

# Student & Parent Handbook



2023-2024 Academic Year



# A. Student Obligations & Requests

## 1. Student Pledge

Students are invited and encouraged to take the Student Pledge. Print and sign a copy and place it near your desk.

### OXROSE STUDENT PLEDGE

*As a seeker of truth, I pledge to strive after the whole and the highest, to be humble, to be diligent, and to delight in what is real.*

*As a seeker of goodness, I pledge to strive to love others, to grow in virtue through daily practice, to fulfil my obligations, and, always, to do what is right.*

*As a seeker of beauty, I pledge to open my heart to all that is lovely and pure, to avoid what is vulgar, and to be a creator of noble things in the world.*

*As a seeker of God, I pledge my life and my love to Christ. I ask for His guidance, and I submit to the authority of His Church.*

## 2. Attendance & Participation

Attendance is a required part of classes. Students are graded for participation, including preparedness and active engagement, at each class meeting. They are expected to arrive with work complete and to strive to actively contribute to the class.

Students are required to keep video on and be ready to engage using their microphones as an ordinary part of participation. In addition, all other websites, messaging apps, and activities must be closed during class time. See section 8, below, for more information.

*Excused absences* are granted for family illness or crises, educational activities, and technical difficulties (storms and outages). They are

not granted for family vacations or ordinary appointment conflicts. Given how limited in-class time is, we ask that activities be planned around these times.

An excused absence does not receive full attendance points—the rationale for this is simply that in-class time represents a real educational value that is required to fully complete the course.

Students who have received an excused absence may earn back participation points by attending Tutor Time and requesting the opportunity to earn those points. Instructors will engage in discussion, review the work, or devise some activity to provide the chance to earn the points. Unexcused absences may not earn back participation points.

### **3. Homework**

Almost all classes include weekly assignments. Specific instructions are given in each course, but for most assignments, the process for completing the work involves four steps:

1. do the work by hand (typed work is allowed, but instructor permission should be sought);
2. scan the work to create a PDF;
3. upload the work before the deadline; and
4. save all assignments in a folder at home (either physically or digitally or both).

It is crucial that all work be saved, just in case documents do not upload properly or any other question of missing work arises. Archive all homework!

Missing and late assignments do affect student grades. Work should be completed and submitted on time. Assignments will normally be graded in the week following the due date.

Late work is accepted without special permission for a preset grace period after the due date for most assignments; the standard grace period is one-week but consult the “Course Information” for each

course. Instructors will recheck the assignment uploads for late items, after the grace period deadline is reached.

*Composition* is a notable exception, many of its due dates are rigid with no late work accepted.

No assignment will be accepted for grading outside of the grace period or the semester end, late work grace period without special permission and only under limited conditions. Students must submit a parent signed "Late Work Acceptance Request" form either before or immediately after the due date. Find the form on the Dashboard.

If you note an ungraded assignment in the gradebook, you are encouraged to send a polite inquiry to the instructor.

For additional grading information, see the "course information" section in each course suite.

It is strongly recommended that students do not regularly rely on the late work period. The assignments for a given week should be completed and turned in by the due date in that week, except under extraordinary circumstances. Reliance on the grace period can often lead to the accumulation of multiple outstanding assignments, high stress, and, ultimately, missed work.

#### **4. Grade Monitoring & Feedback**

Occasionally, tech issues can result in homework uploads not submitting properly. Instructors will be unable to discern this and will grade these as missing assignments. Students should check their grades regularly to ensure that no such issues have arisen.

More importantly, students should check assignments and the grade book in order to read comments and notes. It is by means of this feedback that they correct and improve their work week-to-week.

#### **5. Academic Honesty**

Cheating and intentional plagiarism are dishonest and thieving. Since the moral excellence of the student is of greater importance than academic excellence, all instances of these offenses will be treated very seriously.

If the suspicions of the instructor are raised, he will inform the headmaster, who will contact the parents to explain the situation. The headmaster will seek information and input on the situation, inform the parents as to the school's requirements regarding the academic side, and follow the parents' lead in disciplining the student, generally.

An academic penalty will necessarily apply if academic dishonesty is determined. This penalty will be decided by the instructor and headmaster in consultation with the parents. With a sufficiently mature student, in full knowledge of the nature of his actions, the penalty may be the most severe – an F for the course.

## **6. In-Class Behavior**

Students are required to comport themselves with professionalism and courtesy. Teachers' instructions should be followed promptly. Students who are disruptive or who refuse to abide by an instructor's directions, will be removed from live classes. If a student is removed from class, the instructor will inform the headmaster, who will in turn inform the parents. Should a student be removed from class a second time in the course of the year, he may be expelled from the course or barred from live classes, at the headmaster's discretion.

## **7. Messaging and Social Media**

All approved student correspondence is to be conducted through the "Messaging" function within the online course suite.

Students should check Messaging several times weekly for notes from their instructors. In the event of a disruption to Live class meetings or if a student ever finds that a class is not starting on time, his first step should be to check Messaging. It is there that the teacher or headmaster will inform students of schedule changes, cancellations, homework modifications, and announcements.

Students are allowed to message each other. Non-academic interactions are allowed. We ask that students avoid using messaging for sharing links, campaigns, causes, or any outside content, keeping the focus on academic matters and sharing thoughts.

Messaging is archived and can be reviewed for one month, then is automatically deleted. Access can be restricted, if the privilege is abused.

No interaction among students on social media of any kind, outside of “Messaging,” is officially sanctioned or monitored by the school. Parents are asked to exercise prudence in what they allow; though efforts to provide the kids opportunities to socialize via online tools are not discouraged.

Parents should be careful to have a clear sense of how much time students are spending on Messaging and should encourage good practices.

Students and parents should report any instances of uncharity, impropriety, discourtesy, over-use, or any other concern to the headmaster.

Students and teachers must use the “Messaging” function exclusively for all correspondence. No use of any other means of messaging or social media communication is allowed for the privacy and safety of all parties involved. In the event that any teacher should contact a student by any other means, the headmaster should be informed immediately. Students should be aware that this means the teachers are specifically required not to interact or respond with current students on social media – they are not just being rude.

For student-teacher correspondence, formal writing practices should be followed. We believe both that it is important for students to learn the art of letter writing and that the practice of formality is very appropriate and educative; hence, we request that all student correspondence include appropriate greetings, proper and polite phrasing, and cordial closings. Paper letter writing is strongly encouraged among the students – pen pals abound.

## **8. Video Requirement, Student Appearance, and Classroom Distractions**

During class time, students are required to keep video on, unless there is an at home disturbance that necessitates shutting it off (messy hair, a cold, etc. should not be used as justification for

shutting it off). Video is important as a means for teachers to gauge the involvement and attention of the students, and it makes more complete the interactions between persons.

When attending LIVE classes, students must be neat, groomed, and well presented. A collared shirt, appropriate to an academic setting, is required. More formal attire may be required for some occasions (e.g. viva voce examinations). We recall with St. Bernard: "How beautiful then is modesty and what a gem among virtues it is!"

Distractions (siblings, pets, etc.) should be kept out of the academic space during class time, whenever possible.

Absolutely all apps, webpages, communication platforms (including Moodle messaging), games, etc. must be shut down during class time. Parents should take steps to ensure that this is the case. Students who are contacted by other students about joining any social platform during class time should report it to the instructor.

## **9. Prayer**

Prayer is an integral aspect of all class times and the educational vision of the school. Oxrose asks that students and parents pray for the student body and teachers of the Academy.



## B. Academy Policies

### 1. Textbooks and Course Materials

Many course suites include textbooks and course materials digitally within them; however, some classes do require the purchase of books and other materials. Please read the “Course Information” sections of your course suite carefully and purchase any required books and materials in a timely fashion.

### 2. Technology Requirements

The following items are required:

- A desktop or laptop computer is needed to access the curriculum and attend LIVE classes. Most tablets will also suffice in doing such tasks, but these should be checked for functionality during orientation (see calendar).
- A headset that includes both a microphone and dual earpieces.
- A webcam.
- A means of scanning homework—a smart-phone or desktop scanner.
- Software to generate PDFs that are compatible with Moodle (the course suite software) for homework uploads. Note: It is important that assignments be monitored in order to ensure that there are no issues. Incompatible PDFs may simply not appear for instructors and will be graded as missing.

Please speak with your instructors, if you have any questions regarding required technology and troubleshooting.

### 3. Missed or Cancelled Class & Tutor Time

If a teacher fails to open a scheduled class meeting within five minutes of the stated start time: (1) check messaging to see whether the class has been cancelled or rescheduled; (2) if there is no note, and it is five minutes past the allotted time, students/parents are asked to call the school office immediately. This will allow the school to check on the teacher, help with technical issues, and ensure that the class takes place as scheduled.

If weather, illness, or other circumstances prevent an instructor from hosting a LIVE class meeting, the school will try to find a substitute. If one cannot be found, the instructor will reschedule the class to one of the tutor times already scheduled for the week. If no time during tutor time in the week of the missed class is workable for a majority (or large minority) of students, the LIVE class meeting will be cancelled. Class will not be rescheduled, and students will be encouraged to attend any tutor time throughout the week for instruction and help with the week's work.

In weeks when class is rescheduled or cancelled, all course work will still be due on the regular schedule, unless notice is given otherwise.

Instructors are expected to adhere to their posted schedules for Tutor Times. If a teacher knows he will miss a tutor time, notice should be given in advance via messaging, if possible. If a teacher fails to open a scheduled Tutor Time, students should message him. If a teacher repeatedly misses Tutor Times without notice, students should inform the headmaster. Cancelled tutor times may be, but are not required to be rescheduled.

#### **4. Academic Records and Grade Information**

Instructors grade and provide feedback for assignments, quizzes, exams, and projects in different ways for each course. At the end of the year, parents are encouraged to copy the complete grade book for their records. Parents are responsible for retaining any student work that they wish to keep on file for any course—no assignments are retained after the finalization of grades at the end of the academic year. The registrar gathers gradebook downloads at the end of each school year.

Parents will receive an unofficial transcript with final course grades in digital form at the end of the academic year. Official transcripts are available upon request from the registrar.

High school credit courses may not be removed from a student's transcript. Repeated courses will show only the highest grade received for a course.

## 5. Summer Extensions, Incompletes, & Withdrawals

Students may petition to receive a “Summer Extension” – a work period, beginning on the last regular day of school (not including the grace period) and running for four weeks, into the middle of June – for any course, at the end of the Spring Semester. Petitions should be sent by email to the headmaster by May 15. Extensions will be granted under the following circumstances only: (1) Students must have a score of at least 65% in the course (i.e. the student must have a minimal, passing grade) and (2) students must have completed at least two-thirds of the course work in the class.

If approved, the student will be asked to submit a list of those assignments that he wishes to work on in the Summer Extension. At the end of the extension period, the items will be graded, and a course grade calculated at that time. An administrative fee and a per item grading fee will be required for enrollment in the Summer Extension. Quizzes may be retaken throughout the Extension, but Exams, mini-exams, and review quizzes may not be taken without specific permission.

Students may petition to receive an “Incomplete” for a course at the end of the Spring Semester. Petitions should be sent by email to the Headmaster by May 15. Incompletes are only available for courses which receive high school credit. Incompletes are granted in cases where significant disruption of one kind or another has caused the student to perform below ability. If approved the student will receive an “Incomplete” on his transcript. He will then be allowed to retake the course in a subsequent year and the grade earned for the course will take the place of the Incomplete. No mention of the failing grade will appear on the transcript. Should the student fail to retake the course before graduation, the Incomplete will revert to the earned grade for the original attempt. Courses may not be removed from the transcript.

Students who choose to drop a class or are required to drop a class because of disciplinary issues before completion of the academic year will receive a “Withdrawal” on their transcripts (applies from the first day of the second week of class onward). Withdrawals are not

considered in calculating grade point average but may not be removed from the transcript.

## **6. Parent Teacher Communication**

Important announcements and messages from teachers will be sent via email to ensure that they are received by parents.

Parents are asked to use the messaging system in the course suite to contact teachers. Responses to any inquiries sent via messaging will be made in messaging.

If a parent wishes to talk to a teacher, he is encouraged to arrange it via messaging and then to stop in during a Tutor Time.

The headmaster can be reached at 507-822-6966, via email at [office@oxroseacademy.com](mailto:office@oxroseacademy.com), or face to face during his office hours regularly posted on the school dashboard.

## **7. Grade Scales, Discussion, and Inflation**

The Academy uses the common grade scale wherein letter grades align with a ten-point range of percentage points, which are subdivided into three brackets (e.g. 100-90 receives an A+, A, or A-).

Students are encouraged to seek information regarding an instructor's reasoning for awarding a grade and to advocate for a better grade, if they believe one is deserved. If a student, after having discussed the matter with the instructor, believes strongly that a grade is not a fair reflection of his work in a course, he should consult with a parent, who may, in turn contact the headmaster. The headmaster will review the matter in close consultation with the instructor and decide upon the grade.

The Academy strives to avoid the common problem of grade inflation, whereby average level students, who ought to receive a low B or a C instead receive high Bs or As. C level grades must be understood to be reasonable scores for students of average abilities in challenging courses. C is a solid, passing grade, for which a student must often work hard and for which he receives full credit.

## C. Parent Commitments

### 1. Internet Safety & Discipline

Oxrose provides a work schedule and limited, in-class learning oversight, however, direct supervision of student computer use during class and study time, generally, is a task for which we are unable to offer assistance. We cannot see what the students have open on their computer desktops during class, and we are simply not present at other times. With this in mind, we encourage parents:

- to make use of internet screening tools & parental controls;
- to carefully consider the placement of computers in the home—balancing the need for quiet study space with the need for oversight;
- to exercise prudence regarding the use of social media, knowing that interaction on such media is not a required or encouraged aspect of any of our classes;
- to be familiar with the necessary computer time required for classes. In most instances, students should be working off-line, after having checked the agenda and accessed any needed materials from the course suites. Only some activities (video lectures, quizzes, etc.) require computer time. If the student is spending overmuch time online, it can mean too much time spent on messaging or non-school activities.

### 2. Academic Oversight—Check-in and Check-up

Please do not assume that students no longer need your guidance and help in setting a disciplined schedule once they enroll in a class. We provide tools for setting a schedule, managing time, and working smarter, especially through the “Study Skills” courses, but we are limited in our day-to-day ability to guide student practice in the home. We ask that parents implement two specific practices to maintain awareness of and offer guidance to students.

- **Check in:** Ask what the days tasks are for each class and ask to see the work they have completed. This should be

done daily, if possible, and is especially important at the end of the week, when preparing to scan and upload the week's work for grading. Recall that it is best policy to require your student to turn in his work at the end of the week, rather than regularly relying on the late work grace period.

- **Check-up:** Log in and look over the gradebook. Take note of any missing items, low grades, etc. Read the feedback, glance at the exam schedule ahead. Go over things with the student, asking about any issues you noted. This should be done every other week.

### 3. Creating a Studious Environment

Oxrose requests that parents take concrete steps to help create the best environment possible for student success.

First, it is necessary to create circumstances for successful online class attendance. Proper headphones, covering both ears and including a microphone, are required for live classes. Please realize that microphones designed to pick up all sound, such as those built-in to laptops or web-cameras, communicate white noise, household sounds, and any noisy disruptions to the entire class.

Second, in addition to headphones, it is necessary that the student be provided a place to study that is as free of distractions and noise as possible. This need must be balanced with the need for oversight and internet usage security.

### 4. Discipline

A final point regarding discipline generally. Though Oxrose teachers provide primary instruction, tutoring, and grading it is important to realize that the parent role of general disciplinarian is still essential for success at the school. The students need someone to hold their noses to the grindstone, as it were, day-to-day and week-to-week throughout the year. Shifting analogies, the instructors provide the water, but only the parents can lead the horse to the river and make him drink.

As you are working to diagnose any challenges that arise this year, here is a useful analysis paradigm from the great medieval educator, Hugh of St. Victor. He outlines three general categories of problem that interfere with study and how these should be addressed by the teacher.

- Carelessness: The student omits, skips, or does less than he should.  
The student should be *admonished*.
- Imprudence: The student neglects the most suitable order and method.  
The student should be *instructed*.
- Bad Luck: The student suffers from poverty, illness, non-natural slowness, or a scarcity of professors.  
The student should be *assisted*.

Another useful paradigm to have in mind when considering how to help your student, particularly for motivating a student, is the threefold combination of carrot, stick, and love. What is meant by this is definitely not the use of sticks on students! Simply put, motivating a struggling student needs to include a clear cut reward for success, a clear cut penalty for failure, and an ever present and attentive support for the student. It can often be very productive to include the student in the process of setting his academic goals, rewards, and penalties. By love here we mean, beginning by, letting the student know that he is cherished and that you are on his team, and then following up with the support and help needed as the final component.

There is no replacement for your attention and support.

## 5. Prayer

Oxrose asks that students and parents pray for the student body and teachers of the Academy.