

Classical Cottage School Supporting Documentation 2019-2020

Table of Contents

Mission and Philosophy.....	1
Participation Contract	5
The Classical Cottage School Approach.....	17

Mission and Philosophy

Classical Cottage School, Inc.

2019-20

Our Mission

The Classical Cottage School is a non-denominational Christian consortium whose mission is to equip students with the tools of learning through a careful implementation of classical studies in the Grammar, Logic, and Rhetoric stages of development.

Our Philosophy

Modern education sees learning as an accumulation of facts; it is content-driven but skills deficient. Many children don't know what to do with the information they have. The results include an inability to order thoughts and to think clearly or independently. At the Classical Cottage School, we believe the most important curriculum is that which develops the skills of independent learning and equips students for a lifetime of inquiry and growth. A true classical education does not accomplish education through subjects but uses those subjects as a way to build the skills for becoming a lifelong learner. We believe that students benefit most when skill-building is the focus, no matter the subject.

The core courses in our school will be those Liberal Arts classes that develop critical learning skills, as once taught by the Greeks and by Renaissance scholars. These thinking skills are taught carefully and incrementally in correlation with three major stages of intellectual development:

1) **Grammar Stage:** Before age 10, students at the Classical Cottage School focus on the grammar of language through a basic overview of Latin, and English Grammar. In addition to languages, students might participate in music, multi-level art classes, world history and geography, and several levels of science and nature classes. A three-year Classical Studies Program that covers Ancient Greece, Ancient Rome, and Early American History is offered to older Grammar students.

2) **Logic Stage:** Students between ages 11 and 16 are ready for intense Latin, beginning Greek, independent writing, and Logic. The study of Latin develops the child's powers of memory and observation and enrich his studies of English Grammar, Ancient History, Mythology, Geography and Science. At the Classical Cottage School, we recommend that students participate in a two-year writing program called Progymnasmata before taking our two-year formal and material Logic program. We also encourage Latin students to take our beginning and intermediate Greek classes, and to participate in the Virginia Junior Classical League and Certamen competitions in order to broaden their knowledge of classical history, mythology, and culture. Our beginning Omnibus classes from level I through III will develop students' thinking skills through reading, analyzing, discussing, and writing about literature central to Western culture from ancient through modern times.

3) **Rhetoric Stage:** Rhetoric is the art of articulating ideas for the purpose of persuasion. Students who have followed the curricula of the Grammar and Logic stages will be ready for this level of academics between ages 14 and 18. Latin, Logic, and Progymnasmata courses serve as the foundation for our Rhetoric program. Other offerings include A.P. American Government, A.P. Latin, Philosophy, American History, Ancient & Medieval Western Civilizations, European History, Art History and Omnibus classes from level IV through VI. Additionally, students at the rhetoric stage will find high school math and science courses and other important electives such as Speech, Debate, Studio Art, and A.P. essay-writing seminars offered on a separate day.

An Analysis of Our Choices

Does this sound like more than your child can do? It might be if you try to overlay these classes with an already-packed curriculum at home. These courses deserve to be, along with Bible, at the center of your curriculum. It should be noted that core classes cover much more than the subject title. For example, Latin students learn close analysis, English Grammar, Ancient History, Mythology, Classical Literature, and Roman Culture and may choose to participate in local, state, and national contests.

In general, we strongly advise families to cut back on other academics at home. Time spent building skills conveys benefits that will serve a lifetime. Give your students the time necessary to reap the rewards of our core classes of Latin, Progymnasmata, Logic, Omnibus and Rhetoric. This program may seem time-consuming initially, but it will spare your child the frustration that comes from the academic stagnation and boredom that are the end product of typical, workbook-centered curricula.

Classical subjects deservedly have enjoyed a revival in interest in the past few years. There is, however, a major distinction in the way Classical Cottage School approaches these subjects. Most approaches see subjects in the way that modern education views them: simply as material to be covered. While covering classical subjects is an improvement over much school curricula, we think that this more common approach misses the central benefit to a classical education. **Classical Cottage school sees Dorothy Sayers' emphasis on the tools of learning to be the key to all learning;** these tools are what enable students of all abilities to become motivated and independent learners. Emphasizing the development of these tools necessarily means giving up less important content to focus on mastering the tools. While it may seem that this approach leaves subject material uncovered in the short term, these temporary omissions are more than compensated for by the deeper comprehension of key subjects, the mastery of which makes all future learning markedly easier.

One example of this is the study of vocabulary. Typical vocabulary study involves long, unrelated lists of words, lists that are often dutifully learned for a quiz and soon forgotten. By learning vocabulary in the context of an intensive study of Latin, students understand how words are constructed as well as how language works. This kind of analytical vocabulary study gives an exponential access to new words, one that is not dependent on yet another boring vocabulary list. English words learned in this context are never forgotten, and are used fluently in all their parts of speech and with all modifying prefixes. By mastering Latin (rather than simply studying some Latin), students become attuned to nuances in English words and syntax that are accessible only

through a deep grasp of grammar. Previously unfamiliar words and subtle concepts are thus rendered readily and independently comprehensible, simply on the basis of possessing the keys to language—the tools to learning.

While we see Classical Cottage School as a community where Christian children can grow strong in fellowship with their peers, our goal is to educate students in classical education so that they will be armed with an understanding of the history of the ideas upon which western civilization is built. Our classes are taught from the perspective of a biblical worldview, but we do not offer courses that focus specifically on religious teachings. Due to the wide representation of denominations in our school, that vital area of the curriculum is best addressed at home and through the families' respective churches.

For a more thorough explanation of the reasoning behind our choice of subjects, read Dorothy Sayers' essay *The Lost Tools of Learning* at www.gbt.org/text/sayers.html. If you read anything at all about Classical Education, make this the essay. We recommend that families reread this essay at the beginning of every school year.

Our Goals

While the primary goal of a classical education is not high academic achievement but to train students to learn independently, academic success is a natural by-product of this approach. Even though our curriculum is centered on development of core skills rather than coverage of all subjects, don't be surprised when your child's mastery of subjects far exceeds that of your own public or private education. We encourage parents to attend classes with the child and experience the thrill of acquiring new skills.

In summary, the Classical Cottage Schools aims to:

- use the tools of the classical tradition to focus intently on the development of the skills of analysis, reasoning, writing, and speaking (hence Latin, Progymnasmata, Omnibus, Logic and Rhetoric)
- emphasize that with classical education “less is better”, meaning that the younger student is better off listening to and reading fine books and hearing the stories of our culture than grinding through workbooks that really don't teach as much as they might seem.
- emphasize depth over scope of content so that core Upper School courses really aim for mastery of key skills, which takes time and focused attention, because in developing these skills students will learn *how* to learn, and thereby will be motivated, competent, independent, lifelong learners.
- provide additional liberal arts courses that focus on the noble achievements of western civilization and are carefully designed for maximum effectiveness.
- provide the rich benefits that can best be achieved in courses taught by experienced, professional teachers who have extensive background in their field of study.

- challenge students by making the courses lively and inspiring.
- allow families with multiple children the opportunity to provide quality, age-appropriate instruction for both older and younger children at the same time.
- support families in their desire to school at home by limiting our courses for younger students to one day per week, and assisting families who homeschool through high school by offering additional math, science, and high school electives on a second day of the week,
- encourage mothers to learn alongside their older or younger children if desired (required in the case of Latin).
- model and, when necessary, guide students in Christian principles such as humility, graciousness, and concern for others.

For more information on classical education, we recommend the following lists:

***Essay:** “The Lost Tools of Learning”, Dorothy Sayers (foundational and very important!)

Books:

Berquist, Laura. *Designing Your Own Classical Curriculum*

Bluedorn, Harvey & Laurie. *Teaching the Trivium: Christian Homeschooling in a Classical Style*

Campbell, Andrew. *The Latin-Centered Curriculum.*

Wilson, Douglas. *Recovering the Lost Tools of Learning*

Wise, Jessie & Susan Wise Bauer, *The Well Trained Mind: A Guide to Classical Education at Home*

Websites:

www.classical-homeschooling.org

www.classicalhomeschooling.org

www.well-trainedmind.com

www.triviumpursuit.com

www.canonpress.org

www.memoriapress.com

www.veritaspress.com

PARTICIPATION CONTRACT

Classical Cottage School, Inc.

2019-20

Homeschooling in the Commonwealth of Virginia requires parents to assume sole responsibility for the education of their children. While Classical Cottage School, Inc., provides a theoretical framework for classical education and provides the opportunity to work with qualified teachers, it is expected that parents will provide the structure and reinforcement to enable their students to learn. As a consortium of tutors where classes meet only once weekly, where administrators are volunteers, and where all parents are required to serve in some way, Classical Cottage School is especially dependent upon parents for their cooperation both during a school day and at home during the remainder of the week.

This Participation Contract, the result of 17 years of experience, is an essential means of maintaining an atmosphere of mutual respect and support essential to learning. The rules are intended to promote a school culture of safety and courtesy among teachers, parents and students. By agreeing to abide by the Participation Contract, parents are not only supporting their own child's education, they are supporting the education of all students in the program.

Mandatory Meetings

Students aged 12 and up (by Oct.15, 2019) and one parent MUST attend the Back to School Orientation meeting in order to attend classes. Also, any adult other than a parent who will be conducting the children to classes should also attend one of the mandatory meetings since they also will need to be aware of this information. There are two opportunities to attend this meeting: once in early August in the evening, and once in late August in the morning. Specific dates are in the registration packet and on the school calendar on our website. We recommend planning to attend the first meeting in August and using the second meeting only as a backup in case circumstances make it impossible to attend the first. Please plan accordingly. Failure to plan ahead will not be an excuse since families will have many months advance notice concerning the dates. Families who have not had all qualified students and a parent attend a full meeting will not be allowed to begin classes in September. In that case, parents will have to approach the Board of Directors after the first day of classes; the Board will then meet to consider the case before the student(s) will be allowed to attend.

I. General Rules

Parental Attendance and Supervision

All students must have a parent or supervising adult on the premises at all times on Thursdays. On Fridays, which are reserved for students aged 12 and up only, parents are not required to remain on site. Students attending the Thursday program must either be enrolled in a class, in a study hall, in Chapel, or directly with a supervising adult at all times.

While in the past we have made every effort to provide waiting rooms, this is not guaranteed. Classes have first priority for space. Plan your day at CCS accordingly. It is the responsibility of the parents to arrange their children's schedules so that siblings of enrolled students have a place to be. The nursery is intended to serve teachers, parents in Latin classes and parents who are fulfilling their service position. The nursery can be used only during a teacher's teaching hour(s), a parent's Latin class hour or a parent's service time and only for the duration of their service commitment unless an exception is sought and given by the BOD. The nursery is not available as a general babysitting service.

Should parents need to have enrolled students under the care of another supervising adult during the school day, they must indicate the name of the supervising adult, the name(s) of children being supervised by that adult, the time frame for the parent's absence, and the parent's contact phone number on the sign-out sheet in the binder at the Greeter's Station. In special cases such as lengthy illness or family emergency, parents must request permission from the Board of Directors' Dean of Students (see the contact list at the end of this document) for an extended supervision situation. Once approved, this information may be recorded on a long-term sign-out list, also found in the Greeter Station Binder, so it only needs to be recorded once.

Classical Cottage School, Inc.

Revised February 14, 2019

We expect all adults to be aware of a child who appears to be unsupervised and to please ask the child which adult is supposed to be responsible for them. If a child is unsupervised, please guide him or her back into the building or to the greeter station to find the supervising adult.

It is imperative that parents realize that they have full responsibility for their children's actions and whereabouts throughout the school day on Thursdays. Thursday's open campus lunch policy means that students may only leave campus with clear permission from all responsible adults.

With permission of the teacher, parents are welcome to attend classes with their children. Please note that for some children in the Grammar School, it may be distracting to have a parent present and/or classroom space may be limited. Please use good judgment to determine if your presence is a disturbance. In the case of Upper School Latin classes, parental attendance is required. Siblings of a student enrolled in any class are NOT allowed to attend class with the parent. Special permission may be granted to a sibling who has already completed the class and who would like to refresh his or her knowledge; however, the parent must seek written permission from the Dean of Students and must present the permission letter to the teacher. Permission is also dependent upon numbers governing room capacity. Siblings who have not already completed the class may not attend the class under any circumstances. Siblings must be enrolled in another course or in Study Hall while the parent attends any class with a student. Nursing infants may be brought to class only if they are quiet and are not a distraction. Ambulatory babies should never be brought to class, regardless of whether they are still nursing. Parents who must be in Latin should enroll babies in the nursery during that period unless the infant is young enough to rest quietly in the parent's arms.

Communication

Managing a school requires good communication. For that reason, every family is responsible for checking and reading email each week, notably on Tuesday or Wednesday, to read communications from the school prior to Thursday. Most pertinent communications will come via the very important weekly email announcements called the **All School Weekly (ASW)**. To stay responsibly informed, it is necessary that every family read the ASW prior to classes on Thursday. Other important communications will come in the form of an email from the Administrator. In order to respect your time, we work hard to keep all email communication restricted to essentials.

The Classical Cottage School Yahoo group (amatcottageschool@yahogroups.com) is the place for nonessential communication, such as announcements of cultural opportunities, legislative alerts, or informative news articles. All families desiring access to this wider range of information should send an email to amatcottageschool-subscribe@yahogroups.com with a request to join. They will then receive an "invitation" to join the group with instructions on how to do so. The Yahoo Group is open to current families only. Parents only, not students, are allowed to post on the Yahoo Group. Please contact the group moderator at classicalcottageschool@gmail.com should you experience any problems.

The Greeter's Station is a hub of communication for the school. Located as you come into the entrance through the double doors, this station has both the Binder and the Family/Teacher file box.

The Greeters Station Binder contains class and student schedules, the Sign-Out Sheet for any parent who needs to leave the premises and therefore must designate another supervising adult to be responsible for her children, the Visitors' Sign-In & Sign-Out Sheet, and a school map.

The Family/Teacher file box is used for in-house bookkeeper-to-family, teacher-to-family, family-to-teacher or family-to-family communication. Teachers' folders are in the front section and are clearly marked with the teachers' last names. Families' folders are in the back section and are clearly marked with the families' names. In addition to checking email weekly, families should check their folder each week.

As a matter of respect, please realize that while we are not affiliated with our host church, we are a guest using their facility, and any communications by attending families should go through the CCS Administration.

Nursery

Parents who attend Latin classes with their older children, are teaching or have a service position and they need childcare, may register their children for the nursery during the times of their classes or service

Classical Cottage School, Inc.

Revised February 14, 2019

sessions. Only infants and toddlers 3 years of age and under as of October 15th that school year may enroll in the nursery. Children should be signed up during our spring registration; for summer enrollment by parents needing to fulfill a service role, parents must email the Registrar to enroll their children. For matters of safety and space, the nursery cannot accommodate any child over the age of 3. Children 4 years and older should be registered as students and should participate in classes. If a child cannot adjust to being in the nursery, parents may be asked to find another form of childcare and will be refunded their money. We request that parents be courteous and pick up children promptly as nursery attendants may need to attend class; parents may be assessed an additional childcare fee if nursery attendants are kept late. Please note: Parents who have children enrolled in the nursery MUST remain on the premises as the nursery is not a general babysitting service. Additionally, the nursery may not be used as a waiting room except during hours when no children are enrolled.

Study Hall

Upper School students not enrolled in a class must be enrolled in Study Hall or with a parent. Students are required to enroll in Study Hall as with all other classes, and a modest fee needs to be paid directly to the Study Hall Monitor as indicated in the Registration packet. As silence will be both conducive for study and necessary for classes in session, it will be strictly enforced by the monitor. It is required that students bring enough work to occupy their time. Students must be absolutely quiet, work independently, and may not disrupt the other students in any way. The Study Hall Monitor should not be expected to occupy the student or to assist with class work.

Chapel

Chapel is held between second and third periods. All children not attending Chapel are expected to be with a supervising adult at all times. Anyone not attending Chapel who is in Discipleship Hall or the Discipleship Hall area must remain quiet during the presentation.

Lunch Period

Lunch for students is in Discipleship Hall or outside with a designated adult. Children aged 14 and older may be outside without designated adult supervision ONLY during the lunch period, and only provided that lunch monitors are present. All other children must have designated adult supervision.

There is no eating or drinking in any area of the building by parents or students except Discipleship Hall unless special arrangements have been made. During lunch period, students are not permitted in any area other than Discipleship Hall or outside until the bell rings for fourth period. To protect students with severe nut allergies, please pack only nut-free snacks and lunches (this includes peanuts and tree nuts).

Two bells/bullhorns will ring during lunch:

- 1) Bell at 12:25 (inside & out) to announce the start of Mini Greek for those who are enrolled.
- 2) An announcement (not a bell) at 12:40 in Discipleship hall only signifies clean up and preparation for the class that meets in that room. All families who stay for lunch are expected to help clean up.
- 3) Bell at 12:45 (inside & out) to declare time to head to class. By that time all lunch boxes should be packed up and tables wiped so that classes in Discipleship Hall may begin on time.

Safety

Only those associated with Classical Cottage School or Bethel Lutheran Church may be in the church building or on the church grounds. If you have a relative or friend visiting, they will need to sign in at the Greeter's Station and wear a visitor's badge during their visit so that we all can recognize an approved visitor.

Parents are assigned to supervise the church entrances, hallways and the playground during lunch; however, all parents should remain alert and be prepared to confront anyone in the building or on the church grounds who appears not to belong. Should you become aware of a stranger in the building or on the playground, or of anyone attempting to interact with students, please call 911 immediately. Use your best judgement to ascertain first whether they are a church member but the safety of the children is a priority.

Please refer to the map below for the following safety guidelines and procedures:



- Access to the building is allowed through the doors that open to the Greeter’s Station. No other outer doors are to be used except in the case of an emergency.
- Students and parents should use the established crosswalks (marked in yellow) to travel back and forth between the building and the play area. Nobody should cross the parking lot outside of these designated areas. Orange cones will clearly mark the crosswalk area. Please help children establish the habit of using these crosswalks for maximum safety.
- Running is limited to the play area (marked in blue). Students must walk while in the parking lot or on the sidewalks.
- Students may not congregate in the parking lot. Soccer and football (or other games) may be played only in the grassy play area.
- Students are not to be outside the walking path (marked in orange). All off-limit areas are clearly labelled on the map (marked in red) and include the areas on the Rt. 522 side of the church and the grassy area behind the church.
- Available parking areas (marked in green) include all handicapped areas except where marked with RESERVED signs. If you arrive in the morning, we encourage you to back your vehicle into parking spaces. This will significantly assist your line of sight as you leave the parking lot.

Visitors

It is Classical Cottage School policy to allow interested families to visit and observe classes during the course of the school day. Likewise, friends and families of current Classical Cottage School families are permitted to attend classes on a limited basis provided their presence is not exceeding the size limit for that room. In addition, any visitors must be supervised by the sponsoring family and must be in compliance with Classical Cottage School rules. These visitors must sign in at the Greeter’s Station upon arrival and then sign out when departing. A “Visitor” badge, which may be obtained when signing in, must be worn at all times during the visit. All visitors must make every effort to avoid disrupting regular class routines. Individuals who plan to visit for more than two weeks must obtain permission from the Board of Directors. We ask current families and teachers to welcome visitors.

Friday Classes

Friday is a closed campus. On Fridays, because parental attendance is not required, students are required to sign in upon arrival and to remain indoors under the monitors’ supervision. The parent must come inside to pick up their student(s) and sign them out. Students are not permitted to wander outside unattended or to walk off the premises. Only student drivers may leave and return independently to the premises. They may not take students other than their siblings with them when they leave at the end of the day unless the parents of the students involved grant written permission handed directly to the Friday monitor.

Families with students who attend classes on Friday shall pay a Friday supervision fee of \$15 per student. The per-student supervision fee will be assessed at registration. The purpose of this fee is to compensate designated adults to provide competent, consistent, and safe supervision throughout the day. The rules for students who remain on Friday are the same as for Study Hall: as silence will be both conducive for study and necessary for classes in session, it will be strictly enforced by the monitors. A room will be available for students who during their time at CCS do not have a class to go to. It is required that students bring enough work to occupy their time. Students must be absolutely quiet, work independently, and may not disrupt the other students in any way. The Friday Monitors should not be expected to occupy the student or to assist with class work. Parents are always welcome to stay on Friday, but this provision allows flexibility with families' schedules and protects all students by having reliable monitors on site and in charge at all times. The Friday monitors will ask all students to provide phone numbers where both parents can be reached in case of an emergency. A sign-in sheet will also be available so that students can update these phone numbers as necessary.

Required Service Program

Classical Cottage School parents are required to serve at least once during the year. If a family is registered at CCS, whether it is only on Friday or even for one class, that family is required to sign-up for a service task. Having all families serve is necessary to keep the school running safely and efficiently and to keep it as affordable as possible for everyone. By serving with at least one task, all families have an opportunity to bless our regular volunteers and help them with the faithful and consistent service they provide to us.

Before the school year begins, an online service signup form will be sent to all families listing service areas of need. Those who do not respond during the sign-up period will be randomly assigned to one of the remaining positions.

CCS Graduation

Graduation is scheduled the week following the last day of classes. Parents of graduates will determine the best day early in the process and then communicate this date to the CCS Administrator who will set the date on Bethel's calendar. Graduation is held at **Bethel Lutheran Church** and the ceremony planning and costs are the responsibility of the families involved. Classical Cottage School cannot provide another venue for graduation. Graduation speakers will be approved by the Board of Directors.

Our Facility

All non-emergency communications and concerns regarding our facility should go through our Administrator at classicalcottageschool@gmail.com. Should the administrator be unavailable, please contact a board member. DO NOT contact the church office directly. If there is an emergency, call 911.

The church offices are on the parking lot side of the building. Please note that Bethel Lutheran Church is conducting church business while we are using the facility. In order to give the church the privacy that is needed, please do not enter the Church Offices at any time.

Entry and exit from the building will be through the main entrance. Except in cases of emergency, no other doors will be used for entry and exit.

Elevator use is limited to teachers and parents only. If a student needs to use the elevator due to physical limitations, they must be accompanied by an adult.

Due to narrow hallways, strollers are not permitted in the building.

Parking

Families may park in any church parking space except those marked and reserved for teachers and the church office. Parking is also available on the upper gravel lot. (The map above in the "Safety" section clearly defines this parking lot.) Handicapped spaces are also available for parking unless marked RESERVED.

To conserve space for parents with young children as well as teachers hauling supplies, students who drive themselves to school are not allowed to park in the paved parking lot. Student drivers should park on the

upper gravel parking lot.

Wi-Fi

Bethel Lutheran Church has provided a "Church Guest" internet access point for teachers and parents. The quality and reliability of that access is not guaranteed. No password is required to access the wi-fi. Other alternatives include using an Xfinity access point, bringing a personal 'hot spot,' or traveling to the local McDonalds or any other restaurant offering free Wi-Fi to guests.

Inclement Weather Policy & Extended Class Day Schedule

For both Thursday and Friday classes, we will make an in-house determination by 6 am as to whether to hold classes. Families and teachers will receive a text when classes are canceled. Cancellations will also be listed on the website as soon as possible. Classes will not be canceled as a result of low attendance.

Every effort will be made to make up class days missed on Thursdays due to inclement weather prior to March 1st. Our aim is to provide the maximum allowable academic class time before spring activities make extended days difficult, and, because it is necessary that our Upper School classes meet for sufficient hours each school year to build classical skills, we have a strategy for making up missed classes. Any cancelled day of classes which occurs on a Thursday prior to March 1st will be made up using a variable approach including an extended schedule and will be in effect for three consecutive Thursdays, as well it could impact Roman Culture. The timing of the missed day results in a lot of variables that would determine which strategy we use. The revised schedule will be posted on the website and listed in the very important "All School Weekly" announcements. The extended school day is the result of many years of trying a number of configurations to make up the work.

The Friday schedule has more flexibility and so Friday teachers will contact families directly to apprise families of the adjustments to be made to each class when Fridays are cancelled.

When classes are canceled, parents should check their email and expect to hear from teachers the same day with assignments for the week.

In the event of cancellation of classes while Classical Cottage School classes are already in session (such as inclement weather, but not limited to this), all students and teachers must leave the premises without delay so that Bethel Lutheran Church personnel may shut down the facilities in a timely manner. Any groups approved to meet after school will need to cancel for that day. Parents who are not on site will be called, so a valid emergency contact number must be indicated on the Sign-Out Sheet next to the name of the supervising adult every time a parent leaves the premises.

Guidelines for Participation in State and National JCL Conventions

A student enrolled at Classical Cottage School who has paid Junior Classical League (JCL) dues may attend the Virginia Junior Classical League (VJCL) and/or National Junior Classical League (NJCL) conventions as a Classical Cottage School delegate IF the student:

- is a current Latin or Greek student in good standing, or
- has completed AP Latin, or is an active Classical Cottage School Certamen team player (as determined by the Certamen Coordinator).

II. Parental Responsibility and Attendance Policy

Parental Responsibility

Parental involvement is vital to a student's success at the Classical Cottage School. We believe a parent's first responsibility is not to overload children with too many well-intentioned enrichment activities. Students will not benefit from the core skills that are being taught unless given the appropriate time and atmosphere to focus. Parents also are expected to check their child's progress in class regularly and to ensure that all assignments are completed according to class guidelines as well as turned in on time. Our teachers assume that each child has prepared fully for each week's class; it is the job of parents, NOT teachers, to make sure that a student is keeping up with the work. Only through parental monitoring will students learn effective study skills and responsible studentship. The honoring of the teacher-student-parent relationship is essential to achieving the educational goals of a classical education in our unique setting.

Disciplinary Action at Former Education Institutions

It is the responsibility of the parents to notify Classical Cottage School in writing at the time of registration of a student's suspension or expulsion from any other educational institution. These matters will remain confidential and may require further inquiry from the Board.

Attendance Policy

The Classical Cottage School courses are highly concentrated so that students can receive a week's worth of instruction each class. Missing a single class is equivalent to missing a full week of school. Any absence will diminish a student's ability to be prepared and to understand the higher concepts being taught. Since we are concentrating on building skills, it is extremely difficult for our teachers to bring absent students up to date without re-creating the entire lesson. In fairness to students and teachers, our classes may not be approached as correspondence courses. Please note: Students who are dual-enrolled in other classes on Thursdays or Fridays may not miss Classical Cottage School classes due to these other conflicts. Students who miss three or more Upper School classes during the first 12 weeks of school will be notified by the instructor and/or Board of Directors that their enrollment in those classes is in jeopardy. In the event that makeup work is not feasible as determined by the teacher and the Board, the student will be asked to withdraw from the class with no refund of fees or tuition. If the teacher and Board agree that make-up work is achievable, the family may be asked to pay additional tutorial fees. Continued student absences will be reviewed by the Board and the outcome determined on a case-by-case basis. Furthermore, an Upper School student who has missed four or more classes prior to March will not be allowed to register for the following school year without prior approval by the Board of Directors.

Unexcused Absences

An absence is considered unexcused if the teacher has not been given prior notice or has not been notified of the cause for the student's absence in a timely manner. Should a student elect to skip a class without the parent's knowledge, it is considered a serious breach of school policy and will necessitate a meeting between the student, parents, and the Board of Directors.

Sick Policy

Children may not attend classes at Classical Cottage School if they are running a fever or have a cough or runny nose (unless the parent is positive that the runny nose and cough are due to allergies). Children should remain at home for a full 24 hours after a fever has broken. Please remember that bringing a sick child to our school may prove dangerous to any immune-compromised individuals in attendance.

Some illnesses require those recovering to stay home longer than 24 hours. For example, a norovirus illness (commonly known as a stomach bug) causes inflammation of the stomach or intestines or both and symptoms include vomiting, diarrhea, fever, headache, body aches, stomach pain and nausea. According to the Center for Disease Control, the timeframe of 24 hrs is inadequate when a norovirus is the cause; an individual recovering from a norovirus remains contagious for up to 3 days after they recover. If your child is sick Monday night or later in the week, your child should not attend classes on Thursday at CCS. Please keep this in mind when deciding whether or not your child is healthy enough to come to school.

III. Behavior Policy

A school-like setting is an exciting, new social environment for many of our students. It is for the benefit of all that we establish an atmosphere that supports learning. Such an atmosphere is based on respect for one another and the tasks we come together to undertake. Any behaviors which undermine or distract from the learning atmosphere are not allowed at school.

If deemed necessary, we may schedule additional mandatory school-wide meetings for all parents and/or students. These meetings will remind students about school policies needing attention including, but not limited to, policies regarding dress, manners, and/or behavior. We, as a private Christian community, affirm the Biblical view of morality and human sexuality. Promiscuous or immoral behavior of any kind is grounds for dismissal from Classical Cottage School. Other offenses that may lead to dismissal include, but are not limited to: theft, plagiarism, dishonesty, slander, profanity, vulgarity and use of pornography.

Attire

Modesty is our policy. Skirts and shorts should be longer than a child's fingertips when arms are resting at the sides. Students should not wear overly tight clothes, or clothing with rude or inappropriate sayings or images. Tank tops and hats are not allowed, and shirts must cover the entire midriff. Clingy yoga pants, leggings or tights cannot be worn as trousers, but may be worn under a tunic or skirt. The skirt or tunic must still meet the fingertip rule.

Distractions and Electronics Policy

Students should bring to school only items necessary for class. Unnecessary items should be left at home. This includes, but is not limited to, items such as radios, tape players, electronic games, water guns, trading cards, and other toys. Classical Cottage School is an electronics-free zone for students. No student is allowed to have a cell phone, smart watch, music device, electronic game, tablet (or any other device) at Classical Cottage School. All such items that distract from instruction will be taken from the student and given to the Principal. The item will be returned to the child's parent at the end of the school day. The only exception to this is when a laptop computer is being used for an approved class, and these should only be in the possession of students during the class period in the classroom. During off-campus extracurricular events, parents may elect to allow students to use cell phones.

Solicitation of Goods and Services

The selling of any goods or services (i.e., Girl Scout cookies, tutoring, raffle tickets, etc.) is not permitted on school premises or via school emails unless associated with a CCS school-sponsored function. Exceptions may be given if pre-approved by the Board of Directors. Other solicitations are allowed via the Yahoo group (see the Communication section above for information on how to join this group). Deliveries are permitted on school premises.

Use of Classical Cottage School Address List

The Classical Cottage School Address List is for Classical Cottage School business purposes only and for the sake of privacy, is not to be shared with third parties.

Reproduction and Use of Classical Cottage School Class Material

Classical Cottage School class materials are for Classical Cottage School classes only and are not to be used for outside classes. The reproduction, adaptation, distribution, or use of any part or parts of class materials for commercial purposes (ex., for a similar course) without prior written permission from the instructor is forbidden.

Attitude

A vital component of a learning atmosphere is respect. This includes respect for the task we are at Classical Cottage School to do, respect for the adults who are there to guide us, and respect for those with whom we share this school. A respectful attitude is the key to building both good character and true school spirit.

Respect for a class includes:

- Bringing all supplies with you to class, which means your notebook, text, homework, and writing utensil.
- Preparing your homework carefully and to the best of your ability. Families need to support their children's training in responsible studentship by helping them to check it over to be certain that it's complete. It is the student's responsibility to contact the teacher for assignments when absent from class. If a student repeatedly does not complete class assignments or participate in class activities, he may be asked to leave the class and no refund will be given.
- Not conversing socially in class. The appropriate time for that is outside of class. With the teacher's permission, parents are allowed in the classroom; however, they need to show the proper example by not conversing with other adults while class is in session.
- Being prompt for class by being in your seat and ready to start as class begins. If for some important reason you need to enter or leave while a class is in session, you must do that with utmost quiet so as not to disrupt the class. Chronic tardiness could result in expulsion from the class.

Respect for adults includes:

- Listening to ANY adult who corrects your behavior at school.

Classical Cottage School, Inc.

Revised February 14, 2019

- Helping adults who are carrying burdens and/or holding doors for them.
- Helping to set up or break down chairs, tables, etc. as needed. Every family can contribute in some way. It is not respectful to expect others to do it for us.

Respect for others includes:

- Being considerate. For example, don't discuss social arrangements or exchange gifts in front of those who are not included.
- Not bullying fellow students. A person is bullied when he or she is exposed, repeatedly and over time, to negative actions on the part of one or more other persons, and he or she has difficulty defending himself or herself.
- Refraining from all gossip. Gossip has no place in our school and is one of the most grievous offenses of school policy. Parents will be notified if their children are engaging in this destructive behavior. One easy way to check if you are gossiping is to ask yourself, "Is this something I'd be comfortable sharing in front of the person about whom I'm speaking?" If not, don't say it.
- Being open to new friendships. It's easy to fall into comfortable patterns with our friendships, but cliques are destructive and rob students of meaningful relationships with those outside their "group". We encourage all students to enjoy the blessings of new friendships.

Teachers may arbitrate to help children reconcile conflicts with others by following the Biblical pattern of confession, repentance, forgiveness, and reconciliation (Mt. 18:15; Gal. 6:1; Eph. 4:15; Rom. 15:14) and parents should be notified.

Respect for our facility includes:

- Remembering that we are meeting in someone else's church home and we should treat it with respect.
- Cleaning up after ourselves throughout the day and especially at lunchtime. This goes for both outside the building as well as in Discipleship Hall.
- Parents should supervise their children's lunchtime cleanup.
- Sitting only on chairs - not on tables or chair backs.
- Not moving any of the tables in Discipleship Hall.
- Taking care to not wear muddy shoes into the building.

10 Basic Rules of Classical Cottage School:

1. Students must be in a class, in Study Hall, or under the supervision of an adult at all times.
2. Students are expected to show respect for classes by being on time, bringing all necessary supplies, and preparing homework carefully.
3. Except in extenuating circumstances, late homework will not be accepted.
4. When a student is absent, it is his or her responsibility to contact the teacher for missed assignments.
5. Students must save all social conversation for lunchtime or after school, not during class.
6. Attire needs to be modest and not distracting.
7. Classical Cottage School is an electronic-free zone. No students are allowed to have cell phones, music devices, games, computers, tablets or any other electronic device at Classical Cottage School, period.
8. Lunch for all students (and parents) who are not off campus with a parent is either 1) in Discipleship Hall or 2) outside within designated areas under adult supervision. Students are not permitted in any other areas.
9. No play of any kind is allowed in the parking lots. There is no running in the building or parking lots.
10. Students must show respect for students and adults alike, as well as respond appropriately to any adult who corrects them.

IV. Protocol for Addressing Concerns

Parental Concerns

In the event parents are dissatisfied with any aspect of the school, or have a disagreement with anyone

associated with the school, they are encouraged to seek resolution by beginning with privately addressing the matter only with the person(s) directly involved with the problem and to make a good faith attempt to resolve the issue in the spirit of peace and reconciliation (Mt. 18:15; Gal. 6:1; Eph. 4:15; Rom. 15:14). In general, parents have a responsibility to realize the negative effect gossip can have on others and on the school (Prov. 11:13; Lev. 19:16). For this reason they shall not discuss the matter with anyone else.

Should parents be dissatisfied with the result of this approach, they should bring the matter to the Board of Directors and all parties will promptly be given an opportunity to be heard and present their concerns. The Board of Directors and the parents will agree to cooperate in making arrangements to meet in person in a timely fashion at a location specified by the school and at a time mutually agreeable to all parties. Any such meeting is to take place no later than 8 days after the initial notice of the parent's request and shall be attended by the individuals (including particular parent, teacher or Board member) involved.

Should parents have concerns about the curriculum or the teacher of a class, they should first speak with the Upper School or Grammar School coordinator to discuss the matter. In some cases, parents may be advised to address the situation with the teacher directly. In other cases, the Upper School or Grammar School coordinator may find it necessary to intervene. The respective coordinator may bring the matter to the Board of Directors for further intervention if necessary.

With regard to all of the above situations, the school's Board of Directors will make findings with respect to the matter and determine what, if any, decision is appropriate, including a possible determination of suspension or termination of the school's relationship with parent(s), their child or children, teacher, or other person associated with the Classical Cottage School. In the event of a decision of suspension or termination, there will be no refund of tuition or fees. In the case of a teacher dismissal, the teacher will be expected to refund prorated tuition in order for the replacement teacher to be paid. The decisions of the school's Board of Directors are binding and final.

Failure to Abide by the Participation Contract or Egregious Conduct

In the event that the Board of Directors believes that any terms of the Participation Contract have been breached by any person associated with the school, the BOD has the right to require a meeting in person to discuss its concerns. Additionally, should any conduct not enumerated in this contract be considered by the BOD to be egregious and a threat to the wellbeing of the school, the board reserves the right to require a meeting in person to discuss its concerns. For either circumstance, any such meeting is to take place no later than 8 days after the initial notice, and will be at a location specified by the BOD and at a time mutually agreeable to all parties. Failure to cooperate in scheduling and attending said in-person meeting will be grounds for the BOD to suspend or terminate the family's involvement with and attendance at the Classical Cottage School.

The school's Board of Directors will make findings with respect to the matter and determine what, if any, decision is appropriate, including a possible determination of suspension or termination of the school's relationship with parent(s), their child or children, a teacher, or other person associated with the school. In the event of a decision of suspension or termination, there will be no refund of tuition or fees. In the case of a teacher dismissal, the teacher will be expected to refund prorated tuition in order for the replacement teacher to be paid. The decisions of the school's Board of Directors are binding and final.

Classroom Disciplinary Issues

Discipline by the teacher during class will follow this procedure: The student will be given one warning concerning inappropriate behavior. If the student continues to misbehave, he/she will be sequestered from that day's class and parents will be notified. If an issue persists after sincere attempts to address it with the parent and child, the teacher will bring it to the attention of the Principal, who will confer with the family to reach a resolution. Repeated misbehavior will result in further disciplinary actions determined by the Principal in consultation with the Board of Directors to be appropriate for the situation. In extreme cases, a student may be asked to withdraw from the class for the remainder of the year with no refund of fees or tuition.

Please note: We cannot accommodate special needs at the Classical Cottage School. Most classes meet for only an hour a week, and our teachers have neither the time nor training necessary to help students who struggle with inattention or impulsivity. All students need to be able to sit quietly in class and participate appropriately in class discussions. Those whose behavior distracts other students in the class

Classical Cottage School, Inc.

Revised February 14, 2019

or requires repeated intervention from the teacher will be asked to withdraw from our program.

V. Financial Matters & Registration Fees

Please note that all fees are non-refundable.

Class Payments

Please read our payment policy carefully. All checks should be made payable to the teacher of each class unless you are otherwise directed. Seventy-five percent of the yearly tuition and full materials fees are due the second to last week of this year's classes (in May); the final twenty-five percent is due the second week of classes in the new school year (in September). Please note: A payment plan may be available based on a family's financial circumstances (see Tuition Payment Program below).

Late Fees

Failure to pay on time in May will result in immediate loss of a student's place in the class. Failure to pay on time in September will result in a \$10 bookkeeping fee per class to reimburse the Bookkeeper for additional time and inconvenience. Chronic tardiness of payments may result in the termination of a family's participation at Classical Cottage School by the Board of Directors, and no refunds will be provided.

Tuition Payment Program

A payment plan may be available based on a family's financial circumstances. Families should contact the Bookkeeper at cottageschoolbookkeeper@gmail.com for special permission prior to registration. Families on a tuition payment schedule will submit checks (payable to the teacher of each class) to the Program Coordinator for efficient recordkeeping and distribution. Families who do not pay on time will not be allowed to use this installment option in the future. Tardy payments are not fair to our teachers and result in extra work for both the Program Coordinator and the Bookkeeper. Chronic tardiness of payments will result in the loss of enrollment in the school with no refunds. Nursery payments are not eligible for payment plans.

Enrollment/Tuition Payment Obligation

Enrollment is considered a full year obligation. Any family who defaults on payment will lose their escrow money and will not be eligible for future registration. In addition, families who enroll after classes have begun are still expected to pay for the entire year. We do not prorate classes should a student enter once classes are in session, as the instructor might need to spend extra time helping those students catch up.

We understand that circumstances change and other opportunities arise, and we want to reasonably accommodate those changes. We provide a grace period during which a family may drop or add a course for a fee by notifying the Registrar at cottageschoolregistrar@gmail.com. For the current year's grace period, please consult the calendar on our website www.classicalcottageschool.org or refer to the registration packet. After this grace period, if you drop a class for which there is no waitlist, you are obligated to pay the full year tuition. If a wait list exists and we are able to fill your child's spot, you will be assessed a \$25.00 service charge but will not be responsible for tuition. If we are unable to fill your child's spot, you are obligated to pay the full-year tuition. (We do not assess fees for waitlisted seats held and dropped, or for waitlisted seats offered and refused.)

Registration, Insurance and Administration Fees

Classical Cottage School reserves the right to refuse registration to any family. New families are required to submit an application and complete an interview before permission to register will be granted. Classes at the Classical Cottage School are for students aged 3 through 18 before October 15th of that school year. Any student who will turn 19 before October 15th of the designated academic year may not register without prior permission from the Board of Directors.

In order to run the school fairly and efficiently, a Registration Fee, a Liability Insurance Fee, an Administration Fee and, if necessary, a Late Registration Fee, are assessed yearly. All fees are paid at the time of registration.

- The Registration Fee, \$55 per student to pay for the rental of Bethel Lutheran Church. The Registration Fee applies to all students registered in a class. (Nursery is not considered a class.)

Classical Cottage School, Inc.

Revised February 14, 2019

- The Liability Insurance Fee, \$10 per student and is assessed for every registered student, including those registered only for Nursery.
- The Administration Fee, \$205 per family to help cover school expenses (administration, bookkeeping and registration costs, and non-class-specific supplies.)
- The Late Registration Fee, \$25 per student, applies to all registrations not processed on a scheduled registration day to fairly compensate our volunteers for their time and effort.

The Escrow Account

The Escrow Account protects costs for participating families in the event that a student drops a class and defaults on payment. The Escrow Account also protects our teachers whose income must be guaranteed. The escrow is refundable at the end of the year if a student has met all financial obligations for that year, but it is nonrefundable if a student pulls out of any classes and defaults on payment for any portion of the year.

The escrow fee for new students is a one time fee of \$100 for Upper School students and \$50 for students in the Grammar School. It is to be paid at the time of registration. Returning families may elect to use the “roll-over option” and designate previous escrow payments for the current year. In that case, the returning family will not need to pay additional escrow fees.

Dropping Classes

You must notify the Registrar at cottageschoolregistrar@gmail.com as well as the teacher if you decide to drop a class.

Refunds

Registration Fees and Administration Fees are nonrefundable. The only circumstances in which Materials Fees and Tuition may be refunded is if a course is cancelled or if it does not reach a required minimum number of students. In the case of a class that does not reach the minimum number of students required, the Bookkeeper will notify families of a possible increase in tuition; families unable or unwilling to pay this increase will receive a refund of those Materials Fees and Tuition.

Families will not be reimbursed for missed classes due to student illness, vacation, inclement weather, or other school closings. In the event of a teacher absence, every effort will be made to provide a qualified substitute teacher. In the rare event when a qualified substitute cannot be found, (as in the case of teacher emergency) the class period will be designated as a study hall.

Families should not approach teachers directly with requests for refunds under any circumstances. Not only does such a request put teachers in an awkward position, but it is expressly against the school tuition policy.

Financial Aid – CARE Fund

Families with special financial needs or who experience a financial crisis may email the Bookkeeper at cottageschoolbookkeeper@gmail.com for information on how to apply for financial aid. In addition, aid recipients who receive more assistance than the amount of money in their escrow account are not eligible for escrow reimbursement.

CARE Program

The CARE Program allows all Classical Cottage School families to help each other in times of crisis or when temporary financial difficulties (e.g. job loss, illness) arise. We welcome donations to this fund, prayer support, or help with providing meals for families in need. If you need prayer or support during a family crisis, please contact our CARE coordinator at ccsprogramcoordinator@gmail.com for assistance.

We are so grateful to be making this journey in the company of such wonderful families. It is our humble prayer that through communication, mutual effort and God’s grace the school will continue to be an abiding blessing to all involved.

“In essentials, unity; in nonessentials, liberty; in all things, charity.”

The Classical Cottage School Approach

The classical education movement has received a strong reception within the homeschool community in recent years, and with good reason. Classical methodology, when taught properly, teaches students how to think and learn for themselves. As the benefits become widely known, more classical programs are being written and marketed to home school families than ever before. But while they may appear similar on the surface, classical programs can in fact have quite different approaches. We feel compelled to give you an honest evaluation of how the Classical Cottage School excels above other classical homeschooling programs and why we think it is the best choice for classical homeschooling in this area.

The Classical Method versus Classical Subjects

First of all, there is a significant distinction between a program that uses classical methods and one that simply covers classical subjects. The classical method is characterized by the motto “less is more.” A true classical education gives a student the tools of learning, not through superficial subject completion but through the use of focused concentration on just a few subjects to develop key skills. At CCS, we do not attempt to cover 12 years of the various subjects taught in a typical school because we are not focusing on filling up our children with as much knowledge as possible. Our focus is on creating lifelong learners who are able to learn for themselves. They themselves will fill in any “gaps” as they continue to grow and mature. As Dorothy Sayers writes, *“The sole true end of education is simply this; to teach men how to learn for themselves; and whatever instruction fails to do this is effort spent in vain.”*

In modern education, we have put the proverbial cart before the horse by expecting students to master a great number of subjects before they have mastered the tools of learning. Instead, Language, Latin and Logic, the core of our program are the tools a student needs to develop to be able to approach the task of mastering any particular subject, whether Scottish political history or carburetor maintenance. We believe this model is in perfect harmony with how God has equipped our children to learn. Classical teaching methodology changes as the child matures in order to accommodate the three stages of the child's mental development; on the other hand, modern American education generally fails to make this distinction and uses the same methodology throughout a child's schooling.

At the Classical Cottage School, we firmly believe that Latin, Logic and Rhetoric are more than subjects. They are pathways to skills and should be the core of any classical program. A program in which Latin is tacked on as an elective or for mere exposure is not a classical program the way Dorothy Sayers intended it. The benefits of learning Latin extend far beyond language acquisition, study of ancient history and mastery of grammar. Through the study of Latin, students are being systematically trained to tackle any difficult subject matter. Much like mathematics, the in-depth study of Latin builds analytical skills that will be a foundation for all future learning. This is why advanced Latin students consistently score higher on SAT tests and in other academic areas. Those of us whose children have reached advanced levels of Latin cannot imagine accomplishing this without the aid of an outstanding teacher, such as we have gratefully had in Susan Schearer,

nationally recognized as one of the finest Latin teachers in the nation, and her team of Master Latin teachers.

When you choose to make Latin the core of your family's education in the late Grammar and early Logic stages, you will not have time for a lot of other "subjects"; in fact, there will be days when all you will be able to accomplish academically is a careful study of Latin and math, and that will be a job well done. However, this apparent lack of breadth should not concern you. International testing has repeatedly shown how American students score most highly in relation to other industrial countries while in the elementary years. A startling decline begins in about 4th grade and continues through high school. This alarming trend is not so difficult to understand. David Marsh, a professor at the University of Southern California Rossier School of Education, believes it is because we try to teach too many topics too quickly. Bruce Alberts, the president of the National Academy of Sciences, ascribes the poor performance of American students to American curriculum being "...a mile wide and an inch deep." Simply stated, American schools have opted for a subject-filled curriculum that produces only a superficial understanding and coverage, and lacks skill development. This lack of skill development begins to show as the students mature. As Martin Cothran of Highlands Latin School says, "Formal education should not merely introduce us to many things...which can by necessity lead only to superficial knowledge...but should encourage us to drink deeply at the springs of our culture. Much, not many." *Multum, non Multa*.

Grammar School Philosophy

One of the greatest challenges for families with young children embracing the Classical Approach is waiting for those Upper School core classes. We understand how anxious parents are to begin a "serious" education with their young children; pressure from family and friends increases this anxiety to make sure young children keep pace with the vast amount of subject trivia to which public-schooled children are exposed. However, we are firm believers in the Charlotte Mason/Bluedorn methodology of early education. The best education for young children is the reading of many good books. Reading, math, and moral training at home are excellent preparation for our Upper School core classes. Young students need a lot of time outside (4—6 hours daily, according to Charlotte Mason!) for nature exploration, creative play, reflection and refreshment.

It is admittedly hard to imagine that such a simple approach during the early years can result in a well-educated child, but we now know of many who have followed this method, including some of the Bluedorn children (as related in *Trivium Pursuit*), and their accomplishments, character, and obvious capabilities are apt testimonials. Another thing to consider that is not widely appreciated is that material learned in the early years is often forgotten by the middle school years unless that material has context and persistent application. Susan Wise Bauer, while speaking about the teaching of science at a HEAV convention several years ago, cautioned parents against trying to force-feed facts and said that time spent before middle school trying to teach the scientific method is time wasted.

The same can be said of a subject that we all realize is crucial, but few feel competent to teach: writing. Parents often think that extensive preparatory work is needed for achievement in the Progymnasmata classes. If you want to see local examples proving that not to be the case, ask parents of Progymnasmata I students who have never received prior writing instruction to share their children's work with you. Children who work diligently at the Progym assignments show many

years of skill improvement in a single year—and there are two years of this thorough instruction. If that is the case with a quality curriculum and no evidence of an advantage exists with children who have had previous instruction, why burden your child and yourself with early formal writing instruction? Time in earlier years is much better spent reading and orally narrating the best of children's literature together to, as Andrew Pudewa of the Institute for Excellence in Writing recommends, establish templates of English well-written.

Workbooks and flashcards may have their place, but as an educational staple they rarely lead to long-term understanding and retention. The best learning occurs in context. Skill development, on the other hand, is permanent. This is the time to learn an instrument, a sport, or a new language. Read wonderful books about history and take a field trip; explore books about science and go to museums; or plant and tend a garden. The books give the activities a meaningful framework and the activities give the information grounding in reality. Time at the grammar school stage is best spent exploring and playing in nature; save the heavy academics for later.

At the Classical Cottage School we do not consider the Grammar School to be an “essential” part of a child’s homeschooling experience; rather, we approach our classes as enrichment courses which provide many benefits that are difficult to duplicate at home. For example, early exposure to foreign languages, opportunities for public speaking and recitation, small and large group discussion of classic literature, and the thrill of exploring history with other creative and enthusiastic young learners are worthy reasons to participate in a classroom experience. We have continued to expand our Grammar School course offerings to include science, art and physical education in an effort to balance a young student’s day with a variety of activity and movement. Yet with proper planning and dedication, many of the benefits of our courses could be achieved at home. Our Grammar School courses are designed to complement the Upper School, but they are certainly not prerequisites.

We believe that during the Grammar School years, the best preparation for the classical core strands of the Upper School includes:

- the reading aloud of many good books, including historical biographies
- narration and discussion of “great books” and the ideas that they inspire
- plenty of hands-on experiences, field trips, and nature walks
- hours of free time and creative play DAILY
- daily moral training in the form of Bible readings and character stories
- short but daily math lessons
- copywork (for handwriting) of worthwhile poetry or literary excerpts
- opportunities for artistic creation and an appreciation of beautiful works
- music lessons and a home environment that encourages a love of music
- learning responsibility through caring for a pet, light chores, etc.

An excellent site to give you more ideas for how to structure your day for young students is [Trivium Pursuit](#).

Of course, there are many more ways to nurture young children, and adding more activities to your child’s schedule is fine as long as you still have time for those essentials listed above. As parents, it is our job to protect our family time and create an environment where meaningful learning

opportunities and relationships can flourish. How you balance your family's time now will greatly affect the habits of your children as they mature. A busy, crowded family life that involves the constant packing up and movement of tired, reluctant children is not balanced homeschooling.

Furthermore, not only do young children need free time—older children should likewise have plenty of time to contemplate. If you do not have long blocks of time at home to read, rest, or take a walk, then we urge you to reevaluate your family's priorities. Please choose your children's activities wisely, and make sure that you do not fall prey to modern society's idea of what children need. They don't "need it all", nor is it healthy for them to have or expect it all. The mottoes "less is more" or "much, not many" can apply to all areas of our lives. It is key to cherish this time at home with our younger children; they mature so quickly and their academic requirements in high school place so many more constraints on time and energy. Those of us with children in high school look back and realize how precious that freedom was just to have joy as a family.

A Comparison of Upper School Curricula

In order to develop the skills of Latin, Logic and Rhetoric, the Classical Cottage School Upper School curriculum has three core strands, five and six years in length. The question to ask of a classical program is how well their diligent students are learning and applying these core skills. It is these core skills, rather than a simple exposure to classical subjects, that distinguishes the classical approach from the American methods of the past 50+ years.

Latin

Advanced achievement in Latin cuts in half the efforts for other studies such as modern languages, A.P. (Advanced Placement) Government, ancient history, and A.P. English Literature, to name the more common applications for high school coursework. As proof of their achievements, our Latin students of every level have done phenomenally well in a wide variety of competitions. An astonishingly high percentage of our students excel each year at individual competitions such as: the National Latin Exam; the National Mythology Exam; the Medusa Mythology exam; The National Etymology Exam and the Classical Association of Virginia exam. Those successes — in addition to our students' consistently high achievements at group academic competitions such as: the Virginia Junior Classical League (VJCL) annual convention; the National Junior Classical League (NJCL) annual convention and VJCL certamen (a Latin team competition) — have led to Classical Cottage School's excellent reputation at the state and national levels. How can that be explained other than by excellence of teaching and of method, particularly when our students meet with their teachers only once a week? It also illuminates why our requirement is that a parent join their student in learning Latin throughout at least Latin III. The parent is able to intelligently continue the daily instruction well delineated in the syllabus. Our mothers (and some fathers) master Latin along with their child and that informed effort propels our students to the success they enjoy within the walls of CCS and outside among state and national Latin scholars.

Logic

A classical education revolves around words. The Aristotelian logic that we use involves the four most basic verbal communication arts: reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Modern logic has abandoned this methodology, replacing word-driven logic with a mathematically-based, symbolic approach. The abstractness of an emphasis on symbolic logic makes it far too challenging for a parent without a heavy math/science background to teach successfully—yet the biggest problem is that such an approach leaves one wondering how this type of logic applies to daily life. The tool of

verbal logic, the basis of advanced discourse, is therefore never fully developed. Through extensive research and consultation with other schools, we chose the Martin Cothran formal logic texts and the *Socratic Logic* text by Peter Kreeft because of their thorough and accessible presentations of verbal formal and material logic. Student comprehension and achievement have been excellent in our two-year Logic course and there is no need for parental involvement for students who are ready for this stage of learning. Logic centered in verbal discourse is the tool our children most need; the ability to read an essay, hear a speech or engage in a discussion and evaluate the structure and soundness of the ideas presented is this essential tool that most children never develop. From the idea of His Son as the Word of God to our created image, the word is foundational to our being and what He intends for us to be. A true classical education seeks to lay that foundation by carefully developing the tool of verbal logic.

Progymnasmata/Writing

We believe that the best way to develop higher order skills is to focus on the skills systematically, using the classical method. That is why we have a two-year Progymnasmata classical writing curriculum (far and away the best writing curriculum our writing teacher, who has specialized in teaching writing for over 35 years, has seen) to carefully build writing skills through twelve different genres of writing. Not only do the tools students gain from this study enable them to write well, they also take students' reading comprehension to a new level and advance a deep awareness of how language works. These skills are reinforced and developed by the six-year Omnibus writing component and the Rhetoric class. Such an emphasis on the skills of writing is unique and not limited to a liberal arts education, but certainly foundational to one. We think it is essential to fully develop a student's ability to understand, conceive and express ideas.

Omnibus/Literature & History

Our Omnibus literature is presented chronologically and in historical context, with focus on a manageable number of seminal works at length each year to develop ever deepening understanding and appreciation for the best and most noble ideas of Western civilization. The Paideia discussion method used in Omnibus (as well as in several of our Upper School courses) was developed in the early 1900's by the Great Books Program at the University of Chicago and models inductive thinking and skills of analytical discourse—and the students enjoy it immensely, despite the rigor!

While memorizing historical facts is a necessary part of understanding the complex puzzle that is history, ever deepening study of the chronology of cultures and ideas is the way for those facts to be meaningful. That's why we have arranged Upper School courses that pertain to the history of Western Civilization (Omnibus, World History, European History, Art History, and Philosophy) to be loosely synchronized so students can discuss and compare these ideas thoroughly in their proper context. The professionals who teach these courses are specialists who love their field enough to continue to research and teach it for many decades. Students are blessed by learning from such motivating and effective teachers.

An important consideration for college bound students is the need for objective validation of achievement. Colleges value such measurements as SAT subject tests and Advanced Placement exams as a demonstration of educational rigor and will often award advanced standing or college credit for high scores. Classical Cottage School students have achieved top grades in a variety of Advanced Placement exams. Courses such as Omnibus, Rhetoric, European History, Art History,

American History, Latin Literature and U.S. Government provide a solid foundation from which students can prepare for A.P. exams and we highly recommend the positive effects such efforts engender.

Rhetoric

Rhetoric is the art and science of persuasion; this can be interpreted from the standpoint of the speaker/writer or from the perspective of the audience. Few of us have had much exposure to rhetoric, and it is certainly not a field that is developed by anything short of a full classical method, yet it is an essential part of understanding the world around us and how to affect it. Rhetoric should be the culmination of the writing/logic strand, blending these carefully trained skills into a powerful tool of expression and analysis. Classical Cottage School uses Edward Corbett's edition of Aristotle's *Rhetoric and Poetics*. Both Corbett and Aristotle are the esteemed masters of this field. Those who haven't had the prerequisite Progymnasmata I & II and Logic I & II courses would simply be overwhelmed and lost by the technical nature of this class; however, those who've been given the gift of acquiring the tools of rhetoric will never read, write, or present a speech in the same way again.

Not to be underestimated, such a solid critical foundation of these three core strands enables our students to launch into advanced collegiate coursework and branch into various interests of study beyond the western canon, some choosing more varied cultural histories of study while others delve deeply into sciences, meeting great success with such strong academic training and sharp inquisitive minds.

Math and Science

In our opinion, a one-hour-per-week math class with students checking their own work is not sufficient. Many groups have tried that; even with an experienced math teacher, limited success is the norm using that time-restricted format. Classical Cottage School decided to add a second day of instruction on Fridays for high school students to make possible a two-hour class format. This allows teachers to double critical lecture and question time for math skill development and gives students the benefit of extended models of problem-solving. Coupled with accountability through weekly quizzes and tests, this format focuses on an understanding of math concepts, thereby enhancing long term achievement. In line with our recognition of the benefits students receive from advanced studies, we offer a four-year math sequence that uses these techniques to structure for success: Algebra I, Geometry, Algebra II, Pre-Calculus/Trigonometry. This particular math progression will enable high school freshmen and sophomores to prepare for the PSAT and SAT math tests, which focus on Algebra I and Geometry.

For its first nine years, Classical Cottage School offered no science courses for the Upper School; the reasons involved both a concern for quality and the limited number of class slots in one school day. Doing the liberal arts classes well rather than trying to cover all the high school subjects with lesser quality was a priority in our initial years. Additionally, a high school level science class should include laboratory work, which entails an extended class period. When the decision was made to offer a second day of classes on Fridays to our schedule, we began to offer a series of high school level science courses: Biology, Anatomy & Physiology, Chemistry and Physics. Taught by experienced science teachers, this option serves an important need for students planning to apply to a four-year college. Many four-year colleges expect students to take at least one SAT subject test to demonstrate achievement in a science. Biology is the course of the four that we

would most recommend for SAT subject test purposes; however, the Chemistry and Physics course curricula are also tailored to that goal.

For details on all high school level courses, please see the Projected Four Year Sequence file for individual planning purposes as most courses are offered on alternating years. We make every effort to adhere to that document so that families can make long-term plans for middle and high school aged students.

Remember: *Multum, non Multa*

As longtime homeschoolers, we've seen precious few families persist with homeschooling through the high school years. One major reason is burnout; certain curricula and methods, for example Susan Wise Bauer's very popular *The Well-Trained Mind*, may lead families to think they need to cover all the bases and cram in as much as possible. The other reason is the challenge of teaching at the high school level. That's why we have experienced teachers who have been respected, even highly recognized, specialists in their fields many, many years and are committed to applying the classical model.

While the majority of students at the Classical Cottage School achieve at levels beyond their years, the number one reason that Upper School students fail to succeed in our program is over commitment; students lack the focused time necessary to work on these skills. Our Upper School core classes are not electives but require a student's full effort and attention. That is why every year we stand before our families at the Orientation meeting and exhort them not to take on too many additional outside courses and activities. We urge you not to miss out on the joys of homeschooling and the benefits of classical learning by cramming your schedules so full of "good" things that you miss out on God's "best" for your family.

Our hope is that you will make prayerful decisions for your family based on an informed understanding of the inherent differences in method and quality among the many options available to homeschoolers today. It is hard to understand the long-term ramifications when one is first entering the field; look very carefully at upper level materials in particular. Do the detailed course descriptions sound well designed? Have you talked to parents of high school students to see the long term results? A program purporting to be a classical program may just be "a mile wide and an inch deep" in that it neglects careful skill development, and therefore falls far short of the educational results you're hoping to have for your children.

At the Classical Cottage School, we provide master teachers in the Upper School who spend countless hours weekly deepening their own considerable skills and preparing for class in order to make the most of that weekly hour of instruction. We adhere to a program of classical skill development, skills few American adults were able to learn in our subject-saturated education—and therefore few understand. Mastery of these core skills equips our children to understand the world of ideas. Not only are children thus equipped to appreciate the noblest ideas that Western civilization has developed, they are also armed to defend their faith and freedom in a culture that attacks them with ideas and words that are contrary to God's Word. May God richly bless you as you train up these precious gifts from Him!