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## OUR CULTURE

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### **Trinity School: A Culture of Learning and a Culture of Christian Life**

One of the most important factors parents consider when choosing a school for their children is how well the culture of the school matches their values and supports the culture they are building at home. A school culture involves all members of the community (faculty, staff, coaches, advisors, volunteers, parents and students) and concerns not only the school day itself but how members of the culture relate to one another both inside and outside the classroom.

Trinity School aims to provide a Christian culture that is free yet disciplined, safe for students, and supportive of our educational goals. All members of the Trinity School community work together to support this culture, but the relationship between the parents and the school is particularly important.

At Trinity School, we understand parents (not the school) to be the primary educators of their children. Although parents entrust their children to the school for a large portion of the day and expect the school to strive to accomplish the aims established by its mission and vision, parents still play an integral role. We do not think of parents as simply customers, but as members of the school community and partners with us.

Parental engagement, therefore, is crucial in establishing the culture of the school. Parents support their children at home, support the faculty through their active engagement in the academic experience of their children, and together help provide a rich social life for students outside of school. They coach athletic teams, cheer from the bleachers and sidelines, host student parties, serve at school events, and enrich the entire Trinity School community through their many other generous volunteer activities.

Because of this close partnership, all parents should understand the unique culture that Trinity School aims to create and that they become a part of.

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***Education as Human Awakening:*** Parents want more for their children than merely a good education. They also want their children to thrive as human beings. At Trinity School we aim to introduce our students not to typical schooling but to a genuine experience of human awakening. Our goal for our students is that they would experience such awakening by developing a wide range of intellectual and aesthetic habits of mind. We want them to develop a sense of wonder about the world, to grow in their love of truth, to desire the good in their own lives and in the world, to become morally and spiritually serious, to recognize beauty in all its manifestations, to

be intellectually honest with themselves and one another, to respect others and their views, and to recognize the dignity of all human beings.

These habits of mind must be modeled, not merely taught. To that end, we understand our faculty to be not only individual teachers but also (and more importantly) members of a community of learners. As individuals and as a community, the faculty model learning as a lifelong adult activity and a way of being in the world, not as a hoop to be jumped through during adolescence on the way to something else.

We also resist grade-consciousness in our students and avoid educational practices that link learning to external rewards rather than genuine experiences of wonder and inquiry. Parents can support the school in this effort by conveying the same message at home and by engaging their children in genuine discussions about the material they are learning.

***The True, the Good, and the Beautiful:*** The best educational models have always pointed students to the higher goals towards which human beings should strive. At Trinity School, we seek to create a culture that bears witness to the pursuit of truth, the practice of goodness and the creation of beauty. Our reading lists, drama selections and artistic works are drawn from the best of human culture throughout the ages, reflecting our commitment to excellence. We want our broader Trinity School culture to mirror this commitment as well.

We encourage students to participate in the pursuit of truth, the practice of goodness and the creation of beauty as a way of life, not just as something that takes place at school. We resist the influence of youth culture and popular culture where it is at odds with these ideals. Parents often experience the benefit of this for their family life in serious discussions around the dinner table or in one-on-one conversations with their teenage children. We encourage parents to foster an approach to learning that spills out of the classroom into carpools, class parties and elsewhere.

***The Freedom and Responsibility of the Human Person:*** In order to thrive as human beings and move towards taking their place in the world as adults, children need to experience genuine freedom and increasing responsibility. At Trinity School, we understand students to be the agents of their own learning and fundamentally free and responsible for their own choices within the community. Students agree to abide by the code of conduct stated in the student handbook, but even in matters pertaining to rules and discipline, we believe that students should be treated in a way that respects their fundamental freedom.

***The Free and Disciplined Exchange of Ideas:*** Genuine conversation is a difficult art, but it is one of the most satisfying and productive as well. At Trinity School, we want students to learn this art through dialogue with one another and their teachers. We seek to promote a culture of the free and yet disciplined exchange of ideas. We want students to discuss the ideas they encounter in their courses without a spirit of faction or partisanship. Therefore, we discourage partisan political discussions in the classroom and expect our faculty to teach and model respect for others' opinions. Disciplined discussion requires that students give a good account of their own

perspectives, ask questions of each other, and engage in rational discourse about the topic in front of them.

***Proselytizing and Faith Formation:*** The moral and spiritual education of children is of great importance to parents and the school alike. However, the roles each play in that education are distinct. Parents, churches and other faith communities bear the most immediate responsibility for the moral and spiritual education of their children. Trinity School faculty and staff members do provide positive Christian role models and engage students in a personal manner, but are asked not to engage in proselytizing or explicit faith formation.

Trinity School does, however, aim to provide an authentically Christian education within a culture designed to support parents in their efforts to foster Christian faith in their children. Every class begins with prayer; each year of the curriculum includes the study of the Christian Scriptures or sacred doctrine; and students attend daily morning prayer where faculty members bear witness to their life in Christ. All faculty members are required to assent in good faith to the tenets of the Nicene Creed, to be members in good standing in their own denomination or Christian tradition, and to abide by a basic code of conduct informed by Christian teaching.

Trinity School does not require either parents or students to be practicing Christians or to sign a statement of agreement in order to enroll their children.

***Personal Counseling:*** The teen years can be personally challenging. Sometimes these challenges involve issues with anxiety, depression or other mental health concerns. The dean of boys and dean of girls have primary responsibility for caring for students in this regard, being aware of students who may be struggling, and working with parents to care for each individual appropriately. Trinity School does not provide professional counseling to students. However, if parents are concerned about the well-being of their child and would like help in finding such services, they should contact the appropriate dean or the head of school.

***Christian Unity and Diversity:*** Trinity School is committed to bearing witness to Christian unity wherever possible. Our approach to Scripture is carefully chosen to make it possible for students to study Scripture together without respect to denomination. Most other courses are also taught from within a general Christian framework rather than the perspective of a particular denomination or tradition. Importantly, students and faculty also pray together every morning as Christians from a wide variety of denominations.

However, we do also want our students to be educated in the history and teachings of their own church or Christian tradition. In ninth grade we offer separate Catholic, Protestant, and Orthodox doctrine courses as options. When leading morning prayer, faculty members are free to speak from their own Christian tradition, though they are reminded not to speak as if everyone in the room shares that perspective.

Since Trinity School also admits students from families of other religions as well as from families with no faith tradition, we also encourage respect for the beliefs of these families and students as well.

***Christian Relationships:*** Since Trinity School has high aims for establishing a genuine community of learners among our students, maintaining good relationships is essential. We believe that every person is created in the image of God, equal in dignity and worthy of respect and honor. Thus, we expect that in word and deed the members of our community will strive to build a culture that is characterized by love of God and neighbor, and by joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, purity, truthfulness, gentleness and self-control (cf. Gal. 5:22; 2 Cor. 6:6-7).

We expressly reject any form of harassment, bullying, verbal abuse or intimidation by any member of the Trinity School community towards any other member for any reason. This includes harassment based upon a student's sex, race, ethnicity, religion, sexuality or perceived sexuality. These are antithetical to the spirit of Christian relationships and to our fundamental commitment to human dignity. Such behaviors are considered major violations of our code of conduct for students and faculty alike. (For more information, see the *Student Handbook*.)

***Differences Between Boys and Girls:*** Trinity School is a coed school offering separate-sex education. Our reasons for this arrangement are primarily practical. It is our experience that boys and girls at this age learn best in single-sex classrooms. We also understand men and women to be created by God equal in dignity but distinct from one another. We seek to uphold both that equality and appropriate distinction in our culture.

In the younger years, especially, we encourage the boys to build strong relationships with other boys, and girls to build strong relationships with other girls. As they grow older, boys and girls are encouraged to develop healthy relationships with one another as well. Parents are an essential part of helping to establish these relationships and are encouraged to stay in communication with each other and with the school about challenges that arise or any problems their children are experiencing in this area.

***Marriage and Sexuality:*** As a part of our commitment to help students establish Christian relationships, we want to provide an environment marked by behavior and speech that are consistent with the teachings of Scripture, Christian tradition and our own core beliefs. These beliefs are rooted in a particular Christian understanding of marriage and sexuality. We understand marriage to be a legal and committed relationship between a man and a woman and believe that the only proper place for sexual activity is within these bounds of conjugal love. Outside of marriage so understood, we believe that sexual activity (whether heterosexual or homosexual) is not in keeping with God's plan for human sexuality.

We do not require parents to subscribe to this position, but they should understand that students will encounter it as normative in our Scripture courses, doctrine classes and other courses at Trinity School.

***Human Development and Sexual Identity:*** Young men and women in their teenage years experience a great deal of change, sometimes volatile emotions, and a growing sexual maturity. Though it is natural and consistent with human development that students experience sexual attraction, we discourage the formation of exclusive relationships. The decision whether to allow children to date is left to the parents, but we ask students not to be exclusive or give evidence of their dating relationships while at school.

At this age, some students may also experience same-sex attraction. We believe that it is unwise, however, for teens to prematurely interpret any particular emotional experience as identity-defining. We believe that such self-identification at a young age can lead to students being labeled based solely upon sexuality, generate distraction, create confusion, and prevent students from experiencing true freedom within the culture of the school.

When challenging issues of sexuality arise for a student, the school makes every effort to handle these situations with sensitivity, discretion and care for the student. As a matter of right speech, we ask students not to openly discuss matters of personal sexuality. Furthermore, teasing, ridicule or mistreatment based upon a student's sexuality or perceived sexuality are unacceptable and subject to disciplinary action.

In this as in all other matters, parents bear the primary responsibility for the education of their children. The school aims to provide a culture in which all students can learn and thrive in peace and freedom.

***Communication:*** Good communication and well-ordered discussions are essential to a smoothly functioning community. At Trinity School, we want our culture to be marked by the ideals of charity, right speech, honor and directness in our communication. Therefore, we promote the principles of thinking and saying the best about one another, encouraging one another, honoring all members of our community and communicating directly with one another. We understand that there will be differences among us, disagreements that need to be worked out, and wrongs that need to be addressed. However, gossip, slander, rumor, pressure tactics, etc., have no place in our culture.

If parents have a concern with elements of the culture of the school, they are encouraged to speak directly to the head of school. If matters cannot be handled at the local level, parents may also talk directly with the president of Trinity Schools, who oversees and operates the work of each of the three schools.

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Trinity School makes every effort to foster an environment that lives up to the high standards of our culture of learning and our culture of Christian life. It is important that parents understand our distinctives and are able to support the school in these aims by not modelling behavior or advocating for positions within the Trinity School community that are antithetical to our core beliefs or disruptive to the culture we are establishing together. Together with faculty, staff,

coaches and others directly employed by the school, the witness to these values that parents provide in speech and action is a powerful source of cultural formation that will have far-reaching positive effects in the lives of the next generation.

## ELEMENTS OF LIFE AT THE SCHOOL

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### *Communication*

Good communication is the lifeblood of any social entity. Good communication builds charity, unity, trust, confidence and school spirit. It assures effective consultation, collaboration and participation in the enterprise of Trinity School. Therefore, Trinity School is committed to practice and encourage good communication throughout the entire community.

As a school, we want to know how things are going for you and your child. We want to respond to your needs and concerns. We want you to be well informed. And we want you to know that we are open to reasonable discussion about any topic impacting the life of the school.

Because the life of the school is so complex, good communication involves the timely and useful flow of information. Trinity School publications such as the regular news bulletins, website calendars, the student handbook and this parent handbook help facilitate this flow of information and should be regularly consulted.

We encourage parents to call the school to talk with faculty at any time or to use faculty email addresses to communicate directly (see the annual Trinity School directory for a list of faculty e-mail addresses). Faculty members generally check email sometime during the day, but may not be available in the evenings. If you wish to communicate with a faculty member by phone, the best way is to speak with our receptionist, who can tell you whether or not the faculty member is immediately available. If the faculty member is not immediately available, please leave your name, phone number, and a good time to reach you in the faculty member's voice mail. Please keep in mind that full-time faculty members may teach up to four consecutive class periods, and part-time faculty members are not in the building for a portion of the day, so a faculty member may not receive your message until the next day.

Parents with more serious concerns about the school or about decisions made by the administration or faculty are encouraged to discuss those concerns with the head of school and/or the president of Trinity Schools. Note that the board of trustees does not act as an appeals board. Appeals can be made to the head of school and the president of Trinity Schools.

All members of the Trinity School community are committed to the following principles of good communication.

- Charity: thinking and saying the best about one another
- Right Speech: avoiding gossip, slander, rumor, pressure tactics, etc.
- Honor: honoring students, other parents, families and teachers
- Directness: talking directly to the responsible person

Occasionally, relationship difficulties require some mediation in order to be resolved. Relationship

difficulties among students are typically dealt with by the appropriate deans. Relationship difficulties a student may be having with a teacher should first be brought to the attention of the teacher. If such problems require further attention, they should be brought to the attention of the head of school. Issues that are not routine and all serious cases should be brought directly to the attention of the head of school.

## ***Academics***

The heart of the life at Trinity School is the academic program. The academic program is explained more fully on our website and in the last section of this handbook: “Trinity School: An Overview.”

The following sections review some of the practical elements of academics at Trinity School.

### **ATTENDANCE**

#### ***Reporting***

Consistent attendance is essential for academic progress. Absences should be kept to a minimum. If the absence is foreseeable, a note should be sent in advance. Parents or guardians should call the office before 8:10 a.m. to notify the school each day of a student’s absence. If parents or guardians do not phone the school, the staff will call the parent or guardian to gather any necessary information about the absence.

#### ***Extracurricular Activities***

Students absent from school more than one-half of the school day are not allowed to participate in athletic practices or games on that day.

#### ***Excessive Absences***

If a student misses more than ten class periods for a given subject in a semester, the school reserves the right not to grant credit in those classes. When a student reaches five absences in a semester for any course(s), the appropriate dean will send a notification to the parent(s).

#### ***Homework***

Students are responsible for all class work and homework assigned when they are absent. It is the student’s duty to talk to the appropriate teachers or classmates to find out which assignments have been missed. In most cases, work assigned when a student is absent is due one to two days after the student returns to school.

#### ***Long Term Health Issues***

If your son or daughter is experiencing a long-term health issue and has missed many days of school, please notify the appropriate dean. The school will work with you and your child’s teachers to create a plan that will help your child manage the missed coursework.

#### ***Late Arrival***

Students arriving between 8:15 a.m. and 8:25 a.m. should report directly to morning prayer. If they arrive any time after 8:25 a.m., including the lunch period, they must obtain a tardy pass from the

receptionist before going to class. Parents must contact the school office to excuse tardiness. A pattern of unexcused tardiness may result in appropriate disciplinary action.

### ***Midday Departures***

Parents must come to the front desk in the Administration Building to sign out students who need to leave school at any time other than regular dismissal, which is between 3:00 p.m. and 3:30 p.m. When an early departure involves student drivers, a parent or guardian must provide a written note, email or phone call to the front office verifying the need for the student to leave school.

### ***Project Week and Orals/Labs Days***

All students will be scheduled for a project during the week before the first day of classes in the second semester and oral exams after the last day of classes. Students in grades nine through twelve will also be scheduled for a final lab. Students are expected to be available for labs and oral exams at any time during the school days set aside on the calendar for labs and orals. These days are considered part of the school year for attendance purposes.

## **HOMWORK**

Homework is an important ingredient in a Trinity education. Trinity students are to do their homework diligently and intelligently. They should apply their full mental powers to the task at hand. They should avoid distractions and distracting environments. Further, they should use their time and energy wisely and complete assignments with care and precision.

### ***Parental Help***

As parents, you can help by asking your child about the assignments, reviewing some of your child's work or engaging your child in conversations about the course content. It is important, however, that the students' work be authentically their own. You can also see to it that your child has a quiet location in which to do productive homework.

### ***Planning Ahead***

You can also help your child by planning ahead. If you know that an upcoming event (such as a family trip) may interfere with your child's homework, please ask the teachers in advance for the assignments.

### ***Incomplete Homework***

The most important consequences of not doing homework are natural. Students lose ground in the course, which impedes their intellectual growth. This is particularly true in grades nine through twelve, where instruction and seminar discussion depend directly on the homework assignment. If students do not prepare the homework assignment, they cannot participate well in the class. Thus, not only do they fail to benefit from the homework assignment itself; they also miss much of what goes on in class. Since the material in most courses builds incrementally on previous assignments, a student who fails to keep up with the homework may fall seriously behind.

### ***Excused Homework***

Sometimes parents send the school notes asking us to excuse a child for not completing the homework assignment. We know that there are many good reasons for such a request, such as unexpected illness, stress in the family, or the child's sickness or need for sleep. A note does provide a helpful explanation of incomplete or missing homework. However, the note cannot erase the consequences of losing ground and being unable to participate effectively in the class. Most homework will still need to be made up.

### ***Homework Time***

Trinity School homework is assigned according to the following schedule. Seventh and eighth grade students receive 20 minutes of homework for every hour of class. Ninth through twelfth grade students receive 30 minutes of homework for every hour of class, with the exception of junior and senior math and science, in which students can receive 45 minutes of homework per hour of class.

Therefore, a seventh or eighth grade student should receive a maximum of two hours of homework per night; a freshman or sophomore, three hours; juniors and seniors, three to three and a half hours. These figures are, of course, targets; they might not be hit precisely every night. Assignments will vary from these norms, but they should not vary a great deal. If your son or daughter is consistently struggling to complete homework within this time frame, please contact the teachers or the head of school.

## **EVALUATION**

At Trinity School, we formally evaluate student performance in several phases. The process is designed to assist the student and to keep parents informed about their child's progress.

### ***Checklist Evaluations:***

In the middle of each semester, each teacher completes a checklist evaluation for each student in his or her course, and these forms are then mailed to parents. The checklist evaluation form is designed to give a quick overview, not a detailed evaluation, and in particular it is intended to alert parents to problems before it is too late. It is not designed to call attention to excellence.

### ***Deficiency Notices***

A deficiency notice is mailed to notify parents that a child is earning a D or F in a class. These notices are not mailed at a particular time in the semester, but as soon as a serious academic problem has been identified – early enough, at least, to give the student time to change direction. Parents are to sign these notices and return one copy to the school. Once a deficiency notice has been sent, the teacher need not send out further notices for the student in that particular course. Parents are urged to confer with the teacher if they are not sure what the problem is, what their child needs to do about it, or whether the situation has improved.

### ***Semester Evaluations***

The written semester evaluation is part of the formal evaluation of the student at the end of each semester. This evaluation is written for the parents, not the student. In fact, we discourage parents

from allowing their child to read the written evaluation. We suggest, rather, that parents judiciously convey what they learn from the entire evaluation process to the child in a way that will help the student grow intellectually without producing an excessive grade consciousness.

A copy of the written evaluation is also kept as a part of the student's record. However, the official student transcript sent to colleges or potential employers contains only the letter grade, not the teachers' comments.

### ***Evaluation Meetings:***

In addition to the written account, a half-hour evaluation meeting takes place at the end of each semester between the parents and all the teachers of each student. This is an opportunity for teachers and parents to talk about the evaluation in order to answer questions and to develop specific strategies for improvement. The focus is on the individual student's academic performance. It is not a meeting about the character or leadership qualities of the student or about the class in general. Eleventh and twelfth grade students attend with their parents, make an assessment of their own work in each course, and talk with their teachers about it. In these evaluation meetings, the parents mostly listen. A transcript with grades is mailed to the parents after the evaluation meeting.

### ***Grades***

The school issues a grade for each course. The grade is a cursory but accurate summary of the written evaluation. Trinity School has two grading scales: one for seventh and eighth grade courses and another for courses in the upper grades. The more generous grading scale at the upper level reflects the consistently honors-level rigor of these courses.

### ***Grading Scale for Grades Nine through Twelve***

100-93	A+	4.50
92-83	A	4.0
82-80	A-	3.65
79-77	B+	3.35
76-73	B	3.00
72-70	B-	2.65
69-67	C+	2.35
66-63	C	2.00
62-60	C-	1.65
59-57	D+	1.35
56-53	D	1.00
52-50	D-	.65
Below 50	F	.00

### ***Grading Scale for Grades Seven and Eight***

100-94	A
93-90	A-
89-87	B+
86-83	B
82-80	B-
79-77	C+
76-73	C
72-70	C-
69-67	D+
66-63	D
63-60	D-
Below 60	F

### ***Awards & Honor***

At Trinity School, we want to make a strong distinction between honors and rewards. During the course of the school year, students should not be learning in order to achieve rewards. We believe that learning is an intrinsically purposeful and pleasurable activity. As such, it is its own reward. Learning is also a cooperative rather than a competitive endeavor. Our experience has shown us that working for rewards diminishes the joy and wonder of the learning process itself, stifles creative thinking and creates unhealthy competition around grades. However, we also believe that excellent work should be upheld and celebrated. Therefore, students who have achieved a standard of excellence in a particular field of study or performance receive awards for academic excellence in particular courses. Our awards for excellent work are based on historic standards and not upon the comparison of student to student.

In seventh and eighth grades, academic excellence awards are granted to those who have done exceptionally well across the course of studies that year.

In grades nine through twelve, academic excellence awards are granted in Art, Drama, Music and Scripture at the end of the final course in the program and every year in Humane Letters, Latin, Mathematics, and Sciences.

Academic Excellence Awards are mailed to the parents along with the transcripts.

### ***Cum Laude Diploma***

A *cum laude* diploma is awarded to a student who performs with distinction in the complete Trinity School program. The requirements for this distinction are a grade point average of 4.25 or higher and the awarding of at least two high pass grades for the winter project and final oral exam/labs during the eleventh and twelfth grade years.

### ***Project Week***

Each year students spend one week working on specific projects. Project Week occurs in January, the same week when parents and faculty meet for semester evaluations. Although the students are

not usually at school for their work, this week is counted as a school week. Completion of the project is necessary in order for seventh through tenth grade students to pass the course to which the project is linked. The faculty evaluates these projects. Eleventh and twelfth grade students have their projects graded with a mark of high pass, pass, or fail. This grade is entered on their transcripts and is a criterion for determining *cum laude* diplomas and Graduate Award winners.

### ***Oral Examinations and Final Lab***

At the end of the academic year, students take an oral examination. The questions and topics covered are taken from the subjects studied that year. Seventh and eighth grade students have a general oral examination that ranges across most of their subjects and takes 30 minutes. Ninth through twelfth grade students participate in both an oral exam covering material from the Humane Letters Seminar and a lab. Ninth graders do a biology lab, tenth graders do a chemistry lab, eleventh graders do a physics lab, and twelfth graders work on integrated mathematical solutions to a topic in chemistry or physics. The labs are scheduled for three hours. The ninth and tenth grade oral exams are scheduled for 45 minutes, while the eleventh and twelfth grade oral exams are scheduled for 55 minutes. Students are expected to prepare well for oral exams. They are given directions such as study questions or discussion-starters to help them. The examinations are an essential part of the semester evaluation in the course. For juniors and seniors, they become a factor in the awarding of graduation honors.

### ***Standardized and Diagnostic Tests***

Trinity School at Meadow View does not give standardized tests as part of our curriculum. Because we are confident about our curriculum and the evaluation of our students, we do not feel the need for such testing. Moreover, we want to avoid a “teach and test” mentality and the restriction of constructing a curriculum to accommodate a test.

Trinity School at Meadow View, however, does offer an opportunity on a day in October for all of its tenth and eleventh grade students to take the PSAT. In tenth grade, the test functions as practice for the SAT, while eleventh graders qualify for the National Merit Scholarship program based on their score on this test. The school does not offer the SAT or the ACT. Most students arrange to take one or both of these tests in the spring of their junior year and/or the fall of their senior year. These tests are helpful for our students as they apply for college and also provide the school with some useful objective information.

### ***Student Culture and Discipline***

The foundation of discipline and order at Trinity School is the realization that a civilized Christian learning community demands certain fundamental norms of courtesy, morality and orderly behavior in order to fulfill its mission.

We accept children into the Trinity School program with the understanding that they will be on time for class, will be properly groomed, will complete their assignments, will follow rules of good

classroom order, will be honest and will follow the spirit and letter of the *Trinity School Student Handbook*.

We place a high premium on the freedom and responsibility of the student, as well as on the teacher's need to make a personal investment in the student. To that end, we resist the practices that depersonalize the culture and disciplinary systems of many schools. We do not relate to the students principally under the rubrics of rules and regulations. Rather, we emphasize the dignity of the human person and the formation of a culture marked by peace, patience, kindness, goodness, truthfulness, justice, mercy, purity, and right speech. Within that framework, rules, regulations and punishments are merely means to an end.

Unless there are clear mitigating circumstances, we hold that students freely choose to behave as they do. They are responsible and accountable for their actions. We believe that students in the seventh through twelfth grades are entirely capable of living appropriately in the Trinity School culture.

Students who do not live up to these fundamental expectations need to be corrected. In many cases, a verbal correction is sufficient. The faculty expects this correction to suffice. If it does not, further corrective action may be required. If, finally, a student's behavior does not change, the student may be expelled from the school.

The normal punishment for routine nonacademic misbehavior is a detention. More severe or repeated misbehavior may also result in loss of certain privileges, sanction, suspension, probation or expulsion. In all disciplinary cases, we strive to be fair and timely. Serious disciplinary issues are handled by a disciplinary board, which makes a recommendation to the head of school. In the case of a serious disciplinary sentence (sanction, suspension or expulsion), the parents are informed of their right to appeal and the due process thereof.

When we discipline a student, we understand ourselves to be addressing behavior, not attitudes. Thus, while a change in the attitudes and future behavior of the student is to be hoped for, punishment is not a strategy for rehabilitation.

Please see *The Student Handbook* for more detailed rules that each student is expected to follow. The following is worthy of special attention here:

Discipline at Trinity School serves our educational mission. The establishment of a moral culture is a necessary condition for our educational success. We create a moral culture so that learning and teaching can proceed. Sexual immorality and the use of illegal drugs or alcohol either on campus or off are antithetical to the culture we are building. Trinity School students who knowingly attend events where illegal use or possession of drugs or alcohol occurs, or where sexual immorality or other major breaches of conduct occur, may be liable for punishment. Participation in these types of activities may result in disciplinary action.

## *Athletics and Extracurricular Activities*

### **ATHLETICS PROGRAM**

The athletics field or court offers student athletes an opportunity to learn lessons of teamwork, fair play, healthy competition, honorable victory, gracious defeat, respect for opponents and courtesy.

The goals and objectives of the Trinity School athletics program are:

- To seek victory through skill, teamwork, stamina, courage and commitment.
- To develop healthy bodies, agility, strength, endurance, mental discipline and athletic skills.
- To foster the growth of personal character by demanding the highest standards of good sportsmanship, by teaching loyalty and perseverance and by encouraging personal sacrifice for the sake of the team.

At Trinity School, the student athlete is first and foremost a student. Coaches, team captains and faculty work hard to promote excellence on the court or the field while avoiding an athletics subculture in the school. An unhealthy preoccupation with athletics can produce an athletic elite, which would ultimately be divisive and detrimental to the community of learners. While always secondary to the academic life of the school, a healthy athletics program is nevertheless an important aspect of life at Trinity School.

Trinity School sponsors an athletics program for all students at all grade levels. This program provides opportunities for students at many levels of skill to participate in interscholastic sports. Trinity School at Meadow View offers volleyball, basketball and soccer for girls; soccer, basketball and lacrosse for boys; and co-ed cross-country and track teams. Trinity Schools follow a no-cut policy and welcomes any student onto a team who wants to join it. The program is administered through the Athletic Department.

### ***Eligibility***

All students are encouraged to participate in the Trinity School athletic program and/or the other organizations that sponsor organized activities. However, academic responsibilities are always the top priority. In addition, all student athletes and all students taking part in non-athletic activities are public representatives of Trinity School, which makes disciplinary matters relevant. Students may be removed from teams or clubs for disciplinary reasons.

### ***Transportation***

When the school's minibuses are not available, parents are responsible for finding transportation for their children.

The athletic director and parents may assist other parents by helping them organize a carpool transportation schedule; however, Trinity School assumes no responsibility for the acts or omissions of the operators or drivers of any vehicles utilized in such a transportation schedule. Trinity School assumes no responsibility for the loss of property, damage to the same, personal harm or injury, or loss of life that may occur as a result of the acts or omissions of student drivers, parents or guardians, or any other third parties providing transportation to such extracurricular activities.

Traveling to away games and overnight tournaments requires special care.

The standard for travel clothing should be the same as that required for the school's outdoor field day—or better, it should be determined by the coach.

Appropriate clothing should be worn to practice and games. All undergarments must be completely covered and shorts must be worn over spandex compression shorts or tights.

### ***Parent Support***

In addition to carpooling assistance, parents of athletes can support the athletics program by taking admissions fees when required, scorekeeping, hosting team parties, and organizing or serving the pizza or sandwich lunch fundraisers.

### **OTHER EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES**

Currently, Trinity School at Meadow View offers the following activities:

- Tempest in a Barbershop
- Chorale
- Chamber Choir
- Trinity Life
- Eclectica band
- Rhapsodes drama troupe
- Literary and arts journal
- Yearbook

Other clubs may be added during the year based upon student and faculty interest.

## THE ORGANIZATION OF TRINITY SCHOOL

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Trinity Schools, Inc., headquartered in South Bend, IN, is the corporation that owns and operates the three Trinity schools: Trinity School at Greenlawn, Trinity School at Meadow View and Trinity School at River Ridge.

Like all independent schools, decision-making authority at the highest level resides with the board of trustees. Its board of trustees is entrusted with the responsibility of assuring that the schools are carrying out the mission of Trinity Schools, providing broad oversight of the operation of the schools, and assuring the financial health of the institution. The board selects, evaluates and supports the president of Trinity Schools, to whom it delegates authority as the chief administrative officer of the corporation. The board develops broad institutional policies that guide the president in running the school. The board also oversees the financial well-being of the school. Its members do not intervene in the daily affairs of the school, such as curriculum development, hiring and evaluation of faculty or daily operations of the staff.

In the conduct of its official business, the board acts only as a whole. Individual trustees, including the board chair, have no authority to act unless specifically authorized to do so by the board acting as a whole.

Parents who are interested in high-level decisions can stay informed about the work of the board of trustees by reading our publications, talking to the head of school, and attending appropriate meetings.

The president of Trinity Schools is the chief administrative officer of the corporation and is responsible for seeing to it that the schools carry out the work of education in keeping with the mission.

For a current list of board members, see the school's website.

### ***Trinity School at Meadow View Administration***

Locally, the head of school is appointed by the president of Trinity Schools, Inc. to oversee the local execution of the mission and vision of Trinity Schools. The head of school oversees the culture of the school, the work of the deans, and the work of the faculty and staff.

The dean of girls and the dean of boys oversee the non-academic culture of the school and the non-academic concerns of individual students. This involves situations both inside and outside the classroom.

The director for college guidance helps students through the college selection and admissions process, meeting individually with students and providing parents and students alike with information and assistance.

The athletic director works with coaches, procures equipment, schedules games and events.

The school administrator oversees the financial aid process, awards and tuition payments, and manages the day-to-day business operations of the school and the planning, coordinating and supervising of the operations of the school administration offices.

The admissions director oversees recruitment and the entire admissions process preceding the deliberations of the admissions committee.

The receptionist manages the front desk and greets students and families, communicates information to parents through the school newsletter, weekend events and other notifications.

For a complete list of the current administration and support staff of Trinity School at Meadow View, please see website or the annual directory.

## PARENT INVOLVEMENT

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### *Student Social Life*

The Trinity School community—parents, students and faculty—is committed to the highest ideals of life. We strive for the intellectual formation of our students in terms of the best in human culture and thought, and we work to help them appropriate a life of Christian virtue and service.

We must see to it that all the dimensions of our lives are guided by the pursuit of the truth, the good and the beautiful. It is self-defeating to ask for one kind of life at the school, but allow quite another kind of life in other settings. The kind of education that we strive for should really be a way of life that all of us in the Trinity community are living. Virtue should be the hallmark of all that we do. This is what we mean when we talk about the habitual vision of greatness.

If we are to be successful in this sort of education, all of us have to work together with the best interests of the students in mind. In every way, the social events of the students of Trinity School should embody, not just reflect, the ideals of the school. Every social event or occasion should be a time of good, clean fun and unwavering courtesy.

Social events are an important part of our students' lives. These events include schoolwide activities, gatherings of students by specific grades, and class activities. We have developed guidelines for social activities for Trinity School students. These guidelines are the product of a number of years of experience.

### **GUIDELINES FOR CLASS PARTIES**

There are a variety of Trinity social events in which our students participate – those sponsored by or held under the auspices of the school, class socials given by families for their child's classmates, informal get-togethers with friends, etc. While these types of events are not of the same kind, each ought to share the same spirit. In every social occasion, we want to encourage the highest and best in our young people: courtesy, modesty, generosity, honesty, and the joy of each other's company. Every occasion should be directed in a way that provides the fullest opportunity for the students to develop the best in character.

***Affordability:*** Keeping costs down is a way of insuring that all students can be included in class parties.

***Good Behavior:*** All of us, parents and faculty, have a common goal to guide these students as young Christians. Discourteous behavior or destructive influence in any of these events contradicts the approach taken at school. It is confusing for our young people and ultimately self-defeating. We should not encourage the students to include in their plans themes, activities, music, or movies that are immoral or would be disrespectful of the values we hold.

***Single-Sex and Mixed Parties:*** Experience has shown that there is value in social events held for just boys or just girls. Friendships need to be built among the members of one's own sex as well as with those of the opposite sex. While the school sponsors several mixed parties for grades nine through twelve, it does not do so for seventh and eighth grades. With respect to other parties, the appropriateness of inviting both boys and girls to a particular event should be carefully weighed by parents *and* children before invitations go out. We strongly suggest that mixed parties be held only at the upper grade levels.

***Unity and Inclusion:*** Care should be taken to avoid circumstances that give students the feeling of being left out, overlooked or not wanted. Concern for the feelings of others is the beginning of courtesy.

If the occasion is a class party, then *everyone* in the class is invited and welcomed to attend.

If the party is for a specific group of students, but not for an entire class, then all the students in the specific group should be invited to the party with no one left out. For example, if the party is for the basketball team, then the *entire* basketball team should be invited to attend. Similarly, a few select students from outside the group should *not* be invited to attend such events. If for instance, the party is for juniors, a few sophomores should not be included.

***Private Parties:*** When a smaller, more exclusive party is planned by parents, we urge you to keep it private and encourage the students not to advertise who is or who is not invited. Closer friendships between some students are natural and parents should feel the freedom to host smaller birthday parties, outings, etc. However, we want to avoid intentionally hurtful situations. Parents are responsible at every social event for setting consistent ideals in what is allowed in behavior, entertainment and activity.

***Parental Involvement in Social Events:***

Parents should be actively involved in the planning and hosting of class parties and are valued chaperones at school-sponsored events. They are encouraged to be involved in a positive way with all aspects of student life.

*Planning.* Although students could be left to organize events on their own, in these matters they can profit from the experience and wisdom of their parents. In this, as in all things, Christian values, courtesy and good taste are the guidelines in planning and establishing the atmosphere for an occasion. (In planning a class party it is suggested that the school calendar be consulted in order to avoid conflicting with school activities.)

*Chaperoning.* Adults should always be a visible presence at social events. There is an art to being sufficiently present without becoming merely a scrutinizing monitor. Parents are encouraged to establish friendly, supportive relationships with the students.

*Illegal Drugs or Alcohol.* The importance of parental responsibility in making sure that *alcohol or drugs of any kind are not present or being used* need not be explained.

*Early Departure.* No guests should leave the site of a party unchaperoned. Every parent should enforce this guideline. The opportunity to go off alone or in small groups from the chaperoned party can be deterred more effectively by well-planned activities than by policing the doorways.

*Start and End Times:* It is a great advantage to both guests and hosts to have clear set starting and ending times. Parents will then know when to drop off or pick up their children. Simple fliers or emails giving the date, starting/ending times, directions to the party, and the names and phone numbers of the hosts work well to communicate information.

*Serious Breaches of Conduct.* If there should be serious breaches of conduct, the offending guests and their parents need to be informed. Students deserve to be told politely but unequivocally of their unacceptable behavior. Parents are encouraged to correct the students who violate the standards of their home or those of the school. Very serious misconduct should be reported to the parents and the school (if a Trinity event) for their action and counsel.

We have an excellent and responsible community of students at Trinity. The mutual effort of students and parents can result in a rich social life during their Trinity years.

## THE YEAR AT A GLANCE

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### **AUGUST**

Class parties are organized for any section that has a significant number of new students, to allow the new students to begin to build relationships before school starts. Many sports teams begin practicing the week before school starts. The academic year begins near the end of the month with an orientation meeting for new parents and students, a senior class meeting with the head of school and a time for them to be introduced to the college application process, followed by an all-school orientation. Either at the end of August or early September there is a parent-faculty gathering.

### **SEPTEMBER**

This month and at least half of October is filled with cross-country meets, girls' volleyball and boys' soccer games at every level. Our fall field day is typically held toward the end of September, as is a Study Skill Workshop for new seventh and eighth grade students, who attend with at least one parent. The workshop provides hands-on help with study skills, test-taking, and general organization.

### **OCTOBER**

One of the favorite Trinity School community events is held in October or early November: the chili cook-off, a fundraiser for a student-chosen charity. A second parent-faculty social, the Oktoberfest, usually includes a guest speaker. Checklist evaluations are sent home at the midpoint of the first semester. These evaluations are the first across-the-board communication parents receive from faculty and provide a snapshot of the student's midsemester performance. All sophomores and juniors take the PSAT in mid-October, and the first of two junior drama performances is staged. The whole school has a four-day weekend fall break toward the end of the month. The open house for prospective students traditionally occurs on a Sunday afternoon in October. Many students and parents are on hand to help introduce our school.

### **NOVEMBER**

The fall sports have their state tournaments in the beginning of the month, followed closely by the launch of the basketball seasons. The first basketball games usually are not held till after Thanksgiving break, another four-day weekend.

### **DECEMBER**

The first or second Saturday of the month is the entrance exam for prospective students. The juniors put on their second play. The semester winds down with the Winter Fine Arts Night, followed by an all-school Christmas celebration. This Winter Fine Arts Night includes seventh and eighth grade recorder ensembles, music by the extracurricular choirs, and displays of artwork from the first semester art courses.

## **JANUARY**

The second semester begins after a two week break, with Project Week for students and evaluation conferences for their parents and teachers. Juniors and seniors also attend their evaluation meetings. Classes resume after Project Week and evaluations. A seventh and eighth grade Project Fair is held to showcase their work. Winter sports continue.

## **FEBRUARY**

Near the end of the month the school takes a weeklong midwinter break. March 1 is the deadline for seniors to fill out the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) for college financial aid. Most winter sports end sometime in February.

## **MARCH**

Early in the month, the alumni and faculty play the varsity boys' basketball team in TMV's March Madness game. This, along with the chili cook off, is traditionally one of the most widely attended Trinity School community events. Later this month, the first senior drama class puts on its production, and a wide variety of students showcase their talents at the Coffee House. Checklist evaluations for the second semester are sent out sometime around the middle of March. The track and field teams, boys' lacrosse and girls' soccer teams begin practices. Parents are asked to sign admission and tuition agreements for the following year.

## **APRIL**

Spring break occurs the week following Easter, which usually falls during April. Spring sports continue their seasons. A third parent-faculty social, which can be combined with a fundraiser, the Springfest, is held. The junior/senior prom, a celebration of these classes' life together, is held as a dinner and dancing cruise on the Potomac.

## **MAY**

May is the busiest month of the year. It begins with the spring field day and a 5K charity run for the International Justice Mission. The eighth graders hold their Medieval Banquet. The seniors stage their second play. The Spring Fine Arts Night displays second-semester student artwork and performances by the curricular and extracurricular choirs. Spring sports teams finish their seasons, which may include trips to state tournaments. Classes end, followed by orals and labs.

## **JUNE**

Second-semester evaluation conferences happen in early June. The whole student body and school community gathers for a wide-ranging honors night. The seniors enjoy a dinner with their parents and faculty on a Friday evening, followed by their commencement exercises the next morning.

*For a detailed calendar of events go to the school website, [tsmv.org](http://tsmv.org), and click on "parents" and then on "calendar." All Trinity School at Meadow View families will also receive through email the regular school bulletins that explain all of these events in the weeks preceding them.*

## TRINITY SCHOOL: AN OVERVIEW

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### ***Our Mission Statement***

*The mission of Trinity Schools is to impart basic ordered knowledge about the world and to train students in basic intellectual skills and qualities of mind so that they might be of use to God in the wise care and governance of his creation and in the building of his kingdom. We accomplish this by establishing a culture marked by the discovery of truth, the practice of goodness, the creation of beauty and the development of intellectual and aesthetic habits of mind. Trinity School is a community of learners characterized by the rigorous exploration of reality, the free and disciplined exchange of ideas and active participation in the fine arts.*

### ***Educational Philosophy***

The educational goal of Trinity Schools is the cultivation of the intellect, which includes both true knowledge and sound habits of mind. The Trinity School curriculum is structured by the three essentials of all education: ordered basic knowledge, basic skills or tools of learning, and the habitual vision of greatness.

The cultivation of the intellect—“learning”—is the engagement of the mind and imagination with reality. It is an activity which is essential to a fully human life. As one modern philosopher described it, education is the process of a human awakening. That is our goal: to awaken our students’ desire to engage their minds and imaginations with reality and become more fully human in the process. Our curriculum and teaching methods, then, are intended to introduce our students not to “school” or “schooling,” but to a culture where ideas and the expression of the human mind and spirit matter.

Learning begins with acquiring knowledge in an ordered way. We believe there are things that all educated adults ought to know, so Trinity School students follow a common academic core curriculum that includes six years of mathematics, history, science, writing, literature, religion and foreign language (four years of Latin, two years of modern language). All educated adults should also be able to appreciate and, to some extent, create works of beauty, so Trinity School students also take four years of drawing and painting, four years of music and two years of drama.

While *what* a student learns is important, *how* a student learns is just as important. We believe, in fact, that education is not simply a matter of acquiring important facts and skills, but also a process of acquiring habits of mind that enable a student to become a learner in every environment. Thus, we constantly emphasize that the student is the main agent in his or her education. Students who fail to see for themselves fail to learn. Rather than receiving knowledge passively, each student must actively apprehend concepts, perceive relationships, and express knowledge in written and spoken forms. Therefore, we envision Trinity School as a community of learners. Each member of this community, faculty and student alike, is called to pursue his or her own education, with the understanding that we learn far more together than we could on our own. Thoughtful and imaginative participation is, then, required of every student.

This emphasis on active learning lies behind many of the distinctive features of Trinity School. We limit classes to 20 students; we separate boys and girls in the classroom; we almost always read original texts and documents rather than textbooks; and we use seminars, frequent writing exercises, studios and laboratories to make the courses performance-based. All these strategies keep students actively engaged in learning and help them become truly educated human beings, that is, people who can learn and think on their own. Here is a brief elaboration of each of these features:

***Classes with no more than 20 students.*** With very rare exceptions, classes are limited to 20 students. In small groups such as these, the student becomes the primary agent in the educational process. In small classes, faculty can give individualized attention to each student and individual students cannot easily stay at the margins of the class in an attempt to avoid engagement and participation.

***Single-sex classes.*** In most classes at Trinity School, boys and girls are educated separately. A wealth of research supports our experience that boys and girls learn best in single-sex classrooms. It is well known – and over 35 years of Trinity School educational experience have confirmed – that boys and girls learn in quite different ways. In a single-sex setting, we are able to use approaches and strategies that reflect those differences. The single-sex classroom also avoids the documented sexism of the co-ed classroom, frees adolescents from being distracted by the presence of the opposite sex, and generates a high degree of personal confidence and freedom.

***Socratic seminars and colloquia.*** The seminar is a guided discussion. It is neither a polite conversation nor a free-for-all discussion; nor is it a survey of scholarly commentary. Students give evidence for their own understanding of a text. By discussing, students learn to read carefully, think analytically, keep to the topic, uncover meaning, grow in intellectual humility, grow in their ability to listen to and understand another’s point of view, and defend their own point of view. It is often a struggle for students to learn to engage in such rigorous discussion, but the benefits are great. Students refine their thinking processes as they articulate ideas, receive feedback, and respond in the conversation. The faculty member guides and leads; ultimately, however, the seminar is not about what the faculty member thinks, but about what the students think.

***Original texts.*** The material in the seminar is always an original text. Students are not allowed to read commentaries, introductions or reviews. They must meet the text on its own terms, dealing directly with the thoughts and words of the author, not with the ideas of some other reader or expert. As C.S. Lewis once put it, students learn far more from direct contact with Plato’s writings than from commentaries on Plato.

***A performance-based program.*** In the music program, students play the recorder, sing in the choir, and compose music. In the visual arts, they paint and draw. In drama, they act and stage productions. In the seminar, they discuss and write. In mathematics and science, they solve problems and are engaged in experimentation. By asking the students to perform—often at a very high level—we facilitate the development of active, engaged minds.

## *An Overview of the Curriculum*

All Trinity School students follow the same curriculum. The curriculum is carefully constructed as an integrated and coherent whole. Each element is purposefully related to the learning environment and to the rest of the curriculum. Each course builds on those that precede it.

Borrowing from the elements in the classical notion of a liberal education, we stratify the curriculum according to the categories of grammar, logic and rhetoric. The seventh and eighth grades are considered grammar courses; they communicate the basic elements of things. The ninth and tenth grade courses are logic courses, which begin to articulate the implications and relationships that exist among the ideas already learned. The eleventh and twelfth grade courses are rhetoric courses, wherein the students begin to synthesize and interrelate ideas and concepts that they have already learned.

The science curriculum provides a good illustration of this stratification. The seventh and eighth grade courses are built around observation, the perception of regularities in nature, and the beginnings of explanation. In the ninth and tenth grade biology and chemistry courses, many of these observations are gathered under scientific laws. In the eleventh and twelfth grade physics courses, Newtonian mechanics and relativity theory provide comprehensive theories of great richness and power, providing explanations for what began as questions about our experiences of the natural world.

The writing curriculum provides another illustration of this classical approach. In grades seven and eight, students learn parts of speech, grammar, punctuation and basic sentence and paragraph structure. In the ninth and tenth grades, they are taught to develop and order their thoughts in a logical way by writing several essays. In the eleventh and twelfth grades, students continue writing essays, working on making their arguments more substantial and compelling by bringing ever more sophisticated analyses to their writing and by learning different stylistic and organizational techniques.

The following is a brief description of our approach to the subjects we teach:

### *Religious Instruction*

Students study religion and theology in each of their six years at Trinity School. Since Trinity School is an inter-denominational Christian school, the curriculum focuses on those things that Christians hold in common, while at the same time making sure that each student receives an accurate and careful presentation of the doctrine of his or her own denomination. Accordingly, the curriculum has some elements that are unique to the various denominations represented in the student body. What is held in common is taught in common; what is not held in common is not taught in common.

In the seventh and eighth grades, students study the Old and New Testaments. In ninth grade, they are separated as Roman Catholics and Protestants and study the doctrines of their own denominations. In tenth grade, students participate in a seminar in reading the Old Testament; and in twelfth grade, reading the New Testament. In the eleventh and twelfth grades, the study of religion is integrated into the Humane Letters Seminar, where students read and discuss works by

Athanasius, Augustine, Aquinas, Luther, and Calvin.

### ***Humanities***

The study of the humanities is one way in which we hope to take part in the conversation that humankind has been having with itself for centuries in an attempt to understand itself and the world in which it lives. In these courses, the students, along with the faculty, study the accomplishments of humanity (history) and its own ideas about itself, the world and God (philosophy, theology, literature). Finally, students and faculty take part in the conversation in an active way through written and oral expression of ideas as they attempt to grapple with, understand and explain them.

#### GRADES SEVEN AND EIGHT

*History.* Students in the seventh grade study ancient history, including the civilizations of the Fertile Crescent, Egypt, Greece and Rome. They learn about the rise and fall of empires and the human achievements in those civilizations that continue to affect modern society. Students in the eighth grade study medieval history, from the rise of Christianity to the Renaissance, focusing on such topics as the agricultural revolution, the growth of cities and the development of nations.

*Literature and Composition.* These courses lay the foundation for the writing program that continues through senior year, including its connection to the literature that the students are reading and discussing. The years include a full review of grammar, including parts of speech, parts of a sentence, phrases, clauses, compound and complex sentences, and mechanics. By the end of the eighth grade, the students have been introduced, at the level of the paragraph, to the basic five-part structure of the ninth and tenth grade essays. They are also familiar with the requirements for precise introduction and thorough development of their ideas, a vocabulary and set of skills they will use throughout the Trinity School program. In addition, through the reading and discussing of great literature, they will have developed the skills necessary to offer substantial participation in the upper-level Humane Letters courses.

#### GRADES NINE THROUGH TWELVE

*Humane Letters Seminar.* This course is an integrated approach to the humanities, with the understanding that the various fields—literature, history and philosophy—while distinct disciplines, ultimately are not separate.

They form a cohesive whole in understanding humanity. The heart of the program is the seminar.

During the ninth and tenth grades, students study American and Western European history, respectively. The literature and philosophy they study parallels the historical time periods and the geographic regions they study. This literature and philosophy are not simply meant to be a historical supplement, but are studied as works that contribute to an understanding of the human condition. At this level, the seminar teacher plays a very active part in the discussion—guiding, probing, questioning and instructing the students so that they learn how to learn in the seminar setting.

In the eleventh and twelfth grades, historical narrative moves to the background and the courses focus

on the ideas and issues articulated in the readings. Works are taken from the Greek and Latin classics and the early Christian period (junior year) and medieval to modern authors (senior year). The skills necessary for careful reading, effective analytical writing and discussion that have been developed through the work of the previous four years are now employed as the means of learning in these last two years of the program. The students begin to deal seriously with questions of philosophy, theology, and political theory through reading the works of the great thinkers of the West.

As the students read these texts, their skills of analysis are further sharpened. They learn to comprehend and analyze dense, complicated material. Students begin to refine their writing style while continuing to execute clear, substantial analysis of the texts. Even more, however, the students begin to grapple with the perennial human questions, attempting to understand themselves, the world around them and the God who made it all. In this regard, their reading of great fiction and poetry is essential.

At this level, the seminar teachers begin to be a less active part of the discussion, as the students step forward to take leadership of the conversation. Their own inquiry and analytical abilities drive the discussion, and the teacher is able to act as a moderator and active participant in the discussion.

*Writing.* The goal of the writing program at the upper level is to lead students into clarity and beauty of thought and expression, to deepen their thought so that they can analyze sophisticated ideas, and to enrich their expression so that they can produce articulate, graceful essays that demonstrate and communicate their understanding.

The writing program is arduous. Freshmen and sophomores write at least four to six essays per year, and juniors and seniors write 12 to 15 a year. In this process, they develop into quite good writers. Our experience is that students who learn this program adapt easily to other approaches to writing.

### *Science*

Science is a method designed to reveal the way nature works. Nature is traditionally divided into two broad categories, the first being purely physical and the other including living systems. The physical sciences, including physics and chemistry, address questions involving the physical universe from the scale of atomic particles to the scale of galaxies, and benefit from the immutable, law-like behavior of the fundamental entities. The constancy of physical properties across space and time has two important consequences for our ability to gain understanding. First, it makes the physical sciences especially amenable to mathematical descriptions, which make specific predictions that are borne out remarkably well in nature. Second, it greatly enhances our ability to control experimental processes with care and reproduce experimental results. In contrast, the life sciences must rely to a far greater extent on inferences in order to understand causal mechanisms, because few things are constant. For example, the responses of organisms to a particular change are complicated by variability among individuals as well as variation in other factors across space and time. In other words, the effects of a particular pathogen, for example, depend on traits of the infected individual and possibly the details of the environment at the time of the infection. Nevertheless, despite these essential differences, the scientific method has proved similarly useful in the life sciences.

The goals of the Trinity School science program are to elicit wonder for the natural world by fostering appreciation for both the remarkable predictability of physical systems and the remarkable adaptability of living systems, and to impart a basic ordered knowledge of that world and an understanding of the roles of both theory (mathematical and conceptual) and experiment in gaining knowledge about it. Students experience the extent to which science is a human endeavor in which they can participate, both as professional scientists and as nonscientist citizens. Upon completion of the program, students are able to design experiments to gather evidence for hypotheses. In addition, as citizens and critical consumers of information, they are able weigh carefully the strength of evidence for claims.

Life and earth sciences help seventh and eighth grade students to develop the skills to see nature clearly and to record those observations faithfully using appropriate vocabulary. Biology and chemistry classes taken in grades nine and ten illustrate the principles of classification and comparison based on the relationships among DNA, RNA, proteins, metabolism, organs, biological systems and organisms. In the study of physics in grades eleven and twelve, the students experience the explanatory power of scientific theory and its ability to unify phenomena. It is here that students gain the ability to predict outcomes by comparing experimental results to calculate results and to use these predictions to validate concepts.

The Trinity Computing Initiative is an innovative program within eleventh and twelfth grade physics. Students are given laptop computers and are taught to write useful computer programs in a powerful easy-entry programming language, MATLAB, and to create tools with a modern graphical user interface. Each tool solves a particular class of problems in science or mathematics.

### ***Mathematics***

The mathematics program includes the study of quantities, of figures, and of relationships between quantities and figures. This study is marked by intuition, analysis, logical rigor, elegance and simplicity. Mathematics has a dual nature that is reflected in our program. As a symbolic system, it has elegance, reflected most clearly in the study of patterns. It is also used to express quantitative relations in other disciplines, which demands proficiency in mathematical skills and problem-solving. At Trinity School we have a multilevel approach to learning mathematics. Students work with graphs, symbols and numbers. This method provides them with a rich understanding of the symbols and the beauty of mathematics and at the same time emphasizes proficiency in mathematical skills.

Fundamental concepts and skills in graphs, symbols and numbers are developed in the seventh grade, the eighth grade and the first semester of ninth grade through the study of prealgebra, algebra and geometry. In these courses one viewpoint is studied at a time. From the second semester of grade nine through the end of the first semester of grade twelve, the viewpoints are integrated. In these courses—precalculus and calculus—the dynamic concepts of “function” and “transformation” form a type of backbone for the study of trigonometry, vectors, matrices, probability, derivatives and integrals. Many of these concepts are used as tools in the science courses. Group theory is offered in the final semester of grade twelve, introducing students to structural mathematics.

## ***Foreign Language***

**1. Latin.** The study of a highly inflected language such as Latin enables students to understand the structure of any language and to develop and practice analytical skills that can be transferred to other areas of study. All students are required to take Latin in grades seven through ten.

**2. Modern Language.** The study of a modern language at Trinity School offers the student a foundational understanding of a major foreign language (usually Italian, French or Spanish). The focus of each course is mainly, but not exclusively, the study of grammar and vocabulary, enabling the student to read and translate basic literature in the target language. The student will also have some experience with oral language, both speaking and listening. Cultural exposure takes a tertiary role, accessed through the other aspects of the course.

## ***Fine Arts***

The training of the aesthetic sensibilities is essential to the full development of the human person. The arts are a legacy of the human spirit. They are not mere cleverness or the raw expression of emotion. They are serious endeavors, aimed at clarifying our experience of ourselves and of the world around us. They have their own language of discovery and expression, every bit as profound as spoken language and the languages of mathematics and science. All these languages provide us with keys to reality. Through the arts, reality is re-created and expressed anew, enabling us to see, feel and understand things in new and deeper ways. The arts also provide beauty and refresh our souls.

At Trinity School, the goal of the fine arts program is to allow all students to learn to create as well as appreciate beautiful things. This development of the aesthetic dimension of the whole person has three expressions: art (including art history), music and drama. The Trinity fine arts curriculum combines theory with performance. A study of theory and technique, rather than mere self-expression, undergirds all performances.

**1. Music.** The music curriculum is carried out in the seventh through tenth grades. It begins with the study of music fundamentals and an introduction to music theory, applied to learning the recorder as a solo instrument and in ensembles. In grades nine and ten, students focus on vocal technique and choral performance, as well as learning to compose in four-point harmony.

**2. Art.** The art program begins in the seventh and eighth grades and concludes in the junior and senior years. Students begin with drawing skills in the seventh grade and learn to use watercolor in the eighth grade, when they also study an American artist and reproduce one of that artist's works. The junior and senior years continue to focus on watercolor and the study of art history from prehistoric to modern times. Student artwork from each grade is on display in the school's Fine Arts Nights.

**3. Drama.** Students in both the junior and the senior years take a two-hour drama class for one quarter. In eleventh grade, students are introduced to the fundamentals of acting and performance, including movement, voice and interpretation of the text and character. They perform a dramatic work at the end of the course. The senior drama course reviews these techniques and implements

them in a full-scale production. Students are involved in all areas of the production: text and character interpretation, blocking, sets, music, costumes and props.

*A Six-Year Curriculum.*

<b>Grade 7</b>	Art I Latin I Prealgebra Literature/Composition Ancient History Music I Old Testament Science
<b>Grade 8</b>	Art II Latin II Algebra Literature/Composition Medieval History Music II New Testament Science
<b>Grade 9</b>	Geometry Precalculus A Biology Humane Letters Music III Catholic or Protestant Doctrine Latin III
<b>Grade 10</b>	Precalculus B (1 <sup>st</sup> semester) Precalculus C (2 <sup>nd</sup> semester) Chemistry Humane Letters Music IV Scripture I Latin IV
<b>Grade 11</b>	Calculus A (1 <sup>st</sup> semester) Calculus B (2 <sup>nd</sup> semester) Computer Programming

Physics A  
Humane Letters  
Art III (History/Studio)  
Drama I  
French I, Italian I or Spanish I  
Scripture II

**Grade 12**      Calculus C (1<sup>st</sup> semester)  
Advanced Math Topics (2<sup>nd</sup> semester)  
Physics B (1<sup>st</sup> semester)  
Physics C (2<sup>nd</sup> semester)  
Humane Letters Seminar  
World Issues  
Art IV (History/Studio)  
Drama II  
French II, Italian II or Spanish II

### ***Ecumenism***

Trinity School is ecumenical. We seek to witness to the fundamental unity of all Christians. Thus, we seek as much unity as is feasible based on those things all Christians hold in common. Although Trinity School is a Christian school, a student need not be a Christian to enroll. Members of the faculty are practicing Christians.

The fact that Trinity School is an ecumenical Christian school calls faculty, students and parents to a particular kind of sensitivity. Although denominational distinctiveness is noted and discussed, we respect all forms of Christian thought and life. We try to think and speak in such a way that we do not presume that others share—or ought to share—our own denominational allegiance. At the same time, we are a Christian school and we openly display our Christianity. This means that things deemed to be held in common by all Christians are a major part of the Trinity School culture. If you believe something has been said or done that is offensive to you as a member of a particular Christian denomination, please bring it to the attention of the appropriate faculty member or the heads of school.

### ***Teacher-Student Relationships***

Our faculty are the adult leaders of the community of learners. Their role is to draw students into the rich, Christian culture at the heart of Trinity School. Trinity faculty are friendly and engaging and at the same time observe proper professional boundaries. Although the students are teenagers, the culture of the school is not teen culture but, rather, the adult culture of the Christian men and women leading the school. In order to achieve their mission effectively, the faculty must maintain their adult status and not attempt to establish peer relationships with their students. The teachers do not pastor or evangelize the students, nor do they engage in personal counseling of students. While the faculty are on occasion invited guests to meals, church events and other social gatherings hosted

by Trinity School families, the faculty do not establish personal relationships with students outside of their professional role as Trinity School teachers.

### ***Evangelism and Personal Counseling***

Although Trinity School is a thoroughly Christian school, its goal is educational, not pastoral. Our students are at school to learn, not to be evangelized or counseled. As Christians, we begin the day and each class with prayer, and then we set about the educational tasks at hand. The personal faith life of students is the proper concern of those students and their parents. Non-Christian students can be excellent Trinity School students. However, the Trinity School environment is specifically Christian, and this may very well have an evangelistic effect upon the student.

Trinity School is not directly involved in the personal and/or familial difficulties of its students. In general, we do not provide personal counseling to students. Of course, the entire staff cares about each student and will make an effort to be understanding when we become aware that anyone is experiencing particular difficulties.

### ***College Guidance***

Trinity School has college guidance support staff to assist students as they apply to colleges. The primary responsibility for researching and visiting colleges lies with the student and his or her family, and that process generally begins junior year. Trinity School holds a college planning -information meeting for sophomore and junior parents.

Students are responsible for submitting transcript requests to the school office at least two weeks before deadlines. Students are also responsible for securing letters of recommendation from teachers. It is important that the college application process is managed in a way that will not conflict with the student's Trinity School education. Thus, we highly recommend that students schedule college visits during breaks in the school year.

### ***Evaluation***

#### **1. Checklist Evaluation Form**

On the following page is a sample checklist evaluation form, sent home once a semester.

Trinity School at Meadow View

**Checklist Evaluations**

Student:

Course Name:

Grade:

Teacher:

Academic Year: **2017 - 2018**

Semester:

**Academic Performance in General is** Acceptable \_\_\_\_\_ Unacceptable \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Content</b> _____ Continued Good Work <b>Areas for Improvement</b> _____ Homework/Preparation for class _____ Participation in class _____ Test performance _____ Quiz performance _____ Writing skills _____ Mathematical skills _____ Reading skills	<b>Attitude</b> _____ Continued Good Work <b>Areas for Improvement</b> _____ Attitude towards subject _____ Attitude towards learning _____ Effort in learning _____ Overcoming distractions
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Comments:

“Academic Performance in General” is the most important category. Here the faculty member has indicated whether the student’s performance is acceptable. This category concerns academic performance only. Attitude, behavior, etc., are not included here. Further, this rating is not meant to reflect a particular grade. It would be possible to perform at a passing level, but still have an unacceptable mark in this category. Such a mark could indicate, for example, that the student is passing the course, but he or she is seriously deficient in writing skills or is performing well below his or her abilities. (“Unacceptable” does not mean “failing.” If a child is in danger of failing the course, the teacher will send parents a deficiency notice well in advance so that corrective action can be taken.)

The two subcategories of “content” and “attitude” give further detail that might be useful to parents. Again, it is possible for the teacher both to mark “Continued Good Work” and to indicate an area that could use improvement. In any case, if parents have questions or need more information, they should call the teacher.

***2. Semester Evaluation Form***

Here is a list of the categories the faculty evaluate and a brief description of each. Those that are listed first are the most important qualities for a lifelong learner to develop.

***Sense of Wonder/Depth of Inquiry.*** In the seventh and eighth grades, students should be growing in curiosity, involvement, a questioning mind and the ability to make connections. If students can see connections between what they are studying and things they have observed earlier, in this class or in others, they have begun to teach themselves. It is the faculty's job to elicit and awaken these qualities in younger students by questions and responses to questions. By the time our students are older, they are expected to take more initiative in expressing these qualities and inspiring them in one another. Teachers look for comments in class discussion or insights expressed in written work as evidence that a student is developing wonder and depth of inquiry. Teachers do their best to assess these qualities. When a teacher does not see evidence of these qualities, it does not mean that the student does not have them. It just means they are not demonstrated in the classroom.

***Basic Understanding of Subject Matter.*** This is a brief summary of what the student has learned—or still needs to master—in the course. There will often be a list of skills or content areas covered during the semester and an evaluation of how well the student has mastered them. Frequently teachers will note in this section that a student needs to spend time reviewing a certain topic or practicing a skill.

***Attitude Toward the Subject.*** This tells parents if their child seems to be engaged in the course, consistent in effort and preparation, and developing the character of a good student's approach to learning. On the other hand, the teacher may note if a child complains frequently, seems bored, or acts disinterested.

***Class Discussion.*** This describes the student's participation in classroom conversation. It includes not only the quantity of a student's participation but also its quality. In upper-level seminars, participation in class discussion can count for as much as half of the overall grade.

***Essays and Writing.*** This category covers all aspects of the writing program. Grades that have been assigned to essays will be reported here. In the junior and senior Humane Letters courses, essay-writing is one of the most important components. In seventh and eighth grade literature and composition, writing sentences and paragraphs is the focus. In some courses, such as mathematics or studio art, there may be no essays.

***Objective Tests.*** Scores and percentages on tests will be reported here. For classes in which there are both closed-book in-class tests and open-book take-home tests, these will be reported separately. Tests may be weighted differently. In the eleventh and twelfth grade Humane Letters Seminars, there are usually no tests to report.

***Projects, Reports, Papers.*** All graded assignments that are not essays or objective tests will be reported here. This includes projects such as the leaf booklet in life science, lab reports in biology and physics, timelines and creative projects in history, graded assignments in senior mathematics, and oral presentations in many courses. The teacher may comment on the student's use of time, neatness and ability to work with a group.

***Homework.*** This is where a teacher will comment on a student's study skills and regular

preparation for class. Especially in the upper-level program, the teacher does not always collect homework. However, it is easy to tell from class participation whether the student has read carefully or worked the assigned problems. Daily work and quiz grades are also included here.

***Class Behavior.*** A teacher will report on a student’s attentiveness in class, obedience, cooperation and level of concentration.

### ***Graduation Requirements***

One semester credit is awarded for a class that meets four or five times weekly for 55 minutes per meeting. One-half semester credit is earned for a class that meets two or three times a week.

The Humane Letters Seminars are counted as two and one-half units per semester. The ninth and tenth grade Humane Letters Seminars are distributed as one unit of history, one unit of literature and one-half unit of composition. The eleventh and twelfth-grade Humane Letters Seminars are distributed as one unit of history, one unit of literature and one-half unit of philosophy.

Trinity School is on the normal 4.0 scale, with the addition that an A+ is awarded for exceptional work in any of the courses for grades nine through twelve. The grading scale at Trinity School in these grades is found on page 9 – 10.

The complete Trinity School program in grades nine through twelve breaks down as follows:

- Theology 4 units
- Philosophy 2 units
- English 10 units
- History 8 units
- Mathematics 10 units\*
- Science 8 units (6 with lab)
- Foreign language 6 units
- Fine Arts 6 units (music/art/drama)
- \*Includes eighth grade algebra

### ***A Brief History of Trinity School***

Trinity Schools were founded in 1981 by the People of Praise, an ecumenical Christian community, in response to what its leaders recognized as the “rising tide of mediocrity” (*A Nation at Risk*, 1983) in education and to the unhealthy moral environments of many local schools. From the beginning, Trinity Schools were meant to serve the general public as well as People of Praise children.

Trinity School at Greenlawn (South Bend, IN), founded in 1981, was the first of three Trinity Schools. Trinity School at River Ridge was founded in 1987. Trinity School at Meadow View (Falls Church, VA) was founded in 1998. As Trinity School at Greenlawn grew, ownership was transferred from the People of Praise to an independent 501(c)3 corporation, the Center for Christian Studies,

Inc. (CCS). The CCS has since been renamed Trinity Schools, Inc.

All Trinity Schools are owned and operated by Trinity Schools, Inc. They are operated as one school on three different campuses. They share the same mission statement, goals and objectives. They have the same philosophy, vision, and pedagogy. They teach the same curriculum. These schools are governed by one board. The president of Trinity Schools oversees each school in its execution of the mission and vision of Trinity Schools.

Trinity School at Meadow View opened in 1998 with 37 students and seven faculty in what is now known as South Hall. As the student body and faculty grew, we developed the Art Studio and Annex, West Hall, the Commons and the Administrative Building to meet our needs. In 2009 we received the US Department of Education's national Blue Ribbon Award for educational excellence. Trinity School at Meadow View is accredited through the Virginia Association of Independent Schools.

### ***The People of Praise Community***

Trinity Schools were founded by the People of Praise, an ecumenical Christian community. The schools are not an expression of the People of Praise's communal life, but of what the People of Praise believe about education. The People of Praise do not proselytize faculty, staff or students to become members of their community. The People of Praise is headquartered in South Bend but has more than 1800 members living in 21 branches located in various cities throughout North America and the Caribbean.

The People of Praise respects the valid traditions of all Christian believers. Its members belong to a number of denominations and nondenominational groups. The community is also charismatic, that is, its members profess a personal experience of the Holy Spirit in their day-to-day lives and minister to one another's needs according to the charismatic gifts each has received from the Lord Jesus Christ.

The faculty, staff and student body at Trinity School include Christians from several denominations. Most do not belong to the People of Praise.

As a student at Trinity School, each child is invited, but not required, to participate in youth activities and service projects sponsored by the People of Praise.

*Trinity Schools does not unlawfully discriminate with respect to race, color, gender, national origin, age, disability, or other legally protected classifications under applicable law, with respect to the administration of its programs.*

## NOTES

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