

# **The Bridge Suncoast Academy Classes**

## **Family Handbook**



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## WHO WE ARE

|                            |       |
|----------------------------|-------|
| Statement of Purpose ..... | pg. 4 |
| Education Design .....     | pg. 4 |
| Vision Statement .....     | pg. 5 |
| Statement of Faith .....   | pg. 5 |

## HOW WE WORK

### CLASS INFORMATION

|                                                             |       |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|-------|
| Attendance and Tardiness .....                              | pg. 6 |
| Class Changes and Withdrawals .....                         | pg. 6 |
| Class Cost Information .....                                | pg. 6 |
| Classroom Behavioral Standards .....                        | pg. 6 |
| Communication Between Teachers, Students, and Parents ..... | pg. 7 |
| Credits and Grades .....                                    | pg. 7 |
| Credits and the Options for Homeschooling .....             | pg. 7 |
| Descriptions and Grade Levels .....                         | pg. 7 |
| Discipline .....                                            | pg. 8 |
| Guests and Visitors in the Classroom .....                  | pg. 8 |
| Homework.....                                               | pg. 8 |
| Illness and Injury.....                                     | pg. 8 |

### GENERAL POLICY INFORMATION

|                                         |        |
|-----------------------------------------|--------|
| Behavioral Standards .....              | pg. 9  |
| Building/Facility Stewardship .....     | pg. 9  |
| Daily Sign In/Sign Out Procedures ..... | pg. 9  |
| Dress Code .....                        | pg. 9  |
| Food and Lunch Time .....               | pg. 9  |
| Grievance Procedures .....              | pg. 10 |
| Lost and Found .....                    | pg. 10 |
| Medication Usage .....                  | pg. 10 |
| Personal Items .....                    | pg. 10 |
| School Delays or Closures .....         | pg. 10 |
| Student Code of Conduct .....           | pg. 10 |
| Student/Family Orientation .....        | pg. 11 |
| Substance Abuse Policy .....            | pg. 11 |

### HOW CAN PARENTS HELP

|                                            |        |
|--------------------------------------------|--------|
| Opportunities for Parent Involvement ..... | pg. 11 |
|--------------------------------------------|--------|

# WHO WE ARE

## Statement of Purpose

The educational philosophy of The Bridge Academy Classes is based upon the Word of God. The Word is used for evaluating truth, for determining practices, and as the sole authority of the contents of our curriculum. Our goal is to teach a Biblical Worldview for a lifetime of service to the Lord within a school environment of academic excellence. The Holy Spirit uses the Word through the entire educational process to cultivate the student's fellowship with God and to develop his/her identity in Christ. The Bridge Academy Class program is designed to provide classes that supplement and complement a family's home-schooling curriculum. We provide a Christ-honoring environment where families can look forward to healthy social interaction with teachers and peers. Our classes are designed to support families in those efforts, and to strengthen our families by reflecting Biblical standards in our homes and marriages, as established in Ephesians 5:21-33. We are endeavoring to raise-up our children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord (Ephesians 6:4) through Godly instruction in these four primary areas: spiritual training, character development, academics, and practical life skills. Believing that children are a blessing from the Lord (Psalm 127:3), and that it is both our privilege and responsibility to train our children in the ways of God, we at The Bridge are committed to assisting one another with these responsibilities.

## Education Design

The Bridge is a diverse and flexible home educational support program. As stated in the purpose, above, The Bridge exists to support homeschooling families by offering classes that enrich their home school program and providing a safe place for social interaction with others who have chosen home education over other options. Every child is "a heritage...a gift from the Lord" (Psalm 127:3). We believe that the primary responsibility for education and character development lies with the parents. The Bridge will partner with the parents to impress God's values upon children's hearts. We believe that the foundation of Christian education is the Bible. "All scripture is God breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work" (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

Our instructors are the embodiment of The Bridge's beliefs and values. They are spiritually mature, well-qualified people who focus on academic excellence. Our instructors seek to enhance the development of each student spiritually, intellectually, socially and physically as it says in Luke 2:52. Our teachers live their lives as full-time role models to students and their families. "So that you may walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God" (Col. 1:10). Our teachers agree to follow The Bridge's Statement of Faith allowing us to be of one accord.

Our curriculum is academically excellent and honors our Christian heritage. It helps prepare students for higher learning and to impact the world for Christ. "Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you" (Matthew 28:19,20). We believe that God's promises are true as Proverbs 22:6 says, "Train up a child in the way he should go and when he is old he will not depart from it".

Classes are open to everyone who wishes to attend. Although we do not foresee many people signing up who are not home schoolers, it is a possibility. The program is designed to foster student growth spiritually, academically, physically, and socially. Each year the classes offered vary as the Lord provides teachers.

## **Vision Statement**

The Bridge Academy Classes purposes to train students, in cooperation with their families and their local church, to know, worship and obey God, love people, equip believers, build leaders, and build authentic community.

## **Statement of Faith**

The Bridge's statement of faith is based on the Fourteen Historical Beliefs of the Christian Faith; it is a confession of worship that forms us as the people of God and draws us together into the life of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. These beliefs are:

1. We believe the Bible is the Holy Word of God. It is inspired, infallible, and inerrant. (2 Timothy 3:15-17; 1 Thessalonians 2:13)
2. We believe in the omnipotent, omniscient, and eternal God of creation, existing in three persons. (John 1:1-14, Colossians 2:8-9)
3. We believe that Jesus Christ is God's Only Son. (John 3:16; Colossians 1:17; Isaiah 7:14)
4. We believe in the Holy Spirit. (John 14:16-26; 16 7-11)
5. We believe that all people are sinners (Isaiah 53:6; Romans 3:23; Ephesians 2:1-4)
6. We believe that salvation is available to all through Jesus Christ alone. It is a gift from God and not a result of any human efforts. (Ephesians 2:8-9; Romans 10:9-10)
7. We believe in the reality of Heaven. (Revelation 21:10-17; Hebrews 12:22-24)
8. We believe in the reality of Hell. (Revelation 20:11-15; Matthew 25:41; Mark 9:43)
9. We believe in the reality of Satan. (2 Corinthians 11:14; Isaiah 14:12-17)
10. We believe that Christians have the Holy Spirit living in them, empowering and enabling them to be what God created them to be. (Galatians 2:20; Ephesians 5:18; Acts 1:8)
11. We believe in the local Church. (Acts 2:41-47; Matthew 16:18; Hebrews 10:25)
12. We believe that Baptism and Communion are Church ordinances but are not required for salvation. (Romans 6:1-5; 1 Corinthians 11:23-24)
13. We believe in giving back to the Lord. (Luke 6:38; Malachi 3:10; Leviticus 27:30)
14. We believe in local and world evangelism. (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; Acts 1:8)

We, at The Bridge Sarasota, are persuaded that faithfulness in our generation means declaring once again the truth of God's word, what it says about the world and of our place in it—particularly as male and female.

It is The Bridge Sarasota deeply held religious belief that God has provided boundaries for the expression of human sexuality. We believe that human gender is assigned by God at birth and that birth gender cannot be changed (Gen. 1:27; 5:2; Ps. 100:3; 139:13-14; Matt. 19:4).

Further, we believe that marriage is only between one man and one woman. According to the Scriptures, we uphold the principles of sexual abstinence among the unmarried (1 Cor. 6:18) and the sanctity of marriage between one man and one woman (Heb. 13:4). Therefore, it is our firmly held belief that Scripture condemns all forms of sexual immorality such as pre-marital sex, adultery, cross-dressing, homosexual behavior, pornography, and all other sexual relations outside the bounds of monogamous marriage between one man and one woman (Deut. 22:5; Matt. 5:27-28; Rom. 1:21-27; 1 Cor. 6:9-10; Gen. 2:24; Eph. 5:31).

## **Non-Discriminatory Enrollment**

The Bridge Academy Classes admits students of any race, color, national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national and ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship and loan programs, and athletic and other school administered programs.

# HOW WE WORK

## CLASS INFORMATION

### Attendance & Tardiness

Attendance should be considered a privilege and a responsibility. Regular attendance is also critical due to the limited number of class times available. However, it is The Bridge's policy that students should be kept at home if they have symptoms of illness. If your child is absent, it is his/her responsibility to contact teachers regarding make-up work. The teacher's phone number will be made available to families at Student Orientation.

### Class Cost Information

Cost per class is based upon a 33-34-week school year. Fees are listed on the registration form and on our private online portal. A \$25 non-refundable registration fee per student and a \$10 technology fee per family is due at registration. Please be aware that, in addition to the class costs, there may be additional supplies fees listed. All class cost balances must be paid in full and received by The Bridge upon registration in order to reserve a class spot. This policy is necessary to maintain good stewardship in this ministry. The Bridge's funding to operate comes from student enrollment. It is our goal that no student is unable to attend The Bridge due to financial hardships. We do offer payment plans if necessary; contact the Administrator for more information.

### Class Changes or Withdrawals

Families have until the end of the first month of Academy Classes to withdraw from a class and/or enroll in a new class. When a student changes classes, the original class supplies fees, which are given to the teacher, might not be refunded since the teacher may or may not have already spent them in preparation for the class. Families are expected to pay any fees associated with the new class to which the student is transferring. If a student withdraws from a class during the three weeks, a full refund will be issued for the class. There is no refund after the third week unless there are special circumstances.

### Classroom Behavioral Standards

Willing submission to the following standards is expected from each student. Your efforts to support the teachers and to help uphold these standards will aid in a well-run and Godly program.

- Students must respect the rights and properties of others and treat those in authority with respect.
- When talking, students should use an appropriate conversational tone.
- Students should be punctual to class.
- Students are expected to listen when others are speaking and raise hands for permission to speak in class.
- Writing and passing notes, tossing objects, and playing with irrelevant objects will not be allowed in class.
- All electronic devices, such as cell phones, iPads, tablets, laptops, etc. must be silenced or turned off and put away during class unless use is permitted by the teacher for class.
- Class assignments need to be turned in promptly on the day they are due.
- Teachers, assistants, staff and other adult volunteers should be addressed with the appropriate titles of respect, specifically Mr., Mrs., or Miss unless otherwise communicated.
- Cheating will not be tolerated and will be dealt with according to the improper conduct procedure.

- Classroom outbursts and general disruptions will not be tolerated. If a student is being disruptive, he/she will be invited to sit in the lobby with a parent volunteer until the class is finished.
- The teachers may request additional classroom standards as needed.

If a student repeatedly misses class and/or fails to complete the expected homework to the best of their ability, the student and his/her family will be asked to meet with the teacher and the director or administrator to discuss reasonable options.

## **Communication Between Teachers, Students, and Parents**

Communication between teachers, students, and parents is essential to the success of The Bridge Academy Classes. We encourage parents and teachers to communicate face-to-face at least once during the semester and in on-going ways throughout the semester via email, phone, or written communication. We use Homeschool-Life for communication and classroom management. Registered families will be provided with login information. Teachers are required to communicate directly with parents when utilizing our members' site, email and/or text messaging; parental consent is required for direct communication with students via email and/or text messaging. Our goal is for teachers, students and parents to work together to ensure success of the students. Parents are expected to be involved as volunteers.

## **Credits and Grades**

All course requirements and expectations should be clearly communicated in written form to students and parents. If a student is having academic difficulties, please discuss this with the teacher so appropriate measures may be taken. Parents should discuss with teachers any grade awarded for work completed. The Bridge does not keep student records or give course credits for Academy co-op classes. Parents are responsible for monitoring, filing, testing (when applicable), and academic compliance on the county and state level.

## **Credits and the Options for Homeschooling**

While The Bridge does not give course credits as stated above, the following information is provided for parent's personal use in determining credit for their own students. Parents of high school students may apply courses for credit using the prescribed course of study method or the traditional method.

- *Prescribed (or proposed) Course of Study Method* - Credit is awarded based on completion of pre-determined course objectives and requirements. Grades are based on course standards. For example, you may decide to give your student a full credit in foreign language if he/she completes the Spanish I course through The Bridge Academy Classes. This measures quality of work, quantity of work, or both.
- *Traditional Method* - A Carnegie Credit unit equals 120 hours of class work. Parents would be responsible to track hours and award credit based on the measure of time spent on the material. Parents may refer to The Bridge's Private School high school packet or the Home School Legal Defense Association for more information on credits.

## **Descriptions and Grade Levels**

Although many home school families do not emphasize grade levels, teachers anticipate a certain age group when listing the grade level in the class description which is found in the Registration Handbook. Classes are listed by grade level to include the general age divisions corresponding with those grades. Grades 5-6 are for ten to twelve years old who should be able to read and write fairly

well. Grades 7-12 are for 13-18 years old who read and write well, with minimal supervision. It is important for students to be placed where they will perform most comfortably, rather than strictly by grade. If a parent feels their child can meet the requirements of a class but they are not within the set grade parameters, exceptions can be made. Please contact the teacher with any questions and to obtain a teacher exception to enroll a student outside the expected grade/age level listed.

## **Discipline**

Each teacher establishes reasonable rules and discipline procedures for his/her class; however, no form of corporal punishment will be allowed. Students need to clearly understand the teacher's expectations and the consequences of wrong behavior. If a child is deemed to be involved in a breach of behavior during the program, requiring correction, the following procedure(s) will be implemented:

- Verbal Warning: If the offense is minor, the teacher may first give an oral warning.
- First offense: The teacher will take the child quietly aside and discuss the nature of the misconduct with him/her. A "Growing in Fruitfulness" form will be sent home with the student for the parent to sign and the student to return to the teacher.
- Second offense: The first step is followed, and the teacher will contact the parent and arrange for a conference between the teacher, the parent, and the director or administrator.
- Third offense: A conference with the student, parent, director and administrator will occur. A third incident may be grounds for expulsion from the class or program.

If a child is unable to bring his/her behavior under control, they may be removed from the classroom and taken to an administrative office at which time the parent will be called. All teachers, students and families involved in the program are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that reflects honor upon the Lord, themselves, their family, their church, and home schooling.

## **Guests and Visitors in the Classroom**

The standard at The Bridge Academy Classes is that the only people in the classroom are to be registered students and approved staff. Guests should have permission from both the teacher and the administration. Parents of enrolled children may occasionally wish to sit in their child's class and will be welcomed by the teacher. We ask parents to notify teachers prior to sitting in on a class. In case of an emergency, and for security reasons, we need to know the location of everyone in our program.

## **Homework**

Homework may be assigned by teachers for various reasons:

- Fosters the growth of good work habits such as discipline and responsibility
- Furthers learning through practice and application
- Acquaints parents with what students are learning
- Allows for assignments that require more time
- Teaches children to follow directions
- Ensures students learn the curriculum

Homework requirements for each class are dictated by the teacher.

## **Illness and Injury**

If a student becomes ill or is injured, he/she should report to the director or administrator who will call the parent. The parents will be notified before any action is taken. If the parent or emergency contact cannot be reached, action will only be taken if the situation appears life threatening.

# GENERAL POLICY INFORMATION

## Behavior Standards

Realizing self-control is a fruit of the Spirit; The Bridge requires certain standards of behavior to help train children in this important area. True joy is found in submission to the Lordship of Jesus Christ and outward control helps to train children in inward control. In addition to the Class Behavioral Standards, willing submission to the following standards is also expected from each child. Your efforts to support the Administration and to help uphold these standards will also aid in a well-run and Godly program. Please remember that it is a privilege to meet at Bible Baptist Church.

- Students should not run, yell or be disruptive while in the church building.
- Students must not damage the church property. Parents will be financially responsible for damage caused by their child, even if the damage is the result of an accident. Good stewardship of all our property is a Biblical standard that is very important to us.
- All of us must help keep the church and grounds clean and free of trash.

## Building/Facility Stewardship

The upkeep of the classroom is the responsibility of the teacher and the class. The teacher may delegate responsibility in order to promote servant qualities in each student. Classrooms should remain neat and clean. Teachers may need help with vacuuming, picking up trash, leaving chairs under tables neatly, and wiping tables and white boards as necessary. All classrooms must be in order before class is dismissed. Students will be asked to do only reasonable cleaning. From time to time, families may notice maintenance needs while at The Bridge; please let the administration know of any issues you see or may have.

## Daily Sign In/Sign Out Procedures

All students must sign in and out upon entering/exiting the campus. The Bridge Academy Co-op Classes are a drop off program for High School Students only. Parents are welcomed and encouraged to stay if they choose. Parents of Middle School students are required to be on campus until students have demonstrated that they can successfully navigate the day with independent self-government and decorum. Parents of Elementary students are required to stay on campus while their child/children are in class, or designate an approved, on-campus adult. All staff, students, parents and visitors are required to wear a Bridge ID lanyard. Registered students and parents will provide a picture to be printed on their ID Badge.

## Dress Code

Is there a dress code in the Bible? Yes. God is very specific: cover your nakedness and dress modestly, distinguishing your gender. Do not let the world determine what you will wear. (Romans 12:2)

All Bridge Academy Class participants and families are expected to dress in a modest, tasteful fashion. Parents are responsible for monitoring student clothing choices. Staff may contact parents if a student's attire is questionable. Remember that clothing can be a "stumbling block," so please do not dress in a way that might cause offense or struggle for another. Honor and respect one another with your choices. The following are some basic guidelines which apply to everyone registered or visiting our co-op:

1. Participants may not wear the following: halter tops or tops with spaghetti straps unless covered by another opaque clothing layer, mesh/net or see-through clothing, sagging pants, tight-fitting pants, shirts/tops/hats displaying distasteful pictures, inappropriate wording or the advertising of illegal substances, tobacco or alcohol.

2. Shorts should be a minimum of mid-thigh length. Skirts should be no shorter than approximately 3 inches above the top of the knee.
3. Midriff skin should be covered. Under garments should be covered. Do not wear crop tops or loose/open sleeve hole tank tops. Necklines should be conservative.
4. Wearing of caps, hats and hoods is at the discretion of each teacher.

The purpose of a dress code is to honor God and to promote an orderly learning environment. If you are unsure if something is appropriate, please do not wear it.

## **Food and Lunch Time**

Please ensure that students have food to eat for lunch. Snack items are offered for sale in the lobby hallway, but they are not a substitute for a healthy meal. Parents are asked to donate snacks if they're able. Due to students living with severe allergies, we do not have any snacks containing nuts. Water is available and always free, should anyone forget to bring their own or run out. Food is not allowed in the classrooms except as it pertains to the curriculum. Please ensure that we do not lose favor with Bible Baptist Church by neglecting or damaging the property. Please help us out and clean up after yourself. Many hands make light work, right? Cleaning materials are located in the storage closet.

## **Grievance Procedures**

In order to problem-solve effectively, it is important to direct people to the proper person. Should a student or parent experience disharmony with another student, family, teacher or administrative person, he/she should follow the Matthew 18 principle for resolving conflict. Please respect the confidentiality of all those involved and refrain from discussing the issues with others. Specifically, the following steps need to be taken:

1. Go to the person with whom you have disharmony.
2. If not resolved, bring the issue to the director or administrator.
3. If not resolved, bring it to the entire board for mediation.

The Bridge Academy Classes will most likely be the perfect opportunity to train your children in these principles regarding conflict resolution. All of the above must be done in love, with respect, and with God's grace.

## **Lost and Found**

We will collect items left in classrooms and common areas. Items will be held for the duration of the semester and if unclaimed, will be donated at the end of the semester. The Bridge and Bible Baptist Church are not responsible for lost or stolen items.

## **Medication Usage**

Parents are responsible for giving their student any type of medication, such as prescription drugs, Tylenol, ibuprofen, or similar medication. It is not permissible for teachers or administration to dispense medication.

## **Personal Items**

The Bridge is not responsible for any items lost or stolen. If distracting in the class, any personal items brought to The Bridge may be confiscated by the teacher and returned after class.

## **School Delays or Closures**

If Sarasota or Manatee County school districts are delayed or closed for emergency reasons or inclement weather, The Bridge Academy Classes will be closed. We do not always follow the holiday closures of the school districts so be sure to reference the academic calendar on our website.

## **Special Needs**

Students with special needs that are manageable within the classroom setting are welcome if they are accompanied by a responsible parent or other trusted adult. At this time, The Bridge is unable to give quality attention and service to students who meet any of the following criteria: students unwilling or unable to follow The Bridge's behavioral guidelines, students unwilling or unable to follow Biblical behavioral teachings, students repeatedly accused of bullying or other behavioral referrals, and students with severe medical, mental, or emotional disabilities.

## **Standards for Boy-Girl Relationships**

We believe that God's plan is for boys and girls to have wholesome activities and fellowship together, treating each other with respect as sisters and brothers in the Lord. Proper boy-girl associations are encouraged however, all such friendships and associations are expected to be conducted in a responsible, Christian manner. The Bridge expects that unquestionable, exemplary Christian conduct should be the norm for all students.

## **Student Code of Conduct**

The code of conduct established at The Bridge Academy Classes is based upon the text found in Galatians 5:22, 23: "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control." And also Philippians 4:8: "Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things." We encourage families to memorize these verses and we ask that parents discuss them and their application with their children. We realize that none of us has fully attained these character traits, but we are all striving to attain a greater measure of them in our lives. As such, if a child is involved in a breach of conduct, the person in authority (such as the teacher, hall monitor or teacher assistant) will attempt to gently lead the child into an understanding of how he can gain a better grasp of these qualities in his life. Students and parents are expected to conduct and behave themselves in an appropriate manner for Christian people.

## **Student/Family Orientation**

Student/Family Orientation is mandatory each school year for all students attending classes. Students will receive class schedules and other pertinent information. Teachers will be available, so families may have the opportunity to meet them and visit the classrooms. Teachers may distribute classroom expectations, requirements, scope and sequence, etc. If your child has food allergies, please inquire if the teacher intends to include food in any of the classes. If you have listed allergies on your registration forms, the teachers will be made aware of them by the Administrator.

## **Substance Abuse Policy**

The Bridge Sarasota has ZERO tolerance for the purchase, use, possession or distribution of alcohol, controlled substances, imitation or synthetic controlled substances and/or drug paraphernalia among students. It is a violation of our policy for any student to possess, use, abuse, sell, distribute, purchase or procure alcohol, controlled substances, or drug paraphernalia, and is considered behavior which is detrimental to the welfare, safety or morals of other students or school personnel for students to be under the influence of alcohol or controlled substances. This policy shall apply to any student who is on the Bible Baptist Church Campus during Bridge hours, taking part in any Bridge-sponsored or sanctioned activity, or whose conduct at any time or place interferes with the operations of The Bridge Academy Classes or the safety or welfare of students, families, or staff.

## HOW CAN PARENTS HELP

The Bridge Academy Classes could not operate without the many people who give of their time and talent to help in the various areas of need. Families are expected to volunteer on a weekly basis during the school year. In any given semester we need many volunteers to help The Bridge operate. Please consider what you may be able to do to help at The Bridge – from donating snacks and water, coordinating field trips, doing fundraisers, assisting in set-up and tear-down, to teaching a class!

Parents are encouraged to:

- Read and understand all the information contained in this handbook and discuss all relevant topics with their children - with special emphasis placed on the Student Code of Conduct and all matters related to discipline.
- Read the Statement of Belief carefully and explain it to their children since these truths will be emphasized throughout the program. We do want parents aware that their children will be learning and discussing these beliefs.
- Contact the teacher or The Bridge administration with any questions or comments.
- Become involved in the program. There are many opportunities for both adults and youth to assist The Bridge. Remember, The Bridge would not be here without volunteers!
- Foster unity, through prayer, for the teachers and the administration of this program.