

ASSOCIATION of
CLASSICAL  CHRISTIAN
SCHOOLS

MEMBERSHIP HANDBOOK

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WHAT IS THE ACCS MISSION?

The Association of Classical Christian Schools was founded in 1994 with the promise and hope that education can offer so much more than a career, or technical skills, or even literacy—rather, it cultivates *paideia* in children. This ancient idea of education is summed up by G.K. Chesterton: **“Education is not a subject, and does not deal in subjects. It is instead a transfer of a way of life.”** Such a transfer requires a community, united around the task of passing on a way of life. We want a Christian way of life to be restored within our Christian communities. This powerful vision is why so many have realized that Classical Christian schools are like a “pearl of great price” in education — greatly valued for those who understand its potential, but largely unrecognized by those who do not.

We promote, establish, and equip schools committed to a classical approach to education in the light of a Christian worldview grounded in the Old and New Testament Scriptures. We promote the classical approach and provide accountability for member schools to ensure that our cultural heritage is not lost again. Through these various means, ACCS seeks to set an educational standard for a unified and directed approach to classical and Christian learning.

Meet your 2026 ACCS Staff

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY “CHRISTIAN?”

ACCs STATEMENT OF FAITH

We believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth; and in Jesus Christ His only Son, our Lord. Jesus Christ was conceived by the Holy Spirit, and was born of a virgin, Mary. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended into Hades, and on the third day He rose again from the dead. He ascended into Heaven, where He sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From Heaven He shall come to earth again to judge the living and the dead. We believe in the Holy Spirit, one holy catholic church, the communion of all true saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the gift of everlasting life. (*Apostle’s Creed*)

- We believe that God reveals Himself through the creation, preservation, and government of the universe. We believe that God makes Himself more clearly and fully known through the Scriptures, which are the only inerrant and infallible Word of God, our ultimate and final authoritative rule for faith and practice. These Scriptures are made up of 66 books, from Genesis to Revelation, the authority of which depend not upon the testimony of any man or church, and are all to be received as the Word of God.
- We believe that there is but one living and true God, eternally existent in three Persons of one power, substance, and eternity—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. He is perfectly wise, the overflowing fountain of all good. He is omnipotent, omnipresent, and omniscient. In all things He is limited by nothing other than His own nature and character. We believe the God we serve is holy, righteous,



good, loving, and full of mercy. He is the Creator, Sustainer, and Governor of all that has been made.

- We believe in the true deity and full humanity of our Lord Jesus Christ, such that two distinct natures, divine and human, were inseparably joined together in one person, without conversion, composition, or confusion. We believe in His virgin birth, in His sinless life, in His miracles, in His vicarious and atoning death through His shed blood, in His bodily resurrection, in His ascension to the right hand of the Father and in His personal return in power and glory.
- We believe that Adam was made from the dust of the ground and formed after God's image and likeness, which was good, righteous, and holy. Because of Adam's sin all mankind is in a state of rebellion against God. For the salvation of such lost and sinful men, regeneration by the Holy Spirit is absolutely necessary.
- We believe that salvation is by grace through faith alone, and that faith without works is dead. We believe that God freely justifies His own, not by infusing righteousness into them, but by pardoning their sins, and by accounting and accepting their persons as righteous, for the sake of Jesus Christ alone.
- We believe in the present ministry of the Holy Spirit, by whose indwelling the Christian is enabled to live a godly life, as the Spirit of Christ within us enables us to do freely and cheerfully what the will of God revealed in Scripture requires to be done. We believe that good works are only those which arise from true faith, conform to God's Word, and are done for His glory.
- We believe God has appointed a day when He will judge the world in righteousness through Jesus Christ. We believe in the resurrection of both the saved and the lost; those who are saved to the resurrection of life, and those who are lost to the resurrection of damnation.
- We believe in the spiritual unity of all believers in our Lord Jesus Christ. All who are united to Christ as Head of the Church are united to one another in love, and have communion in each other's gifts and graces.
- We believe that God defined marriage as the life-long covenant between one man and one woman, that it is the only proper basis for sexual activity, and that it is the ideal forum for raising children.
- We believe that God, in creating each person in His image, made each person immutably either male or female, a distinction that is a blessing from God to be embraced.

We welcome members who hold to traditional, conservative Christian orthodoxy and our statement of faith (above). Our board reserves the right to remove members who are openly, in our sole judgement, opposed to the above statement. We also welcome members to adopt this statement of faith for their organization, if they wish.



OUR AUTHORITY

Our schools operate as an extension of the family, under the authority of fathers who are required to raise their children in the fear and admonition of the Lord (Deuteronomy 6 and Ephesians 6). Some of our schools operate under the authority structure of a church, and therefore these schools have extended authority in the area of family and community. The authority vested by God in the church is not a matter that we address within this document. However, we maintain that the authority granted to fathers and mothers in Scripture is passed to the school *in loco parentis*.

This means that, for the development of *paideia* in students while at school, the school operates with the same authority that fathers have in the raising of children. Our position on authority influences our view of government and its role in education.

We expect that many schools will have more particular practices and policies regarding faith. Those listed here should be considered minimum standards.

ACCS POSITION STATEMENTS

[ACCS Statement on Ethnic Harmony \(PDF\)](#)

[ACCS Statement on Viewpoint Diversity \(PDF\)](#)

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY “CLASSICAL CHRISTIAN” SCHOOL?

“Classical Christian,” as used by the ACCS, refers to the specific form of education practiced at our member schools. We capitalize our use of the term because, as a single compound phrase, we use it to refer specifically to the form we describe in our definition. We do not use ‘classical’ as a description, but rather a name. The ACCS sometimes abbreviates “Classical Christian” to CC in its documents. We acknowledge that similar terms are in use within the movement such as “classical and Christian” or “Christian classical” which use “classical” as a descriptor, and therefore these uses are not capitalized.

Many educators view school as a mechanism that delivers content using an educational method. This results in the mistaken belief that “Classical Christian education” (CCE) simply means that the content is classical and the methodology is more traditional. CCE has deep footings that are distinct from modern schools, and even different from liberal arts or classical schools founded after the Enlightenment. There is no single recipe or formula for Classical Christian education. It is a way of educating children that developed in the Middle Ages as an outworking of classical Greco-Roman thought and Christianity. It flourished in the Reformation and thus has a rich and varied form. It starts with a different purpose and ends with different results than conventional education.

A promise of this scale and magnitude necessitates that we are careful to implement the form faithfully.



WHAT IS OUR OBJECTIVE?

Before the mid-eighteenth century, Christian *paideia* was the purpose of nearly all Western education. This was based, in part, on Ephesians 6 that commands fathers to raise their children in “the *Παιδεία* (*paideia*) of the Lord.” It seeks an inner transformation of the student. It cultivates the students’ habits of thought and action in order to view the world with certain foundational truths and thereby align their desires with God’s ideal. Classical Christian education’s objective, then, is to shape the virtues and reason so that they will be in line with God’s will. In other words, our objective is to cultivate a Christian *paideia* in students.

College preparation is not an end in itself, but can often result because most colleges are built on a Western model that reveres language and reasoning. CCE graduates are eager to learn and have excellent faculties in language and reasoning. Thus, college is a natural outworking of CCE. But, the chief end of education is to prepare students to worship and glorify God.

WHAT IS OUR COURSE OF STUDY?

We begin with the unity of all truth around one prime truth—the personal and sovereign Lordship of Jesus Christ over everything. From this, we study all of history and nature (science) as His workmanship. We interact with the greatest works of His fallen image bearer (man), both good and bad. We study divinely ordered patterns of truth, goodness, and beauty, and apply them in our interactions with the natural world and with human culture, including great literature, music, philosophy, theology, and art.

We pursue language, both in the study of rhetoric and poetry, and in the study of Greek and/or Latin as the classical instruments through which God chose to bring up His church. Words convey truth, chasten goodness, and express beauty; thus language bears fruit for those who are masters of it. And, the mastery of language brings light to God’s revealed and infallible Word, from which all truth emanates, and it links us to each other.

God’s Word is our prime lens used to appraise all things, with a disciplined reason that unifies the faith of students and their worldview. Put together, this universal education cultivates virtue in students, which should be lived out in their lives as their affections are cultivated and disciplined by their immersion in truth, goodness, and beauty so that they may desire God and His ways.

WHAT ARE OUR METHODS?

- **The Trivium & Quadrivium:** These three arts of the Trivium—grammar, logic, and rhetoric—are the Western tradition for learning and language study. Combined with the four arts of the Quadrivium (arithmetic, geometry, music, and astronomy), we aim to teach according to the liberal arts tradition. Different arts of the trivium received special emphasis or hierarchy throughout history. Today many classical schools organize their grade levels in such a way as to prioritize and focus on one of the liberal arts. Some schools, for example, tend to follow the insights proposed by Dorothy Sayers in her essay, “The Lost Tools of Learning,” where greater attention is given to that liberal art that most appropriately fits with the development of the child (i.e. grammar in grades K-6, logic in grades 7-9, and rhetoric as the capstone in grades 9-12). Such an arrangement is not meant to undermine the importance of any other art but only to capitalize on the way children naturally mature.



- **Integration of content:** Integration reveals the unity of God’s world, so CCE schools value integration of content like history, literature, science, math, composition, language, etc. Some CCE schools teach multiple subjects in the same class to create a unity of understanding. Others integrate in a more conventional classroom organized by discipline or subject. Francis Schaeffer once stated, “We tend to study all our disciplines in unrelated parallel lines. This tends to be true in both Christian and secular education. This is one of the reasons why evangelical Christians have been taken by surprise at the tremendous shift that has come in our generation.”
- **Imitation and practice:** We teach many skills and habits as they form in students during their school years. First we teach habits as a form, then through imitation, and then through repeated practice toward mastery.
- **Recitation:** Memory work such as great oratory, poetry, and virtue sayings are trained through recitation in grammar school and beyond. These advance student’s vocabulary and aesthetic, and embed virtuous ideas.
- **Socratic discussion:** We train students in the art of reason and argument through dialogue (often around a table). We challenge ideas and work from the greatest literary sources. In this, we train students to submit to, internalize, harmonize, align with, and accept God’s truth—not individual, subjective “truths.”
- **Focus:** Classical Christian education was not dismissed, it was pushed out. When good coursework or methods are substituted, it replaces great coursework and classical methods, and competes for the focus of the students. Classical schools focus students on learning fewer things well.

WHAT IS OUR CONTENT?

We study our physical universe, and then reach beyond it into transcendent truth about the Creator through philosophy and theology. Rather than viewing subjects as an end in themselves, we approach all learning with a love of wisdom (philosophy) and the love and study of God (theology), and we live these loves before students.

- **Scripture:** The Bible is not limited to a Bible class, but is integrated into all subjects as a tool to be memorized, studied, and understood. We view the Bible as God-breathed and inerrant. It is also literature and interpreted as such.
- **Seven virtues:** We begin with the seven virtues (Justice, Prudence, Temperance, Fortitude, Faith, Hope, and Love) that should mark a Christian community. To these, we add the many virtues taught in history and the Scriptures. We do this through story, habit, recitation, and community standards.
- **Foundational skills:** Handwriting, grammar, spelling, and math skills are practiced and mastered.
- **Latin & Greek:** We study Latin as the language of the church and theology, and some schools study Greek as the language of Scripture and early Western texts. Knowledge of these languages is necessary for students to enter the thinking of the classical and early church era. Inflected



language, like Latin or Greek, opens the mind to an incomparable way of thinking, thus opening new depth in the student's *paideia*. Some study Hebrew or European languages in addition to these, for the academic study of original texts. Other modern languages, when studied at Classical Christian schools, are pursued for other valuable, but secondary purposes.

- **Persuasive writing & thesis:** We base our writing and speaking in the ancient Greek and Roman training in rhetoric. Rhetoric is the art of persuasion, not to be confused with speech, debate, composition, or any other subcomponents of it. The defense of at least one rhetorical thesis before graduation typically completes the K-12 classical experience. (Depending on the school, sources may include the progymnasmata, the five canons of rhetoric as described in Cicero's *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, and Aristotle's *On Rhetoric*.)
- **Great children's books:** Grammar school students read higher, excellent literature, mainly from the mid-nineteenth to mid-twentieth centuries. We use the complete, unabridged, and original languages (or the most poetic and accurate translations) of these texts wherever possible.
- **Great Books:** The Western canon from Homer to C.S. Lewis, read as close to the original as possible, is the core of our secondary education. *Ad fontes* ("to the source") is a principle in CCE that values original sources over knowledge digested from textbooks. We encounter each work of art as an expression of some truth, goodness, and beauty. We evaluate each work in light of Christian truth.
- **Great art, music, literature:** You become what you behold. Consistent exposure to the greatness of Western culture (and some others) has a profound impact on the *paideia* of a school. Regular exposure to and appreciation of great music and art in the classroom helps develop the student's aesthetic sensibility. Classical and sacred music are emphasized. Other, more recent forms, like jazz, may also be studied.
- **Logic, science, and math:** The second art of the Trivium, logic, is also a core subject, typically taught in middle school. It is a bridge between language and subjects like math, philosophy, and science. Science is the study of God's revelation in the natural world. Math reflects the language of God's order in creation.
- **History:** We immerse students in the whole sweep of Western history, integrated with biblical and Christian history, from a young age. We emphasize human history and culture, not just geopolitical information. Integration with literature helps achieve this goal at some schools. C.S. Lewis noted, "The scholar has lived in many times and is therefore in some degree immune from the great cataract of nonsense that pours from the press and microphone of his own age."

WHAT ENVIRONMENT DO WE PROMOTE WITHIN OUR SCHOOLS?

- **Marked by the gospel:** We cultivate Christian *paideia* in an environment characterized by the grace of the gospel—at school and at home. First-century Greeks cultivated *paideia*, typically, through unforgiving schoolmasters who were about the business of bending the student into a virtuous person. Christian *paideia* is not brought to a student in this external way. Rather, we cultivate it through a lived-out gospel in the classroom. This means that the gospel applies to who



we are and every aspect of life under His authority.

"I am much afraid that schools will prove to be the great gates of hell unless they diligently labor in explaining the Holy Scriptures, engraving them in the hearts of youth." – Martin Luther

- **A Christian community of learners:** Rather than the posture of teachers as completed experts and students as absorbers of the teacher's words, Classical Christian schools have a hierarchy of learning. The teachers are clearly researching and studying the great works as they disciple the students. Older students promote the pursuit of learning among younger students.
- **Immersion and cultivation in the aesthetic arts:** Beauty is in the eye of God, not the beholder. Our students practice and appreciate the arts, music, and poetry, which shape the soul to love higher things. While they do study some more recent works, these are often crafted with "expression of the artist" as ultimate, and are therefore often less beautiful. We use radiance, harmony, and integrity as measures of art.
- **A beautiful and purposeful environment:** CCE schools convey this artistic distinction as we decorate our facilities and train students. Rather than functionality, we center the school environment on beauty and purpose. Classroom décor pulls children up rather than appealing to a base desire for sensation and entertainment.
- **Joyful rigor:** Few worthwhile things come easily. We impart a work ethic that promotes joy as children accomplish great things, *solī Deo gloria*. Rigor, as we define it, is sustained attention to a worthwhile pursuit.
- **God's authority:** Classical Christian schools model a world based on God's authority. Authority flows from God and His word to churches, fathers, mothers, and the government, as God ordained it. And by extension, it flows to teachers and the school. Rather than insist on outward rule-compliance, we cultivate virtue through confession, repentance, and loving restoration within our Christian communities. This approach stands in contrast to conventional government schools where a post-modern undertone of personal truth, "expressive individualism," and anti-Christian ideologies inform the culture of the school.

TEACHERS AT CLASSICAL CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS

A good teacher is first a Christian, then a scholar, then a teacher. We use the term "scholar" here in the old sense of the word, not in reference to formal collegiate degrees. Some have formal academic degrees in traditional scholarly fields. Others gained their scholarship informally. The student will become like the master. If we desire to produce scholars who seek to learn, and love to understand, and work in the realm of ideas (philosophy), we must have teachers who do so. Those who teach artistry in some form must be masters of their craft, if they are to train masters. Specialized training in teaching, while valuable, is of secondary importance. Teaching is a spiritual gift and should be recognized as such.

Teachers of young students (K-6) are nurturers, but should also be scholars and learners. The level of scholarship required for the teacher increases in the secondary.



UPHOLD THE WESTERN CLASSICAL TRADITION

“So then, brothers, stand firm and hold to the traditions that you were taught.” – 2 Thessalonians 2:15

Our students love to learn. From the beginning, the ACCS has been engaging our world. We study all things, using scripture as an interpretive lens. Music, art, entertainment, culture, history, science, and much more is within our scope. We “pillage the Egyptians,” in the words of Augustine, by reclaiming all earthly treasures in subjection to Christ. We promote learning that is Christ centered, but not isolated from the world and the culture around us. Ultimately, this approach led to the position Christianity once had in culture.

ASSESSMENT AT CLASSICAL CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS

Our goal is to assess humanely, not mechanically. Our assessment recognizes that ideas, understanding, and thought are more important than mere information. Christian virtue lived out is also recognized. For example, hard work and submission are weighed in assessing a student—not just mastery—in accordance with the parable of the talents. Traditional grades, however, are a measure to communicate mastery to outside entities. We respect the integrity of academic performance in grading.

Persuasive speaking and writing are supported in various ways, including oral testing, discussion rubrics, 1:1 engagements, and presentations.

GRADUATES OF CLASSICAL CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS

The graduate of a Classical Christian school should be marked by a noticeable refinement of manner and intellect. He will be first and foremost committed to his Christian purpose in life, and will love and live the Christian virtues. He will be competent in language, mathematics, natural philosophy (science), philosophy, and theology, and he will be prepared and interested in studying them further. He will think well, with Christian presuppositions in all areas of his life. He will be wise and full of humility. He will love to learn and will seek to learn throughout his life.

“The end then of learning is to repair the ruins of our first parents by regaining to know God aright, and out of that knowledge to love him, to imitate him, to be like him, as we may the nearest by possessing our souls of true virtue, which being united to the heavenly grace of faith makes up the highest perfection.” – John Milton

INTERACTING WITH OUR CULTURE

When our efforts intersect with those of the world around us, we ask our member schools to have a Christian response.

ACCEPTING MONEY FROM THE GOVERNMENT

According to the American First Policy Institute, “there are 75 School Choice programs in 34 states, with 18 states offering Educational Savings Accounts (ESAs).” More growth in these programs is expected. While ACCS once prohibited schools from accepting voucher funds, the significant increase in school choice programs has led ACCS to revise its guidelines for member and accredited schools, allowing schools to receive these funds.



Schools may accept funds provided the school is not required nor voluntarily elects to sign an agreement with the government or an outside organization to access the funding if that agreement creates a future obligation, or, if by statute, accessing the fund binds the school to future obligations by the state or another agency besides the ACCS. Generally speaking, government funding comes with increased requirements (e.g., standardized testing) and greater dependence on states continually funding these programs on an annual basis.

While ACCS is thankful that ESAs make private school tuition more affordable, we view state funding of tuition as both an opportunity and a potential threat. We are concerned that these funding programs may function as a modern Trojan horse. To ensure long-term stability, schools must take measures to mitigate the potential loss of these funds. However, schools may accept government funds under terms and conditions that do not adversely affect the school's mission or its compliance with the principles in this document. Schools are therefore encouraged to prepare contingency plans for responding to the loss of government funds, such as establishing a reserve fund.

Member schools should recognize that relying on any significant proportion of their operating revenue from a single source, whether a generous private donor or money from the government through vouchers, tuition tax credits, or similar programs, likely creates such a dependence that a significant hardship would be created if the school were ever disqualified for eligibility.

AFFIRMING THE BIBLICAL VISION OF THE FAMILY AND SEXUAL IDENTITY

A Classical Christian school is a Christian community that encompasses students and their immediate families as integral parts. To establish and maintain that nature, a school will affirm and seek to live out the biblical model of the family, according to which marriage is a life-long covenant between one man and one woman and is the only proper basis for sexual activity. The community cannot do this when individuals within it publicly reject the truth of the biblical model, whether by speech or by participating in alternative family structures that publicly and visibly contradict the biblical model (e.g. polyamorous and homosexual unions). Likewise, a Christian school community will affirm and seek to live out the biblical truth that each person's biological sex is an immutable gift from God, to be embraced.

Accordingly, we expect member schools to adopt and follow the following policies:

- Member schools may not explicitly endorse unbiblical family structures or gender identities that are at odds with biological sex.
- Member schools may not employ individuals who openly participate in unbiblical family structures, adopt a gender identity at odds with their biological sex, or otherwise reject the biblical view of the family and sexual identity.
- Member schools may not enroll students who, within the school community, openly reject, by speech or conduct, the biblical view of the family and sexual identity or have themselves adopted a gender identity at odds with their biological sex. Likewise, member schools may not **enroll students from households** whose structure publicly contradicts the biblical model of the family or that, within the school community, openly reject, by speech or conduct, the biblical view of the family and sexual identity.



We expect both open enrollment schools (those for whom the family's Christian faith is not a requirement for admission) and schools that accept only children of believers to adopt and follow these policies. Open enrollment schools, of course, do not expect students' families to abide by every principle of Christian living. But they still must be able to create a community that lives consistently with Christian values, as part of providing a comprehensively Christian education as described above. The presence of individuals who publicly and visibly reject, whether by speech or conduct, Christian teaching on the family and sexual identity subverts a school's ability to be and provide such a community.

We ask that member schools consider the implications of open enrollment. The decision may have legal ramifications in the future.

Common Questions about the ACCS

OUR MEMBERS

Our member schools range from startup schools to established schools with over 1,000 students. We have over 500 member schools representing over 68,000 students. All ACCS members are strongly committed to traditional biblical Christianity.

- We have members in 48 U.S. states and Canada, with a growing number of international members.
- Most are traditional in their school day and programs. Some have limited day-length or meet fewer than five days per week. A few offer online programs or are online schools.
- Some member schools serve only Christian families. Others serve a community of believers and non-believers. Many of our members have connections to the Reformed tradition (Lutheran, Presbyterian, Dutch Reformed, or other Calvinistic denominations). Many others are affiliated with non-Reformed churches or have no specific church affiliation.
- While we believe ACCS accreditation is the best choice for Classical Christian schools, because of unique local circumstances, some of our members are accredited by regional or other religious accrediting organizations.

The ACCS is an evangelical Christian organization without denominational affiliation. In addition to schools, we also welcome individuals, families, homeschools, colleges, and businesses as affiliates who wish to identify with the ACCS and learn more about Classical Christian education. We do not represent non-Christian schools (charters, magnets, independents, etc.), though they are welcome to attend our conferences and access our public resources. Only schools or school startup groups can be voting members of the ACCS.

WHAT IS THE MEANING of MEMBERSHIP?

ACCS has supported our members for 30 years, providing them with a foundation built on the classical tradition, while they act as the architects to create a local Christian culture. Building culture starts with



excellent teachers, board members committed to the vision, and invested parents and community. ACCS offers resources, wisdom, and partnership for these vital members of your team. While many schools can benefit from knowing how to run a good budget, learning how to structure their tuition increases, or knowing how to conduct more efficient faculty meetings, these are all procedural measures of success. The real substance of success is *paideia*. ACCS schools learn to form *paideia* by pursuing Christ and His Kingdom, by preserving a classical tradition, and through our standards of excellence in the classroom.

We know the hard work your school is doing, beyond even the work of developing hiring procedures or crafting an annual budget: Your school is partaking in the work of soul-formation known as *paideia*. ACCS is your school’s partner in that lasting work.

WHO CAN JOIN?

MEMBER QUALIFICATIONS

Classical Christian Schools within the US and Canada that are organized to serve students in some combination of grades K-12 may join the ACCS if they meet the membership qualifications (see the Membership Qualification Checklist below). Member schools may serve fewer grades (for example K-6). However, members are encouraged to have a plan for their students to attend all K-12 grades in a Classical Christian school in some manner. The school may be organized as privately held, or as a for-profit or non-profit corporation. Startup groups may become members as well.

We have the following membership types:

MEMBERSHIP CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION
Accredited Members	Full members who have gone through the ACCS accreditation process. We encourage all of our Full Member schools to pursue the ACCS Accreditation experience. For more information about ACCS accreditation, please contact the ACCS Director of Accreditation. Find more here: classicalchristian.org/accreditation .
Full Members	Traditional day schools in the US or Canada that conform to our membership requirements. Included in this category are “nontraditional schools” or Collaborative Schools where students are scheduled to meet fewer than 5 full days per week, whether in physical classrooms or online. If grades 9-12 are offered, the school must offer diplomas (or the equivalent in states that do not allow non-accredited schools to offer diplomas). Nontraditional schools are committed to serving more than one or a few families, are composed of either physical or online classrooms, and have teachers (not facilitators) who set the pace of instruction.



Startup Members	Startup membership is available to schools in their first two years and is open to first-time members. At the time of their first renewal, a school may remain at the Startup level for one additional year if they are still in their inaugural phase. Once a school opens its doors, it moves to Full membership for renewal, and standard membership rates apply.
International School Members	<p>Classical Christian schools geographically located outside of the U.S. and Canada that are organized to serve some combination K-12 (or equivalent ages), presently or at some point in the future, may join as International School Members if they meet the requirements in this document as school members.</p> <p>If someone from your school would like to form an ICCA branch in your country with like-minded schools, please visit the ICCA page to inform us. We would love to talk with you about this opportunity for Classical Christian education in your country.</p>
Transitional Members	Transitional members are schools that previously operated under another educational model and are committed to make a transition to Classical Christian education within 5 years, but do not yet meet current ACCS membership requirements. These members pay dues and receive all member services, but do not comply with our member standards. They are labeled as “transitional” in our school-finder directory, have 5 years to meet our requirements, and their voting rights are suspended until they comply with member requirements.
Homeschool Co-ops	A collaborative educational arrangement where families who homeschool their children come together on one or more days to share some of the responsibilities of teaching a mutually agreed curriculum. They are committed to serving more than one or a few families, are composed of either physical or online classrooms, and have teachers (not facilitators) who set the pace of instruction. Such co-ops seeking ACCS membership maintain academic records and issue transcripts. While they do not need to award diplomas, their academic programs should reflect those required of other member schools.
Business / College Affiliates	Businesses or Colleges that wish to associate with the ACCS to support our work may become Affiliates. Contact the ACCS office for details.

We do not represent non-Christian schools (charters, magnets, independents, etc.), though they are welcome to attend our conferences and access our public resources.

The Association of Classical & Christian Schools (ACCS) does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, and national or ethnic origin, and does not discriminate against ACCS membership or job applicants on the basis of race, color, and national or ethnic origin. Our members may not discriminate on the basis of race, color, and national or ethnic origin.

MEMBERSHIP QUALIFICATION CHECKLIST

These are the Academic and Operational standards ACCS Members Schools follow:

1. Be private and Classical Christian.



2. Not accept government funding sufficient to compromise the Classical Christian mission should the government funding be withdrawn in the future.
3. Operate a school with classrooms (physical or digital) and teachers where students are sent by their parents to be instructed. Nontraditional models such as Collaborative schools or University™ model schools, or online schools qualify.
4. Serve some combination of grades K-12. We do not charge per-student fees for Pre-K.
5. Commit to providing or finding a path to full K-12 Classical Christian education for students. This can include a future plan or a path involving another school. For example, you can qualify if you are K-4 planning to go to K-8, at which time students may transfer to another Classical Christian school in your area serving grades 9-12.
6. Serve more than one family. Homeschool co-ops that offer high school diplomas may qualify as Full members. Generally, co-ops that offer classes, but no comprehensive program, do not qualify.
7. Teach the arts of the Trivium in the academic structure that you provide; also, teach at least two years of Latin or ancient Greek, one year of formal Logic, and one year of Rhetoric in the secondary for each student.
8. Support the work and mission of the ACCS.
9. Agree with the ACCS definition of Classical Christian education and implement it insofar as you have the ability and resources.
10. Agree with our Statement of Faith.
11. Agree to treat other ACCS member schools according to the "golden rule," particularly with regard to recruiting families and staff.
12. Not discriminate on the basis of race, color, or national/ethnic origin.
13. Not affirm unbiblical family relationships.

Also note: We have a “Transitional” membership under which schools that do not need to meet requirements 4 and 7 may become part of ACCS for up to 5 years.

ACCEPTANCE POLICY

ACCS reserves the right, at its own discretion, to accept or reject applicant schools. Schools seeking to renew membership who have changed any of the core commitments listed in the Membership Qualification Checklist will be asked to explain the reasons for the change, and such change may result in non-renewal of membership.

MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS

Our goal is to include all benefits to our members as part of their membership, without additional fees.

ACCS members enjoy the following benefits:



- Affiliation with the largest and most recognized support and advocacy organization for Classical Christian education.
- **Direct care and support** from the ACCS Membership Team.
- Bi-monthly membership email updates (**The Forum**) that contains news, resources, and announcements that are of particular interest to our member schools.
- Qualification for the next step toward excellence with our independent, highly recognized, and uniquely classical [ACCIS Accreditation](#) program.
- Exposure to thousands of parents who use the [ACCIS School Finder](#) to locate Classical Christian schools. We direct over 100,000 visitors per year to member schools through classicalChristian.org's school-finder utility.
- Access to the [ACCIS Job Board](#) to search for qualified teachers, staff, administrators, and college hires who share your school's passion for Classical Christian education. The ACCS actively recruits participants in this exchange through college partnerships and in other ways. We direct around 30,000 people per year to job postings, and we post hundreds of qualified applicants through our job placement service.
- Access to the [ACCIS Training Center](#) – learn about classical philosophy and pedagogy from master teachers and real classroom video footage. Move through the ACCS Teacher Certification levels of *Provisional* (foundational understanding of Classical Christian education), *Practicing* (applied knowledge in a Classical Christian setting), *Master* (expertise and leadership in Classical Christian education), and *Fellow* (the highest level of scholarship and dedication.)
- The ACCS has been at the center of Classical Christian education for decades. Our goal is to share the collective experience of our members and our experts through one web-based tool – the [Member Resource Center \(MRC\)](#). Access to the MRC equips member schools with exclusive tools and an extensive library of documents and resources to build better schools, including:
 - **Conference Talks and Training:** Access to audio/video of previous Repairing the Ruins plenary and breakout sessions
 - **Curriculum & Training:** Access to comprehensive curricula and a library including previous editions of *Classis*
 - **Data & Insights:** Specialized statistical information to guide school leadership to help improve and explain classical Christian education
 - **Operational Tools:** Practical resources and shared documents to streamline administration
 - **Community & Collaboration:** Platforms for networking and peer-to-peer collaboration with other member schools



- **Expert Guidance and Support:** Access to professional consulting services for school health and growth
- **Exclusive Savings for Member Schools:** Discounts on products and services curated specifically for Classical Christian schools
- Access to the [ACCIS Doctorum Training](#). Doctorum is a two year-long program offered through the ACCIS for Head of School certification. This program can provide the pathway to a valuable Administrator Certification and is specifically tailored to meet the unique demands of Classical Christian educators, whether prospective, new, or existing. The program is designed for a Head of School to systematically work through the life cycle of a school year with fellow ACCIS leaders.
- Ten complimentary copies of [The Classical Difference](#), our well received glossy magazine written especially for parents and friends of member schools published twice a year with the option to send the magazine directly to the home of your school's parents at a deeply discounted rate.
- [Classis](#), our academic journal for Classical Christian educators published twice a year. Our academic publication, *Classis*, is a beautifully designed journal established to edify, support, and encourage educators and thought leaders in the Classical Christian movement.
- Connect and grow alongside a vibrant community of other member schools at [Repairing the Ruins](#) (our annual conference) and participate in regional conferences, through online forums, and other sponsored events specifically designed for ACCIS Members.
- Access to national contests for students at ACCIS Member Schools including:
 - [Universal Latin Exam](#)
 - [National Honor Choir](#)
 - [Blakey Prize in Fine Art](#)
 - [Chrysostom Oratory Competition](#)
- Access to **exclusive Members-only discounts** to ACCIS Repairing the Ruins and Regional events
- Collective work to advance the mission, visibility, and renewal of the Classical Christian movement
- Access to additional **ACCIS School Support Services through our in-house consulting firm, [Concordis](#):**
 - [School Launch Services](#): All levels of assistance available — from DIY to Full Service Launch Packages. Our full service launch package includes full consulting and implementation, over 300 videos for training, and all software and service implementation. This takes a school through 12 months of the school launch process. All services are available



- for a continued-services contract at a per-student rate.
- **The Accelerator Program:** A series of consulting sessions to equip you for progress and growth. Ideal for schools that want to start off right.
 - **The Reignite Program:** A 360 degree professional review of your school's finances, curriculum, enrollment processes, teacher hiring processes, scheduling, and tuition policies; plus 10 hours of consulting, mission review, handbook review, and a site visit with an ACCS consultant. Ideal for small schools that have been open 2+ years and in need of a boost.
 - **Transitional School Program:** Consulting sessions that include leadership training, teacher training, parent training, classroom teaching (curriculum, scope and sequence documents, classroom liturgy, classroom discipleship, curriculum discounts), board training (mission & vision review, bylaw review, board policy review) Ideal for schools transitioning to a Classical Christian model.
 - **Board Training & Leadership Unity Services:** Board room observation via Zoom, interview with Head of School, interview with each individual board member, board survey, intervention consulting personalized to school situation (3 meetings), 3 training workshops, agenda template for school needs, board processes documented, board honor code created, and bylaws review. In person observation & training is an option for an additional charge.
 - **Head of School Coaching:** All documentation reviewed with board review team, support plan and training for Head of School, 30 Head of School consulting calls
 - **Emergency Needs Services:** For schools in need of internal crisis assistance, enrollment drop, faculty support, board implosions, Head of School emergencies, scandals, financial emergencies, discipline emergencies, and more.
 - **Student Special Needs Support:** For any school with struggling students, testing and solutions, discipleship plans to help teachers & parents work together, academic benchmark plans, teacher training for working with special needs children, and parent meetings for overcoming behavior struggles.
 - **Full Management Services:** For any established Classical Christian school. All software included: donor software, student management system, board management, budgeting tools, quickbooks and payroll feature, publications software; Full services: bookkeeping and payroll, human resources, publications and development, teacher training, evaluation software, IT support, board training and development; pedagogy: scope and sequence, and curriculum.

HOW DO WE BECOME MEMBERS?

Simply submit a Membership Inquiry (linked below) and complete the Membership Application sent to you. We'll work with you to address any questions, and have you fill out a form to complete your membership



profile! Contact info@accsedu.org if you have any questions.

Click here to request an application: classicalchristian.org/membership-interest/

Unless noted below, membership dues for US and Canadian schools consist of two components: **a fixed amount plus a per-student assessment**. *Please note that the membership pricing structure will change in 2027*. You will see these changes reflected during the 2026 renewal process.

All membership fees are based on a calendar year, but are collected during the renewal period between August 1st and October 1st of the prior year. Membership extends through December 31st of the following year. For example, a school renewing or paying dues on September 1st, 2025 will enjoy member benefits through December 31, 2026. Since schools normally work on academic years, this practice provides academic year membership coverage, *plus* one semester of the following calendar year. Membership dues are nonrefundable.

Late renewal extends through December 31st. Schools that fail to pay their association dues before December 31st will have a lapsed membership until they pay. Lapsed membership results in a date of membership reset and a new customized dues schedule.

MEMBERSHIP CATEGORY	MEMBERSHIP CYCLE	DUES
Startup School	Yearly; based on calendar year	First year, Reduced Flat Fee, then calculated upon renewal as a Member School (\$500 - Includes the ACCS Launch Kit); if an additional Startup year is desired the fee increases to \$700 ; limited to two years
New Members / Renewing Members (Traditional and Collaborative Models)	Yearly; based on calendar year; dues are prorated for new member schools joining midyear (see below)	Calculated upon renewal; Base Fee of \$340 +\$9 per full-time K-12 student (Traditional Model students) OR +\$5 per K-12 student (Collaborative Model students)
International Members	Yearly; not prorated	Reduced Annual Flat Fee (\$190)
Affiliates / Business / College / Individuals	Yearly; not prorated	Varies on type of entity joining



TRADITIONAL MODEL SCHOOLS

For renewal, a “full-time student” is any student who is on track to graduate with a diploma from the school. If the school does not offer diplomas (for example, it is K-6), then a full time student is any student who attends class for the normally allotted time considered “full-time” by the school. This definition covers both in-person and online schools.

Pre-K students are not assessed (no dues are collected for these students). K 3-year olds and K 4-year olds in a school with a separate K5 grade level are considered Pre-K. If the school has an integrated K program (including 3’s, 4’s, and 5’s in the same classroom), then all of these students are included in the K-12 count.

COLLABORATIVE MODEL SCHOOLS

A Collaborative Model school (non-traditionally scheduled school) has students attending **fewer than 21 hours** of class per week (recess/lunch included) with the expectation that parents do some school at home. Because these schools generally have lower tuition, we adjust the per-student rate per K-12 student. We ask that the following guidelines are followed:

- Do not alter the number of students (i.e., making 2 part-time students the equivalent of 1 student). This affects our count of total students in ACCS membership.
- Students who are not diploma seeking – typically those who are “a la carte” (only take a class or two as electives) – are not counted. Do not include them in your student counts.
- If the school serves students who attend **more than 21 hours** per week are considered a “full-time student.” Include them as full-time students.
- If diploma-seeking non-traditional students normally attend fewer than 21 hours per week (recess/ lunch included as class hours) and do the remainder of time at home, then we will reduce the total student assessment by 50% (rounded to the nearest dollar).

As with Traditional Model Schools, Pre-K students are not assessed in Collaborative Model Schools (no dues are collected for these students). K 3-year olds and K 4-year olds in a school with a separate K5 grade level are considered Pre-K. If the school has an integrated K program (including 3’s, 4’s, and 5’s in the same classroom), then all of these students are included in the K-12 count.

STARTUP MEMBER SCHOOLS

Startup membership is available to schools in their first year and is open to first-time members. At the time of their first renewal, a school may remain at the Startup level for one additional year if they are still in their inaugural phase. Once a school opens its doors, it moves to Full membership, with standard membership rates applying.



ONLINE MODEL SCHOOLS

For distance/online schools: An online school provides the majority of the instructional process at a distance, usually through a computer. We charge only for diploma-seeking students. In K-8, “diploma” means that the student is participating in a program intended to meet the majority of their required schooling for that year. Part-time students who take classes “*a-la-carte*” are not counted. “Diploma seeking” students are charged 50% less at online/distance schools because our services at present are tailored for schools associated with a physical location.

NEW MEMBER SCHOOLS

New members that join between July 1st and December 31st have immediate access to member benefits and will be members through the end of the next calendar year. For example, a new school paying dues on September 1st will enjoy member benefits immediately and through December 31 of the subsequent year.

New members that join between:

- January 1st and March 31st: Deduct 25% from standard annual dues. Membership extends through December 31st of the calendar year in which it was paid.
- April 1st and June 30th: Deduct 50% from standard annual dues. Membership extends through December 31st of the calendar year in which it was paid.
- July 1st through December 31st: Pay full annual dues, but receive membership status and benefits for the rest of the current year and the following calendar year.

TERMINATION OF MEMBERSHIP

Grounds for Termination

Membership in our association may be terminated upon demonstration of any of the following failures:

Christian Witness:

- Unresolved issues surrounding moral failure, defined as conduct that is inconsistent with the biblical standards outlined in the ACCS Statement of Faith, including but not limited to sexual misconduct, harassment, or abuse.
- Policy changes that affirm unbiblical family relationships, contrary to the standards upheld by the ACCS.

Ethical Behavior:

- Financial impropriety, including but not limited to embezzlement, fraud, or mismanagement of funds.
- Failure to provide, or misrepresentation of, the services claimed by the school, including adherence to Classical Christian educational principles and practice.



Membership Qualification Checklist Compliance:

- Failure to affirm and comply with the items listed in the Membership Qualification Checklist.

Process

Complaint Submission:

- Complaints regarding a member school must be in writing and signed by the complainant, providing appropriate contact information, and submitted by mail to the ACCS office.
- Complaints must include specific details and any supporting related evidence.
- Complaints may be initiated by the ACCS.

Investigation:

- Upon receipt of a complaint, the ACCS may initiate an investigation to verify the claims.
- The investigation may involve reviewing documentation, conducting interviews, and gathering additional evidence as necessary.
- The ACCS may decide not to pursue an investigation if prima facie the complaint is not substantiated by the evidence submitted.

Determination:

- The findings of the investigation will be reviewed by the ACCS.
- A decision will be made based on the evidence collected during the investigation, and a letter sent by mail to the school.

Appeals

- A school may appeal termination by submitting a letter to the president of the ACCS detailing the reasons for their appeal and including supporting documentation. The appeal will be considered, and a decision rendered in a timely manner.
- There is no further appeals process beyond the decision made by the president of the association.

Refund of Fees

- If the termination of membership is to be immediate, 50% of the outstanding fees for the remaining period of membership that have been paid will be refunded.
- If the termination of membership is dated for the end of the membership period, no refund of fees will be made.



Confidentiality and Nondisclosure

- The ACCS will maintain confidentiality throughout the investigation process.
- All parties involved in the investigation are required to sign a nondisclosure agreement to protect the privacy of those involved and the integrity of the investigation.
- The ACCS will not publicly disclose the reasons for membership termination, except as required by law.

Legal Considerations

- The termination policy and process is intended to comply with applicable local and state laws.
- The ACCS reserves the right to amend the policy and process as necessary to ensure legal compliance and to uphold the mission and values of the association.