaged, the student must also pay for its replacement.

Homework

The majority of class time should be spent in instruction and dialogue. Homework is reserved mainly for reading and meaningful independent activities that provide for practice of content learned in class, preparation for upcoming lessons, or work on long-term assignments such as essays, reports, presentations, etc. Students at Northwest Arkansas Classical Academy will be assigned homework on a regular basis. It is an integral part of the school program and aids students in advancing their studies. We ask parents to help communicate to students the importance of establishing a silent and distraction-free environment for completing all homework.

Students are expected to complete the homework assigned and parents are expected to monitor their child's homework activity. If a student does not complete homework as assigned, he or she may receive a consequence and/or loss of credit for the assignment. Most importantly, the learning process will have been hindered. Parents will be required to meet with the teacher and headmaster if a student is consistently failing to complete assigned homework.

There is a general rule of thumb that is both connected to research and traditional practice. The rule is approximately 10 minutes of homework per grade level, plus some additional reading. In kindergarten, this equates to 10 minutes of homework plus some reading time (parents are the ones typically reading to children at this age, especially during the first part of the year). In 8th grade, this means about 1½ hours of homework or so. One consideration with homework duration, especially at the beginning of the year, pertains to the students themselves. Some students work faster than others. All students, however, will "get in shape," so to speak (or better shape). Once they learn teacher expectations and gain more experience in reading,

writing, etc., they will complete homework at faster rates.

Make-Up Work

It is the responsibility of the student to make up missed classwork and homework after any absence, planned or due to illness, in a timely manner. A student, or parent in the case of young children, may contact the teacher or contact a classmate. If a student is unable to coordinate with another student, it is the student's responsibility to seek the guidance of teachers regarding missed work as soon as he or she returns, so as to be ready for upcoming assessments. Missed work due to absence must be made up within the same number of days missed, not to exceed 5 days. For example, if a student is absent 1 day, then he or she has 1 school day in which to make up the work; a two 2 day absence would mean 2 school days in which to make up the work, etc.

An absence on the due date of a major assignment (essay, lab report, etc.) or exam may not extend the due date of that assignment. The student should expect to submit the work and/or make-up the exam on the day of his or her return. Absences during the preparation time of a major assignment may not extend the due date.

Assignments taken home before or during an absence are due the day the student returns to class; this includes assignments given to a student to complete while on a trip.

Grade penalties will affect assignments turned in late.

Note: make-up work policies refer to "documented" absences (illness, verified with a parent or doctor's note, field trip, family vacation, or other documented absences as described on page 2 of this Handbook).

Semester Tests & Exemptions

Semester tests are given the last week of the fall and spring semesters in grades 7-12 in all academic core courses (performance based classes do not give a semester exam). The following guidelines apply to semester exams:

- Exams will NOT be given before the scheduled testing date and time.
- Prior approval from the Headmaster's Office must be obtained before make up of any semester tests at the scheduled make-up date. Prior notification or a medical excuse is required to make up semester tests.

- Students who do not show up for a final exam at the scheduled time without prior notification will be considered truant. In this case the student will receive a zero on the exam.
- Seniors may receive semester exam exemptions if they have an A in the class, no unexcused absences, and fewer than 4 excused absences. All three conditions apply in order for the student to be exempt.
- A senior must be enrolled by 9/1 to earn test exemptions for the first semester and by 1/13 for the second semester.