

CHELSEA ACADEMY

2023-2024 Academic Year



Parent- Student Handbook

CHELSEA ACADEMY

Parent-Student Handbook | 2023-2024

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MISSION STATEMENT

Chelsea Academy seeks to form confident young men and women educated in the liberal arts tradition and the Catholic faith. The Academy is committed to promoting and cultivating in its students the life of the mind and the love of truth; an appreciation for the natural world and the heritage of human achievement; enduring friendships; a spirit of adventure; and the virtues of honesty, diligence, courage, piety, and personal responsibility. Through an ethos shaped by Catholic teaching and devotions and a balanced curriculum that includes the humanities, sciences, the arts, and athletics, Chelsea Academy provides students with opportunities for developing themselves into adults who are capable of making positive contributions to their families, places of work, and communities.

EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY

The purpose of a true education is to develop in a person a habit of being and a “culture of the Word.”¹ This arises both as a natural duty of parents to educate their children and as a solemn duty of the Church being faithful to her Lord. Such an education demands that students be introduced to and given the tools to apprehend all of reality—both in its natural and supernatural aspects. The very grammar of reality arises through the creative work of God who creates by “speaking” into existence all things. God’s self-revelation of Jesus Christ being the Word of God adds to our understanding that “all things were made through him” and that as the Divine Logos all truth, goodness, and beauty finds its origin and end in him. Hence, a “culture of the Word” is a set of concrete conditions whereby parents, faculty, students, and staff—together in a community of friendship—seek God. This is accomplished, firstly, with the recognition of God as our Father who is, therefore, due our worship and love. Secondly, it is the training of the intellect to seek the truth about things and to understand each of those things in the greater context of the symphony of reality. This implies the cultivation of awe and wonder at this symphony—its beauty, goodness, and the inexhaustibility of its contemplation. This understanding of things both natural and supernatural takes into account the unique creation that is the human person and concomitantly raises the question as to how one should act. A training in virtue then, rooted in the natural light of reason and given confirmation by Divine Revelation, gives students the tools to utilize their freedom in a way that conforms them more closely to Jesus Christ: to have the courage to overcome their fallen natures (a lifelong project), to choose wisely and act rightly in a variety of circumstances, to engage the wider culture with confidence and conviction, and to love God and neighbor more perfectly. As our patron, St. Thomas More put it:

to put virtue in the first place, learning in the second; and in their studies to esteem most whatever may teach them piety towards God, charity to all, and Christian humility in themselves...These I consider the real and genuine fruits of learning, and I would maintain that those who give themselves to study with such intent will easily attain their end and become perfect.²

¹ This phrase was articulated by Pope Benedict XVI in an address to the ministers of culture in France on September 12, 2008 at the Collège des Bernardins, Paris.

² Thomas More’s “Letter to William Gonell” (22 May 1518)

General Information

ADMINISTRATION

Chelsea Academy is governed by a Board of Directors who have plenary authority for the mission, functioning, and direction of the school. The Board delegates authority to the Headmaster who is responsible for the day-to-day operation of the school, the hiring of staff, and the provision of the academic and student life programs. For the organizational structure of the school see Appendix.

ADMISSION

Non-Discrimination Statement.

Chelsea Academy admits students of any race, color, national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national and ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship programs, and athletic and other school-administered programs. As a Catholic school, Chelsea Academy gives preference in admission first to Catholic students living within the boundaries of the Diocese of Arlington; second, to Catholic students outside the Diocese; thirdly, to non-Catholic students.

Admissions Process

Chelsea Academy operates on a rolling admissions basis. Applications are accepted starting in the fall for the following academic year, and they are processed as received. Students must be 5 by August 1 of the academic year in which they are enrolling. Classes are limited and tend to fill quickly. As such, it behooves families to complete admissions paperwork in a timely manner. For an application to be complete, students must submit the application paperwork, a teacher's recommendation, and their academic records. Chelsea utilizes FACTS and requires its use for application submission. In addition, they must write a short essay, take an admissions test, and—along with their parents— they must meet with the Headmaster for an interview. Applications for grades K-12 are considered. Likewise, there are a limited number of spots for international students. These students have additional requirements. Please see the school website for more information: <https://chelseaacademy.org/admissions>

ATTENDANCE POLICY

School Hours

During the academic year, the school office is open Monday thru Friday from 7:30 a.m. until 4 p.m. During vacation periods a modified schedule will be communicated to families.

Arrival and Dismissal

Students may arrive at school no earlier than twenty minutes before the start of the class day (7:55 a.m.) and should be picked up within twenty minutes of the end of the last class in the afternoon (3:45 p.m.). Students who are not participating in athletics or an extracurricular and who are not picked up by 3:45 p.m. will be sent to an After School Study Hall. For families who are habitually non-compliant with this policy, parents will be notified and a significant fee will be assessed. Parents are requested to pick up their children immediately following an after-school activity, such as a sports practice or extracurricular event.

Early Dismissal

Appointments for doctors, dentists, etc. should be made outside of school hours. When a student needs to miss part of the school day, he or she must submit in advance a note with departure date and time, reason for the early departure, and signature of parent or guardian. Students must be signed out at the school office by a parent unless they drive themselves when leaving campus, and it is their responsibility to complete missed work.

Tardiness and Absences

Students are expected to arrive at Convocation by 8:15 a.m. each day. Attendance is taken each morning, and students are expected to attend the full class day. In the case of unanticipated absences, parents are asked to notify the school office before the start of school. If a full or partial absence is anticipated, the student's parent or guardian must send a note to the office at least one day in advance. **Without parental notification, absences are considered unexcused.** It is the student's responsibility to meet with his or her teacher about work missed due to an absence, late arrival, or early dismissal. Students who accumulate fifteen or more absences in a specific course or twenty or more full-day absences during the school year risk losing credit in one or more courses.

Repeated or prolonged tardiness is disruptive to the school community and undermines a student's ability to participate fully in class. **Parents must notify the school office before the start of the school day if their son or daughter will be arriving late.**

Emails are not sufficient; parents must either **call** and leave a message at (540) 635-0622 prior to 8:15 a.m. or **send a written and signed note** prior to the absence, indicating the dates and reason for the absence.

Students arriving late must check in at the school office prior to going to class. Three unexcused late arrivals will be considered an unexcused absence. Frequent tardiness and patterns of tardiness will be addressed by the Administration and may result in academic and disciplinary consequences.

COMMUNICATIONS

Communications from the School

Chelsea Academy will provide weekly communications every Thursday to members of the school community. These communications will include academic and extracurricular information and they will also provide announcements of events. In addition, the Headmaster will send a monthly missive that provides reflections and thoughts from his perspective. Likewise, there will be additional communications from the Lower School Dean to families of Lower School students as needed. Finally, at appropriate times there will be stand-alone individual communications for particular events and important announcements.

Parent Inquiries

Chelsea Academy encourages frequent and open communication between students, faculty, and parents. Faculty and staff will be responsive to parent inquiries and will acknowledge them within 24 hours of receipt. Parents should be understanding of teacher responsibilities in setting up appointments or conferences. In the event of an issue with a faculty or staff member, consonant with the principle of subsidiarity, parents and students should seek to resolve the issue first with the individual and only resort to involving the Headmaster when resolution is not forthcoming. All school-related emails from the faculty and Administration are made through Chelsea email accounts. Parents are asked to use these accounts when communicating by email with teachers and administrators.

Parent-Teacher Conferences

At designated times during the academic year, there will be formal and scheduled times for parents to meet with teachers and ascertain the progress of their students. This is not the exclusive time that parents and teachers should meet. Indeed, parents should reach out to teachers to set up individual conferences when the need arises. Likewise, teachers will reach out to parents in those cases where disciplinary or academic needs may require it.

FINANCE

Tuition and Fees

Tuition and fees are set every year by the Board of Directors. The Headmaster and Chief Finance & Business Officer communicate the tuition and fee structure to families in the early spring. Every parent or guardian of a student at Chelsea Academy must execute a tuition agreement contract each year through FACTS. This contract specifies the tuition, available payment plans, and other contractual items. A student may not attend class unless this tuition agreement is submitted, the enrollment fee is paid, and a FACTS tuition management account is created. Since the overwhelming majority of school operating revenue comes from tuition, timely payment of tuition and fees is of importance to the school. A late fee will be assessed any time a payment has not been received by the due date. Parents are urged to set up an appointment with the Headmaster if there are unusual circumstances or situations arise which materially change a family's financial wherewithal.

Fundraising

In addition to tuition, the other major source of operating revenue for Chelsea Academy is the program of fundraising sponsored by the school. The success of fundraising requires hard work and the cooperation of every family in the school community. It is necessary that all students and families, regardless of financial circumstances, assist in the fundraising efforts of the school.

SCHOOL POLICIES

Cars on Campus

Students who drive themselves to school must notify the Administration and provide written parental permission and vehicle information. Due to the limited parking a student parking fee will be assessed. Student drivers will receive a sticker for their vehicle. Students are asked to park in designated spaces and may not visit their cars during the school day. Only siblings may ride with student drivers to school activities and sports events (as well as to and from school) unless both the driver and the passenger have written parental permission.

Cell Phones and other Technological Devices

Students may not bring cell phones, smart-watches, computers, iPods, video games, or other technology to any school function, activity or on school property, except with explicit permission of the Administration. This is one of the most significant policies of the school. In forming our students, cultivating habits of self-control and virtue is a must. Cell phones and other technologies can be an addiction and distract from learning. More and more, the evidence has shown that addiction to technology is deleterious to learning, retention, and prolonged serious study (cf. Appendix). Since this is such a unique, important, and vital policy at Chelsea, violations of this policy will generally include significant disciplinary action in addition to the device being confiscated and turned into the office for a parent to come retrieve. Repeated violations will result in increasing disciplinary action including loss of activity privileges, suspension or even dismissal from Chelsea.

Dress Code and Personal Appearance

The uniform and dress code serves to foster a fruitful, respectful academic environment and school community. Students are required to wear a uniform to school every day. When an exception is made for selected after-school activities, events, or field trips, a dress code will be specified and shared with the school community. It is the students' responsibility to verify the dress code before the event or activity. Uniform items are purchased from Flynn & O'Hara (FOH) or from Lands' End (LE).

"Dress Down Day" Dress Code

The following policies apply for all "Dress Down Days" throughout the year:

- Shirts & sweatshirts must be either: solid color, Chelsea Apparel, Events which Chelsea formally approves (March for Life), Colleges or Universities, Apparel from natural attractions (OBX, Grand Canyon), No tv shows or movies. No tank-tops
- Jeans, pants or athletics pants – No sweatpants/lounge pants, No PJ's, No Shorts, No ripped pants, No leggings
- All footwear allowed.

Activities Dress Code

Students attending Chelsea activities not with a specified dress code such as athletic events must adhere to the following rules:

All clothing must be modest (not too short, not overly tight) and appropriate (ripped pants must be modest, words on shirts, etc)

- Undergarments may not be visible
- No leggings

*Technology policy clarification as of September 2022

Boys K-8 Dress Code

Fall/Spring

- Gray dress pants (FOH, LE) Gray chinos permitted for K-8
- Navy short sleeve polo shirt with Chelsea logo (FOH, LE)
- Black or brown leather belt (Not required for K-2)
- Dark colored dress or crew socks - NO white socks

Winter

- Gray dress pants (FOH, LE) Gray chinos permitted for K-8
- White long-sleeve Oxford cloth button-down collared shirt (FOH, LE)
- Navy V-neck sweater vest w/ Chelsea logo OR Navy V-neck long sleeve sweater w/ Chelsea logo (FOH, LE)
- Maroon/navy striped necktie (FOE, LE)
- Black or brown leather belt (Not required for K-2)
- Dark colored dress or crew socks - NO white socks
- Optional: Navy blue Fleece full zip w/Chelsea logo (FOH, LE) *Does not replace sweater*

Boys 9-12 Dress Code

Fall/Spring

- Gray dress pants (FOH, LE) *Pleats or more than 4 pockets not permitted.*
- Navy short sleeve polo shirt with Chelsea logo (FOH, LE)
- Black or brown leather belt
- Dark colored dress or crew socks - NO white socks

Winter

- White long-sleeve Oxford cloth button-down collared shirt
- Navy 2-button sport coat/blazer (FOH, LE)
- Maroon/navy striped necktie (FOH, LE)
- Black or brown leather belt
- Dark colored dress or crew socks - NO white socks
- Optional: Navy blue fleece full zip w/ Chelsea logo (FOH, LE) *Does not replace sweater*

Girls K-5 Uniform Dress Code

Fall/ Spring

- Red/navy jumper no logo (FOH) OR Gray jumper w/ Chelsea logo (LE)
- Plain white polo, peter pan or pointed collar, worn under jumper
- Navy or white crew or knee socks. No ankle socks

Winter

- Red/navy jumper no logo (FOH) OR Gray jumper w/ Chelsea logo (LE)
- White long-sleeve button down, collared blouse
- Navy cardigan sweater w/ Chelsea logo (FOH, LE)
- Navy or white ribbed tights, navy or white opaque tights, or navy or white knee or crew socks (no logos visible). No ankle socks
- Optional: Navy blue Fleece full zip w/Chelsea logo (FOH, LE) *Does not replace cardigan*

Girls 6-12 Uniform Dress Code

Fall/ Spring

- Red/navy kilt (FOH) OR Gray a-line skirt (LE)
- Navy short sleeve polo shirt with Chelsea logo (FOH, LE)
- Navy or white crew or knee socks (No logos visible). No ankle socks

Winter

- Red/navy kilt (FOH) OR Gray a-line skirt (LE)
- White long-sleeve button down, collared blouse
- Navy cardigan sweater w/ Chelsea logo (FOH, LE)
- Navy or white ribbed tights, navy or white opaque tights, or navy or white knee or crew socks (no logos visible). No ankle socks
- Optional: Navy blue Fleece full zip w/Chelsea logo ^ (FOH, LE). *Does not replace cardigan*

P.E. Dress Code (Grades 4-8)*

- Chelsea related t-shirt (FOH) (grades 4-8), shorts or sweatpants
- Sturdy athletic shoes

* Grades K-3 do not change clothing for P.E. They do need a pair of sturdy athletic shoes.

Shoes

Only black, brown or gray dress shoes that are flat and closed-toed, such as bucks, loafers, or docksiders, may be worn with the school uniform. Shoes made primarily of fabric such as “Hey-Dude” or “Vans” are not considered dress shoes and are not permitted. Sneaker soles and boots are not permitted. Sturdy athletic shoes must be worn for P.E.

Kilts/Jumpers

Kilts and jumpers must hit the kneecap and fall no longer than two inches below the knee.

Outerwear

With the exception of a Chelsea fleece which may be worn over the uniform but not in place of the uniform, outerwear may not be worn in the building.

Grooming

Students must follow appropriate standards of grooming and modesty at all times. Hairstyles should be natural colors (no primary colors) and neat; boys' hairstyles should also be trim including above and off, the collar, ears and eyes. Boys should be clean-shaven and may not wear jewelry. Girls' jewelry and makeup should be discreet.

Athletic Wear

Students are required to wear the Chelsea gray, house t-shirt, or spirit wear t-shirt with athletic shorts (reaching past fingertips) and athletic shoes during physical education classes. For sports practices, students may wear either a Chelsea t-shirt (gray, house, spirit wear, team) or a solid color shirt of same make as Chelsea gray/house t-shirts.

Emergency Procedures

Chelsea Academy works with professionals to ensure the implementation of proper procedures in emergency situations. Policies and protocols for fire, tornado, lockdown, and other emergencies are reviewed each year and developed with the assistance of local officials to ensure the safety and security of our students and faculty. Faculty and staff are informed and trained on these procedures each year.

Litter and Gum

Students are expected to help maintain a clean and tidy campus. They should pick up and properly dispose of their trash. Chewing gum is not allowed on campus at any time.

Building

The building has been divided into sections for appropriate age involvement and interaction. Included in this division are bathroom assignments based on age such as "Lower School Only Boys and Girls Bathrooms" as well as "Faculty Only Bathrooms." Students as well as visitors are expected to abide by these assignments which are noted on the appropriate doors.

Lockers

All students in grades 6-12 are assigned lockers for their books and binders. Students in grades K-5 use cubbies and hooks in their classrooms. Lunches, coats, bags, and athletic clothes should be stored neatly in designated areas. As Chelsea Academy is a private school, it has the right to search lockers and other student spaces if in the judgment of the Administration it is necessary to the safety, health, and welfare of its students, faculty and staff.

Lunch

A dining area under adult supervision is provided for student lunch. Students should bring a sack lunch to school, and they are expected to dispose of all trash and to leave their area tidy and clean. A hot lunch and pizza option is offered weekly to families and purchase may be made via the online payment forms provided on the school website.

Medical Needs

Parents should contact the Administration regarding prescriptions, medicines, or other medical needs of their children. Students who receive prescription medication during the day must have an authorization form completed by the parent and physician on file with the school. Please contact the school office for a blank form. The school does not dispense over the counter or prescription medication to students except for an Epi-Pen in the case of an emergency.

School Closures

Severe inclement weather, poor driving conditions, or a power outage may make it necessary to close the school or delay the opening of school. The Headmaster makes the decision to cancel classes or delay the start of the school day due to inclement weather or an emergency situation. Parents are notified via email and text alerts. Announcements are also recorded on the school phone and posted on its website www.chelseaacademy.org by 6:00 a.m. In the event that deteriorating weather conditions make it necessary to close the school early, parents will be contacted immediately.

Telephone Calls

Only emergency messages are delivered to students. Other messages can be posted on a bulletin board outside the main office. The school phone is available for student use when a significant reason exists. Requests to speak to a student on the office phone should only be made in the event of a true emergency as locating the student and bringing them to the office to make the call is disruptive to both the classroom and office routines.

Visitors

All visitors to Chelsea Academy must enter through the front main doors “Doorway A” then check in and sign in at the School Office.

Policy on Christian Anthropology and Gender Dysphoria

It is a great joy to articulate and promote the goodness of the nature of the human person as made in the image and likeness of God. We are cognizant, however, that there are those who do not share our convictions—born of faith and reason—that reality can be apprehended and understood. Hence, confusion abounds in the area of human sexuality and, in particular, in the phenomenon of gender dysphoria. Chelsea Academy makes ours the teaching of the Roman Catholic Church and, in particular, *A Catechesis on the Human Person and Gender Ideology* authored by Bishop Michael Burbidge of the Diocese of Arlington (see Appendix). In light of this teaching and of the biological reality of human persons,

- Chelsea Academy, a canonically recognized private Catholic school in the Diocese of Arlington, shall respect the biological sex of the human person as given by God and shall apply all policies and procedures in relation to that person according to that person’s God-given biological sex.
- Chelsea Academy faculty, staff, administration, employees, and volunteers shall conduct themselves in accord with their God-given biological sex. This includes but is not limited to appropriate dress, hairstyles, jewelry, and makeup.
- Chelsea Academy partners with families to educate and form students consistent with the teachings of our Lord Jesus Christ and His Church, and so families are expected to live in accord with the Gospel, particularly regarding actions and behaviors that are public. Students and parents (or legal guardians) shall conduct themselves in accord with their God-given biological sex.

Academics

ACADEMIC HONESTY

Academic honesty is critical to the mission of Chelsea Academy. Academic dishonesty includes cheating on quizzes, tests, and other assignments, helping another student to cheat, and presenting the thoughts or work of another person as one's own (i.e., plagiarism). Academic dishonesty is a serious offense that Chelsea Academy does not tolerate. This policy does include the use of web-based systems to produce school-work such as "ChatGPT" and other AI assisted services or software.

If a student fails to adhere to this policy, the Administration is notified and, at a minimum, the student receives a failing grade for the assignment. Students involved in repeated incidents risk more serious consequences, including dismissal.

Commented [CVW1]: Do we need to address ChatGT?

CURRICULUM & CREDITS

The Chelsea Academy curriculum is an integrated, Catholic liberal arts plan of study. Students are invited to engage both their faith and reason in knowing and ascertaining the truth of things. The curriculum and reading list may be found at:

<https://chelseaacademy.org/academics/curriculum-2>

Graduation Requirements

Beginning with the 2021-2022 academic year³, students must earn a minimum of twenty-five credits for graduation from the Upper School, including:

English	4 credits
History	4 credits
Mathematics ⁴	4 credits
Religion	4 credits
Science ⁵	4 credits
Latin/French ⁶	3 credits
Fine Arts	1 credit
Elective	1 credit

Students are required to enroll in a minimum of five full-credit courses each year. Requests for any exceptions to these requirements or requests for independent study should be addressed to the Administration.

Independent Study

A student who is in good academic standing and has completed course requirements within a given department or wishes to pursue a particular subject in depth may earn academic credit through an independent study under the direction of a full-time faculty member. A student interested in an independent study must choose a faculty sponsor and submit a written proposal outlining the objectives and scope of the study to the Administration during course registration

in the spring. Approval is based on the merits of the course and the student's workload and proven ability to work independently. Independent studies are graded according to the school's grading scale, and the faculty sponsor is responsible for overseeing the study. Based on the independent study, an additional fee may be charged.

³ Students who entered Chelsea's Upper School (grade 9) prior to this academic year will matriculate under the previous policies.

⁴ i.e., Algebra I, Geometry, Algebra II, Statistics, Pre-calculus, or Calculus.

⁵ i.e., including Biology, Chemistry, and Physics

⁶ Three (3) years of Latin, French, or a combination of the two, including second-year proficiency in either language

CURRICULAR POLICIES

Academic Probation

After each quarter grading period, the academic progress of each student is reviewed. Students who earn two or more grades below a C- are placed on Academic Probation. Parents are notified, and a plan is established for helping the student to raise his or her grades. Students who remain on Academic Probation risk not being invited to continue their education at Chelsea Academy for the following year.

Field Trips

Field trips are an important part of a Chelsea education. Students and families will be informed in advance of field trips and students participating in field trips must have a Field Trip permission slip signed by a parent or guardian. The number of field trips will be limited in a given week to ensure adequate faculty presence and student class attendance.

Semester Exams

Upper School students take exams at the end of both semesters in all their courses. Eighth-grade students in Upper School courses (e.g., Algebra I, Latin I, and French I) also take exams. Although teachers provide review sheets and spend class time to prepare students for these exams, students are expected to prepare and study on their own. At their teachers' discretion, seniors who have earned a minimum semester grade of A- for the second semester may be exempt from the final exam in that class.

Grade Reports

The school year is divided into two semesters. Full grade reports are sent out on a quarterly basis, twice in the fall semester and twice in the spring. In addition, an interim report is issued following the third full week of the academic year.

Grade and Course Requirements

Students are expected to follow the full range of courses for their grade levels. Exceptions are made only for compelling reasons as decided by the Administration. Students who finish the year with a D+ average or lower risk not being able to advance to the next grade or return to Chelsea Academy. Only in certain circumstances as determined by the Administration, may students repeat sequential courses (math, French, Latin) needed for advancement to the next level.

Grading and Grade Scale

Letter grades are assigned for all courses as follows (including numerical equivalents for determining Grade Point Averages (GPA)):

Honors classes are weighted with an extra half point.

Report cards for grades K-2 will use skill and standards-based grading consisting of number grades.

Grades K-2
(Grading scale: 1-4)
1: Does not meet academic standard (<i>little or no proficiency</i>)
2: Partially meets academic standard
3: Meets academic standard
4: Exceeds academic standard

Grades 3-12
A = 93-100% (4.0)
A- = 90-92% (3.67)
B+ = 87-89% (3.33)
B = 83-86% (3.0)
B- = 80-82% (2.67)
C+ = 77-79% (2.33)
C = 73-76% (2.0)
C- = 70-72% (1.67)
D+ = 67-69% (1.33)
D = 63-66% (1.0)
D- = 60-62% (0.67)
F = less than 60% (0.00)

Honor Rolls

Honors Courses

Honors Courses at Chelsea Academy are designed for the high achieving, intellectually curious student in order to probe more deeply a particular subject or to explore an aspect of course of study that is more advanced than our already challenging curriculum. As such, there is a distinction in both academic standards and work required in these courses. Thus, students should expect more depth and may have to dedicate additional time (e.g., attending additional lectures) to achieve success in these courses. As a result of the additional work and time required, honors classes are weighted with an extra half point.

Admission to an honors course:

- Students must have completed at least one full year at Chelsea
- B+ (or higher) in a prerequisite course
- Maintain at least a grade of B- or above in each class.
- Signed Recommendation of the instructor of the prerequisite course
- Signed Consent of Parents
- Consent of the Headmaster

Tests

The faculty tries to coordinate in order that students not take more than two tests on any given day. Tests are announced at least five days in advance.

Tutoring

Teachers make themselves available to address questions or problems. At the same time, an occasion may arise in which a student needs more formal tutoring on a regular basis. Additional tutoring sessions organized by the school may require an additional expense to families.

SENIOR AWARDS

Valedictorian and Salutatorian

Given to the top two students, as selected by the faculty, according to the following criteria: GPA of grades 9-12, difficulty of course load, depth of understanding, intellectual curiosity, effort, and contributions to raising the overall academic tone of a class.

Character Award

Given to the student who exhibits exemplary character, including generosity, humility, and Christian love and concern for others, as well as diligence, perseverance, and self-discipline. The award recognizes a student who has been involved in the life of the school and whose integrity, leadership, and spirit of adventure have brought out the best in others.

Student Life

Since true education must strive for complete formation of the human person that looks to his or her final end as well as to the common good of societies, children and youth are to be nurtured in such a way that they are able to develop their physical, moral, and intellectual talents harmoniously, acquire a more perfect sense of responsibility and right use of freedom, and are formed to participate actively in social life. (Canon 795, Code of Canon Law (1983))

THE CHELSEA CODE OF BEHAVIOR

Chelsea Academy expects its students to adhere to the highest standards of civility and comportment. They should deal honestly in all their interactions with others. They will give proper respect to those in authority and to their peers as well as to personal and school property. They are expected to take personal responsibility for all of their actions and fulfill their duties to the school and to others.

The rules and regulations governing student behavior at Chelsea Academy are meant to serve as basic guidelines. They are not meant to be exhaustive. Students are expected to follow the letter and the spirit of the rules to do their part in creating a pleasant, harmonious school environment in which the dignity of every person—faculty, staff, and student—is respected.

THE ARTS

A goal of Chelsea Academy is to awaken students to beauty through study and appreciation of the arts, as well as active participation. All Lower and Middle School students study fine art and participate in the music program. All Upper School students are required to take at least one credit of Fine Arts.

The Schola sings at all-school Masses, on special occasions, and in concert. Likewise, the school's drama production takes place in the spring semester of each year. Concomitant with end-of-year activities, art exhibits showcase the work of Lower, Middle, and Upper School students.

ATHLETICS

Embracing the ancient Greek ideal of *mens sana in corpore sano* (a healthy mind in a healthy body), Chelsea Academy encourages participation in its sports program as a way of promoting physical development, athletic skills, and team play as well as building character and good sportsmanship in its students. A variety of interscholastic sports, including soccer, cross-country, volleyball, basketball, and rugby, are offered. Students in grades 6-11 may participate on a sports team. Students in grade 5 may participate on Middle School teams. Additional opportunities are provided for students in grades K-4. Students who accumulate more than three unexcused absences from practices and games risk being dismissed from the team and losing credit for their participation. Only absences for illness or family emergencies are excused. Further policies for athletics will be determined by the Athletic Director and communicated to coaches and student-athletes each season.

THE OUTDOORS

Chelsea Academy seeks to promote physical health, a spirit of adventure, friendships, and an appreciation for God's creation. To these ends, Chelsea draws on the wonderful natural resources available in the Shenandoah Valley by including outdoor activities as part of its program. Students participate in the Fall Hike in the Blue Ridge Mountains each year, and an all-school canoe trip on the Shenandoah River is an annual tradition. Students in grades 4-12 also go on a camping trip in the fall.

SPIRITUAL FORMATION

Daily Prayer

Essential to the Catholic mission of Chelsea Academy is the obligation and the joy of prayer. Our Blessed Lord revealed to us that God is our Father; he also calls us friends. What a beautiful reality: our obligation to worship the God who has given us everything and the realization that he wishes us to approach him as a son, a daughter, and a beloved friend. Hence, an essential element and goal of a Chelsea education is to cultivate this daily conversation with the Lord. *Convocation* at the beginning of each school day is an opportunity for the whole school community to come together to pray and offer the day to the Lord under the patronage of Our Lady and St. Thomas More. In addition, students will say the *Angelus* at Noon and conclude the day with an *Act of Contrition*. In addition, each class will begin with prayer, as will lunch and the opening of school assemblies or school events.

Feast Days

In harmony with the liturgical year and with the help of the Chelsea Parent Association and student volunteers, the school sets apart time for a number of events and celebrations, including Advent devotions, St. Joseph's Day, Lenten devotions, and the birthday of our school's patron,

St. Thomas More. Holy Days of Obligation, as solemn feasts, are treated as holidays and there is no school on those days.

Mass

In cooperation with St. John the Baptist Catholic Church and our area pastors, Chelsea Academy offers an opportunity for weekly Mass for all students. The school hopes to make available as many opportunities as possible for Mass for students, faculty, staff, and families. The beginning of the academic year is marked by an all-school Mass of the Holy Spirit. Likewise, there will be various opportunities during the academic year for all-school Masses.

Penance

The Sacrament of Penance is made available to students regularly throughout the school year. In particular, students will have the opportunity to confess during the seasons of Advent and Lent as well as regularly scheduled monthly opportunities.

Retreats

Each year students and faculty participate in retreats. These are times for individual spiritual reflection as well as community building.

Sacramental Prep

Chelsea Academy's religion and theology curriculum has been approved by the Diocese of Arlington and the pastor of St. John the Baptist Catholic Church in Front Royal as an accepted program for sacramental preparation for First Confession, First Communion, and Confirmation. Additional requirements, such as retreats, may be placed on our students. It is up to the child's parents to ensure that their child is registered with the parish to receive the sacrament(s) and has fulfilled all requirements. Chelsea families from other parishes will need to check with their pastors to ensure their children are meeting parish requirements for reception of the sacraments.

STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

Honor Societies

Honor societies allow students to enrich their study and engagement with specific disciplines, including math, English, and foreign languages. While sponsored by a faculty advisor, each group offers the opportunity for multiple levels of student leadership and participation.

Student Government

Seniors and 8th graders are encouraged to serve as leaders, mentors, and role models—the seniors for the Upper and Lower Schools and the 8th graders for the Lower and Middle School—to develop their leadership, organizational skills, and sense of service to others, as well as patience and humility.

Houses

Chelsea Academy is divided into four houses: two for boys and two for girls. The houses serve several purposes: they provide membership in a smaller group for all Chelsea students, they encourage interaction and friendships among students across the grade levels, and they promote camaraderie and healthy competition while contributing to creating strong school morale and solidarity.

Each house includes students from across the grades, and each of the boys' houses is paired with one of the girls' houses, with family members belonging to the same house or pair of houses. The houses are involved in various activities and competitions, including field days, poetry recitations, and service projects.

The names of the Chelsea houses are associated with Thomas More:

Fisher House: John Cardinal Fisher (1469-1535) was a trusted friend of More and served as bishop of Rochester during the early sixteenth century. A distinguished scholar of international renown, he put his life at risk by supporting Catherine of Aragon in her efforts to resist her husband Henry VIII's attempt to annul their marriage in defiance of the Pope. After refusing to recognize the Act of Supremacy, which declared Henry VIII the head of the Church of England, Fisher was martyred for the Catholic Faith. He was made a cardinal shortly before his execution in 1535. In 1935, Pope Pius XI declared Fisher (and Thomas More) saints.

Pole House: Countess of Salisbury, Margaret Pole (1473-1541), whose brother was the last male representative of the Yorkist line, served Catherine of Aragon before serving as governess to Princess Mary, later Queen of England. Her son Reginald was the last Catholic Archbishop of Canterbury, and it was his condemnation of Henry VIII's divorce of Catherine that led to Pole's arrest and execution on charges of treason. The martyrdom of Pole was officially recognized in 1886, when Pope Leo XIII declared her Blessed.

Colet House: John Colet (1467-1519) was a scholar and priest who served as young More's spiritual advisor. A man of great learning, Colet studied at Oxford, Florence, and Rome before holding the position of dean of St. Paul's Cathedral in London. Beginning in 1509, Colet devoted his life and vast inherited fortune to the founding of St. Paul's School, one of England's oldest and most prestigious secondary schools.

Roper House: Margaret Roper (1505-1544) was the devoted and much-loved eldest daughter of Thomas More. She received a liberal arts education that included literature, languages, history, mathematics, science, philosophy, and theology, and she earned a reputation among her contemporaries for her scholarly command of Greek and Latin. Her husband, William Roper (1496-1578), wrote the first biography of More. As a young man, Roper spent much time in the More household and enjoyed close relations with his father-in-law. He served in Parliament during the reign of Queen Mary, and throughout his life he was respected for his character and learning.

STUDENT DISCIPLINE

Philosophy

Chelsea Academy provides students with clear expectations and positive models of behavior in an effort to help them internalize and follow the highest standards of good conduct. While Chelsea holds students accountable for adhering to school rules and expectations, it is understood that students will make mistakes as they grow in independence and learn to exercise their freedom. Rather than impose an overly rigid and exhaustive code of rules that emphasizes harsh consequences, Chelsea provides opportunities for students to develop maturity and self-discipline and expects them to take responsibility for all of their actions.

Disciplinary Responses

All disciplinary responses are aimed at improving character and leading the student to a life of virtue. A majority of classroom disciplinary cases are handled by individual teachers. Most “beyond the classroom” disciplinary cases are handled by the Dean of Students and/or The Lower School Dean. Violations of major school rules are referred immediately to the Administration. Parents are notified in all cases involving major rule violations, which may result in probation, suspension, or dismissal from school. Chelsea Academy reserves the right to place on probation, suspend, or dismiss any student whose conduct is determined by the Administration to be out of sympathy with the goals and ideals of the school.

Major School Rules:

Alcohol, Drugs, Tobacco

Chelsea Academy does not tolerate student use, possession, or distribution of alcohol, drugs (illegal and unauthorized), tobacco, or vaping products of any kind. Violation of this rule on campus or during school-sponsored events may result in immediate dismissal from the school.

Fighting and Bullying

Every student is entitled to be treated with dignity and respect. Fighting is not permitted, nor is harassment or intimidating behavior of any kind—on or off campus—tolerated. Students engaged in this kind of behavior are referred to the Dean of Students and Lower School Dean, and in cases of extreme gravity, to the Headmaster.

Leaving Campus

No student may leave campus during the school day without permission of parents and authorization by the Administration.

Lying, Cheating, and Stealing

A school depends on the trust of all its members. It is expected that students tell the truth, do their own work, and respect the property of others. Included under this rubric is plagiarism or academic dishonesty. (At the beginning and throughout each academic year, teachers will outline specific examples of what constitutes plagiarism or academic dishonesty.) Failure to follow these guidelines is treated by the Administration as a serious rule infraction.

Safety Issues

Possession of dangerous objects, including but not limited to knives, firearms, ammunition, and explosive devices, is not permitted and results in immediate referral to the Administration and, in some cases, immediate expulsion.

School and Personal Property

Students are expected to respect all school and personal property. The deliberate destruction of property is considered a serious rule infraction. Chelsea Academy makes an effort to investigate any cases involving theft or damage to property. However, it does not assume responsibility for damaged or stolen personal property.

Detention Policy

When student misconduct occurs, teachers and staff are empowered to correct the misconduct. Verbal warnings are sufficient for minor first offenses and low-level violations (e.g., tardy for class, minor uniform violations).

Should misconduct be repetitive, egregious, or should a violation of a major school rule take place, it is appropriate to issue a detention. There are three types of detentions:

In-School Detentions—These include but are not limited to infractions such as unexcused tardies and uniform violations. In place of this, the faculty member may assign a student particular duties during the school day (e.g., picking up trash, etc.).

After School Detentions—These include but are not limited to serious misconduct such as use of profanity, disruptive or disrespectful behavior towards any faculty or staff member, being in possession of or using a cell phone or other unauthorized electronic device. This detention is also appropriate if a student accumulates numerous in-school detentions.

Saturday Detentions—These include but are not limited to skipping a detention for an extracurricular or any other unapproved reason and the accumulation of in-school or after-school detentions.

Teachers and staff will enforce school policy and rules. They always have the discretion to handle particular situations and decide to impose discipline according to prudence and right judgment. When in doubt, or if there is a problematic situation that isn't clear, teachers and staff will consult the Dean of Students.

Suspension Policy

For repeatedly violating school rules or for more serious infractions that warrant a more serious penalty than a detention, the Administration may choose to impose a suspension. When taking this step, a conference with parents should occur with the Dean of Students and/or The Lower School Dean. There are two types of suspension:

- **In-school suspension**—During the time of this suspension the student is not permitted to attend class or participate in school activities. The student must report to the main office for instructions for the day.
- **Out-of-school suspension**—This is a severe disciplinary measure. During the time of this suspension, the student is not permitted to attend class or participate in school activities. The Administration will provide a counseling statement, hold a conference with the student and parents, and may provide other criteria to ensure proper conduct prior to re-admittance.

Behavioral Contracts

In certain cases, the Dean of Students, in consultation with the Headmaster, may place a student on a behavioral contract as a condition of continued matriculation. A conference with the parents will be arranged in order that there be an understanding of any and all conditions.

Denial of Re-Enrollment

At the discretion of the Administration, a student may be denied re-enrollment for a subsequent semester or academic year. This may be for disciplinary, academic, or other deficiencies.

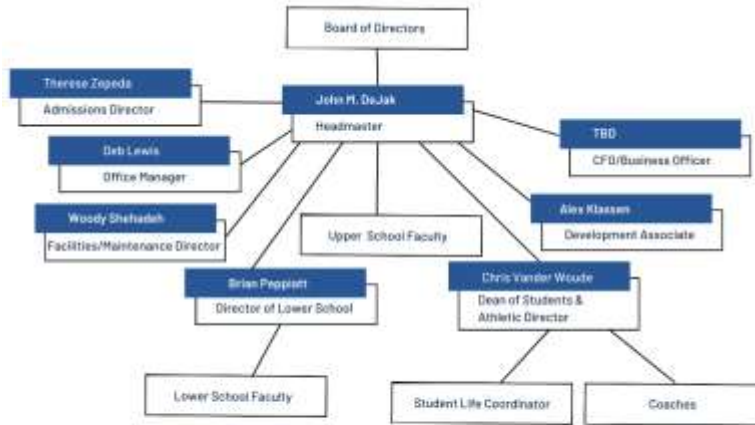
Expulsion Policy

If a student's conduct is judged to be detrimental to the school community, and/or he or she has consistently failed to cooperate with the school authorities, or—in the case of a grave single incident—the Headmaster may affect an expulsion.

Elastic Clause

The Administration of Chelsea Academy has the right to amend this handbook for a just cause at any time. The Administration also has a concomitant duty to promptly inform those whom this handbook governs of such changes.

APPENDICES



Resources on Technology

Books

Carr, Nicholas. *The Shallows: What the Internet is Doing to Our Brains*
(ISBN: 9780393339758)

Lynch, Jonah. *The Scent of Lemons: Technology and Relationships in the Age of Facebook*
(ISBN: 0232529582)

Newport, Cal. *Digital Minimalism*
(ISBN: 978-0525536512)

Turkle, Sherri. *Life on the Screen: Identity in the Age of the Internet*
(ISBN: 9780684833484)

Alone Together: Why We Expect More From Technology and Less From Each Other
(ISBN: 978-0465093656)

Reclaiming Conversation: The Power of Talk in a Digital Age
(ISBN: 9780143109792)

Articles/Lectures

Ahktar, Allana and Marguerite Ward. "Bill Gates and Steve Jobs raised their kids with limited tech — and it should have been a red flag about our own smartphone use." *Business Insider*. May 15, 2020.

<https://www.businessinsider.com/screen-time-limits-bill-gates-steve-jobs-red-flag-2017-10>

Barahmpour, Tara. "This simple solution to smartphone addiction is now used in over 600 U.S. schools." *Washington Post*. February 5, 2018.

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/inspired-life/wp/2018/02/05/this-millennial-discovered-a-surprisingly-simple-solution-to-smartphone-addiction-schools-love-it/>
Dejak, John M. "Contra Torporem: The Catholic School's Response to Social Media and New Technologies." Address given at *Life! Posted: Social Media & Its Impact on the Modern Family*. Ann Arbor, March 10, 2018.
<https://fgrhs.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/john-m-dejak-jd-presentation-3.10.2018.pdf>

Stanford, Mary. "Technology and the Language of Bodily Presence." *Principles*, Vol. II, Issue 4 (2016).
https://www.getprinciples.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/Principles_Vol2_Iss5_web.pdf

Summers, Juana. "Kids and Screen Time: What Does the Research Say?" *NPR.org*. August 28, 2014.

<https://www.npr.org/sections/ed/2014/08/28/343735856/kids-and-screen-time-what-does-the-research-say>

Websites/Videocasts

Covenant Eyes (<https://www.covenanteyes.com>)

Covenant Eyes is a filtering and screen monitoring system that encourages accountability through screenshot monitoring and activity reporting. Protect your own device, or protect what your children see on shared, family devices.

Integrity Restored (<https://integrityrestored.com>)

Founded by Dr. Peter Kleponis, author of the book *Integrity Restored: Helping Catholic Families Win the Battle Against Pornography*, Integrity Restored is an organization dedicated to helping Catholics fight pornography at all levels. Dr. Kleponis and his Integrity Restored Team – Matt Fradd, Fr. Sean Kilcawley and Ryan Foley – provide valuable resources and advice on how to protect individuals, couples and families from the dangers of pornography. Resources are also available for clergy. In addition, information is provided on the *Integrity Starts Here Recovery Program*, the first comprehensive recovery program for Catholics struggling with pornography addiction and their loved ones.

Cuddeback, John. "Friendship and Social Media: Is Virtuous Virtual Friendship Possible?" Thomistic Institute. April 13, 2021. (<https://thomisticinstitute.org/upcoming-events/friendship-and-social-media-is-virtuous-virtual-friendship-possible>)

A Catechesis on the Human Person and Gender Ideology

Most Rev. Michael F. Burbidge, Bishop of Arlington
[Read Letter from Bishop Burbidge](#) | [Download Document \(en Español\)](#)

Introduction

In the past decade our culture has seen growing acceptance of transgender ideology—that is, the claim that a person's biological sex and personal identity have no necessary connection and could in fact contradict each other. According to this view, “human identity” is self-defined and “becomes the choice of the individual.”¹ Consequently, our culture is experiencing a rapid rise in the number of persons claiming an identity contrary to their biological sex. Attempts to accommodate such claims already have resulted in tremendous upheavals in our social, legal, and medical systems.

This situation presents a serious challenge for all members of the Church because it presents a view of the human person contrary to the truth. It is of particular concern for our young people, as Pope Francis has warned:

*Today children-children!-are taught in school that everyone can choose his or her sex. Why are they teaching this?*²

*Let us not play with truths. It's true that behind all this we find gender ideology. In books, kids learn that it's possible to change one's sex. Could gender, to be a woman or to be a man, be an option and not a fact of nature? This leads to this error. Let us call things by their names.*³

“Gender dysphoria” is a psychological condition in which a biological male or female comes to feel that his or her emotional and/or psychological identity does not match his or her biological sex and “experiences clinically significant distress” as a result.⁴ Situations involving gender dysphoria must always be addressed with pastoral charity and compassion rooted in the truth. Any unjust discrimination or needless insensitivity in addressing such situations must be avoided and/or corrected.

At the same time, in responding to this question justly and charitably, one cannot deny or obscure the truth of our created nature and human sexuality. Indeed, charity always requires the clear presentation of the truth. As Pope Saint Paul VI observed, “[I]t is an outstanding manifestation of charity toward souls to omit nothing from the saving doctrine of Christ.”⁵ From medicine, natural law, and divine revelation, we know that each person is created either male or female, from the moment of conception. “It needs to be emphasized,” writes Pope Francis, that “biological sex and the socio-cultural role of sex (gender) can be distinguished but not separated ... It is one thing to be understanding of human weakness and the complexities of life, and another to accept ideologies that attempt to sunder what are inseparable aspects of reality.”⁶

This document presents the teaching of the Catholic Church on sexual identity and the transgender issue and offers some pastoral observations. It is not intended to anticipate or address every situation. Rather, it provides the principles of Catholic teaching to encourage the faithful and to guide them in responding to an increasingly difficult cultural situation.

Goodness/Gift of the Human Person and Human Sexuality

The human person, created in the image of God, is a being at once corporeal and spiritual. The biblical account expresses this reality in symbolic language when it affirms that “then the Lord God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.” Man, whole and entire, is therefore willed by God.

The human body shares in the dignity of "the image of God": it is a human body precisely because it is animated by a spiritual soul, and it is the whole human person that is intended to become, in the body of Christ, a temple of the Spirit...

The unity of soul and body is so profound that one has to consider the soul to be the "form" of the body: i.e., it is because of its spiritual soul that the body made of matter becomes a living, human body; spirit and matter, in man, are not two natures united, but rather their union forms a single nature.⁷

The Church's teaching rests on three principles, all knowable by way of human reason. First, the human person is an "embodied soul," the composite of the spiritual and physical. The human soul is created to animate one particular body. To be a human person means to be a unity of body and soul from the moment of conception. Thus, the body reveals not only the soul, but the person; the person, as a unity of body and soul, acts through the body. Thus, each person's body, given by God from the moment of conception, is neither foreign nor a burden, but an integral part of the person.

Second, and in keeping with the authoritative witness of Scripture (cf. Gen 1:27), the human person is created male or female. The human soul is created to animate and be embodied by one particular, specifically male or female, body. A person's sex is an immutable biological reality, determined at conception. The sexed body reveals God's design not only for each individual person, but also for all human beings, by "establishing us in a relationship with other living beings."⁸

As Pope Francis reminds us, "valuing one's own body in its femininity or masculinity is necessary if I am going to be able to recognize myself in an encounter with someone who is different."⁹ Thus, realizing that human persons are part of "human ecology" reminds us that "man too has a nature that he must respect and that he cannot manipulate at will."¹⁰ The human body has intrinsic meaning. Through the body, we encounter not only other human beings but also "the moral law, which is inscribed in our nature."¹¹

Sexuality affects all aspects of the human person in the unity of his body and soul. It especially concerns affectivity, the capacity to love and to procreate, and in a more general way the aptitude for forming bonds of communion with others. Everyone, man and woman, should acknowledge and accept his sexual identity.¹²

It is important to note that there may be a variety of ways in which a person may express his or her sexual identity as male or female, according to the norms and practices of a particular time or culture. Moreover, a person may have atypical interests, but this does not change the person's sexual identity as either male or female.

Third, the differences between man and woman are ordered towards their complementary union in marriage. Indeed, the differences between man and woman, male and female, are unintelligible apart from such a union.

Man and woman were made "for each other" - not that God left them half-made and incomplete: he created them to be a communion of persons, in which each can be "helpmate" to the other, for they are equal as persons ("bone of my bones ...") and complementary as masculine and feminine. In marriage, God unites them in such a way that, by forming "one flesh," they can transmit human life: "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth." By transmitting human life to their descendants, man and woman as spouses and parents cooperate in a unique way in the Creator's work.¹⁴

Physical, moral, and spiritual difference and complementarity are oriented toward the goods of marriage and the flourishing of family life. The harmony of the couple and of society depends

in part on the way in which the complementarity, needs, and mutual support between the sexes are lived out.¹⁵

Sexual difference is at the heart of family life. Children need, and have a right to, a father and a mother.

Our Transcendent Purpose

These truths about the human person, accessible to natural reason, attain an extraordinary dignity and calling in the Christian view of the world. The body is not a limitation or confinement but one with the soul in the life of grace and glory to which the human person is called.

Do you not know that your body is a temple of the holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you have been purchased at a price. Therefore, glorify God in your body (1 Cor 6:19-20).

Likewise, the relationship between man and woman as masculine and feminine has transcendent significance. Their complementary union serves as an icon of the marriage between Christ and the Church (cf. Eph 5:31-32). Through procreation, spouses welcome new life into the world and become a community of persons that images the Trinity.

Our Wounded Human Nature

Unfortunately, we experience our human nature not as the original harmony intended by the Creator but as fallen and wounded. One of the legacies of original sin is the disharmony and alienation between body and soul. Immediately after sinning, Adam and Eve “sewed fig leaves together and made themselves aprons” (Gen 3:7). They evidenced their sense of alienation from their own bodies by seeking to conceal them.

Everyone experiences this disharmony in various ways and to varying degrees. Nevertheless, it does not negate the profound oneness of the human person's body and soul. The truth of Christ's Church confirms us in the knowledge of this oneness so often obscured by our brokenness. The restoration of that original harmony, begun here by the action of Christ's grace, realizes its fulfillment in the resurrection of the body on the last day.

Gender Dysphoria

A person may experience this tension and alienation between body and soul so profoundly that the person claims an “internal sense” of sexual identity different from his or her biological sex. This condition was labeled by the American Psychiatric Association in 2013 as “gender dysphoria.”¹⁶ From a theological perspective, the experience of this interior conflict is not sinful in itself but must be understood as a disorder reflecting the broader disharmony caused by original sin. It is a particularly painful experience of the wounds we all suffer as a result of original sin. Every individual experiencing this condition should be treated with respect, justice, and charity.

What is new in our times, however, is the growing cultural acceptance of the erroneous claim that some people, including children and adolescents, are “in” the “wrong body” and therefore must undergo “gender transition,” either to relieve distress or as an expression of personal autonomy. Sometimes this involves psycho-social changes: The person asserts a new identity, reinforced by a different name, pronouns, and wardrobe. At other times it involves a medical or

surgical change: The person seeks chemical or surgical interventions that alter the body's function and appearance and even impair or destroy otherwise healthy reproductive organs.

At its core, this belief in a “transgender” identity rejects the significance of the sexed body and seeks cultural, medical, and legal validation of the person's self-defined identity—an approach called “gender affirmation.” Culturally, these claims have brought challenges to law, medicine, education, business, and religious freedom. They also raise significant pastoral challenges for both the shepherds and the faithful of the Diocese.

The Witness of Science

We know from biology that a person's sex is genetically determined at conception and present in every cell of the body. Because the body tells us about ourselves, our biological sex does in fact indicate our inalienable identity as male or female. Thus, so-called “transitioning” might change a person's appearance and physical traits (hormones, breasts, genitalia, etc.) but does not in fact change the truth of the person's identity as male or female, a truth reflected in every cell of the body. Indeed, no amount of “masculinizing” or “feminizing” hormones or surgery can make a man into a woman, or a woman into a man.

The Christian Response

A disciple of Christ desires to love all people and to seek their good actively. Denigration or bullying of any person, including those struggling with gender dysphoria, is to be rejected as completely incompatible with the Gospel.

In this sensitive area of identity, however, there is a great danger of a misguided charity and false compassion. In this regard, we must recall, “Only what is true can ultimately be pastoral.”¹⁷ Christians must always speak and act with both charity and truth. After the example of the Apostle Paul, they are to seek to speak the truth in love (cf. Eph 4:15).

The claim to “be transgender” or the desire to seek “transition” rests on a mistaken view of the human person, rejects the body as a gift from God, and leads to grave harm. To affirm someone in an identity at odds with biological sex or to affirm a person's desired “transition” is to mislead that person. It involves speaking and interacting with that person in an untruthful manner. Although the law of gradualness¹⁸ might prompt us to discern the best time to communicate the fullness of the truth, in no circumstances can we confirm a person in error.

Indeed, there is ample evidence that “gender affirmation” not only does not resolve a person's struggles but also can in fact exacerbate them. The acceptance and/or approval of a person's claimed transgender identity is particularly dangerous in the case of children, whose psychological development is both delicate and incomplete. First and foremost, a child needs to know the truth: He or she has been created male or female, forever. Affirming a child's distorted self-perception or supporting a child's desire to “be” someone other than the person (male or female) God created, gravely misleads and confuses the child about “who” he or she is.

In addition, “gender-affirming” medical or surgical interventions cause significant, even irreparable, bodily harm to children and adolescents. These include the use of puberty blockers (in effect, chemical castration) to arrest the natural psychological and physical development of a healthy child, cross-sex hormones to induce the development of opposite-sex, secondary sex characteristics, and surgery to remove an adolescent's healthy breasts, organs, and/or genitals. These kinds of interventions involve serious mutilations of the human body, and are morally unacceptable.

Although some advocates justify “gender affirmation” as necessary to reduce the risk of suicide, such measures appear to offer only temporary psychological relief, and suicidal risks remain significantly elevated following gender-transitioning measures.¹⁹

Adolescents are particularly vulnerable to claims that “gender transition” will resolve their difficulties. Long-term studies show “higher rates of mortality, suicidal behavior and psychiatric morbidity in gender-transitioned individuals compared to the general population.”^{20,21} In addition, studies show that children and adolescents diagnosed with gender dysphoria have high rates of comorbid mental health disorders, such as depression or anxiety, are three to four times more likely to be on the autism spectrum, and are more likely to have suffered from adverse childhood events, including unresolved loss or trauma or abuse.²² Psychotherapeutic treatments that incorporate “ongoing therapeutic work ... to address unresolved trauma and loss, the maintenance of subjective well-being, and the development of the self,” along with established treatments addressing suicidal ideation are appropriate interventions.²³ Gender transition is not the solution.

Indeed, to disregard or withhold information about the harms of pursuing “transition” or about the benefits of alternative, psychotherapeutic treatments constitutes a failure in both justice and charity.

Language

Those asserting a transgender identity and/or seeking to “transition” often adopt new names and pronouns that reflect their desired identity and insist that others must use the chosen names and pronouns. Such use might seem innocuous and even appear to be an innocent way of signaling love and acceptance of a person. In reality, however, it presents a profound crisis: We can never say something contrary to what we know to be true. To use names and pronouns that contradict the person's God-given identity is to speak falsely.

The faithful should avoid using “gender-affirming” terms or pronouns that convey approval of or reinforce the person's rejection of the truth. It is not harsh or judgmental to decline to use such language. In the broader culture, Catholics may experience significant pressure to adopt culturally-approved terminology. However, in no circumstances should anyone be compelled to use language contrary to the truth. The right to speak the truth inheres in the human person and cannot be taken away by any human institution. Attempts by the state, corporations, or employers to compel such language, particularly by threats of legal action or job loss, are unjust. We must love in the truth, and truth must be accurately conveyed by our words. At the same time, clarity must always be at the service of charity, as part of a broader desire to move people towards the fulness of the truth.

For Clergy, Catechists, and Teachers

The transgender issue presents a particular challenge to the handing on of the faith. So much of our faith rests on the natural truths of the human person, the body/soul unity, and the complementarity of man and woman. Jesus our Redeemer, the Son of God, assumes the body/soul unity of our human nature, sacrifices Himself and nourishes us by His Body, and is worshipped as the Bridegroom of the Church. The rejection of core natural truths regarding our humanity damages the “template” that God uses to reveal Himself to us and to manifest His salvific plan for us.

When teaching on this issue, it is essential to situate it within the broader context of the nature of the human person, the body/soul unity, and the sanctity of the body. Transgender ideology

does not exist in isolation but is part of our culture's broader confusion about the body, sexuality, man, woman, etc.

Further, it is always important to distinguish between a person's subjective experience and his or her moral culpability. The Church teaches that a person is created male or female. No one "is" transgender. A person who identifies as transgender may experience troubling feelings, confusion, or a mistaken belief that he or she is or can "become" someone different. The Church does not teach that people who experience gender dysphoria or confusion are immoral or bad. At the same time, a person who deliberately rejects his or her given identity or the sexed body and seeks harmful medical or surgical interventions is pursuing a path that is objectively wrong and harmful on many levels. The Church has a special solicitude for those who are suffering and desires to lead them to the truth and to healing.

Thus, when speaking with those who experience gender dysphoria or who claim a "transgender" identity, it is essential to listen and seek to understand their experiences. They need to know they are loved and valued, and that the Church hears their concerns and takes them seriously. In every case, the person's dignity as a person beloved by God should be affirmed. Only in the context of an authentic dialogue will people be able to receive the truth, particularly truths that challenge their feelings or other beliefs.

Special care must be taken when interacting with children who experience gender dysphoria or who express a belief in an identity incongruent with biological sex. Authentic accompaniment requires remaining firm in the truth of the human person while patiently guiding children towards that truth. Parents must always, and immediately, be involved in any discussions with a child about such sensitive topics.

For Parents

You are the first and the best teachers of your children. They will believe, pray, and love according to what they see, hear, and experience in your home. From you they will learn the truth of who they are, the dignity of the human body, the meaning of human sexuality, and the glory of their being children of God. Nothing can substitute for the school of the family.

Still, you cannot fulfill this vocation by yourselves. The Church provides her teachings and pastoral care so that you can draw upon her wisdom and grace in teaching and caring for your children.

In addition to your good example and teaching, raising your children also requires vigilance against dangerous ideas and influences. This means the close monitoring of what your children receive via the internet and social media. Transgender ideology is being celebrated, promoted, and pushed out over all social media platforms and even children's programming. Much of your good work and witness can be undone quickly by a child's unsupervised or unrestricted internet access.

Another strong source of misinformation about the nature of the person, and the meaning of the body is, regrettably, the public education system. Our region's public schools provide an excellent education in many regards. However, many also aggressively promote a false understanding of the human person in their advocacy of gender ideology. Current policies compel the use of chosen names and/or pronouns. Staff in many schools are required to affirm a child's declared "gender identity" and facilitate a child's "transition," even in the absence of parental notice or permission.²⁴ Parents with children in public school must therefore discuss

specific Catholic teaching on these issues with their children and be even more vigilant and vocal against this false and harmful ideology.

The Church extends her pastoral care especially to those parents whose children suffer gender dysphoria or feel distress over their God-given identity as male or female. Parents in such situations experience a profound sorrow as they witness their children's suffering. Their sorrow is deepened if their children pursue "gender affirming" therapy, a harmful and life-altering path. Parents are encouraged to find strength and wisdom through the grace of the Sacraments of Communion and Confession, and to seek pastoral support in the parish or diocese.

In difficult circumstances, parents are often tempted to think-or are made to feel-that their Catholic faith is at odds with what is good for their child. In fact, authentic love for their children is always aligned with the truth. In the case of gender dysphoria, this means recognizing that happiness and peace will not be found in rejecting the truth of the human person and the human body. Thus parents must resist simplistic solutions presented by advocates of gender ideology and strive to discover and address the real reasons for their children's pain and unhappiness. They should seek out trustworthy clinicians for sound counsel. Meeting with other parents who have been through similar trials also can be a source of strength and support. Under no circumstances should parents seek "gender-affirming" therapy for their children, as it is fundamentally incompatible with the truth of the human person. They should not seek, encourage, or approve any counseling or medical procedures that would confirm mistaken understandings of human sexuality and identity, or lead to (often irreversible) bodily mutilation. Trusting God, parents need to be confident that a child's ultimate happiness lies in accepting the body as God's gift and discovering his or her true identity as a son or daughter of God.

For those struggling

Finally, a word to those struggling with gender dysphoria.

Every one of us has a struggle that is unique. But none of us should feel alone or abandoned in his or her struggles. Like many others, you may feel alienated from your body, as though you are supposed to have a different one. Please know that, although you may struggle with your body or self-image, God's unrelenting love for you means that He loves you in the totality of your body as well. Our basic obligation to respect and care for the body comes from the fact that your body is part of the person-you-whom God loves.

Be on guard against simplistic solutions that promise relief from your struggles by the change of name, pronouns, or even the appearance of your body. There are many who have walked that path before you only to regret it. The difficult but more promising path to joy and peace is to work with a trusted counselor, therapist, priest, and/or friend to come to an awareness of the goodness of your body and of your identity as male or female.

More than anything else, the Church desires to bring you the love of Jesus Christ Himself. That love is inseparable from the truth of who you are as one created in God's image, reborn as a child of God, and destined for His glory. Christ suffered for our sake, not to exempt us from all suffering but to be with us in the midst of those struggles. The Church is here to assist and accompany you on this journey, so that you will know the beauty of the body and soul that God gave you and come to enjoy "the glorious freedom of the children of God" (Rom 8:21).

Further resources

Support:

- Courage and EnCourage: <https://couragerc.org/>. EnCourage in the Diocese of Arlington -encourage@arlingtondiocese.org
- Partners for Ethical Care: <https://www.partnersforethicalcare.com/>.
- Person and Identity: <https://personandidentity.com/>.
- Sex Change Regret: <https://sexchangeregret.com/>.
- Society for Evidence-Based Gender Medicine: <https://segm.org/>.
- Truth and Love: <https://truthandlove.com/>.

Information:

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8. *Laudato Si* (LS), no. 155. http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html.
9. *LS*, no. 155.
10. Pope Benedict XVI. (2011, September 22). Address to the German Bundestag. <https://www.vatican.va/content/benedict->

[xvi/en/speeches/2011/september/documents/hf_ben-xvi_spe_20110922_reichstag-berlin.html](https://www.vatican.va/holy-father/pope-francis/speeches/2011/september/documents/hf_ben-xvi_spe_20110922_reichstag-berlin.html).

11. *LS*, no. 155.
 12. *LS*, no. 155.
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 14. *CCC*, no. 372.
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- See Virginia Department of Education, Student and School Support, Gender Diversity, particularly Model Policies for the Treatment of Transgender Students, the Sample Support Plan, and the sample Name and Gender Change Request form. <https://doe.virginia.gov/support/gender-diversity/index.shtml>.

Family Service Expectation.

As a small private Catholic school, Chelsea Academy relies heavily upon its families for the success of its programs and in maintaining fiscal solvency. In addition, joining together for a common cause builds community and camaraderie. Beginning with the 2022-2023 academic year, families are expected to serve **40 hours/academic year** in support of the school, its programs, and its events. (Families receiving financial aid may be asked to do more.) Families also have the option of paying an amount "**in lieu of**" service if there is difficulty or inability to fulfill this expectation. Service opportunities will be communicated to families at the beginning of each academic year, and from time to time as they arise.

Family Service Expectation—FAQ

1. What is the Chelsea Academy “Family Service Expectation?”

As a small private Catholic school, Chelsea Academy relies heavily upon its families for the success of its programs and in maintaining fiscal solvency. In addition, joining together for a common cause builds community and camaraderie. Beginning with the 2022-2023 academic year, families are expected to serve **40 hours/academic year** in support of the school, its programs, and its events. (Families receiving financial aid may be asked to do more.) Families also have the option of paying an amount "**in lieu of**" service if there is difficulty or inability to fulfill this expectation. Service opportunities will be communicated to families at the beginning of each academic year, and from time to time as they arise.

2. Why initiate the “Family Service Expectation” in the 2022-2023 academic year?

With expanded academic programs (i.e., the addition of K-3), the acquisition of a new campus, and the complexity of athletic, co-curricular, and extracurricular activities desired by our families, the administration—in consultation with the board of directors, faculty, and parents—considered this pivotal year of expansion to be the year to initiate this expectation.

3. What good will this do for the school?

A tremendous amount of good! Tangibly, the school will accrue much needed services from our families to enhance the educational experience for all of our students. Things such as maintenance and cleaning, as well as opportunities for team meals and sports banquets, or even lunch/recess monitoring, will provide a much more positive experience for our students and will provide also a much needed reprieve for our teachers and coaches who work many and long hours.

4. Why was the number “40” chosen as the expected number of hours?

It is not lost on the biblically literate that 40 is a number that symbolizes sacrifice. Chelsea realizes that this is a sacrifice for many families but also has the conviction that families working together in this same spirit of sacrifice will redound to the benefit of all—especially our students. The number was also chosen as a reasonable attempt to approximate both the time required for anticipated needs with the aforementioned expansion of programs; as well as a reasonable amount of time that families could dedicate to particular opportunities throughout the academic year. Indeed, to provide one example, it is not uncommon for the “father’s work day” (which occurs in August) to net a participating family, 8 or 9 hours. This one event covers almost (or in some cases) a quarter of the family expectation. Similarly, the same could be said for those families helping with set-up, clean-up, or other aspects of the annual Gala or perhaps through participation in the CPA or Boosters efforts.. Many hours can be accomplished in one transaction given the nature of the opportunity.

5. Who is obligated by the “Family Service Expectation?” Do students and parents have to participate? How do you define “family” for purposes of this program?

The “Family Service Expectation” is the responsibility of each Chelsea family. Students, parents, siblings, and extended family (e.g., grandparents, alumni siblings) may all participate in the fulfillment of this expectation. Often there will be opportunities that are more appropriate for adults to participate in rather than students; and vice-versa. Likewise, there will also be opportunities for the entire family. As long as there is participation from each family, there is great latitude as to who fulfills this expectation.

6. What if there are family circumstances that prevent me from participating?

There are instances and individual family circumstances that may prohibit the ready availability of certain families from participating in many of the opportunities that are put forth in support of Chelsea. Sometimes distance itself is prohibitive given where some of our families live. The administration is sensitive to these realities and is open to having a conversation about this with the affected families. Happily, there are opportunities to help the school that would qualify that may be done remotely or in a way that would not require one’s physical presence. Families are encouraged to meet with the Headmaster about these particular difficulties and a workable solution may be found for those in this situation.

7. Given the timing of the announcement of this new program, will there be a “fee assessment” this year if a family cannot complete the required hours?

One of the stated purposes of the family service expectation is fiscal responsibility. Things that can be done by family service will necessarily vitiate any need to pay additional personnel or additional stipends to existing staff. In the Headmaster’s missive of July 28, 2022, he indicated that “families who fail to fulfill [the expectation] will be assessed a fee.” Likewise, he indicated that a “buy out” or “in lieu of” option was available as well. Indeed, these options alongside a family service requirement are very common among small private and Catholic schools across the country. Families can help the school in various ways and giving them options is a helpful way to accomplish our aims. The administration did hear from some parents that the “fee assessment” at the end of the academic year was a surprise and that would have caused a reassessment of their student’s enrollment had they known of this aspect of the Family Service Expectation. Likewise, the rollout of the Family Service Expectation was timed only after the purchase of the new campus, the solidification of enrollment for the K-3, and the ascertainment of needs and opportunities to be fulfilled by this expectation. Admittedly, the timing on these things—especially with a financial element attached—are best done during the time at which tuition and fees are announced for the upcoming academic year. We are confident that people understand all the complexity that went into the timing of the announcement. That said, it seems prudent for the 2022-2023 academic year not to assess a fee for service hours not fulfilled, given that parents may have made certain yearly financial decisions when tuition was set. We are still rolling this out this year and still are offering families the ability to “buy out” if that is their wish. The “in lieu of” or “buy out” for the 2022-2023 academic year is \$1000. As it is not a required fee assessment this year, any “buy out” for this year would be considered a tax deductible donation.

8. What opportunities qualify for the fulfillment of this requirement?

The Headmaster's missive of July 28, 2022 outlined in broad brushstroke some of the opportunities available. Likewise, there have been announcements by the Dean and the Director of the Lower School as to opportunities that are available. We invite all families to look to our website at the Volunteer Opportunities section of the Parent Tab to see what opportunities may be available for the academic year. This page is under construction and new opportunities will be added and announced periodically.

9. How are my family's hours tracked?

The administration will be tracking each family's hours for purposes of the Family Service Expectation. Many families have already participated in opportunities that have sign-up's and whose hours have been tracked. These are all initially being tracked manually by the Business Office until an appropriate system has been selected and set up for self reporting and online monitoring. If you have any hours to report, they may be submitted to Mr. Fier at lfier@chelseaacademy.org. Once an online system is in place, details will be announced in the regular Thursday Announcements.



*FAMILY-SCHOOL AGREEMENT &
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT AND RECEIPT OF HANDBOOK*

When enrolling their child(ren) in Chelsea Academy, parent(s) or legal guardian(s) (hereafter, "parents") are asked to sign the Family-School Agreement. In signing the Family-School Agreement, it is understood that:

1. All children are welcome to Chelsea Academy. As part of enrollment, parents must sign the Family-School Agreement.
2. Our schools exist to pass on the Catholic faith in its fullness to students and to form disciples of Jesus Christ. Parents and schools are partners in this mission; parents are expected to cooperate fully in it and shall supervise their children in accordance with this agreement.
3. As partners in this mission, students and their parents are all part of the school community. As such, students and their parents agree to live their lives in a way that supports, rather than opposes, the mission of the school.

The school joyfully exercises its responsibility to teach Catholic faith and morals in all fullness. Parents whose religious practices and beliefs run counter to Church teaching might experience conflicts as we maintain mission integrity. Sincere questioning of the practices and doctrines of the Catholic faith—whether by students or their parents—in order to more deeply understand them are welcome; but openly hostile or persistent defiance of Catholic truths or morality are a violation of the Family-School Agreement and may result in denial of admission or dismissal from the school.

I acknowledge receipt of the 2022-2023 Chelsea Academy Parent-Student Handbook containing policies, rules, and regulations for Chelsea Academy. I understand and agree that the administration of Chelsea Academy will have the authority set forth in the Handbook.

I understand that the policies, rules, and regulations contained in the Handbook are established for the welfare and benefit of the students.

I will discuss the policies with my child(ren) to ensure their understanding of the policies.

I understand my responsibility to support Chelsea Academy in the policies it has established, and to see that my child adheres to the rules and regulations set forth in the Handbook.

I/We hereby acknowledge that I/we have read and understand the Family-School Agreement and the policies set forth in the Parent-Student Handbook:

My/Our signature below indicates my/our agreement to abide by the terms set forth by both the Agreement and in the Handbook. This form is due on or before the first day of classes.

Parent(s) signature(s) _____ Date _____

_____ Date _____

