



CORNERSTONE
ACADEMY

2022-2023 Student and Parent Handbook



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I. Introduction

A. MISSION:

To deliver a high-caliber education focused on academic excellence, global citizenship, and spiritual and personal development with a Biblical worldview.

B. CORE VALUES:

- Discovery*** - of self, beliefs, purpose, and calling.
- Diligence*** - academic excellence with practical application.
- Disciple-Making*** - spiritual disciplines and evangelism.

C. EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY:

We believe an exceptional Christian education employs a variety of research-informed methods with a Biblical worldview to facilitate the personal and academic development of each child while deeply rooting them in their faith and moral values.

Through interdisciplinary instruction, application of Biblical principles and collaboration with families and spiritual leaders, we'll equip young believers to stand firm in their faith and be successful in any arena they enter.

Our program offers a comprehensive academic curriculum as well as various electives, such as art, computer, drama, music, and physical education. The experienced faculty at Cornerstone desire to help each student believe they are capable of learning and reaching their full potential.

D. OUR HISTORY:

Founded in 2001 by Mike and Martha Zeher, Cornerstone Academy was established to provide specialized instruction for children with learning differences. The Zehers recognized a great need in their community, as they and other families experienced the difficulties and intensified stress of parenting a child with learning difficulties. Feeling a burden to meet that need, the Zehers initially sought to develop a Special Education department in a larger Christian school, so that students with learning differences could be served with excellence alongside their general education peers. But when that did not seem feasible, Cornerstone Academy was established as its own school for students with learning differences.

Now, in 2022, the initial vision of Cornerstone's founders is being realized. Cornerstone remains an educational haven for students diagnosed with learning differences while



welcoming students of all learning styles and abilities. Through compassionate instruction and scaffolding, Cornerstone is committed to educating and equipping the whole body of Christ.

We achieve this through instruction that is structured and multi-sensory. Appropriate compensations in all subject areas are provided for each student. Students are placed in small classes with a teacher and an assistant as needed, where skills are broken down into the smallest possible component and directly taught. The instruction is systematic, and skills are taught until mastery is achieved. Each student is appropriately challenged to reach their full potential.



II. Statement of Faith

We believe and teach that:

- i. There is only one God (Deuteronomy 6:4), and His name is Jesus (Matthew 1:22-23; Colossians 2:9). He is the creator of heaven and earth, and of all living beings. He has revealed Himself to humanity as the Father (Creator), in the Son (Savior), and as the Holy Ghost (indwelling Spirit).
- ii. Jesus Christ is God manifested in flesh. He is both God and man. (Ephesians 4:4-6; Colossians 2:9; I Timothy 3:16)
- iii. The Bible is the inspired, inerrant, and only infallible authoritative Word of God and the authority for salvation and Christian living. (II Timothy 3:15-17)
- iv. God created man and all things, visible and invisible, very good by the power of His Word. (Genesis 1 and 2, John 1)
- v. Man, made in the image of God, is responsible to God in all things. Man has a unique and valuable place in the plan of God and must be highly esteemed and respected. (Colossians 1:15)
- vi. God wonderfully foreordained and immutably created each person as either male or female in conformity with their biological sex. These two distinct yet complementary genders together reflect the image and nature of God. (Genesis 1:26-27)
- vii. The term marriage has only one meaning: the uniting of one man and one woman in a single, exclusive union, as delineated in Scripture. (Genesis 2:18-25) God intends sexual intimacy to occur only between a man and a woman who are married to each other. (1 Corinthians 6:18, 7:2-5; Hebrews 13:4) God's command is that there be no sexual intimacy outside of or apart from marriage between a man and a woman.
- viii. Everyone has sinned and needs salvation. Salvation comes by grace through faith based on the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ. (Romans 3:23-25, 6:23; Ephesians 2:8-9)
- ix. The saving gospel is the good news that Jesus died for our sins, was buried, and rose again. We obey the gospel (II Thessalonians 1:8; I Peter 4:17) by repentance (death to sin), water baptism by immersion in the name of Jesus Christ (burial) and receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit (resurrection). (I Corinthians 15:1-4; Acts 2:4, 37-39; Romans 6:3-4)
- x. We are enabled to live a godly life by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. (Galatians 5:22-25) As Christians we are to love God and others. We should live a holy life inwardly and outwardly, and worship God joyfully. The supernatural gifts of the Spirit, including healing, are for the church today. (Mark 12:28-31; II Corinthians 7:1; Hebrews 12:14; I Corinthians 12:8-10)
- xi. Jesus Christ is coming again to catch away His church. In the end will be the final resurrection and the final judgment. The righteous will inherit eternal life, and the unrighteous eternal death. (I Thessalonians 4:16-17; Revelation 20:11-15)

Our Statement of Faith is not exhaustive of all our beliefs. The Bible, as the inspired and infallible Word of God, speaks with absolute authority regarding the proper conduct of mankind and is the unchanging foundation for all belief and behavior.

III. Cornerstone Entrance Requirements



Cornerstone Academy is a private, coeducational Christian day school for students in grades 6 through 12. Cornerstone welcomes students of all learning styles and abilities, including those with learning differences and the gifted and talented.

Cornerstone is equipped to provide instruction for children who have special needs including:

- Dyslexia
- Socialization issues
- Academic skills disorders
- Recovery credits
- Attention disorders – ADHD
- School phobias
- Processing deficits
- PDD
- Language disorders
- Home hospital instruction
- Anxiety disorders
- HSA course credits

We are not able to service children with a diagnosis and history of behavioral/emotional difficulties. The screening committee will review each applicant. Prior school records, psycho-educational testing, informal testing, and observation by our staff will all be used to determine final acceptance.

Each applicant must provide the following information:

- Full psycho-educational battery of testing (if applicable)
- Previous school records
- Student’s medical records must be on file in the office
- Proof that the student has an acceptable record of behavior in school

Parents must sign a Parental Statement that affirms the following:

- I have read Cornerstone Academy’s Statement of Faith, and I agree to have my child educated in accordance with it.
- I give permission for my child to be disciplined according to Cornerstone Academy’s policy.
- I recognize that Cornerstone Academy has the right to dismiss any child who does not respect its spiritual standards or cooperate in the educational process.
- I give my child permission to attend required scheduled trips and other activities when properly notified.

- **Tuition Fees**

The tuition fees may be paid under one of the following payment plans. Payment plans must be agreed upon at the time of acceptance.



- Annually: Payment due July 1st (for the period September - June)
- Semi-annually: Payments due July 1st and December 1st
- Monthly: Beginning July 1st (10 payments due July - April)
 - If a student enrolls after July 1st, 10 monthly payments will begin on the first of the month for which they enroll and continue until 10 full payments have been made.
 - ***Tuition payment is due on or before the first (1st) day of each month***

- **Application Fee**

An application fee of \$75 is due with the application and is non-refundable after submission of the application.

- **Enrollment Fee**

For new students accepted to Cornerstone Academy, an enrollment fee of \$350 is due at the time of student enrollment. This fee is non-refundable.

For returning students, a re-enrollment fee of \$350 is due on or before the re-enrollment deadline. If the student re-enrolls after the deadline has passed, the re-enrollment fee increases to \$400.

- **Delinquent Accounts**

Tuition fees are essential for Cornerstone's day-to-day operations.

- Late Fee: Beginning October 1, 2018, a \$20 late fee will be assessed for tuition received after the 10th of the month. If not received by the next month an additional \$20 late fee will incur per month for each payment.

Any account that is ten days past due is considered a delinquent account. In the event of financial difficulty, parents who require special consideration must contact the office manager in writing. The office manager will review the request and respond in writing.

Any account which remains delinquent for an additional twenty days without contacting and receiving approval from the office manager will result in the student's withdrawal from Cornerstone until satisfactory arrangements have been made. This grace period can be suspended or eliminated at Cornerstone's discretion. Once the student has withdrawn, the opening may be filled from a waiting list. There is no guarantee that the student will be able to resume the educational program at Cornerstone. Delinquent accounts may be turned over to a collection agency. Records will not be released until full payment is made.

- **Assessment at Withdrawal**



Upon withdrawal or dismissal from Cornerstone for any reason, fees will be assessed to the end of the academic year. The majority of the school's expenses and obligations are incurred on an annual basis. Financial commitments for school services are made based upon anticipated enrollment, and the educational operating expenses of school do not diminish with the departure of some students over the course of the school year. Regardless of a student's absence, withdrawal, or dismissal from the school, parents/guardians remain obligated to pay tuition and fees for the full academic year, in accordance with the tuition payment option chosen and assume full responsibility for payment.

- **Previous School Records**

We reserve the right to review a student's record from the last school attended. The information serves as one of the criteria for determining admission and placement. It will be included as part of the cumulative records kept for each student.

A special form for the transfer of school records to our school is available at the school office.

- **Medical Records/Immunizations**

Students transferring from another school must have their medical records transferred before final acceptance can be given. No student will be admitted to classes until all medical requirements are satisfied, including Maryland immunization requirements.

- **Entrance Testing**

Our school tests prospective students with informal tests used to determine their ability in language and math. This information, in conjunction with previous school records, and the psycho-educational battery helps us to determine if our program will meet their needs.



IV. Administrative Matters

A. Visiting Cornerstone

We are eager to have parents and friends visit. Interested persons should call the office in advance to set up appointments so that arrangements can be made for their visits. Appointments to see a teacher must be made through the office.

B. Parent's Day is held for parents of Cornerstone students and **Open Houses** are sometimes held for parents and/or the public.

C. Parent Back to School Night is held at the beginning of the school year. This will provide the opportunity to meet the faculty and hear about the curriculum.

D. Class Size

The average size for each class is 10 students with a teacher and a teacher assistant as needed.

E. Attendance

Regular attendance is expected of every student. Parents should recognize the relationship of regular attendance and successful performance in the classroom.

Due to COVID, we encourage students to stay home if they are not well, even if it is just a headache, cold or stomachache.

A student must present a note signed by one of his/her parents explaining any absence.

A student who is ill should stay home. Contagious diseases should be reported as soon as the condition is known.

Should a student need to be dismissed early, the office should be informed in writing. A student who leaves during the day must be signed out at the office by his/her parent or by an adult authorized by the legal guardian. **A student will be marked tardy if they arrive late or leave early.**

Assignments missed because of excused absences must be completed. It is the responsibility of the parent and student, not the teacher, to follow through on this. Parents wishing to pick up assignments must call the office, so that teachers can be notified of the request. A student will have a reasonable time, established by the teacher, to complete the assignment.



Necessary family trips may be considered excused absences with the permission of the principal. Arrangements must be made in advance with the appropriate teachers.

If a student has a lengthy absence, parents may notify Cornerstone and arrange to pick up daily assignments for the student.

A student entering the building after 9:30 a.m. or leaving before 1:00 p.m. because of medical appointments or other excused reasons will be credited with one-half day in attendance.

The principal may deny promotion or credit to any student who is absent (excused or unexcused) more than 15% of the school year.

F. Absence Codes:

- Excused Absence – A
- Unexcused Absence –U
- Illness – I
- Left Cornerstone property without permission – W/O
- Death in family – D
- Suspension – S
- Storms – St
- Tardy – T

G. Schedule

The school day begins at 8:00 a.m. and dismissed at 2:30 p.m. Students are to arrive between 7:45 and 7:55 a.m. Students must be picked up no later than 2:45 p.m. Parents of students who remain after 2:45 p.m. will be charged an additional fee of \$10.00 for each 15 minutes they are late. This will be reflected in a monthly bill to be sent home.

H. Closings

In case of inclement weather, we will follow the more conservative decision of either Carroll, Howard, or Montgomery County Public Schools. Current information regarding school closings and delays involving those counties may also be found on the Internet at www.wrbs.com. If one county is open or delayed and the other county is closed, we will close. If one county is delayed one hour and the other county is delayed two hours, we will delay two hours. The same is true of early dismissals. Any changes in the normal schedule of the day will be announced via the Parent Alert System and on the above listed stations. Please assist us by keeping your contact information updated in the FACTS Family Portal and by tuning to one of the above stations rather than calling Cornerstone or staff.

I. Tardiness



A student who arrives after **8:00** a.m. will be marked late. Students arriving after 8:00 a.m. must have a parent sign them in on the sheet on the table in the entrance way. Late arrival causes disruption to the classroom as well as putting the late student at a disadvantage in having missed important information reviewed at the start of the day. **A student with excessive tardiness will be subject to after school detentions.**

J. Early Release

We will release a student upon receiving a written notice from his/her parents. Please sign the student out on the sign out sheet.

Do not text students about early dismissal. Please call the school office. An attempt should be made to limit medical appointments to after instructional hours or on school holidays.

K. Pick-up Authorization

If parents wish to authorize someone to pick up their children in the event of occurrences such as inclement weather, authorization should be made in writing, so it may be kept on file in the office. Cornerstone is not responsible for the administration of transportation. It is the responsibility of the parent or guardian to arrange for transportation to and from Cornerstone.

Where applicable, students will be released only to the care of their custodial parent or those designated in writing by the custodial parent. A certified and recorded copy of any divorce settlement agreement or court order signed by a judge must be submitted to the office. This document should indicate visitation rights.

L. Emergency Procedures

Cornerstone Academy has evacuation procedures posted for fire and other emergency situations. The staff has had active shooter training from the Howard County Police Department, and we have purchased everything the police recommended for our safety. We will conduct evacuation/fire drills five times throughout the school year.

Please see attached information regarding all of our COVID procedures.

M. Code of Conduct:

Students –



Students are expected to live by Christian standards as defined by the Bible. We believe love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control are reasonable goals to be expected of our students. (Galatians 5:22-23)

Our administration, staff, teachers, and students should model godly behavior at Cornerstone, at home, and in the community. We will emphasize an education that results in a Christian who is actively involved in his/her community.

We recognize that children need limits, and that some may at times exceed those limits. There will be occasions when a student must be suspended or dismissed. Suspensions are the responsibility of the administration; dismissal is an action of the Board. Some causes for suspension or expulsion may be weapons, rebellion, fighting, persistent misbehavior, bad language, sexual immorality, and use or possession of drugs, alcohol, tobacco, or pornographic material. Repeated offenses may result in dismissal.

Our discipline is based on trust. Students who want to work in an instructional setting where there is freedom will have to accept responsibility for their behavior. The consequence of poor behavior is the loss of such freedom or the privilege to attend Cornerstone.

Parents –

It is important that all school-related problems be promptly discussed and resolved using the biblical principles outlined in Matthew 18. Any school related issues that occur inside or outside of school should be discussed directly with the other party involved. If it is not resolved, the person should discuss the situation with the principal. If the matter is still not resolved an appeal should be made in writing to the School Board, who acts as final arbiter in grievance situations for the school.

It is also important that as a school we follow the biblical principles relating to gossip as outlined in I Timothy 5:13 and Proverbs 26:20. We have a rule against students gossiping about one another and this applies to social media as well as during school. We expect parents to set the same example for their students by not gossiping about other students or their families.

N. Honor Code

Students are expected to present their own work for each class. Cheating and plagiarism may be dealt with in the following manner:

First Offense: Zero for work



Second Offense: Zero for work
 Go before Faculty

Third Offense: Suspension
Fourth Offense: Expulsion

Lying or forgery will be dealt with in the following manner:

First Offense: Zero for work
Second Offense: Suspension

O. Substance Abuse

Cornerstone will investigate fully any incident suggesting involvement with controlled dangerous substances including but not limited to alcohol and marijuana or other illegal drugs on the part of students. Confirmation of such involvement will most likely lead to the dismissal of the student and appropriate authorities will be notified.

P. Use of Non-educational Materials

During scheduled academic classes the use of distracting items is not allowed. Electronic games may be played during recess time and with teacher permission. Cell phones may be used only with teacher permission. Any cell phone used without permission during the school day will be confiscated until the end of the day.

Q. Building Rules

Students are expected to conform to the following guidelines while at Cornerstone:

- Students will respect those in authority.
- Students will respect and maintain school facilities and property.
- Students will encourage and edify each other.
- Students will refrain from chewing gum in the building.
- Students will refrain from any public display of affection (PDA).



R. Classroom Rules

Our students are expected to conform to the following rules in the classroom:

- Students will respect the teacher and other adults.
- Students will respect other students (including no gossiping).
- Students will ask permission to leave their seat.
- Students will show respect for the property of others.
- Students will raise their hands and be recognized before speaking.
- Students will use cell phones and technology only with teacher permission.

S. Computer Usage

- Each student will be provided their own laptop for school use.
- If a student damages their laptop they will pay for the cost of repairs.
- Students are not permitted to use computers without authorized personnel.
- Food and drink are not permitted near computers.

Cornerstone strongly believes that the Internet provides a great resource to further our students' studies and enrich their lives. Therefore, we have provided each student with the capability to gain Internet access. Whenever accessing the Internet, each student must adhere to all the guidelines listed below:

- Students will only use the Internet access for approved coursework. Use of the Internet for anything not directly related to approved coursework is prohibited.
- Students may use school-provided Internet access only with teacher permission and supervision by the teacher.
- Students' personal information such as pictures, addresses, telephone numbers, parent's names, and home or work address/telephone number, will not be published by the students or without permission.
- Students who encounter inappropriate materials that make them uncomfortable will immediately report the occurrence to the supervisor.
- Students may view published web pages and site information obtained from them appropriately. Caution must be taken to avoid plagiarism.
- Students will not vandalize, damage, or disable the work of another individual or organization.
- Students will not access, manipulate, alter, or attempt to damage, disable or destroy technology or computer files.
- Students will not access, create, or distribute harassing, pornographic, obscene, racist, sexually explicit, or threatening material, imagery, or language inside or outside of school.



- Students will not use provided Internet access for illegal purposes or for non-approved purposes.
- Students may be disciplined for Internet or computer misuse when the misuse, as in other student discipline issues, is deemed related to Cornerstone even if the incident occurs away from Cornerstone.
- Any bullying or unkindness related to social media use that spills over into the classroom will be dealt with as a discipline issue.
- Students should demonstrate godly behavior in utilization of technology, including social media, outside of school hours and premises. Consistent inappropriate utilization of technology may result in dismissal from Cornerstone.

T. School Bus Rules (when a bus is used for a field trip)/ Riding with Chaperone

Students will follow the same conduct guidelines on field trips as required the classroom.

In addition:

- Students are not permitted to stand in the bus/vehicle while it is moving.
- Students will share responsibility for keeping the bus/vehicle clean.
- Students will refrain from throwing anything out of the window.

U. Retention

Students are tested in Language and Math. They are placed in classes based on ability levels, not grade levels. In order for a student to be moved ahead in their Language and Math placement, they must reach 80% mastery level. Parents and teachers may agree that it is in the best interest of the student to be retained due to academic, social, or emotional concerns. We will always seek the best placement for a student.

At the High School level, a student must fulfill the 24 credit requirements as defined by school policy in order to graduate.

V. Distribution of Records

Records and transcripts will be sent to other schools at the written request of that school. All financial obligations to Cornerstone Academy must be paid in full before records will be sent to another school or released at graduation.



V. Medical Policies

A. Medication Technician

A certified medication technician will be available for students who are ill or need to take medication. Cornerstone also has a registered nurse from Howard County Public Schools on call daily for questions or emergencies.

B. Communicable Diseases

If a student has been diagnosed with any of the following diseases or conditions, the student must have written consent from either a physician or the Maryland State Health Department to return to Cornerstone or be subject to office approval for re-admittance: Chicken pox, measles, mumps, pneumonia, whooping cough, pinworms, scabies, ringworm, impetigo, pink eye, or other such communicable diseases and conditions.

C. Medical Excuses for Physical Education Class

If a student needs to be excused from Physical Education class for 1 week or less due to an illness or injury, a note from a parent is required. If a student needs to be excused from Physical Education class for more than 1 week, a physician's note is required.

D. Medication Policy for Prescription and OTC Medications

Cornerstone personnel will administer no prescription or over the counter medication unless written authorization forms are on file from the student's physician and parent. This authorization must be renewed annually, even if the order is for over-the-counter medication.

E. Labeling Medication

All medications must be in their original containers. When filling prescriptions, parents should request two containers (one for Cornerstone and one for home) from the pharmacist.

F. Medication Security

In compliance with the School Health Standards (COMAR 13A..05.05.05--15) medications are stored in a locked cabinet. Access to medication locked in the designated place shall be under the authority of the Medication Technician.

G. Administration of Medication

Parents must give the first dose of any new prescription or over the counter medication, except whenever necessary or emergency medications (e.g. Epi-Pen).



Medication must be brought to Cornerstone by the parent/legal guardian. All prescribed medication to be given must be provided by the parents and meet the requirements as listed previously.

The Medication Technician will maintain a record every time a medication is given, and that form will be kept on file.

(This medication policy was formulated using the guidelines from the Maryland State Department of Education and the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene.)

H. Medical Emergency Procedures

At the beginning of the school year an **Emergency Information & Emergency Treatment Consent** form must be completed. These forms include the name and phone number of the doctor to be notified, as well as the name, address, and phone number of the parents or guardians and an alternate person to be notified if the need should arise. It is the responsibility of the parents or guardians to provide this information. If the forms are not on file by the first day of the new school year, the student will not be able to attend classes until the forms are received. In case of serious illness or injury, this information may be furnished to healthcare professionals if this is felt necessary.

In case of illness, the family will be contacted by phone, and the parents will be requested to come to Cornerstone to pick up the ill child.

In certain cases (i.e. fainting, low blood sugar, diabetic conditions, etc.) the classroom teacher must notify the office. The Medication Technician will then come to the classroom to administer first aid and to determine the status of the student. Parents will then be notified. If they cannot be reached, others listed on the emergency form will be called. Internal medication will be given only by, or on the order of, a physician.

I. Hearing and Vision Screening

Cornerstone, in cooperation with the county health department, will provide hearing and vision screenings as scheduled by the health department. Students may be referred for screenings at other times if problems are suspected.



VI. Student Information

A. Student Records

Cornerstone will maintain a complete cumulative record for each student. This record will consist of grades, standardized test results, teacher comments, health information, attendance records, behavior reports, and any other data deemed important.

All material in each student's cumulative file will be treated confidentially and will be accessible only to the professional staff, the student's parents or guardians or such persons as the parents or guardians shall authorize in writing.

Parents or guardians have the right to inspect, review and/or receive copies of academic and health records directly relating to their children. Such requests shall be made in writing to Cornerstone's office at least 2 business days in advance.

Copies of cumulative file records will not be released without the consent of the parents or guardians. Also, they will not be released until all financial obligations are met.

According to Maryland law, both parents have equal responsibility for the education of the child, and therefore, will have access to report cards and other written records.

B. Family Legal Matters

Cornerstone's Board and staff will not become involved in family legal matters unless subpoenaed by a court.

C. Reporting to Parents

Report cards are issued 4 times a year at the end of every quarter.

Two parent-teacher conferences will be scheduled during the school year. Parents are encouraged to initiate a conference with a teacher if they have questions at any other time.

Report cards will not be released if there are any outstanding financial obligations to Cornerstone Academy.



D. Parent-Teacher Conferences

Dates for parent-teacher conferences will be scheduled on Cornerstone’s calendar. Appointments may be made through the office.

E. Homework

Homework is a means for reinforcement of material introduced in class. It is also an opportunity for special projects and reports. It is important that homework assignments not occupy the majority of a student’s after-school hours. We believe that students need time to enjoy their families and expand their horizons in sports, church groups, and other activities. The amount of homework will vary from time to time. It is important for parents to remind students of their responsibility to return homework to the teacher at the required time.

F. Student Absences

Parents are ultimately responsible for decisions relating to student absences. Cornerstone encourages parents to carefully consider the academic impact on both students and teachers when students miss class for reasons other than illness.

Students who are absent and have a written excuse from a parent or guardian will be given a reasonable amount of time to make up missed homework, projects, quizzes, and tests. If a parent knows in advance that their child will be away for an extended period of time, it is the responsibility of the parent or student to deliver a written note (from the parent) to the office. The office will notify the teachers. If possible, the teachers will provide advance assignments for the student to complete before leaving.

G. Dress Code

Student attire must reflect Christian values and be modest. This would preclude student clothing that is too tight, too short, too revealing or which displays questionable graphics, slogans or writing on shirts or pants. No belts, backpacks or clothing with chains or metal studs are permitted. Modesty should be observed, and we ask parents cooperation in overseeing this matter. Students may occasionally be asked to “dress up” a bit more than usual for a field trip or special program. Parents will be notified of this in advance. Our students represent our school and our Lord in the way they dress and will be expected to abide by these guidelines.



H. Lunch

Students will bring their own lunch from home. Pizza may be ordered one day each week (day to be determined at the beginning of the school year). On “Pizza Day,” students should bring a drink and any other lunch items.

VII. INSTRUCTIONAL OVERVIEW

Many students learn differently, and some students have failed to learn by regular classroom methods. We believe that every child is teachable. We strive to help each of our students believe that they are capable of learning and push them to their greatest potential. Emotion functions as a switch that either closes or opens the brain’s pathways to thinking and learning. Our students are nurtured in a loving and positive environment, where they feel secure and confident. Frequent positive feedback helps our learners to feel successful.

It is also our belief that a positive relationship between parents and teachers leads to improved self-esteem (in reporting progress, exchanging information, and planning goals). For those that require remediation, the time required for remediation differs for each individual. If a student wants to learn, and if parents support the learning process with drill work and additional study time, noticeable progress occurs.

Language Arts:

We use an **Orton-Gillingham** based program called **LANGUAGE!** which is structured, and multi-sensory. This develops the weaker senses and maximizes the stronger senses. The instruction is interactive. The teacher says the fact out loud, the student repeats it, the student sees it, and writes the fact. **LANGUAGE!** directly teaches all aspects of language arts, presenting phonemic concepts in a sequential and cumulative concept-based format. Students learn how to break written words into their distinct phonemes and identify phoneme/grapheme associations.

Progress is dependent upon concept mastery. The **LANGUAGE!** materials include:

- Phonemic awareness
- Decoding/encoding connected text and isolated words
- Syllabication in word structures
- Comprehension
- Pragmatic language
- Syntactic variations and sentence patterns
- Grammatical structures of English and their inter-related functions
- Mechanics
- Principles of composition
- Morphology



- Vocabulary expansion

Students enter the **LANGUAGE!** Program at their initial proficiency levels, and their progress depends upon their understanding, applying, and mastering the concepts in a unit of study. Assessment tools are provided for the instructor to effectively gauge a student's progress.

How we teach **Reading, Writing, and Mathematics:**

- **Small Groups** – Students are placed in a small class. Students are provided frequent interactive time with a teacher on a one-to-one basis.
- **Skill-based** – Each individual skill is broken down into the smallest component. Skills are taught to mastery before the student moves on to the next skill. We directly teach each skill without assuming each student will independently learn it on their own.
- **Systematically** – Each fact is taught incrementally, step by step. The structured environment provides students with the consistency they need. Teachers use a spiraling method to revisit concepts even after new material is introduced. This ensures that students retain the skills they learn throughout the year. Teachers use the latest teaching techniques, and use some traditional teaching methods, like drills, to help students commit ideas to memory.
- **Taught to Mastery** – We test students frequently and re-teach any skill not mastered.

Science and Social Studies:

Students are placed in Science and Social Studies classes based on their language placement. National Curriculum Standards in both Science and Social Studies are used to create the framework for the units studied each year. Students work best with a multisensory approach to learning. Therefore, the program includes carefully selected hands-on experiences, with field trips, art projects, and teacher created programs, video presentations, guest speakers, games, and classwork. Units are created by the classroom teacher. Our desire is that through the study of history, geography, social studies, and science, students will come to understand God's truth. We want our students to see that from creation and all through history, every story is **HIS STORY**.

Art class sparks the creative talents of many of our students. The instructor teaches the fundamentals of art and provides students with materials in which they can produce a variety of art and craft projects throughout the year.

Music and Drama are areas where students can explore and express their performing talents. Each year we provide opportunities for drama productions, talent shows, poetry recitals, bells, recorder, guitar instruction, music, and drama classes. These activities and classes vary from year to year. In



the Language classroom, teachers include elements of the performing arts, including puppet shows, reader's theaters, dramatization, and choral readings.

Field Trips offer hands on experiences with the facts being learned in the classroom, particularly in Social Studies and Science. Students may attend the Baltimore Symphony, the local theater, and Sight and Sound productions as exposure to the arts. A few field trips a year are reserved just for fun to facilitate community bonding. We encourage teachers to plan for at least one field trip a month.

Physical Education classes are offered each year at Cornerstone. Games and activities to strengthen physical fitness and team cooperation are emphasized.

VIII. DISCIPLINE

“They disciplined us for a little while as they thought best; but God disciplines us for our good, in order that we may share in his holiness. No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it.” Hebrews 12:10-11 (NIV)

At Cornerstone Academy, we require students to respect each other, parents, visitors, and school employees. Cornerstone students are expected to obey student behavior policies adopted by the school. Discipline is a necessary part of the learning experience. We desire to guide students according to biblical standards, using Scripture as the basis for our discipline procedures. At Cornerstone Academy, we emphasize preventative discipline. Below are a few strategies we implement to encourage godly behavior:

- Praying for the specific needs of students
- Maintaining well-organized classrooms
- Stating classroom and school rules in a positive manner
- Reinforcing appropriate behavior
- Recognizing and affirming each student
- Demonstrating sensitivity to the needs of each child
- Implementing challenging and motivating curriculum
- Communicating regularly with parents
- Modeling a godly example to the students

The school's primary goal is to educate, not to punish; however, when the behavior of an individual student comes in conflict with the rights of others, corrective actions may be necessary for the benefit of that individual and the school as a whole. Accordingly, students shall be governed by policies, regulations, and rules set forth in this Discipline Policy.



The purpose of all discipline is to correct unacceptable behavior patterns. The ultimate goal of all discipline is for complete restoration of the violator with his/her peer group, staff, and most importantly, God.

We believe it is a privilege to attend Cornerstone Academy. All students are expected to cooperate with our standards of behavior to assure their continued attendance at Cornerstone Academy.

The Cornerstone Academy Discipline Policy is effective during the following times and in the following places:

- At school or on school property at any time;
- Off school grounds at any activity, function, or event and while traveling to and from such events;
- On vehicles provided for student transportation.

Students are expected to adhere to all school rules and regulations, follow directions, and interact respectfully with fellow students and school personnel. ALL teachers, administrators, and other support personnel are responsible for ensuring compliance with the Cornerstone Academy Discipline Policy.

The following behaviors are handled initially by the classroom teacher or supervising teacher, but are referred to the administration if they become chronic:

| Behaviors | Actions |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Excessive talking ● Failure to complete assigned schoolwork ● Foul language ● Inappropriate behavior during school activities ● Inappropriate clothing ● Inappropriate displays of affection ● Inappropriate behavior in hallways and outside of classroom ● Lateness ● Lying ● Throwing objects ● Being unprepared for class ● Using unapproved electronic devices | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Verbal reminder to student of expected appropriate behavior. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Students will receive two verbal reminders 2. Home contact by teacher and in-class consequence 3. Referral to Principal 4. Lunch or After-school detention <p><i>*The school administration reserves the right for expediting the disciplinary process depending on the circumstances of the student's behavior.</i></p> |



The following behaviors are immediately referred to the principal and home contact is made:

| Behavior | Action |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bullying • Teasing or derogatory remarks towards others • Defiance • Physicality with students or staff members • Endangerment of self or others • Fighting • Malicious or excessive profanity (possible expulsion) • Non-emergency fire alarm • Overt sexual behavior • Possession of drugs and/or alcohol • Possession of knives, guns or other weapons • Theft • Threatening • Sexual or physical harassment • Skipping school • Smoking • Unauthorized administration/possession of medication • Vandalism • Verbal aggression | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Referral to principal and home contact by Principal 2. Detention 3. Meeting with parents 4. In or out-of-school suspension 5. Verbal and written apology to the offended person(s) before being able to return to school 6. Disciplinary probation 7. Expulsion <p style="text-align: right; margin-top: 20px;"><i>*The school administration reserves the right for expediting the disciplinary process depending on the circumstances of the students' behavior.</i></p> |



A. **Detentions**

Students may receive lunch detention or after-school detention for consequences of unacceptable behavior, excessive tardiness, or violation of rules and policies such as foul language, inappropriate behavior, or physical contact with other students. Service hours to Cornerstone or other consequences may be assigned to students in lieu of detention.

B. **Suspension**

If a student is suspended, an administrator or teacher may require a personal conference with the parents of that student before the student is reinstated. Students suspended from Cornerstone are responsible to make up all academic work missed during the suspension. The following offenses will most likely result in suspension on their first occurrence:

- Theft
- Use or possession of tobacco, alcohol, or drugs
- Fighting
- Stealing
- Threatening (possible expulsion)
- Harassment (possible expulsion)
- Continued harassment of other students
- Malicious or excessive profanity (possible expulsion)
- Unauthorized administration/possession of medication

C. **Dismissal/Expulsion**

Expulsion is an action of the Board upon the recommendation of the staff. A student may be expelled for the following reasons:

- The commission of any crime, gross immorality, gross misbehavior, or the violation of any other written rules and regulations established by the Board inside or outside of Cornerstone Academy.
- When the presence of the student is deemed to be detrimental to the best interest of Cornerstone Academy.

Dismissal means the student cannot do the following:

- Attend Cornerstone as a student or be on the grounds
- Attend any program at Cornerstone in the daytime or at night
- Attend any Cornerstone sponsored activity

Final transcripts will reflect the final completed year at Cornerstone. The final report card will reflect the final completed quarter at Cornerstone. Grades earned for partial quarters up to the date of the expulsion will be provided upon request.



D. Disciplinary Probation

Disciplinary probation may be invoked if a student has a severe behavioral offense or repeated behavior offenses during one academic year. A Probation Hearing is required if a student receives two suspensions during one academic year.

1. Reasons for Probation:

- A rebellious spirit, which is unchanged after much effort by the teachers.
- A continued negative attitude and influence upon other students.
- Continued deliberate disobedience.
- Committing a serious breach of conduct inside or outside of Cornerstone, which has an adverse effect upon Cornerstone's testimony.
- Failure of the parents to comply with the disciplinary procedures of Cornerstone.
- Repeated offenses of a similar nature.

2. Invoking Probation:

The probation will take place after the student has attended a Probation Hearing. The Hearing Board will be made up of members of the staff with the parent and student in attendance

A written letter explaining the probation and making suggestions for parental action in cooperation with the actions of Cornerstone will be sent to the parents and a copy placed in the student's file.



IX. BENEFITS WE PROVIDE

- Structured routine
- Small class size
- Curriculum that is appropriately challenging for learners of all abilities
- Multisensory teaching approach
- Frequent review of skills mastered
- Instruction of new material given in appropriate chunks
- Mastery of skills before a child moves to new material
- Teacher-directed instruction, child centered classroom
- Frequent monitoring of student's work
- Clear and repeated directions before starting a project
- Untimed tests
- Plenty of time to process directions and information
- Frequent breaks
- Limited copying from the board
- Carefully constructed worksheets
- Immediate rewards for good work and behavior
- Instruction in self-checking skills and proofreading
- Use of highlighters to pinpoint main ideas and key words
- Use of pencil grips, reading guides, and spell checks (as needed)
- Keyboarding instruction
- Access to computers for skill reinforcement
- Limited homework
- Frequent field trips
- Exposure to the arts
- A **Newsletter** for parents every **Tuesday** to provide information
- Minimal visual, auditory, and social distractions
- Use of biblical principles to teach socialization skills
- Consistent discipline policy
- Positive reinforcement and feedback
- Prearranged signals to bring student back to task
- Explicit teaching of time management and organizational skills
- Materials management
- Positive learning environment where each child is accepted and appreciated for their individuality and their specific learning needs



X. APPENDIX

A. Teacher Credentials

| | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Janet Horst Piano Lesson Instructor | University of Maryland - B.S. of Music Education - M.M.Ed. |
| Kimberly Kirk Business Manager Science Teacher Math Teacher | Towson University - B.S. of Business and Finance, Math Minor Western Maryland College - MS Ed. of Special Education Jemicy School - Orton Gillingham Level I |
| Taylor McIntyre English Teacher Orton Teacher | Michigan State University - B.A. of English, English as a Second Language |
| Danielle Ngalibika Principal Math Teacher Orton Teacher | The George Washington University - BA of Psychology, Sociology Minor Harvard Graduate School of Education - M.Ed. of School Leadership IMSE - Orton Gillingham Level I |
| Mary Ann Sterling Math Teacher Orton Teacher Health Teacher | University of Maryland - B.S. of Education IMSE and Fran Bowman - Orton Gillingham Level I and II |
| Rebecca Wiggin Teachers' Aide | Gordon College - B.S. of Elementary Education and English |
| Anna Will PE Teacher | Certified Personal Trainer Association of Sports Medicine |



B. Daily Schedule

| | | | | | |
|----------|-----------|-----------|--------------|---------------------|-----------|
| 8:00 AM | DEVOTIONS | DEVOTIONS | DEVOTIONS | DEVOTIONS | DEVOTIONS |
| 8:30 AM | ART 2 | HEALTH | ART 1 | HEALTH | ART 1 |
| | BASIC 1 | | BASIC 2 | | BASIC 2 |
| | ALG | | Pre-ALG | | PRE-ALG |
| 9:20 AM | ORTON | ORTON | ART 2 | ORTON | ORTON |
| | | | BASIC 1 | | |
| | | | ALG | | |
| 10:10 AM | ENG A | ENG A | STUDY HALL A | ENG A | ENG A |
| | SCIENCE B | SCIENCE B | SCIENCE B | STUDY HALL B | SCIENCE B |
| | GOVT C | GOVT C | GOVT C | Writing/Book Club C | GOVT C |
| 11:00 AM | ENG B | ENG B | STUDY HALL C | ENG B | CLUB |
| | SCIENCE C | SCIENCE C | SCIENCE A | SCIENCE C | |
| | GOVT A | GOVT A | GOVT B | GOVT A | |
| 11:50 AM | LUNCH | LUNCH | LUNCH | LUNCH | LUNCH |



| | | | | | |
|----------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| | | | | | |
| 12:20 PM | ENG C | PE 1 | HEALTH | PE 1 | ENG C |
| | SCIENCE A | BASIC 2 | | BASIC 2 | SCIENCE A |
| | GOVT B | PRE-ALG | | PRE-ALG | GOVT B |
| | | | | | |
| 1:20 PM | MUSIC | PE 2 | Writing | PE 2 | ENG B |
| | DRAMA | BASIC 1 | | BASIC 1 | SCIENCE C |
| | | ALG | | ALG | GOVT A |
| | | | | | |
| 2:20 PM | AGENDA CHECK |
| | | | | | |
| 2:30 PM | DISMISSAL | DISMISSAL | DISMISSAL | DISMISSAL | DISMISSAL |



C.

Calendar 2022-2023

| | |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|
| August 29 - September 2 | In-service for Teachers |
| September 2 | 1-2 pm Open House |
| September 6 | School Opens |
| September 12 | Back to School Night |
| September 23 | 1/2 Day In-service Staff |
| October 10 | School Closed- Indigenous Peoples' Day |
| November 4 | End of Marking Period (43 days) |
| November 4 | 1/2 Day In-service Staff |
| November 14 | Report cards go out |
| November 17 | 1/2 Day Conferences |
| November 18 | Full Day Conferences |
| November 23 - 25 | Closed Thanksgiving |
| December 19 - January 2 | Closed for Christmas |
| January 3 | School Reopens |
| January 16 | School Closed - Martin Luther King, Jr Day |
| January 27 | End of Marking Period (44 days) |
| January 27 | 1/2 Day In-service Staff |
| February 6 | Report cards go out |
| February 20 | School Closed – Presidents' Day |
| March 31 | End of Marking Period (44 days) |
| March 31 | 1/2 Day In-service Staff |
| April 3 - 10 | School Closed- Easter Break |
| April 11 | School Reopens |
| April 17 | Report cards go out |
| April 20 | 1/2 Day Conferences |
| April 21 | Full Day Conferences |
| May 19 | 1/2 Day In-service Staff |
| May 29 | School Closed - Memorial Day |
| May 31 | 1/2 Day Graduation |
| June 9 | 1/2 Day Last Day of School (42 days) |

This calendar has 173 school days. We are required by law to be in school 170 days, which allows for 3 snow days. Any unused snow days will result in an earlier end to the school year.



D. COVID Response Plans for Cornerstone Academy 2022-2023 School Year

Based on current recommendations from the Maryland State Department of Education, the CDC and the Howard County Health Department

Monitoring symptoms

- Students' temperatures should be monitored at home and no student should come to school with a temperature of 99.4 or above.
- The first time coming to school, students/others will be asked if they have any COVID related symptoms or if they have been around anyone with COVID related symptoms and sign a form indicating that they will report in the future if their symptoms or exposure to COVID has changed.
- Morning Greeters will ask upon arrival each morning if symptoms or exposure to COVID has changed.
- All staff, families, and students will be asked to report flu-like symptoms to the Medication Technician (MT).
- All persons related to Cornerstone Academy will be asked to get tested for COVID if their flu symptoms persist and report test results to the MT.
- If a student, family member, staff member or family of a staff member tests positive to COVID, it will be reported to the Howard County Health Department by the MT and we will follow their recommendations.

Facial Coverings

- Face coverings are optional.
- If staff or student tests positive for COVID-19, they must wear a mask for 5 days upon returning to school after day 5 at home.
- At lunch while eating, during outdoor recess, and during Physical Education class students will not be required to wear masks.
- If a student becomes ill during the day while at school, they will wear a mask while on school premises until picked up by parent/guardian.

Social Distancing

- There are no recommended social distancing protocols advised by the Maryland State Department of Education or the CDC



Guidance for COVID-19 Symptoms, Isolation, and Quarantine

| | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>COVID-19 Symptoms</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff or student should not attend or work in school • COVID-19 testing is recommended • If test is negative, may return when symptoms have improved, no fever for 24 hours without medication, and applicable criteria in the Communicable Diseases Summary have been met |
| <p>Positive test for COVID-19, regardless of symptoms</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff or student must stay home for 5 days from the start of symptoms or from the date of the positive test if no symptoms • After day 5, may return if symptoms have improved and no fever for at least 24 hours without medication • Upon return, must wear a mask for 5 additional days (except while eating, drinking, sleeping or outside) • If unable to wear a mask for medical reasons, may return if they have a negative test at day 5 or later; otherwise, they should remain at home for days 6-10 |
| <p>Close contact with someone with known or suspected COVID-19 but no symptoms</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff or student can continue to work in or attend school regardless of vaccination status • Those who can mask should do so for 10 days from the last day of exposure • A test 3-5 days after exposure is recommended, especially for those who cannot mask due to medical reasons |

**Adapted from the Maryland State Department of Health “P-12 School and Child Care COVID-19 Guidance” (July 22, 2022)*



Identifying Small Groups and Keeping Them Together

- Since Cornerstone Academy has under 30 students, they will be considered one cohort group.
- Students will each have their own material storage crate and a bin to keep their supplies separated from other students.
- Only one student will be allowed in the bathroom to use the facility at a time.

Hand Hygiene

- Students will be directly taught how to wash their hands and will be reminded by the staff.
- Signage will be posted in the bathrooms reminding students and staff of hand washing.
- Students will sanitize hands upon entering school.
- Students will be reminded and allowed to wash their hands frequently throughout the day. We will require hand washing prior to lunch.
- Multiple hand sanitizing stations will be set up in the building and one in every classroom.

Cleaning and Disinfecting

- Surfaces of tables will be disinfected after lunch.
- Staff will disinfect all common touch areas in the building daily. This includes desks, door handles, light switches, bathroom toilet handles and sink handles, countertops, copier, and cabinet handles.
- Bathroom trash cans will be non-touch.
- The cleaning company will be hired to clean the classrooms twice as often as in previous years.
- Each room of the building will be supplied with their own disinfectant and paper towels to use as required. The teacher is responsible to store them safely
- Students will each have their own crate for books, notebooks and folders.
- Plans for cleaning an area used by a person who displays symptoms of COVID-19 will include opening the window to increase ventilation in the room. Then we will thoroughly disinfect any area touched by the sick person and disinfect all light switches, door handles, tables and floors in the room. Proper PPE equipment will be worn by the person cleaning.

Dining Area/Food Service

- Cornerstone Academy has no cafeteria service.
- All students will bring their own lunches each day.
- Food can be provided and served for special occasions.
- Students will be allowed to use the water cooler.

Facility Considerations



- **Mold-** There are no instances of mold currently in our building.
- **HVAC-** the HVAC system has been inspected by our building supervisor; the filters have been upgraded, and fresh air intake has been optimized. Doors and windows will be opened to increase ventilation as needed. Teachers will ensure windows and doors are locked at the end of each day.

Transportation

- No buses are used at Cornerstone Academy.
- Each family will be responsible for the transportation of their own child to and from school.
- Carpools will be allowed in school with parent permission only.

Medication Technician/Isolation/Exclusion/Quarantine and Return to School

- A good supply of face masks and gloves were purchased for the MT and for each classroom as needed. These supplies will be reordered as necessary.
- Classroom #7 has been identified as the isolation space for symptomatic people.
- Students or staff with COVID-19 symptoms will be immediately separated.
- We will require parent pick up of anyone who is sick.
- Areas used by a sick person will be closed off and we will not use these areas until after cleaning and disinfecting.
- If a student or staff member tests positive for Covid-19 the Howard County Health Department will be notified and we will follow their guidance.
- Staff and families will be notified immediately of any case of COVID-19 while maintaining confidentiality.
- Students or staff who test positive for COVID-19 will follow the Health Departments guidelines for quarantine and returning to school.
- When calling in absenteeism as is already required, parents or staff members will report to the principal/MT if the reason is due to symptoms.

Communication/Reporting

- This reopening plan will be given to each family and staff member of the school. It will also be reviewed at Back-to-School teacher week and at Back-to-School Parent Night.
- The principal will be responsible to inform the school community of policies and revisions of policies and procedures to promote safety and health and prevent the spread of illnesses.
- An email alert will be sent out to inform students, families and staff of a COVID-19 case present on our campus.
- Families and staff will be required to report to the principal of being infected with COVID-19 virus or being in close contact with an infected person.



- The Medication Technician will be the designated person from Cornerstone Academy to report COVID-19 positive cases or potentially infected persons to the health department.

Supports Provided for COVID-19 related Anxiety and Stress

- Counseling support services will be available to students as needed due to COVID-19 related stress.
- We will provide group discussions led by a professional counselor as needed.
- We will allow opportunities for small group discussions if needed for students to express their fears, anxieties and stress related to COVID-19.