

EPC TEEN BIBLE SCHOOL HANDBOOK



“Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves. Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord.”

Romans 12:9-11

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GENERAL INFORMATION:

Student Ages: 14-16 years

Location: EPC Evangelical Church of Philadelphia
3470 Huntingdon Pike
Huntingdon Valley, PA 19006

MISSION: To encourage and equip teenagers to live a life of faith, character and integrity.

VALUES:– **GRACE**

To personally appropriate and extend the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.

“For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.” Ephesians 2:8-9

– **GROWTH**

To live as an authentic follower of Jesus Christ with thoughts and actions rooted in the Scriptures, pursuing Christ-likeness with the help of the Holy Spirit.

“Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ.” Ephesians 4:15

– **SERVICE**

To serve others according to ones talents and spiritual giftedness.

“Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves. Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord.” Romans 12:9-11

– **FELLOWSHIP**

To connect with other believers and establish meaningful relationships.

“But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.” 1 John 1:7

PURPOSE OF THE PROGRAM:

1. To help students gain an understanding of Christian Biblical principles and ethics, grow spiritually and learn more about God, people and themselves
2. Encourage students to serve others and be sensitive to the needs of the people around them
3. To teach students how to compassionately serve at home, in church and in their community
4. Give the students an opportunity to use and develop their talents through leadership, servitude, and new experiences in a safe environment.
5. Allow students to gain experience and confidence in ministry, whether it’s singing, preaching, praying, or serving others.
6. Develop friendships with other teens from different states who share the same goals and desire to serve Jesus

ACADEMIC POLICIES

Academic Integrity Policy

Academic integrity is essential to the most effective development of a person's intellectual skills and abilities. Academic dishonesty is not insignificant in its impact on student development. Violations of academic integrity and other forms of cheating, as defined below, involve the intention to deceive or mislead or misrepresent, and therefore are a form of lying.

Attendance

EPC expects students to attend and participate in all classes, discussions, activities and trips unless a valid reason for absence is warranted.

Conditions to receive a Certificate of Completion:

- Average grade at the end of the program must be at least a 70% (C) average.
- Submit all assignments, exams, projects, and forms.
- Appropriate behavior and obedience to administration and school rules.
- A Certificate will not be granted if a student receives three strikes/ violations or is caught cheating.

STUDENT CONDUCT

Philosophy of Discipline

EPC Teen Bible School maintains a Christian discipline, promoting a way of life that is intended to uphold the teachings of Jesus Christ, calling all people to God's truth. Therefore, community life at EPC is a disciplined life. Community standards reflect biblical principles and traditional Christian teaching and encourage students, volunteers, lecturers and administration to live lives of holiness, honesty, decency and civility. The intent of all discipline is to enhance growth and maturity, especially responsibility for one's own behavior and accountability for one's own actions.

EPC's philosophy of discipline is neither legalistic nor permissive. Instead, members of our community are called to a high standard of behavior in order to establish and maintain an environment conducive to learning and personal growth. Our desire is that all people reach their greatest potential in Jesus Christ.

Standards of Conduct

Within the context of EPC's mission and its determination to be Christ-centered, students are expected to develop and maintain a high standard of personal and behavioral values. At its core, this expectations is based on loving God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength, and loving your neighbor as yourself. More specifically, it includes, but is not limited to, the following:

1. Respect for EPC's Teen Bible School tradition of honesty, moral and ethical integrity, and open inquiry.
2. Respect for the right and necessity of EPC to develop and maintain a Christian atmosphere conducive to academic study and personal growth.
3. Respect for the personal worth, dignity and rights of others.
4. Respect for the diverse backgrounds, personalities, convictions and spiritual traditions of students, volunteers, staff and administration who comprise the EPC community.
5. Respect for local, state and federal laws and ordinances.
6. Respect for the discipline, policy, procedures and authority established by EPC for the systematic management of school activities, the well-being of the members of the student community, and the integrity of the program.

7. Regard for the nature of a moral community by embracing the need to lovingly confront and hold accountable members of the EPC community whose conduct falls outside the boundaries of Christian behavior, school policy, state and federal laws.

POLICIES AND GUIDELINES FOR STUDENT PARTICIPANTS

1. All students are required to obey the school's rules and its administration.
2. Students must respect the upbringing, views and opinions of others.
3. Students do not have the right to disturb the discipline established by the instructor, counselor, house leader or the administration.
4. Students are required to attend ALL in-school and after-school activities assigned to you. Attendance of each service at the local church is also mandatory.
5. Students are required to provide the administration with a written explanation for any absence from class stating a specific and acceptable reason (acceptable reasons are determined by administration.)
6. All students are required to be punctual and arrive on time to all in-school and after-school activities and events.
7. Students are required to complete and submit all assignments given by the instructor or the administration by the set deadline.
8. Cheating on exams and any other in-class and out-of-class assignments is strictly prohibited. Lying is unacceptable.
9. Cell phone use is prohibited during class, activities and church services. Cell phones are to be used only during breaks.
10. Students are not allowed to chew gum in class or in the church.
11. Students must abide by the school-established dress code in school and in church.
12. Students are required to wear their nametags during class and activities every day.
13. Students cannot change their assigned seats independently or without permission.
14. Students are not allowed to go home during breaks unless given specific permission by administration.
15. It is prohibited between girls and guys to hold hands, sit in each other's lap, hug, kiss, give massages, go swimming without a school administrator present, or have sexual relations.
16. During the course of the school session, students are not allowed to date.
17. Students are not allowed to listen to non-Christian music and watch movies that do not follow Christian morals.
18. Students are to arrive home no later than 11:00 pm, unless with EPC administration.
19. Students must spend the night only in their assigned home - this includes students living at home. Spending the night elsewhere is allowed only with the consent of the administration.
20. Students hold a financial obligation for any damages to school inventory, property, place of lodging, or school transportation.
21. The school does not bear any responsibility for a student's medical costs associated with illness, medical condition, trauma, or car accident.
22. Students are responsible for the cleanliness and neatness of the school space. Those on duty are responsible for the general cleanliness of the classroom, kitchen, hallways, sanctuary and restrooms.
23. Behavior that is strictly prohibited:
 - Vulgar words or expressions
 - Fights and the use of physical force in resolving arguments

- Theft
 - Leaving the classroom during class time
 - Eating during class
 - Talking and disturbing discipline during lectures
 - Sleeping during lectures
 - Having headphones in and/or using electronic devices including laptops, iPads, or iPods during class
 - Storing, using, distributing or selling alcohol, tobacco and other drugs
 - Irresponsible/illegal operation of a vehicle
 - Visiting inappropriate internet sites/pages
 - Bullying, teasing or making fun of others
24. Students must treat ALL adults with respect - this includes activity leaders, host families, counselors, administration, and all adults in school and in the local church.
25. Every student is responsible for the upkeep and cleanliness of the room that they are provided to live in. They are to be respectful to the host family. Student will be held responsible for any damages caused in their place of living.
26. Students will bear responsibility for every complaint made against them outside of school such as misbehavior, inappropriate conversations, and violation of the dress code or any other form of damages.
27. If a student withdraws from the school for any reason or if the student is expelled, he/she will not receive a tuition refund.
28. If a student demonstrates inappropriate behavior, the school administration reserves the right to deny him/her participation in field trips.
29. For every violated rule and regulation, the student will face appropriate disciplinary actions. The student will receive a strike and parents will be notified. After receiving three strikes, the student will be expelled from the school without a tuition refund. Student will be responsible for all charges associated with returning home early. The administration reserves the right to contact church leaders of the student's home church.
30. In case of outright violation of Christian morals and the Bible with behavior such as fornication, deceit, theft, alcohol, tobacco, or drug storage, selling or use, the administration reserves the right to expel the offender immediately without a warning.

Purpose of Disciplinary Responses

In order to preserve moral community, it sometimes becomes necessary to confront and hold accountable members of the EPC family. Procedures have been designed to provide a loving disciplinary response, balanced by justice and mercy. Justice requires that those who violate community standards are held accountable, and those who are innocent are protected. Mercy requires an understanding that all people are fallen sinners in need of God's grace and a mandate to encourage hope rather than condemnation. Therefore, discipline must be both corrective and restorative. The goal must be to redeem individuals and to restore relationships so that people can grow and develop in knowledge and grace. The purpose of the disciplinary response is:

- to redirect behavior
- to protect the rights of others in the community
- to encourage and teach responsibility
- to maintain a Christian environment compatible with the educational mission of the school

DRESS CODE POLICY

All members of our community are responsible for the way they present themselves and how the decisions they make communicate what they value. Through the way they dress, students are encouraged to reflect their God-given worth and Christian aspirations. EPC believes that God has uniquely designed each person and as God's creation, we are called to respect ourselves and our bodies. There is nothing shameful about the human body. However, the EPC Bible School is an educational environment seeking to prepare students for service in the church and community. Part of the educational process, then, is learning to dress appropriately and teaching students that from the first day at EPC, the way you present yourself to administrators, leaders, volunteers, EPC members and fellow students matters.

Because bright line rules are often needed when we talk about dress codes, the following outlines a few guidelines that will allow our community to address these issues with grace and respect. Implementation and enforcement of the dress code are the responsibility of the entire school. These guidelines apply to all EPC activities.

1. Clothes should fit appropriately to cover private areas when sitting, standing, and walking. Any shirts that reveal chest, back, torso, or midriff are not acceptable; shorts with less than a 3-inch inseam; and/or revealing skirts or top are not acceptable.
2. Shirts should be worn in public at all times including outdoor exercise.
3. Athletic clothing appropriate for sports or recreation may be worn while participating in classes/activities in designated athletic or recreational areas or going to or from those areas.
4. Clothing with offensive, vulgar, or inappropriate advertising, pictures and/or slogans or that which promote illegal substances are contrary to EPC's mission and should not be worn.
5. Sweatpants, pajama pants or sleepwear are not appropriate for the school environment and should not be worn to class.
6. Leggings may not be worn without a top garment completely covering the buttocks.

LADIES

"Do not let your adorning be external—the braiding of hair and the putting on of gold jewelry, or the clothing you wear— but let your adorning be the hidden person of the heart with the imperishable beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which in God's sight is very precious." (1 Peter 3:3-4)

Class and Church Dress Code:

1. Skirts must be knee - length (no mini-skirts) and should not have high slits (longer than 2 inches)
2. Blouses or T-shirts must have regular length sleeves that cover up past the shoulder. No thin straps, tank-tops, spaghetti straps or strapless shirts. No graphic T-shirts with excessive or inappropriate drawings or writing.
3. Blouses cannot have a low neckline (no cleavage showing)
4. Head-covering for church services are to be worn out of respect for church culture and elders
5. Jeans and pants are permissible during class. No pants or jeans allowed for church services.
6. Pants or jeans cannot have excessive rips, tears, or holes.
7. Caps/hats are not to be worn inside the church building
8. Footwear: Sneakers are permissible for class. No sneakers or casual shoes to be worn during church services. No flip-flops allowed.

Physical Activity/ Sports/ Field Trip Dress Code:

1. When outdoors for physical activities- ladies may wear shorts, capris or pants if the shorts are as long as their middle finger when the arms are extended down and against the body. No mini-shorts.
2. Ladies must wear shirts with sleeves. No low necklines or backlines permitted.
3. Ladies must have a pair of comfortable sneakers for physical activities.
4. While swimming in the presence of boys, girls must wear a tank top and shorts over their bathing suit. The tank top and shorts should not be see-through when wet. No white bathing suits or tank-tops.

GENTLEMEN

"I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect." (Romans 12:1-2)

Church/Class Dress Code:

1. Dress pants or khakis are required for church (no jeans)
2. Jeans may be worn to class.
3. Pants or jeans cannot have any rips, tears, or holes
4. No shorts or sports pants can be worn in the church or class.
5. Gentlemen are to wear polos or dress shirts with a collar to church. Simple T-shirts are allowed for class. No sleeveless shirts or tank tops.
6. No inappropriate graphic tees (T-shirts should not have excessive or inappropriate writing, symbols or drawings)
7. Caps/hats are not to be worn inside the church building
8. Footwear: dress shoes must be worn in the church. Casual sneakers can be worn for class. No flip-flops allowed.

Physical Activity/ Sports/ Field Trip Dress Code:

1. Swimming shorts are required - no swimming in undergarments
2. When outdoors for physical activities - boys may wear shorts or pants. The shorts should be as long as their middle finger when the arms are extended down and against the body.
3. Boys must have a pair of comfortable sneakers for physical activities
4. T-shirts must have sleeves. No tank tops or sleeveless shirts.

STUDENT SUPERVISION

Within our program we have 12+ full-time volunteers such as the directors, administrators, group leaders, etc. who will be present throughout the whole program from morning to evening with the students. All students will also be divided into 4 groups (14-15 students per group) with 2 group leaders (one male/one female) overseeing them. Group Leaders are responsible for constant oversight of every student in their group and discipline. We strive to have organization, discipline and take all appropriate measures to ensure student safety and appropriate behavior.

SCHOOL DISCIPLINE

Each student received a written document with all rules, regulation and appearance appropriate for school conduct. We have a three-“strike” rule. If a student receives three misconduct “strikes”, they will be counselled with directors, senior advisors and possibly excused from the program. Other discipline measures for minor misconduct will be cleaning kitchen and bathrooms, copying chapters from the Bible, or being kept out of a “fun” activity such as six flags, or other trips.

The violations listed below are not construed as all encompassing. The directors and administrators are given discretion in addressing incidents of violation not listed here. All policies and regulations of the Student Handbook may apply to all students on or off church property regardless of whether school is in session.

Category One violations. Category One violations may include, but are not limited to:

- Lateness
- Minor disturbances of peace. A disturbance will be defined as an event in which failure to maintain control of the event occurs and/or complaints are reported and/or police respond to the scene.
- Violation of curfew policies
- Engaging or threatening to engage in behavior that would cause minor damage to school property or to the personal property of others
- Violation of dress code principles
- Violation of academic integrity policy, cheating
- Violation of parking/safety regulations
- Use of profanity, vulgarity or obscenity in any form
- Photographs or comments on social networking sites that document or publicize suspected violations of the Handbook

Actions assigned as disciplinary responses to Category One violations may include, but are not limited to written warning; minimum fine and/or restitution of damaged property; and additional assignments such as rewriting one-two chapters from the Bible, assist with cleaning duties or as assigned by the disciplinary administrator.

Category Two violations. Category Two violations may include, but are not limited to:

- Repeated or severe Category One violations.
- Violation of the attendance policy.
- Violation of church property
- Repeated violations of the academic integrity policy
- Alcohol consumption on church property or at any school-organized event.
- Illegal gambling
- Use of tobacco in any form or any type of smoking on church property or at any school-organized event.
- Failure to comply with a directive of a school official acting in the performance of his or her duties.
- Disrespectful behavior toward a school staff or faculty member.
- Knowingly providing false or misleading information to an EPC authority, including all leaders and administrators.
- Leaving church property or event without informing administration

- Engaging or threatening to engage in behavior that would cause significant damage to school property or to the personal property of others.
- Minor instances of disruptive behavior. Disruptive behavior includes conduct that distracts or intimidates others in a manner that interferes with instructional activities, fails to adhere to an instructor's appropriate classroom rules or instructions, or interferes with the normal operation of the school.
- Unauthorized entry or use of university buildings, facilities, equipment, supplies or resources.
- Possession or use of fireworks or chemicals that are of an explosive or corrosive nature.
- Theft or possession of stolen property.
- Possession and/or use of pornography of any kind.
- Sexual immorality, including pre-marital sex.
- Forgery, alteration or misuse of school documents, forms, or records.
- Violation of state, local law
- Any activity that qualifies under applicable criminal law as a misdemeanor, regardless if charges are filed.

Actions assigned as disciplinary responses to Category Two violations may include, but are not limited to: loss of privilege to participate in certain activities or trips; contact with parents and pastor; fine and/or restitution of damaged property; and discretionary assignments.

Category Three violations. Category Three violations include, but are not limited to:

- Repeated or severe Category Two violations.
- Failure to comply with disciplinary decisions, including conditions of probation.
- Violation of the alcohol or drug policy.
- Possession of weapons in school or church.
- Misuse of fire or safety equipment.
- Causing or reporting a false warning of a campus emergency.
- EPC strives to provide a safe and orderly environment for its students. In keeping with that goal, students whose behavior is disruptive to the community may be subject to corrective or administrative action including dismissal. "Disruptive" is here defined to include behavior that causes emotional/psychological or physical distress to self, fellow students, volunteers, leaders or administration that is significantly above what is normally experienced in daily life, as determined by the university. Such disruption may be in the form of a single behavioral incident or a somewhat less severe but persistent disruption over a more extended period of time.
- Knowingly accessing a computer, computer network, or computer system beyond the standard assigned and/or accepted permissions.
- Causing physical or emotional harm to another person. Emotional harm includes but is not limited to, intimidation, stalking, cyber-bullying, and/or threats by text messaging or other electronic media.
- Creating a hostile environment, including but not limited to hate speech, harassment, or sexual harassment.
- Arson or attempted arson.
- Assault, physical or sexual in nature.
- Any activity that qualifies under applicable criminal law as a felony, regardless if charges are filed.

Actions assigned as disciplinary responses to Category Three violations may include, but are not limited to: suspension or dismissal from EPC Teen Bible School; accountability agreement; loss of privilege; minimum fine and/or restitution of damaged property; discretionary assignments; and/or denial of readmission without approval of Pastors and Board of directors.

Explanation of Actions taken:

The actions listed below are not construed as all encompassing. The directors and/or other designee are given discretion to assign actions not listed here.

Verbal Warning: A student will be given a verbal warning if a minor offense occurs.

Verbal warning with assignment: A student will be given a verbal warning if an offense occurs with an assigned task/assignment as a disciplinary measure (such as writing chapters, etc.) which the student must fulfill in the time expected by the director or administrator.

Formal Warning: A student served with a formal warning is given an official written notice. The formal warning may include other sanctions, and carries the message that continued or repeated violations may result in more severe sanctions. Parents will be notified and receive a copy of the formal warning.

Loss of Privilege: A student may be restricted from participating in school activities, including but not limited to six flags, sport activities, workshops, and trips.

Dismissal: Dismissal from the program is a permanent termination of student status. Notification of dismissals will be sent to parents or guardians and to pastor of your church. A student who has been dismissed will be informed by written notice of the time within which the student is expected to leave the campus.

RESIDENCE POLICIES

Students will reside with a host family. Host families are Evangelical Church members who voluntarily open their homes for our out-of-state students. All students will be placed with at least one other teenager of same gender, thus giving an opportunity to build friendships.

Students staying with a host family:

1. Student is responsible to obey all house rules of their host family.
2. Student is responsible for the general cleanliness of the space they were given.
3. The students will be responsible for every complaint made against them by neighbors such as for bad behavior, inappropriate conversations, violation of the dress code, or any types of damages.
4. It is strictly prohibited without the consent of the school administration to:
 - Organize gatherings or parties
 - Allow anyone to spend the night
5. Students' guests are not to stay past 10pm.

TRANSPORTATION

The host family, group leaders or administrators will be providing transportation to and from school for each student. On trips, all students will be transported on a big bus by a licensed bus driver.

ITEMS TO BRING

Personal items:

- Personal Hygiene items (Toothbrush, tooth paste, shampoo, soap, etc.)
- Sun block lotion and hat
- Medications (if you are prescribed to take it)
- Towels (bath and beach towel)
- Alarm clock
- APPROPRIATE church, class and casual clothing (see **DRESS CODE POLICY**)
- One uniform outfit for Church: White blouse and black skirts for girls, white dress shirt and black dress pants for boys (Must wear upon announcement)
- Extra money for personal spending
- Camera (optional)
- Watch
- Cell Phone (if you own one)
- Backpack (for change-clothing and school supplies)

Besides Personal items, **must** bring:

- Bible (NKJV or ESV version is best)
- Backpack (for clothing and school supplies)
- Loose leaf paper (Binder will be provided with all information upon arrival)
- Personal talent(s)
- Notebook for personal note taking
- Musical instrument (if you play one)
- Song book and soundtracks (you and your group will be grateful for these when you'll be preparing for services)
- Ministry materials (Christian skits/play, poetry, devotionals, Christian movies and documentaries)
- Laptop (optional)

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS?

Please contact the following:

Pastors

Veniamin Voshchilo	267-718-4204
Alexander Poberezhnyuk	267-231-7799

Senior Advisors

Yaroslav Mukha	267-255-0684
Roman Pasternak	215-565-6623
Vladimir Soroka	267-262-3342
Bogdan Voshchilo	267-323-5475
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