



Rhema Academy

A Christian, Classical, and Chartered School

1640 Salem Road
Caledonia, Ohio 43314

2025-2026 School Year Family & Student Handbook

www.rhemaacademyk12.education

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Section 1: Introduction

Welcome to Rhema Academy! This handbook includes the overall philosophies, characteristics, belief statements with respect to the Christian Faith, and other current relevant information. The handbook also contains the rules and policies that enable the school to operate in an efficient manner, where all students can maximize their learning.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Brian Sparling and he will attempt to answer any questions you may have.

1.01 Foundation

Rhema Academy desires to provide an alternative in education to parents and families. Through a biblically-based and Christ-centered education, our goal is to support parents who wish a sound academic education for their children that nurtures their children's hearts and minds to know God's Word and seek His purpose for their lives. The model for Rhema's academic instruction is Hillsdale College's K-12 Classical Curriculum focusing on grammar at the K-5 level, logic in grades 6-8, and rhetoric at grades 9-12. The basis for Bible instruction is Summit Ministries' Bible curriculum, School Ministries' God's Rescue Mission, and other Bible instruction resources.

This handbook is designed to share important information and policies of Rhema Academy. Please read it and keep it available for future reference. The Rhema Academy Board and Administration reserve the right to amend these policies at any time.

1.02 Non-Discrimination Statement

The Governing Board of Rhema Academy has adopted the following racial non-discriminatory policies. Rhema Academy recruits and admits students of any race, color or ethnic origin to all its rights, privileges, programs and activities. In addition, the school will not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national and ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, employment, scholarship and loan programs and athletic and other school administered programs

Rhema Academy will not discriminate on the basis of race, color, or ethnic origin in the hiring of its certified or non-certified personnel.

Section 2: Foundational Information

2.01 Executive Leadership

Rhema Academy operates under the authority and is governed by the Governing Board. The board serves as the development and advisory group for the school. The Rhema Academy Board appoints the administration to establish policy and oversee the daily operation of the school. The headmaster/principal reports to the Rhema Academy Board regularly to communicate progress, growth and development issues.

2.02 Mission Statement

It is the mission of Rhema Academy in partnership with families to create a Christian school with excellence in education and Biblical instruction.

2.03 Vision Statement

Rhema Academy's vision is that students will be equipped with a strong foundation in academics and applying the principles of God's Word, in order to be successful leaders and contributors to their families, the church, the greater community.

2.04 Statement of Faith

We accept and proclaim the historic truths of the Christian faith including the following:

God and the Human Race—We hold that the Lord our God is one: Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and that He fulfills His Sovereign Purposes (Isaiah 55:10-11) — in creation, revelation, redemption, judgment, and the coming of His Kingdom — by calling out from the world a people united to Himself and to each other in love (Isaiah 43:11). We acknowledge that God wonderfully and immutably created us from conception, male and female, in His own Likeness and Image (Genesis 1:26-28), conferring on us dignity and worth and enabling us to respond to Him (Psalm 139:1-18). However, we are members of a fallen race; we have sinned and come short of His Glory (Romans 3:23).

Jesus Christ—We believe that the Father has shown us His Holy Love in giving Jesus Christ, His only Son, for us, while through our sinfulness and guilt, we were subject to His Wrath and condemnation; and has shown His Grace by putting sinners right with Himself when they place their trust in His Son (1 John 3:1-3). We confess Jesus Christ as Lord and God; as truly human, born of the Virgin Mary (Isaiah 7:14, Matthew 1:23); as Servant, sinless, full of grace and truth (John 1:14, 16-18); as only Mediator and Savior (1 Timothy 2:5), dying on the cross in our place, representing us to God (Hebrews 7:24-26), redeeming us from the grip, guilt and punishment of sin (John 3:16-17); as victory over Satan and all his forces (1 John 3:8), rising from death with a glorious body (Acts 1:3), being taken up to be with His Father (Acts 1:9-11), and one day returning personally in glory and judgment to establish His Kingdom (1 Thessalonians 5:2-4, Acts 1:11).

Holy Spirit—We believe in the Holy Spirit who convicts the world of guilt in regard to sin, righteousness and judgment (John 16:7-11); who makes the death of Christ effective to sinners, declaring that we must now turn to Christ in repentance, and directing our trust towards the Lord Jesus Christ (Mark 1:14-15, Acts 16:25-34), who through the new birth makes us partakers in the life of the risen Christ (1 Peter 1:3-9), illuminating our minds to grasp the truth of Scripture (John 16:12-15), producing in us fruit (Galatians 5:22-25), granting to us His Gifts (1 Corinthians 12:1-11, 14:1-16), and empowering us for service in the world (Acts 1:8). Supporting Scripture: 1 John 1:1-2:2

The Holy Bible - We believe that the Old and New Testament Scriptures are God-breathed, since their writers spoke from God as they were moved by the Holy Spirit; hence are fully trustworthy in all that they affirm; and are our highest authority for faith and life. Supporting Scripture: 2 Timothy 3:16-17

The Church and its Mission —We recognize the Church as the body of Christ held together by the working of His Spirit and growing up in Him, both as a total fellowship throughout the world and as the local congregation in which believers gather in fellowship and service (Ephesians 4:1-6). We acknowledge the commission of Christ to proclaim the Good News to all people making them disciples, teaching them to observe all things that

Christ has commanded, and to be baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. We acknowledge the command of Christ to love our neighbors, resulting in service to the Church and society, in seeking reconciliation for all with God and their fellows; and in spreading Christ's justice as defined in His Word in an unjust world until He comes again. (Matthew 28: 18-20)

Human Life –We believe God endowed all human life with inherent dignity from conception through every stage of development. All life has value and is important to God so that the believer is compelled to have compassion for all. Our love for Christ and for those created in His Image is the basis for teaching, loving, and serving our students. (Isaiah 44:2, 49:1)

Marriage and Sexuality–As defined in Scripture, we believe that the term “marriage” has one meaning, is marriage sanctioned by God, and joins one man and one woman in a single, exclusive, covenantal union. We believe that God intends sexual intimacy to occur only between a man and a woman who are married to each other. We believe that any form of sexual immorality, such as adultery, fornication, homosexual conduct, bisexual conduct, bestiality, incest, pedophilia, any use of pornography or any attempt to change one’s sex, or otherwise acting upon any disagreement with one’s biological sex, is disordered and offensive to God’s desire for human flourishing. We believe that God offers redemption and restoration to all who confess and repent, seeking His mercy and forgiveness through Jesus Christ. We believe that every person must be afforded compassion, love, kindness, respect, and dignity. Hateful and harassing behavior or attitudes directed toward any individual are unacceptable and are inconsistent with Scripture. Supporting Scripture: Genesis 1:27-28; Genesis 2:18-25; Exodus 20:14; Matthew 19:3-9; Romans 1:18-32; 1 Corinthians 6:9-20; Ephesians 5:22-33; Hebrews 13:4

Identity in Jesus Christ

“For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world but to save the world through Him.” (John 3:16-17) God has commended His own love toward us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. (Romans 5:8) We cannot boast about what we have done. God who is rich in mercy has made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in our sins. (Ephesians 2:4-9) Our true identity is found when we accept the free gift of Jesus Christ as God’s Son and begin to live our life not for ourselves but for Him. He provided forgiveness through His death on the cross in our place and by His resurrection is destroying our greatest fears and giving us true peace. (Romans 3:23-24)

God wants to be our Father forever. By accepting the gift of God’s Holy Spirit, we are being transformed to be more like Jesus and can receive grace to live a new life in a relationship as a Child of the heavenly Father and have become part of God’s family, His Church.

Conflict Resolution – Rhema Academy encourages families to create a partnership with the teachers and school staff focused on the development of their child. Open and frequent communication between teachers and parents are a positive benefit for the student and helps to avoid problems. Parents are asked to communicate directly with their child’s teacher(s) about their child’s progress and any questions and/or

concerns with respect to any area of their child's schooling and performance. The school staff is committed to assist parents in answering their questions and/or resolving any problems/concerns.

If a situation arises, where the above guidelines do not achieve a successful resolution, parents are requested to submit a request to schedule a meeting with Head Master, the child's teacher(s), and parents. Parents are encouraged to make this request in writing, listing their concerns. A meeting will then be scheduled with all three parties (Parent, Teacher, Administration) to attempt to come to a resolution to the problem.

If the above meeting does not produce a resolution, the parents may appeal (in writing) to the Board President for a meeting. The Board will have the final decision for any conflicts.

Statement of Biblical Authority—The above statement of faith does not exhaust the extent of our faith. The Bible itself, as the inspired and infallible Word of God that speaks with final authority concerning truth, morality, and the proper conduct of all is the sole and final source of all that we believe to address issues that may arise.

2.05 Philosophy of Education

Rhema Academy upholds the historic Christian view of life as presented in the Bible: since God created and sustains everything through His Son Jesus Christ, the world and life are God-centered and should glorify Him. Man, being a sinner by nature and choice, however, cannot in this condition glorify or know God. Man can only do this through the new birth, and by committing one's life to Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. The total process of education, therefore, seeks this restoration of the student to the position of true knowledge, true righteousness, and true holiness in Christ. Rhema seeks to assist in this transformation by developing and relating the whole person to God spiritually, mentally, socially, emotionally, and physically. When we provide an atmosphere where young people can experience regeneration and spiritual growth, they can grow in their understanding of God's will. Discipleship, therefore, is an important part of the ministry of Rhema.

Such an education stems from the comprehensive principle stated in Colossians 1:16-17: "For by Him (Christ) all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through Him and for Him. He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together." Such an education is God-centered, not man-centered, and presents God's truth as the only source of truth through general revelation in nature (Romans 1:20) and spiritual revelation, Christ revealed to us through His Word. (John 1:1-5, 14) Even though knowledge is often factually the same for both the Christian and non-Christian, no subject can be taught in the totality of its truth if the Creator is ignored or denied.

Also vital to such an education is the recognition of the Holy Spirit's ministry in teaching and learning. If "all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hidden in Christ" (Colossians 2:3), then an educational process conducted in vital union with the Holy Spirit will be a truly fruitful one. "He will guide you into all truth..." (John 16:13)

It is in this atmosphere that Rhema embraces a program of instructional excellence emphasizing solid academics and using educationally sound materials and methods to develop the student's intellect. We believe

parents are seeking this type of education when they enroll their children at Rhema Academy. We believe that the school should function as an extension of the home to aid parents in their God-given responsibility to “train up their children in the way they should go.” (Proverbs 22:6)

2.06 Characteristics of Christian Classical Education

Rhema Academy in the classical model embraces and upholds the following key characteristics:

1. A curriculum that is Christ-Centered, content rich, balanced, and strong across the four disciplines of mathematics, science, literature, and history.
2. Instruction in the Western tradition through history, literature, philosophy and the fine arts.
3. Study of the American literary, moral, philosophical, political, and historical traditions with respect to Western civilization thought and culture.
4. Explicit instruction in phonics and grammar.
5. The study of Latin is valuable to the development of language skills, not only of English but also of the Romance languages, including French, Italian and Spanish.
6. An approach to instruction that acknowledges objective standards of truth, goodness, and beauty.
7. A well-educated and articulate faculty who use traditional, teacher-led methods of instruction.
8. A commitment to use technology effectively without diminishing the faculty leadership that is crucial to academic achievement and with discretion to ensure the security of our students.
9. A plan to serve Grades K through 12 (even if the school must open with fewer grades) so as to provide continuity and a recurrent examination of subjects throughout a student’s academic career.
10. A school culture of Christian virtue, respect, and discipline inspiring excellence in every facet of the lives of students, faculty and staff.

2.07 Teaching Ministry

Teachers and school administrators are called by God to assist in the development of our students’ faith. Jesus, our Savior, was also a teacher. He gathered His Disciples and others around Him and taught with such conviction and truth that "many who heard Him were astonished, saying, 'Where did this man get these things? What is the wisdom given to Him? How are such mighty works done by His Hands?'" (Mark 6:2). His apostles, likewise, were teachers and gave witness "with great power through the Holy Spirit" through their words and deeds, and "giving their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all" (Acts 4:33).

The ministry of teaching obligates the teacher to help his or her students toward an understanding not only of mathematics or science, but how the order and discipline of mathematics or science reveals the Mind of God. It obligates one not only to instruct in geography and history, but to instill faith by helping students know that God created the mountains, the seas, the rivers, the deserts, the forests, the plains, and all the creatures that inhabit them, and to learn that human discoveries, empires, conflicts, and social movements are measured by God’s divinely ordained order. (Daniel 2:31-45) The ministry of teaching requires one not only to help students learn skills in spelling, reading, grammar, and writing, but also to acquire in human language, an understanding of Scripture as the primary means by which students communicate the Gospel message. Regardless of the subject, true teachers minister to their students by helping them follow Paul’s admonition: “Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. What you have *learned* and *received* and *heard* and *seen* in me, practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you.” (Phil 4:8-9)

Teachers in a Christian school must be ever mindful that they instruct not only through rational explanation of formal subject material but even more powerfully through word, deed, example, and shared experience. (Colossians 3:17) Simply put, they teach faith by modeling faith and by modeling faithfulness, both at school and away. This is why all teachers, even before their first meeting with students, must subscribe to the school's Statement of Faith. Teachers must teach the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth. "Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor, for we are members of one another...Let no corrupt talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear." (Ephesians 4:25, 29).

Teachers minister to the students by providing them with faith experiences. They lead the children in prayer, praise, and mercy. Paul urged Christians to "Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you." (Ephesians 4:31-32). Teachers also model the Christian life by being in fellowship with other Christians through their regular church attendance.

Section 3: General School Information

3.01 School Hours

The Rhema Academy school day begins at 8:00 am and ends at 3:00 pm. The office is open from 7:30 am until 4:00 pm each day.

3.02 School Closings, Delays, Early Dismissals

Emergency School Closings, Delays, and Early Dismissals (due to weather and/or other unforeseen circumstances) will be communicated to parents.

3.03 Morning Drop Off

Students should be brought to school between 7:30 and 8:00 am. Parents should park in the main parking lot (south of the building) and walk to Main Rhema Entrance (furthest south door on the west side of the building) Upon entering, students will go into the gym until their specific teacher has them go to their classroom. On days when the weather is inclement, there will be a sign in the parking lot directing students to use the main sanctuary entrance (on the south side of the building). On these days, the students will remain in the sanctuary until their teacher walks them to their classroom.

3.04 Dismissal

Students will be dismissed at 3:00 pm (or earlier in the case of an early dismissal). The dismissal procedures and locations will be the same as the drop off procedures and locations. If students are not picked up within 10 minutes of dismissal, parents will need to come to the office to sign their child(ren) out of school. Situations where students are continually picked up late will be discussed on a case-by-case basis with the administration.

3.05 Transportation to and From School

Once the Rhema State Charter is completed (estimated early October), parents may apply to their residential public school district for transportation. Please note, the public school district may choose to provide a stipend in lieu of bus transportation. Ultimately, it is the responsibility of the parents to provide transportation both to and from school each day.

3.06 Student Release Policy

The parents (guardians) of each child must supply Rhema with a list of adults who are authorized to pick up their child from school. Any individuals not recognized by the staff will need to bring proper identification with them. In any unusual situations, the Rhema Staff will need to contact the parents before the child will be released. These decisions will be made by the Rhema Staff.

3.07 Changes in Student Personal Information

Parents are required to keep all student information current and up to date. This includes guardian and/or custodial changes, address changes, parent contact phone and emails (both home and work), employment, emergency contact information, and adults authorized to pick up students. These changes should be done in person at the school office.

3.08 Court Documents

Parents must provide Rhema copies of court related documents pertaining to their child(ren)'s welfare, such as access to student records, custody, restraining orders, probation, etc.

3.09 Withdrawal

Parents must complete the withdrawal paperwork, return all school materials, and pay any outstanding school fees. Rhema will send a student's official records to their new school when it receives an official record request and all of the above criteria have been met. Parents may request unofficial records at any time.

3.10 Lunch

All students should bring a nutritious and balanced packed lunch to school each day. There are no refrigeration or heating options available for students, so these lunches need to be planned accordingly. Parents must notify the school of any food allergies and/or diet restrictions. Please avoid carbonated and red drinks.

Parents and/or other family members desiring to eat lunch with their child will need to make prior (at least one school day) arrangements with the administration. These occurrences should be reserved only for rare and special circumstances and should not be a "regular" occurrence.

3.11 Student School Day Assemblies / Gatherings

Weekly chapel services will be in the morning and will include prayer, worship, and Bible study. Chapel services may include guest speakers. All students will be expected to attend chapel services and behave in an appropriate, orderly, and respectful manner. Parents and other invited visitors are encouraged to attend, but they must sign in at the office before the event. Individuals should contact the office for an exact schedule of dates and times.

3.12 Communications with Families

Families should expect regular communication from both the Rhema Administration and Classroom Teachers. This may be done via email, phone calls, written notes, letters, and forms. Parents should plan to attend (with their child) the Before School Orientation and Parent Teacher Conferences. The exact dates for these events will be established at a later time. Parents may call the school at any time to request a conference with either their child's teacher and/or the Rhema Administration. Parents should make sure they are following the "Conflict Resolution" Guidelines found in Section 2.04 with respect to any problems.

3.13 Medications

The following conditions must be met to have a child take any medications while attending Rhema Academy:

1. A completed medication authorization form must be provided to the school office for the official student record. All parts of this form must be completed, including dosage, and times the medication is to be administered. This form must be completed (and signed) by the parents and the student's doctor.
2. All medications must be in their original container and be clearly labeled with student's name.
3. All medications must be stored in the Rhema Office and will be administered only by Rhema Academy Personnel. When additional medications are required, parents must bring them to the Rhema Office when the student arrives at school. Special arrangements must be made for asthma inhalers, EpiPens, and diabetic supplies.
4. All over the counter medications (Tylenol, Advil, Motrin, natural remedies, etc.) fall under this policy. Parents may provide written consent for the administration of these types of medications.

3.14 Immunizations

The Ohio Department of Health (per Ohio Revised Code 3313.671) requires that all students attending any school must have the minimum number of required doses of vaccines or have a completed waiver on file in the school office. No student will be permitted to attend school until this requirement is met. Please contact the Rhema Office for vaccine requirements and/or a waiver form.

3.15 Emergency Operations Plan

Rhema Academy has a comprehensive Emergency Operations Plan on file with the Ohio Department of Education, Ohio Department of Homeland Security, Marion County Sheriff, and the First Consolidated Fire Department of Caledonia.

3.16 Emergency Drills

All emergency drills (Fire, Tornado, Lockdown, etc.) will be completed as required by law at various times throughout the school year.

3.17 Emergency Medical Plan

Precautions are taken to prevent accidents and to ensure the safety of all students. Should an accident occur, the Rhema Staff are equipped to care for minor wounds and illnesses. Parents will be contacted by the school office and updated as soon as possible when a situation occurs. When a student comes to the office for care, a staff member will determine if the student should remain in school or go home. If a student needs to go home,

the appropriate person (per student emergency medical file) will be contacted and the student will remain in the office until they are picked up. No student is permitted to leave school for any reason without first reporting to the office.

If Rhema Academy Administration determines further medical assistance is required, then the school will call an emergency squad for the safety and well-being of the student, including transportation to appropriate medical facilities. Rhema Academy will make every effort to contact the parents of the student as soon as possible. Supervision of subsequent medical decisions will become the responsibility of the parents.

A report of any accident or illness will be completed by the appropriate Rhema Staff supervising at the time of the incident. A copy of this report will be given to the parents and kept in the student's file.

3.18 Confidentiality of Records

Student records will be kept secure in the Rhema Administration Office only be available to the student's parents, teachers, administration, authorized Ohio Department of Education Agents, and representatives of a court or law enforcement with a valid court order.

3.19 Student Photographs / Videos

Throughout the school year, Rhema Academy will have the opportunity to photograph various student activities. Opportunities where students may be photographed and/or recorded include (but are not limited to) student recognition programs, assemblies, field trips, classroom activities, special activities, fine arts programs, and service opportunities. Rhema Academy reserves the right to use these photographs and videos to help tell our story and applaud the efforts of our students. Photographs and videos may be used in various school publications which may include (but not limited to) the Rhema Website, promotional materials, print materials, and displays at the school. In all publications, it is the intent to highlight and celebrate the success of our students. Students will not be identified by name in any photographs or videos without written permission from the parents first. All parents will be required to complete a form at the start of the school year, either granting or withholding permission for these purposes. This form can be updated at any time during the school year for future publications.

3.20 Student Needs

Rhema Academy will continually monitor the needs of all students attending the school. This includes evaluating their academic, social, emotional, behavioral, spiritual, and physical needs. If at any time, it is determined that Rhema Academy can no longer adequately meet the needs of a student, a meeting will be scheduled with parents and student to discuss changes that need to be made for the student to be successful.

Section 4: Admissions Policies

4.01 Admissions Philosophy

Rhema Academy is a chartered nonpublic K-6 school that is committed to partner with families to provide students a high quality, Christ-Centered education. For this reason, Rhema Academy has established specific admissions criteria, policies, and procedures to provide a Christ-Centered, safe, secure, and wholesome learning environment. These policies and procedures are designed to ensure that students receive the correct grade-level placement, and that Rhema Academy can support the development of the academic, social, behavioral, and spiritual needs of the student.

Rhema Academy recruits and admits students of any race, color or ethnic origin to all its rights, privileges, programs and activities. In addition, Rhema Academy will not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national and ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, employment, scholarship and loan programs, and athletic and other school administered programs.

By enrolling children at Rhema Academy, families pledge cooperation to pay tuition and fees regularly and on time, to encourage children in following the Christian teachings of the school, and to respect the authority of the teachers, staff, and administration.

Rhema Academy desires every student and family to come to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. Families enrolling at Rhema Academy must be supportive of and agree to have their children taught in accordance with the “Statement of Faith”. In addition, Rhema academy encourages families to recognize their scriptural responsibility to “...bring them (their children) up in the training and instruction of the Lord.” (Ephesians 6:4)

4.02 Kindergarten Age Requirements

In accordance with State Law, Rhema Academy will consider a student for admission to Kindergarten if they turn five (5) years old on or before August 1 of the current school year. Exceptions may be made on an individual basis.

4.03 Admission Process

Families wishing admission of their children to Rhema Academy must follow the steps listed below:

Initial Application

Families must submit a completed application form for each student. In addition, families must provide a copy of the birth certificate for each student, proof of residency, current report card, any state test results, attendance report (if not on the report card), signed admission policy and the nonrefundable application fee (\$50 per student). A signed agreement of the Statement of Faith Policy will be required.

Meeting

Attend an in person interview with school/parent enrollment expectations, included in the application packet.

Applicant Screening

Each student will be screened by Rhema Academy to ensure correct grade placement. Test results from current/previous schools may be accepted in place of a screening at the discretion of the administration. A decision on the application will be made by the administration following a review of all application documents.

Admission Decisions

Final admissions decisions will be made by an admission committee and communicated to the family in writing.

Enrollment Completion

In order to complete the enrollment process and hold a seat for your child, the following must be submitted: immunization records, custody/court documents (if applicable), signed acknowledgement of having read the Family Handbook and all application forms turned into the office.

Ed Choice Scholarship

Once an enrollment offer has been accepted, all families must apply for the Ed Choice Scholarship or pay the full tuition price.

Wait List for Openings

Rhema academy will create a waitlist after classes have filled. Once on the waitlist we cannot guarantee you a seat, but parents should collect all necessary documentation in case a seat becomes available. The office will call the parents to inform them of an opening and how to proceed with the application process.

4.04 Student Grade Level Placement / Graduation Credits from Other Schools

For students to thrive in school, they must master the fundamentals. The grade level placement policy is designed to promote educational excellence and fairness by placing students at the most appropriate level for instruction. Rhema Academy will accept all credits and grades towards graduation from all Public, Community, and Non Public Chartered Schools. This includes schools chartered in other states. Credits from Home School Students will be accepted provided the parents can provide sufficient documentation for the credits earned, but a grade of P (Passing) will be assigned for all grades for credits accepted.

Rhema Academy will respect the promotion and retention decisions from the school from which a student transfers. If students new to the school are found to be reading more than one grade level behind their existing peer group, they may be asked to enroll in the grade level deemed appropriate by the administration. These decisions will be based on teacher observations and/or test scores. If the parent chooses that the student be placed at the grade level in which the student originally enrolled against the advice of the school, a signed document of this choice will become part of the student's permanent file.

Section 5: Attendance Policies

5.01 Attendance Policy Overview

Parents or legal guardians must provide proof that their child(ren) have attended a school which conforms to the minimum attendance standards prescribed by the State Board of Education. Regular school attendance is vital for student success. For these reasons, Rhema Academy does everything in its power to encourage regular and punctual attendance. Parents should call or email the school if a student is ill, will be late, or will not be attending school. The tardy and absence policies are as follows:

Tardy – a student will be considered tardy if they are less than one hour late to school

Half Day Absent – a student will be considered for a half day for student missing 1 – 3.5 hours

Full Day Absent – a student will be considered absent for the full day if they miss more than 3.5 hours

5.02 Tardiness

Students are expected to be in their respective classroom and ready to begin school before the school day begins (8:00 am on a normal day). Students arriving after this time will be considered tardy and must sign in the main office before going to class. An excused absence will be granted students who are late due to doctor and/or dentist appointments provided a note from the doctor is brought to the school when the student arrives.

Every five unexcused tardies to school will result in one additional day of unexcused absence.

5.03 Student Absence Reporting

Parents can either call or email the school when it is necessary for their child to miss school. A written and signed note must accompany the child when they return to school.

5.04 Definite Reasons for Keeping a Child Home from School

Students who were sick must be fever free and had no vomiting / diarrhea for 24 hours before returning to school after an illness. If your child had a communicable disease (pinkeye, lice, strep, impetigo, etc) please contact the school so appropriate measures can be taken to prevent the spread of the disease. Students with the following symptoms should be kept home from school.

1. Fever of 100.4 or above
2. Vomiting
3. Diarrhea
4. Severe coughing
5. Difficulty breathing
6. Conjunctivitis (pink eye)
7. Untreated infected skin patches
8. Evidence of lice or scabies
9. Sore throat associated with a fever
10. Skin rashes associated with a fever
11. Covid 19 symptoms per current Covid 19 Policies

5.05 Excused Absences

The following are Rhema Academy's reasons for excusing an absence from school. Families receiving the EdChoice Scholarship should make sure they are aware of the EdChoice Student Absence Policy (outlined in section 5.10).

1. Student Illness – Parents must either call or email the school the date(s) the child will miss school before 9:00 am on the first day a student will miss school due to an illness. Please also provide a doctor's note to the school if applicable.
2. Family Emergency – Please notify the school as soon as possible with the dates and reason(s)
3. Unexpected & Unusual Personal Circumstances – An absence(s) will be considered excused for “unexpected, unusual” circumstances if the school administrator approves. Parents should communicate with the school as soon as possible (beforehand if possible), for a decision. The Rhema Administrator has the final judgement in all cases of this nature.

5.06 Extended Student Absences

Rhema Academy recognizes the fact that there are circumstances that lead to student missing school for an extended time that includes serious illness, medical procedure, out of town funeral, or any other situation. Parents should contact the school as soon as they realize their child will need to miss school for an extended time period. The parents and administrator will then develop a “plan” to minimize the impact on the student's overall learning.

5.07 Family Trips

Families are encouraged to schedule vacations during the times when school is not in session. However, Rhema recognizes that this may be impossible for some families due to work schedules, etc. Rhema also understands this can be valuable learning experiences for children. When a family needs to schedule a vacation during the school year, the parents should contact the Rhema Administrator as soon as possible prior to the trip. The parents and administrator will then develop a “plan” to allow the student to complete their school assignments in a timely manner.

5.08 Student Appointments

Parents are encouraged to schedule all appointments (dentist, doctor, etc.) outside the normal school day. Otherwise, communicate these times as soon as possible, before the appointment when possible.

5.09 Make Up Work

When a student has an excused absence(s) from Rhema, they will have the same number of school days plus one to complete their missing work. For example, if a student is absent three days, they would have the next four days to complete their missing assignments. The student will receive a failing grade (0%) for all work not completed according to this timeline. Individual teachers may extend this time if the situation requires.

If a student is going to miss multiple days, parents should contact the teacher in advance (or as soon as they are aware of the days that will be missed) for the assignments. The school will not interrupt class time to obtain assignments from teachers, so parents should expect to receive these the following day.

5.10 Unexcused Absences

All absences that do not fall into any of the reasons listed in Sections 5.03 – 5.09 will be considered “unexcused”. Parents have three school days to submit a note (either from the parent or a doctor) for the absence. After this timeline has passed, the absence will be considered unexcused and the student will receive a failing grade (0%) for all missing assignments. Ed Choice Scholarship Guidelines will apply.

5.11 Ed Choice Student Absences

Students with more than 20 unexcused absences in a school year (defined above) will lose the eligibility to renew this scholarship for the next school year.

5.12 Excessive Absences

Regular attendance at school is vital to the success of a student. The following policies will be followed for students with excessive absences.

1. A conference with administrator, parent, and students (grades 5 and above) will be required for any student with 5 or more absences (both excused and unexcused) days per quarter.
2. A student may be placed on Academic Probation (this will require a written contract between the school administrator and parents) for any student absent (excused and unexcused) 8 days in any quarter. A doctor’s note for all future absences may also be required in this situation.
3. A student who misses 20 or more days of school (both excused and unexcused) may not be promoted to the next grade level for the following year.
4. The Rhema School Administration has the right to adjust the above policies as needed for unusual individual circumstances.

Section 6: Academic Policies

6.01 Curriculum

Rhema Academy meets or exceeds all of the curriculum standards for Chartered Non-Public Schools as set forth by the Ohio Department of Education. Rhema Academy will use the Hillsdale Classical Curriculum in all applicable academic areas. Rhema Academy has a committee that evaluates all curriculum materials to ensure the best curriculum is available for students to help meet the learning standards.

6.02 Bibles

All students will be required to bring a Bible to use every day. Rhema will provide a Bible if a student’s family is unable to afford one.

6.03 Report Cards

Report cards will be issued at the end of each grading period. These will be available approximately one week after the end of the quarter. Final report cards at the end of the school year will be mailed to the parents.

6.04 Grading System

Students in Kindergarten through 2nd Grade will be evaluated on a rubric.

Students in 3rd Grade and above will be evaluated using a “traditional” grading system for all subjects. These subjects will be graded on the following scale:

A	94% - 100%	B+	90% - 91%	C+	80% - 81%	D+	73% - 74%
A-	92% - 93%	B	84% - 89%	C	76% - 79%	D	71% - 72%
		B-	82% - 83%	C-	75%	D-	70%

6.05 Student Grade Level Promotion / Retention

In accordance the Ohio Revised Code, the Board of Directors of Rhema Academy adopts this Student Promotion and Retention Policy in order to address grade level promotions / retentions while attending Rhema Academy. This policy applies to all grade levels K – 12.

Rhema Academy recognizes that the personal, social, physical, behavioral, and educational growth of children will vary and that they should be placed in the educational setting most appropriate to their needs at the various stages of their growth.

It shall be the policy of Rhema Academy that each student is moved forward in a continuous pattern of achievement and growth that is in harmony with his or her own development. A student will be promoted to the succeeding grade level when he or she has:

- Completed the state-mandated requirements at the presently assigned grade;
- In the opinion of his/her teachers, achieved the instructional objectives set for the present grade; and,
- Demonstrated sufficient proficiency to permit him or her to move ahead to the educational program of the next grade.

A final decision regarding promotion to the next grade level will be based on the student’s overall progress on grade level learning standards, standardized test results, and student overall ability and age. Each student’s progress is monitored throughout the school year. The final decision to promote or retain will be made by the teacher, administration, and parents jointly. Conferences for struggling students will be held at various times throughout the school year in an attempt to develop structures to help aid an individual student’s success.

6.06 Advanced Stading Policy

All students at Rhema Academy will be encouraged to develop their abilities as much as possible. For some students, this may require classes that are beyond the “normal” classes offered. One option for these students is to participate in the Ohio College Credit Plus Program at any time they qualify and permitted by state guidelines. Rhema Academy will adhere to all Ohio Department of Education and Workforce guidelines, procedures, and timelines associated with this program.

6.07 Students At Risk Policy

The progress of all students at Rhema Academy will be evaluated on a continuous basis and adjustments to their learning plan and goals will be adjusted accordingly. The school will use a student's grades, standardized testing scores, teacher observations, and parent input to develop and adjust this plan.

This plan will become more specific when the student enters the 9th grade and will be written to a student's specific post secondary goals and meeting graduation requirements. There will be a meeting between the student, their parents, and the administration starting with the spring of a student's 8th grade year and held in the spring each year following. Additional meetings throughout the year may be required if the administration determines a student is not meeting the criteria and goals of their educational plan.

Students who are falling behind or at risk of not meeting graduation requirements will require a specific meeting between the student, teachers, parents, and administration to develop a plan with measurable goals to help the student meet all class and graduation requirements.

6.08 Achievement / State Testing

Students at Rhema will take standardized and/or state tests at various times during the school year. Please remember, these tests are only one assessment of a student's abilities on a specific day. These assessments serve two basic purposes.

1. To better monitor the academic progress of individual students.
2. To assist the teacher and administration as they evaluate the overall progress of the class to determine areas of strength and those needing reinforcement.

6.09 Special Subjects

Students at Rhema Academy will take Art, Music, and Physical Education Classes.

6.10 Textbook and Resource Books

The Bible will be the foundation in all subjects. Students will develop the understanding that all subjects are understood and studied in light of Biblical Principles. Textbooks and resource books that are used by students at Rhema are owned by the school and need to be treated with care. Parents will be held responsible for the replacement costs of any damaged or missing materials at end of the year.

Section 7: Behavior Management and School Order

7.01 Behavior Philosophy

Discipline is a process of discipleship whereby students are guided into Christ-like character. Each teacher maintains classroom behavior in accordance with Christian principles set forth in Scripture (II Timothy 3:16). All discipline is designed to show the child their basic nature and lead them to submit themselves to God's will and to develop self-discipline under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Discipline includes both direction and restriction. In an atmosphere of clear Christian standards, there is the opportunity for strong Christian character development.

7.02 Behavior Principles

Teachers and students benefit from sound classroom management and school rules. In a school community mutual respect and order must prevail so that all students may feel safe and secure. Students should never be "put down" or demeaned before their peers. A teaching-learning situation can exist only in an orderly environment where distractions do not create barriers to student learning. We promote the positive reinforcement of behavioral management through rewards, incentives, and encouragement. Faculty and administration will seek to apply the school's rules fairly with compassion and wisdom.

Behavior management should build character and a supportive classroom community based upon the principles of the Word of God. If a behavior problem becomes more serious and cannot be resolved in the classroom, administration will step in to provide assistance. Close communication with the home should help avert a more serious problem. "Plans fail for lack of counsel, but with many advisors, they succeed." (Proverbs 15:22)

7.03 Dress Code

Objective

The goal of the dress code is to assist students in developing the skills needed to present themselves as Christian witnesses in the world, with an outward appearance that reflects modesty and neatness.

General Guidelines

Girls: Uniform dresses, uniform skirts, uniform pants, leggings or shorts under dresses/skirts, polos, socks, close-toed shoes, sandals with backstraps. Crocs are not permitted.

Uniform Sweaters/Vests/Sweatshirts: in solid colors may be worn during the school day.

Outerwear: jackets/coats/hats/mittens/gloves may not be worn during the school day.

Jewelry: should be worn in moderation. No visible piercing other than the ears are permitted.

Hair: no extreme styles; only natural hair color.

Boys: Uniform pants, polos, socks, close-toed shoes, belts (brown or black). Crocs are not permitted.

Not Permitted: socks with excessive coloring, clothes with brands. No piercings permitted for boys.

Uniform Sweaters/Vests/Sweatshirts: in solid colors may be worn during the school day.

Outerwear: jackets/coats/hats/mittens/gloves may not be worn during the school day.

Jewelry: should be worn in moderation. No visible piercing other than the ears are permitted.

Hair: no extreme styles; only *natural hair* color; hair must be above the eyes and not below the neck.

7.04 Schoolwide Disciplinary Progression

One of the main goals of Rhema Academy is to provide an excellent and engaging learning environment that enables all students to be successful as they learn, grow, develop, and mature. Parents play a vital and critical role in this process by supporting the school's overall philosophies.

Every teacher at Rhema Academy will be responsible for setting up, clearly communicating with both parents and students, and implementing their specific classroom management system. These rules must be consistent with the overall behavior management system and philosophy of Rhema Academy and must be approved by the Rhema Academy Administration.

All students at Rhema Academy are expected to act in a Christ-like Manner and show all other individuals respect at all times. This includes all actions, as well as all spoken and written words. Students are also expected to be completely truthful and honest at all times.

Students are also expected to respect and properly care for all of the facilities, property, materials, and equipment belonging to both Rhema Academy and the Salem Church at all times. Students need to report any incidents that require repair and/or cleaning to either their teacher or the office as soon as possible.

Each situation requiring any disciplinary measures will be dealt with on an individual basis by the teacher and administration with appropriate consequences for the student.

The following is a list of behaviors that are not acceptable at Rhema Academy and will be addressed and dealt with as soon as they occur. This list is only a general list and may not include all types of misbehavior.

1. Disrespect (verbal or physical) towards any other individuals (staff, students, outside visitors). This includes all types of bullying, intimidation, or aggression (physical and verbal) towards any individual.
2. All forms of cheating, lying, stealing, destruction or damage to any school, church, or another individual's property.
3. Not following the directives of a teacher or other Rhema Staff immediately.
4. Any actions that disrupt or hinder the learning process for any other student(s).

7.05 Disciplinary Probation

The administration will schedule a conference with the parents of any student who continually or consistently violates school rules and/or policies. A written Disciplinary Probation Contract may be issued in such cases.

7.06 Bullying, Intimidation, and Harassment Policy

Rhema Academy strives to have all relationships (student / student, staff / student, and staff / staff) follow Biblical Principles. John 15:12 says "My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you". Rhema Academy desires to create a school environment that promotes this attitude. However, Rhema Academy realizes that there will be situations where there are conflicts between individuals. In these instances, bullying, intimidation, and harassment are never acceptable. Rhema's response to these types of actions is based on the

Biblical Principles of relationship found in the Bible. God intended for us to live in a way that acknowledges our differences and accepts others because we are all made in God's Image.

Rhema Academy is committed to providing a safe, positive, productive, and nurturing educational environment for all students. Any intentional acts of bullying, harassment, and intimidation, whether written, verbal, electronic, or physical that a student exhibits towards another student are unacceptable.

Bullying, harassment, or intimidation towards a student, whether by other students, staff, or third parties is strictly prohibited and will not be tolerated. This prohibition includes aggressive behavior, physical, verbal, and psychological abuse. This policy applies to all activities including activities on school property, on school transportation, traveling both to and from school, and those occurring off school property, such as field trips, or other events where the students are under the school's control. This policy also includes behaviors that occur outside of the school day / year if these actions have a negative impact on a Rhema student's learning atmosphere and/or attitude.

Students found responsible for any acts of bullying, harassment, or intimidation will be disciplined according to the school's disciplinary procedures.

Students and parents are encouraged to immediately report any conduct they consider to be bullying, harassment, or intimidation to a staff member. Likewise, all Rhema Staff who become aware of any bullying, harassment, or intimidation actions shall immediately report these actions to the school administration.

7.07 Child Abuse Reporting

In accordance with state law and school policy, all school staff are obligated under penalty of fine and jail term to report the reasonable suspicion of physical abuse, sexual abuse, or child neglect. In this very serious and legally narrow area the school will not contact families prior to making a report to the proper authorities, which would be the procedure followed in most other legal matters. The clear intent of the law, based on the seriousness of the crimes listed above, mandates that a report of reasonable suspicion of abuse be made. Once reasonable suspicion is established, school staff has no other legal alternative than to make such reports to the proper authorities for their investigation and review in the best interest of the affected child.

7.08 Allowable Student Areas

All students attending Rhema Academy are to remain in the areas designated for their particular class at its designated times. Students should have permission from their teacher before going to other areas of the building. The entire 2nd floor of the church (accessed by the steps in the gym) is "off limits" to all students at all times, unless specifically directed by Rhema Staff Member or Salem Church Staff Member.

Section 8: Acceptable Technology Use and Internet/Network Safety Policy

Section 8: Internet Policies

8.01 Statement of Purpose

The purpose of providing technology, internet access, and network access is to support the school's educational objectives of Rhema Academy. For a student to be allowed access to and use of the Rhema Academy computer system, computer network, the internet, and other technology, parents/guardians must sign the Acceptable Technology Use and Internet/Network Safety Policy.

8.02 Rules for Internet/Network Usage

By nature, classical education is accomplished through teacher driven instruction. Students will have very limited use of technology in the classroom except to fulfill some requirements of Ohio content standards. If Rhema Academy provides access to its school computer systems, computer networks, and the internet for educational purposes only, it will be on a very limited basis and guided closely by the classroom teachers and staff. If there is any doubt about whether a contemplated technology activity is educational, students should consult with the classroom teacher.

Section 9: Other School Information

9.01 State Charter

Rhema Academy will be seeking its State Charter by the Ohio Department of Education for Grades K-12. The date of this charter is yet to be determined. An official copy will be posted in the school office.

9.02 School Memberships

Rhema Academy holds membership in the Ohio Christian Education Network (OCEN) and the Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI). Rhema Academy is also designated as a Hillsdale K-12 curriculum school.

9.03 Class Parties and Treats

Each classroom teacher will establish procedures for any class parties. The teacher will also inform parents of any food allergies that students may have.

9.04 Lost and Found

All lost items will be brought to the school office. Any unclaimed items will be donated at the end of each quarter.

9.05 Recess / Playground Guidelines

All students must obey all instructions and requests of the adult supervising the playground (both inside and outside) at all times. Recess will be held outdoors whenever possible, so students should dress accordingly. Recess will be held in the gym in the case of cold and/or inclement weather. If individual situations occur (such as a student is recovering from an illness) alternate accommodations will be made.

9.06 Soliciting and Selling

All types of solicitations and selling are not permitted on the premises of Rhema Academy for any purpose by staff, families, students, or any other visitors. Any exceptions to this policy for approved charitable drives will only be permitted with administration's prior approval.

9.07 Personal Electronics / Office Telephone

Students are not permitted to use any personal electronic devices at any time during the school day without permission from their teacher before using the device. The use of the Rhema Office Telephone is only permitted at the sole discretion of the school office staff.

9.08 Visitation Guidelines

For security reasons, all visitors to Rhema Academy must first report to the school office, sign in, and receive a visitor pass once they enter the building. Visitors will need to be buzzed in at the west office door (with wheel chair ramp) during the school day.

9.09 Volunteer / Chaperone Guidelines

Any individuals wanting to volunteer at Rhema Academy must complete the Volunteer Application and agree to submit to a background check. Rhema Academy also has the right to require appropriate documentation, such as example driver's license when necessary and appropriate.

Section 10: Situations / Events that are Not Covered in this Handbook

When situations / events occur that are not specifically covered in this handbook, the Rhema Academy Administration and Board will attempt to follow Godly Principles in handling the situation. The administration and board also retain the right to adjust this handbook at any time if it is determined that changes are necessary to keep the school operating in a Godly, Christ-Like Manner. Any changes will be communicated in an appropriate and timely manner to the students and families impacted by the change.