



UNITY
CHRISTIAN
ACADEMY

2023-2024
Community Handbook

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Mission, Vision, & History

Our Mission

Empowering a diverse community, united by Christ, to achieve excellence in education, for the flourishing of all creation.

Our Vision

Our deep hope is to see all students leave our school, empowered by Christ, equipped to be instruments of transformation in their families, their communities, and God's broader world.

Our History

History & Vision

Unity Christian Academy is rooted in the community. In 2014, clergy, business leaders, area elementary school leaders, parents, and community leaders gathered to discuss the future of Christian high school options in the south Chicagoland region. Each group and all voices pointed in the same direction: the need for a redefined and redesigned Christian high school in this area.

Out of the steering committee, a Board of Directors was formed. This founding board was composed of men and women from various denominational and professional backgrounds. This group worked tirelessly over the next several years to start what would eventually be named Unity Christian Academy.

When UCA opened its doors in 2018, an essential aspect of the vision was to be distinct from and unlike a traditional high school education. We desired, and continue to desire, to seek the flourishing of the broader community. From the Board of Directors, families, and educator leaders, it was clear that God was assembling a group of people committed to this vision for education.

Growth

After UCA's second academic year, clear signs of growth became apparent—53 students were enrolled. A December 2020 parent satisfaction survey showed encouraging data points. Parents demonstrated buy-in by offering constructive feedback as well as genuine encouragement and appreciation for the UCA program. The survey indicated that 85 percent of UCA parents are highly likely to share their positive experiences at the school with others. The end of our third academic year illustrated another clear indicator of growth. When given the opportunity to testify to God's work in their lives, more than 10 students spontaneously poured their hearts out to their classmates. God's calling on the community is coming to fruition through the work of his Spirit.

Permanence

UCA is beginning its sixth academic year. Through the incredible generosity of many donors, we have been able to purchase a 10-acre property, home to a church and a school building. UCA is flourishing, and we eagerly wonder who else God will bring to prosper this mission.

Senior Leadership Team

Mr. Neil Okuley, Head of School
Mrs. Charis Bootsma, Head of Academics
Mrs. Amy Veldboom, Head of Operations

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Faculty & Staff

Mr. Alex Eiland, PE Teacher
Mrs. Rachael Fedor, Spanish Teacher
Mr. Tom Findysz, Science Teacher
Mr. Noah Friesen, Math & Engineering Teacher
Mr. Toney Howell, Director of College & Career Services
Dr. Dwight Lucas, History & Social Studies Teacher
Ms. Madelyn Mikitka, School Social Worker
Mrs. Hannah Morgan, English Teacher
Mr. Tony Powell, Performing Arts Teacher
Mrs. Michelle Smith, Dean of Students
Mr. Andy Sons, Director of Discipleship & Bible & Theology Teacher

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Board of Directors

Mrs. Constance Ford
Mr. Corey Hardiman
Mrs. Sally Haywood-Larsen, President
Mr. Dave Larsen
Mr. Phillip Leo, Vice President
Mrs. Beverly Ozinga
Mrs. Meika Slotsema, Secretary/Treasurer
Mr. Jason van den Brink
Mrs. Betty Vander Laan

slarsen@weareuca.org

All of UCA's Board Policies are available for your review in your PowerSchool parent portal.

UCA Statement of Faith

As followers of Jesus Christ, living in this world—which some seek to control, and others view with despair—we declare with joy and trust: Our world belongs to God! This truth directs us in our work and play at Unity Christian Academy.

Our world, fallen into sin, has lost its first goodness, but God has not abandoned the work of his hands: our Maker preserves this world, sending seasons, sun, and rain, upholding all creatures, renewing the earth, promising a Savior, guiding all things to their purpose.

God holds this world with fierce love. Keeping his promise, he sends Jesus into the world, pours out the Holy Spirit, and announces the good news: sinners who repent and believe in Jesus live anew as members of the family of God—the first fruits of a new creation.

We rejoice in the goodness of God, renounce the works of darkness, and dedicate ourselves to holy living. As covenant partners, set free for joyful obedience, we offer our hearts and lives to do God's work in the world. In our work and worship at Unity Christian Academy these truths guide our behavior and expectations for life together.

With tempered impatience, eager to see injustice ended, we expect the Day of Christ's return. We are confident that the light which shines in the present darkness will fill the earth when He appears. Come, Lord Jesus. Our world belongs to you.

Remembering the promise to reconcile the world to himself, God joined our humanity in Jesus Christ—the eternal Word made flesh. He is the long-awaited Messiah, one with us and one with God, fully human and fully divine, conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary.

Standing in our place, Jesus suffered during his years on earth, especially in the tortures of the cross. He carried God's judgment on our sin—his sacrifice removed our guilt. God raised him from the dead: he walked out of the grave, conqueror of sin and death— Lord of Life! We are set right with God, given new life, and called to walk with him in freedom from sin's dominion.

Being both divine and human, Jesus Christ mediates between us and God. He alone paid the debt of our sin; there is no other Savior. We are chosen in Christ to become like him in every way. God's electing love sustains our hope: God's grace is free to save sinners who offer nothing but their need for mercy.

At Pentecost, promises old and new are fulfilled. The ascended Jesus becomes the baptizer, drenching his followers with his Spirit, creating a new community where Father, Son, and Holy Spirit make their home. Revived and filled with the breath of God, women and men, young and old, dream dreams and see visions.

At Unity Christian Academy, the Spirit renews our hearts and moves us to faith, leads us into truth, and helps us to pray, stands by us in our need, and makes our obedience fresh and vibrant.

The Spirit gathers people from every tongue, tribe, and nation into the unity of the body of Christ. This school stands in that unity fostered by the Spirit. Serving the Lord in whom all things hold together, we support sound education in our communities, and we foster schools and teaching in which God's truth shines in all learning. At Unity Christian Academy, all students, without regard to abilities, race, or wealth, bear God's image and deserve an education that helps them use their gifts fully.

The Bible is the Word of God, the record and tool of his redeeming work. It is the Word of truth, breath of God, fully reliable in leading us to know God and to walk with Jesus Christ in new life. It is the central living text which shapes our curriculum and guides our life together.

We grieve that the church, which shares one Spirit, one faith, one hope, and spans all time, place, race, and language, has become a broken communion in a broken world. While we are a school and not a church, we commit ourselves to seeking and expressing the oneness of all who follow Jesus, and we pray for brothers and sisters who suffer for the faith.

Our hope for a new creation is not tied to what humans can do, for we believe that one day every challenge to God's rule will be crushed. His kingdom will fully come, and the Lord will rule. Come, Lord Jesus, come. Come here at Unity Christian Academy.

Adapted with permission (c) 2008 Christian Reformed Church in North America, permission granted March 2016.

Communication Methods at UCA

The Learning Team

At UCA, the Learning Team consists of the teacher, student, the student's family, and any other support staff needed for the student to succeed. You can expect that teachers and staff will keep you engaged and informed in the following ways:

- provide you with access to syllabi, student grades, and major assessment directions,
- maintain regular and appropriate communication with you via phone call and email,
- communicate any behavioral or academic concerns with you early and often, and respond to emails in a timely manner (1-2 business days) during work hours

UCA families can expect to receive the following communication from school administration.

1. Weekly Parent Newsletter

The weekly parent newsletter provides important updates, announcements, and logistics for the upcoming week and immediate future. This *digital* newsletter is *emailed* and *texted* to all UCA parents every Monday of the academic year.

2. "The Direct Four"

Direct communication between faculty, staff, parents, and students is via **email, phone call, letter, or text message**. We encourage all UCA stakeholders to keep up-to-date with all four mediums as we regularly communicate critical information through them. If a parent or student has a question or comment about any matter in a particular class, we encourage them to reach out to that teacher directly via email.

3. PowerSchool & Schoology

PowerSchool is UCA's chosen Student Information System. Schoology is UCA's chosen Learning Management System. In PowerSchool and Schoology, students and parents can view grades, assessments, syllabi, resources, attendance records, and more.

4. Phoenix Rising Newsletter

Phoenix Rising is a **monthly e-newsletter** that highlights the ways in which the mission of UCA was experienced in the previous month. Phoenix Rising is *emailed* every month to all UCA students, parents, faculty, staff, donors, and board members.

5. Facebook, Instagram, & YouTube

Frequently throughout the week, we share the life of UCA on our Facebook, Instagram, & YouTube accounts. "Like" us on Facebook at Unity Christian Academy, follow us on Instagram @weareuca, and subscribe to our YouTube channel: Unity Christian Academy - South Holland.

6. Website

Our website, weareuca.org, is the go-to place for shared language and information about Unity Christian Academy. Current families can utilize the "Current Families" tab for up-to-date school information. Prospective families can utilize the "Admissions" tab for all of the information related to the admissions process.

Academics

Approach to Education

Our approach to education flows from our core values: Empowerment, Diversity, Unity, Excellence, & Flourishing. Our decisions in curriculum design, instruction, and classroom culture flow from these values and beliefs.

Profile of a UCA Graduate

UCA seeks to graduate students who demonstrate certain skills and knowledge. Below is a description of the Profile of a UCA Graduate:

- 1. Formation of a Christ-Centered Identity**
 - a. Understands the transformative power of new life in Jesus Christ
 - b. Has a firm grasp of their own interests, gifts, and skills
 - c. Is capable of making decisions that flow from their Christian identity
- 2. Complex and varied communication**
 - a. Demonstrates active listening by contributing nuanced insights and feedback
 - b. Articulates messages with clarity and conviction across varied media
 - c. Understands the power of the gospel message and can communicate it effectively
- 3. Problem solving and collaboration**
 - a. Demonstrates empathy and design thinking when approaching difficult or complex problems
 - b. Confidently distinguishes between helpful and unhelpful information when problem solving
 - c. Demonstrates the ability to work independently toward a common goal
- 4. Quantitative and critical reasoning**
 - a. Can gather quality evidence, analyze it effectively, and make appropriate claims
 - b. Can make data-driven decisions that produce beneficial outcomes
- 5. Community participation and advocacy**
 - a. Capable of initiating action to advocate for others and seeking the prosperity of the places in which they live
 - b. Can recognize, name, and boldly confront injustices in their communities
 - c. Can leverage understanding of self and others to effectively engage in diverse settings

Beliefs about Students

At UCA, we believe the following to be true of students and of learning.

Empowerment

- God created each student with dignity, value, and intelligence.
- God calls each student to unique and important work within His kingdom.

Diversity & Unity

- Who you learn with matters. Learning with a diverse population enhances the learning experience for all students.
- Students bear God's image and demonstrate the Gospel when they participate in a diverse learning community.

Excellence

- All students are capable of excellence, not just the fastest and most confident.
- Students are not supposed to understand everything the first time around.

- Consistent effort is the main determinant of success.
- Mistakes help us learn.

Flourishing

- The right pursuit of excellence is worship.
- Faith formation happens everywhere.
- The purpose of education is ultimately wrapped up in God's mandate for human beings to create, improve, and seek the fulfillment of His creation.
- Meaningful Kingdom work happens now, while students are in high school.

Assessments & Grading

As Wiggins and McTighe (2005) articulate,¹ expert teachers begin with the end, and they work backwards as they design curriculum. When understanding the work of teachers at UCA, it is also essential to begin at the end: with assessments and grading. Assessments provide students with the opportunity to show evidence of their learning and prove what they know and are able to do. Grades communicate this learning.

Unity Christian Academy uses the **Standards-Based Grading system**, a researched-based approach that seeks to accurately, reliably, and fairly communicate student learning throughout the process of learning.

What is Standards-Based Grading?

Each class at UCA has class **Standards**, which are the class' articulated learning goals for a grading period. Standards are skills students use to demonstrate their understanding and application of knowledge. These skills-based Standards require a deep understanding of relevant content knowledge. Standards are written in "I can" language from the student's perspective.

Students are graded based on how their work measures against the Standard and its **Scale**. The Scale is a Standard's **rubric**, which communicates the development toward, and even beyond, the Standard. The Scale shows how the Standard skill becomes more complex as it moves from left to right. Scales articulate a student's **Level of Mastery** on a Standard.

Below, a general description of each Level of Mastery is articulated. Please note that Proficient - Level 3 is the grade-level expectation of the Standard.

¹Wiggins, G. P., & McTighe, J. (2005). *Understanding by design* (2nd ed.). Pearson.

General Standard Scale Description				
No Evidence - Level 0	Basic - Level 1	Emerging - Level 2	Proficient - Level 3	Distinguished - Level 4
Student has not submitted evidence, or the evidence submitted is incomplete or incorrect.	Student shows a novice level of understanding or ability. Examples of skills used at this level: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify • Recognize • Locate • List 	Student shows inconsistent but growing levels of understanding and ability. Examples of skills used at this level: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand • Apply • Compare/contrast 	Student meets the expectations of the Standard. Examples of skills used at this level: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apply • Analyze • Evaluate 	Student exceeds the expectations of the Standard. Examples of skills used at this level: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluate • Assert • Create

UCA calculates grades for each Standard using a Decaying Average of 65/35. This means that the score of the **most recent assessment** will weigh **65%** of the final grade.

A student’s grade consists of their scores on each of the Standards. UCA seeks to avoid passing students along to the next level without ensuring that the student has mastered the necessary content and skills they need to succeed at the next level. Therefore, in order to pass a class, the student must have an **overall mastery level** of Emerging - Level 2 or higher. The overall mastery level is calculated by averaging the class standards.

Academic Progress vs. Classroom Behavior

To communicate an accurate picture of learning and behavior, UCA reports on Standards and **Habits of Learning**. HOLs are behavioral goals; they articulate habits, behaviors, and dispositions that help students succeed in and out of the classroom. HOLs are used to track student engagement and work habits, but do not determine whether or not a student passes a class. Below is the HOL that will be tracked in all classes in the 2023-2024 school year:

UCA HOL: Diligence | I take responsibility for my learning by completing work by the given deadline. My work meets the requirements.

HOLs exist on a different Learning Scale than Standards. This Scale has three levels instead of five.

No Evidence - Level 0	Basic - Level 1	Proficient - Level 3
I have not completed my work.	I have submitted my work, but it does not meet the given requirements OR I have submitted my work past the due date.	I take responsibility for my learning by completing work by the given deadline. My work meets the requirements.

Why does UCA use the Standards-Based Grading system?

We seek to communicate student learning accurately. Grades are a form of communication about student learning. Oftentimes, letter grades in a traditional grading system are a combination of academic achievement, behavior, extra credit, and anything else on the syllabus, and the weighing system tends to vary teacher to teacher. In a Standards-Based system, teachers articulate the exact learning expectations they have of students, and can communicate how a student is performing against these expectations with specificity.

When students are given the language of excellence through class Standards, they are empowered to be leaders of their own learning.

Grade Reporting

In addition to Schoology, a **Progress Report** of ongoing grades will be provided to families at the end of Quarter 1 and Quarter 3. A **Report Card** containing final grades will be provided to families at the end of Semester 1 and Semester 2.

While Standards-Based Grading is used in other schools, UCA acknowledges that it is not universally used. Because of this, we regularly translate our grading scale to a traditional grading scale, calculate GPAs accordingly, and communicate this information to students and families. GPA is calculated by first, averaging a student’s Standard scores in each class, and then translating these scores using the conversion chart below:

Average of Class Standards	Translation for traditional grading system
3.2-4	A
2.7-3.19	B
1.75-2.69	C
1-1.74	D
0-.99	F

Assessments at UCA

UCA teachers design valid and reliable assessments that are aligned with class Standards, use clear criteria that are appropriate to the needs of students, and provide data to be used in the planning of future instruction. Assessments are considered **attempts at mastery**. Any given assessment will be aligned with one Standard or multiple Standards when appropriate.

There are four types of Assessment at UCA that measure student achievement.

- I. First, teachers conduct a **pre-assessment**. The pre-assessment happens at the beginning of the unit, and provides the teacher with a baseline for where the student is beginning and what the student already knows and can do. Pre-assessment data are not recorded in the Gradebook, but are kept in a teacher’s records and used to inform future instruction.
- II. Second, students **practice** the skills of the Standards. Practice allows students to learn by doing. Teachers give students feedback on their practice attempts. The giving and use of

feedback is foundational for growing as a learner; students learn best when given timely and descriptive feedback and have the opportunity to apply the feedback.

- III. The third type of assessment at UCA is the **Formative Assessment**. Formative Assessments provide students the opportunity to attempt mastery on Standards during a learning period. Formatives are graded according to the Standards. Teachers provide students with meaningful and timely feedback based on these assessments. Both the teacher and student benefit from Formative Assessments. Teachers use student learning data to inform future instruction; students use feedback and scores to focus attention on what can be improved. Therefore, Formative Assessments are assessments *for* learning.
- IV. The final type of assessment at UCA is the **Summative Assessment**, which is the final attempt to show mastery during a learning period. If Formatives are *for* learning, Summatives are assessments *of* learning that has happened. They are also called Capstone Projects and Final Assessments. Because UCA calculates grades for each Standard using a Decaying Average of 65/35, expectations for Summative Assessments should reflect the weight of the decaying average.

When designing activities and assessments, particularly Summative Assessments, teachers are informed by the Excellent Work Protocol². This means that student work often reflects one or more of the following descriptions.

² Adapted by Christian Schools Canada from EL Education's Quality Work Protocol.

Purpose	Complexity	Craftsmanship	Authenticity
<p>Purposeful work matters to students and contributes to a larger community. Students “get smart” to “serve God.”</p> <p>Purposeful work invites students to recognize themselves as important actors in God’s story of restoration.</p> <p>Purposeful work is designed to serve real needs of real people.</p> <p>Purposeful work provides a meaningful context for students to practice and master content and skills, preparing them for whatever God might call them to do.</p>	<p>Complex work is rigorous: it aligns with or exceeds grade-level expectations. It invites students to higher-order thinking, challenging them to apply, analyze, evaluate, and create.</p> <p>Complex work often shows connections to deep concepts that unite the disciplines.</p> <p>Complex work prioritizes consideration of multiple perspectives. It often invites students to take stand and defend it with evidence or persuasion.</p>	<p>Well-crafted work is done with care and precision. It demonstrates attention to accuracy, detail, and beauty.</p> <p>Well-crafted work should be beautiful in conception and execution. It can be present in thoughtful ideas, imagination, and design, not just in polished presentation.</p> <p>Well-crafted work shows evidence of perseverance, often through multiple drafts and critique from others.</p>	<p>Authentic work demonstrates the original, creative thinking of students—authentic personal voice and ideas—rather than simply showing that students can follow directions, fill in the blanks, or paraphrase research.</p> <p>Authentic work often uses formats and standards from the professional world, rather than artificial school formats (e.g., students create a book review for a local newspaper instead of a book report for the teacher).</p> <p>Authentic work often connects academic standards with real-world issues, and local people and places.</p> <p>Authentic work reflects principles of God’s kingdom (creation, justice, beauty, stewardship, etc.).</p>

Controversial Topics in the Classroom

Students become more and more exposed to controversial and explicit topics in our information-laden world. Part of a school’s responsibility is to help students think critically about and evaluate the changing world around them. Because of this, UCA teachers may engage in content surrounding controversial topics and containing some explicit content to a certain extent.

If a student and their family deem content inappropriate for the student to read or watch, the teacher will work with the Head of Academics to provide alternative curriculum that meets the same standards of rigor as the original content.

Certain content is deemed inappropriate and cannot be discussed in class:

- Saying or reading any racial slurs if it appears in literature or historical text (Containing these slurs does not automatically disqualify a text. Teachers may still use these texts but should not read the slurs aloud.)
- Reading or watching content of overtly sexual activity
- Reading or watching content that contains grotesque violence

Unique features of the calendar and schedule

Time is designed and used intentionally at UCA so that students have both a breadth and depth of learning opportunities throughout the school year.

The Calendar

I. A-Term

A-Term (April-Term) is an important aspect of UCA's calendar. For one week, core courses pause, and educators offer a variety of unique and meaningful classes. Students apply for the class they hope to take. The daily schedule is altered; classes meet from 9:00-2:30 everyday. Teachers typically take their students off campus, invite outside guests, and design hands-on activities for their classes.

A-Term is a required, Pass/Fail course. In order to graduate, students are required to take one A-Term course each year they attend UCA. To earn credit, students may not miss more than two days of their A-Term class and must participate in all of the class's activities. If students fail to participate or miss more than two days of class, they must submit a research paper to the Head of Academics by a determined deadline.

II. Curriculum Night

The purpose of Curriculum Night is to help families understand *who* is teaching their students, *what* their students are learning, and *how* their students are learning. Curriculum Night happens once a year, and parents are invited back to campus to have these questions answered.

III. Deeper Learning Days

We value both the breadth of what a student can learn, but also the depth of their learning. Deeper Learning Days are intentionally designed days in which students will dive deep into a particular way of learning or a specific subject, department, or field. Normal classes will pause on these days, and students will participate in a unique schedule to deepen their learning in the specified focus. The following Deeper Learning Days are scheduled for the 2023-2024 school year.

- August 15: How We Learn at UCA
- October 18: Humanities Deeper Learning Day
- February 15: Faith Formation Day
- May 10: STEM Deeper Learning Day

IV. Celebration of Learning

We desire to celebrate our students, their growth, and all that God is doing in their lives. Celebration of Learning is an annual celebration of what students have accomplished and is meant for the entire school community.

V. Student Learning Conferences

Student Learning Conferences are student-led and happen between teachers, students, and families. They happen twice a year, as reflected on the 2023-2024 School Calendar.

Daily Schedule

I. Independent Studies & Online Courses

Qualifying junior and senior students at UCA have the option to engage in deeper studies of vocational interest to them. In order to take an Independent Study or an Online Course at UCA, students must

- demonstrate consistent good academic standing over the course of their freshman and sophomore years, and
- complete an application prior to the start of the academic year. Applications can be found with Mrs. Bootsma, Head of Academics.

II. Office Hours

The purpose of Office Hours is to set apart time to provide interventions for students who are struggling or who may have questions.

Teachers offer Office Hours to students 4 times a week. Teachers will determine their own Office Hours schedule, and may offer Office Hours before school, after school, or a combination of both.

Teachers will claim students for Office Hours, but will give students and families at least 1 day's notice. If a student wants to attend a teacher's Office Hours, they must sign up at least 1 day in advance. Scheduling Office Hours occurs on Focus Period.

III. Shout Outs

A community's values can often be found in what they celebrate. At the end of every week, UCA seeks to celebrate our students and community members publicly. At the end of every Friday, the entire school – students, staff, and faculty – will gather in the gym. Everyone will be invited to share a public shout out of someone they want to praise.

IV. Student Choice Lunch

UCA is full of students with diverse interests and gifts. Student Choice Lunch (SCL) provides our diverse students the opportunity to choose from an array of options that empower them to develop self-knowledge; engage their heart, minds, and hands; and authentically apply their learning in engaging and meaningful ways. UCA offers SCL options once a week every Thursday. Teachers and staff plan and offer options, and students will sign up for options at the beginning of each Quarter.

V. Study Halls

Students may take up to 2 Study Halls each quarter. Study Halls should be silent to quiet. Students are expected to work, study, or read during this time.

VI. Unity Groups

Unity Groups are made up of a group of students mixed together with freshmen, sophomores, juniors, and seniors as well as a teacher leader. Unity Groups meet on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays.

The purpose of Unity Groups is to set aside regular time for students to get to know one another better, develop life skills, foster good relationships, build their self image, share prayer requests, and build community.

On Mondays, teachers will share school announcements and answer any questions. On Wednesdays, teachers will lead discussions on the chapel message of the day. Thursday plans are determined on a weekly basis.

Academic Policies

Proficiency Requirements to Receive Credit

UCA seeks to ensure students move to the next level having mastered the necessary content and skills they need to succeed at that level. To earn credit for a course, a student must have an **overall mastery level** of Emerging - Level 2 or higher and have no No Evidence - 0s in an academic standard. The overall mastery level is calculated by averaging the individual class standards.

Assigning Tests and Projects

To provide students with the best opportunity to put forth quality work, teachers will work together to ensure that students do not have more than **three** major assessments scheduled for the same day. Major assessments include tests and exams, as well as final drafts for papers and projects. Major assessments do not include quizzes, first drafts, or similarly challenging assignments.

Late Work & Reassessment

Students must submit work in a timely manner in order to receive feedback and actively participate in the learning process. Because of this, late practice work or Formative Assessments will only be accepted in the same Quarter in which it was originally assigned **if a teacher determines that it truly demonstrates learning**. Teachers hold the professional responsibility to determine whether or not to accept late work from students. If a teacher accepts a student's late work, the original grade (0) should stand in the gradebook. A new grade should be added to reflect the new work.

If students are dissatisfied with the Level of Mastery they have earned within a Quarter, students may be given the opportunity to reassess on a Formative Assessment in the same Quarter in which it was originally assigned. If granted a reassessment, the student must complete the reassessment before the next assessment in that Standard.

To reassess, students must fill out a Reassessment Ticket and schedule an Office Hours meeting with the teacher. If a student submits a reassessment the teacher is willing to accept, the original grade will stand in the gradebook. A new grade will be added to reflect the new work.

Below is a copy of the Reassessment Ticket. Students can request these from their teachers.

Reassessment Ticket		
Step 1: Student fills out the following information.		
Name _____ Today's Date _____		
Class _____ Teacher _____		
Standard(s) to reassess on	Current Level of Mastery	Reassessment Goal
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
Step 2: Student meets with the teacher		
Meeting Date: _____ Teacher signature after meeting: _____		
Step 3: Check off necessary action steps (to be determined by teacher and student during Step 2)		
<input type="checkbox"/> Re-teaching meeting during Office Hours with teacher on _____		
<input type="checkbox"/> Receive and apply feedback from teacher		
<input type="checkbox"/> Written summary: explain everything you did wrong or answered incorrectly on the first assessment		
<input type="checkbox"/> Complete practice assignments related to this assessment		
Notes: _____		
<input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____		
Step 4: Check off the method that the student will complete reassessment		
<input type="checkbox"/> In Office Hours on _____		
<input type="checkbox"/> Submitted to Schoology by _____		

Students are responsible for requesting extensions on work. It is the teacher's professional responsibility to decide when to grant extensions to students.

Academic Dishonesty

Cheating, plagiarism, and the misuse of artificial intelligence (AI) are inconsistent with honest and honorable work. At UCA, we believe that both the final product and the *process* of learning are essential to a student's academic progress. Because of this, all forms of academic dishonesty are detrimental toward a student's learning and growth.

UCA defines plagiarism as any form of using someone else's work and claiming it as your own or allowing someone to use your work and claim it as his/her own. Cheating is any unauthorized use of information or sources of information (e.g. electronic devices) on a test, quiz, assignment, or project.

Students are strictly prohibited from submitting material generated by AI as their own work.³ Submitting AI work without acknowledgement and citation is both a form of cheating (using unauthorized tools) and a form of plagiarism (using outside work without attribution). Academic dishonesty with AI may include but is not limited to copying and pasting text, paraphrasing without attribution, word-switch plagiarism, and submitting work created by AI tools without acknowledgement.

Students must not use AI tools on assignments and assessments without explicit permission from the teacher. **The student should assume that AI is forbidden** unless they are directly told and provided in writing that it is allowed for an individual assignment.

Students should not manipulate, falsify, or revise AI-generated work to deceive others or misrepresent work used to assess their academic abilities.

Proof of Origin

Teachers will use a variety of tools that may detect use of AI. We recognize that there is no current tool to determine to a 100% degree of certainty that AI was used. If a teacher believes that a student has used AI or falsified work, the student will be requested to substantiate their work and work process. The school reserves the right to in-person, hand-written, or oral reassessment and/or assessment review.

If a student is academically dishonest, the following tiered approach will be taken:

Tier 1 Infraction	Tier 1 Consequence
<p>A student commits a Tier 1 infraction if they do one of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Copy from another student’s work the first time. Use disallowed materials on an assessment (notes, calculator, etc.) the first time. Copy and paste, without attribution, from a source not their own (including human and AI-authored sources), for the first time. Paraphrase, without attribution, from a source not their own (including human and AI-authored sources), the first time. 	<p>A student will receive a 0 on the assignment standards and must redo the assignment by a deadline determined by the teacher.</p> <p>Teacher will call home to notify the parent/guardian of the academic dishonesty. In the case that the call is not answered, the teacher will send an email.</p> <p>In addition to requiring the student to redo the assignment, the teacher will administer any additional in-class consequences.</p> <p>The teacher will submit a student conduct referral for documentation.</p>

³ This policy is adapted from the work of Dr. Ryan Gagnon at Clemson University, Amy Goldman at River High School in the Washington Unified School District, and a model from Chat GPT-4.

<p style="text-align: center;">Tier 2 Infraction</p> <p>A student commits a Tier 2 infraction if they do one of the following:</p> <p>Copy from another student’s work the second time, regardless of the classroom in which the dishonesty occurred.</p> <p>Use disallowed materials on an assessment (notes, calculator, etc.) the second time, regardless of the classroom in which the dishonesty occurred.</p> <p>Copy and paste, without attribution, from a source not their own (including human and AI-authored sources), for the second time, regardless of the classroom in which the dishonesty occurred.</p> <p>Paraphrase, without attribution, from a source not their own (including human and AI-authored sources), the second time, regardless of the classroom in which the dishonesty occurred.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Tier 2 Consequence</p> <p>A student will receive a 0 on the assignment standards and must redo the assignment by a deadline determined by the teacher.</p> <p>Teacher will write a referral requesting Dean intervention and consequence for the second instance of academic dishonesty.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Tier 3 Infraction</p> <p>A student commits a Tier 3 infraction if one of the following is observed:</p> <p>A pattern of copying from another student’s work.</p> <p>A pattern of using disallowed materials on an assessment (notes, calculator, etc.).</p> <p>A pattern of copying and pasting, without attribution, from a source not their own (including human and AI-authored sources).</p> <p>A pattern of paraphrasing, without attribution, from a source not their own (including human and AI-authored sources).</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Tier 3 Consequence</p> <p>A student will receive a 0 on the assignment standards and will not be able to reassess on this attempt at the standard(s).</p> <p>Dean will refer the student to SLT intervention for the pattern of academic dishonesty.</p> <p>The student may be subject to losing credit in the course in which the academic dishonesty occurred.</p>

Requirements for Participating in a Co-Curricular Activity (athletics, clubs, and teams)

- Academic Standing
 - Mastery reports are run weekly on Mondays. Students are ineligible for the entire week if the mastery report indicates that:
 - A student has an overall score of Level 1 - Basic or lower in one class OR
 - The average of all of a student's classes is below Level 2 - Emerging
- Student Conduct
 - UCA students are expected to maintain a high standard of personal conduct in order to participate in co-curricular activities.
 - Students will be ineligible if:
 - they receive a Tier 2 or Tier 3 consequence.
 - based on the context of any given situation, the Dean of Students or Senior Leadership Team deems it inappropriate for a student to participate in a co-curricular activity.
 - Students may become eligible again the following week after appropriate consequences have been served.
 - Please note that if a student receives a Tier 1 consequence, the Athletic Director will be notified.
- Attendance
 - UCA students may participate in co-curricular activities only if they are in attendance for more than 50% of the school day on which the activity falls.
 - In the instance of a Saturday activity, a student must be in attendance for at least 50% of the most recent previous school day.
- Age
 - UCA students are eligible to participate in co-curricular activities through the age of nineteen.
 - If a student would turn 20 during a given season, they would not be eligible to participate.
- Length of Enrollment
 - UCA uses Quarters and Semesters as learning terms. In the event that a UCA student has to repeat a portion of an entire grade level, their total involvement in co-curricular activities shall not exceed 10 Quarters.

Academic Support

Multi-Tiered Systems of Support

MTSS is a common framework for providing academic, social-emotional, and behavioral supports to students. At UCA, we are committed to holistically supporting each student so that they may flourish. This section focuses on academic support at UCA.

Tier 1 The Classroom		
<p>The Learning Team</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Teacher ● Student ● Family 	<p>The Student</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Student is learning with an expected level of student/teacher interaction. ● Student is showing some level of mastery in the class. ● Student is approaching or meeting expectations on testing data. 	<p>Interventions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Best practice for planning, instruction, differentiation, and interventions used by the teacher. ● Teacher communicates successes and concerns to the Learning Team through an updated gradebook, phone calls, and emails. Teacher keeps a record of emails and phone calls to the Learning Team.

Tier 2 The Classroom and Additional Supports		
<p>The Learning Team</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Teacher ● Student ● Family ● Relevant Student Support Team members <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Head of Academics ○ School Social Worker ○ Paraprofessional ○ Dean of Students 	<p>The Student</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Testing indicates that student is at-risk in reading or math ● Student is exhibiting some struggles in the classroom environment with an expected level of student/teacher interactions. Teacher observation has demonstrated a reason for concern. 	<p>Interventions & Accommodations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Student Support Team, in collaboration with the teacher, creates an Intervention Plan for the student with a determined goal or date for the next Intervention meeting.

Tier 3 | Intensive Supports

<p>The Learning Team</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Teacher● Student● Family● Relevant Student Support Team members<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Head of Academics○ School Social Worker○ Paraprofessional○ Dean of Students● Partnering district	<p>The Student</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Student has a 504 plan or an ISP● Testing data shows that student is 2 or more grade levels behind	<p>Interventions, Accommodations, & Services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● If student does not have a 504 plan or ISP, the School Social Worker and student's family put in a referral for an evaluation through the district.● Head of Academics and School Social Worker meet with family to develop and propose a 504 Plan.● Student receives accommodations and services through 504 Plan for all classes. <p><i>At this time, UCA cannot provide Special Education support.</i></p>
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Attendance

Why Attendance Matters

Attendance is essential for students to achieve excellence in education. Below are UCA's attendance policies.

Attendance Policies

Absence Policy

The State of Illinois considers 5% over a 180-day school year to be **Chronic Truant** (that equates to **nine** absences over 180 days).

If a student reaches ten (10) absences in a school year, a \$100 fine will be assessed. Payment of this fine will be due in the main office via cash, check, or card by no later than the start of the next Quarter. If a student reaches ten (10) absences by the end of the school year, the \$100 fine must be paid in order to receive the student's final Report Card, their official academic transcript, and/or their diploma. Students will only be excused for medical⁴, religious, or legal reasons.

Absence Notification Policy

Parents must contact the main office by calling (708) 980-1045 by **8:15 AM** to inform UCA of their student's absence. Notification of an absence must come from the parent/guardian; it cannot come from the student. These calls are imperative in order to ensure accurate daily rosters in cases of crisis or emergency on school grounds. If you do not contact the school office, you will receive a call or text notification from the school office by 9:45am to notify you of the absence.

Planned Absences

When a family knows in advance that their student will be absent, they must fill out a Planned Absence Form. Forms are available in the main office and should be completed **5 days** before the planned absence. Please note that the completion of this form does not automatically result in the student's absence being coded as excused. Only medical, religious, and legal exceptions apply to planned absences.

⁴ Students who have a medical diagnosis and need to be consistently excused for treatment should speak with the School Social Worker to develop a 504 plan so the absences can properly be coded in the attendance data.

Illinois Legislation 105 ILCS 5/26-1, enacted in 2021, grants students 5 school days of excused absence from school, as "Mental Health Days" each academic year. Digital resources with recommendations on how to spend the day out of school will be accessible to parents and students upon request. Under this legislation, if a student is absent for 2 consecutive days for mental health reasons, they are required to meet with school mental health personnel to discuss the circumstances, potentially receiving a referral for additional, professional help. Students are not allowed to excuse part of an extended absence as "mental health days," as this is seen as an obstruction of Illinois legislation.

Late Arrival & Early Dismissal

If a student reaches five (5) early dismissals in a school year, a \$25 fine will be assessed. In increments of five, \$25 fines will continue to be assessed.

Tardy Policy

Students are expected to be in their assigned classroom at the beginning of each school day and at the beginning of each class period throughout the day. Being consistently tardy is a hindrance to academic progress and the learning environment of other students.

If a student arrives to class after a teacher has taken attendance, they will be marked tardy. Students arriving to class after half of the class period has expired will be considered absent for that period.

Please refer to the Student Conduct portion to read the consequences for receiving tardies.

Arrival & Dismissal Policy

The building opens at 7:30 AM. Students will not be allowed in the building before this time. All students should be in the building by **8:25 AM**.⁵ UCA expects students to be present and prepared to launch into learning *by 8:30 AM* when class begins.

Please note that students are **not allowed to leave school grounds after they arrive in the morning**. When students leave & return to campus after arriving, it creates a safety and attendance issue.

UCA dismisses students at **3:30 PM** on Mondays through Thursdays. UCA dismisses students at **2:35 PM** on Fridays. The building closes at **4:15 PM**. *Unless students are participating in an official co-curricular activity, it is the expectation that they are off-campus by 4:15 PM*. Students who leave campus after dismissal, for any reason, may not return to campus.

Please abide by the enter/exit locations at 16341 S. Park Ave. We ask all drivers to: (1) enter at the **north** entrance, (2) exit the **south** entrance, and (3) keep speed to 10 mph or less.

⁵ Unless otherwise indicated, we have a late start for students every Wednesday. Class begins promptly at **9:30 AM** on Wednesdays. While the building opens at 7:45 AM on Wednesdays, we **request that students do not arrive until at least 9:00 AM unless it is necessary to arrive earlier for transportation reasons**. Faculty & staff meetings are held on Friday mornings, and it is helpful for supervision purposes to have fewer students in the building. All students should be in the building by no later than **9:25 AM**.

Student Conduct

Why Student Conduct Matters

We believe that who you learn with matters. Below are the school-wide expectations for student conduct. When not followed, it is the responsibility of the Dean of Students and other designated parties to apply restorative justice practices to preserve the safe and respectful environment that UCA values.

Student Conduct Policies

Below are policies specifically related to student conduct at Unity Christian Academy.

Bullying Policy

UCA believes that all students have a right to a safe and healthy school environment. The UCA community has an obligation to promote mutual respect, tolerance, and acceptance.

To that end, UCA will not tolerate behavior that infringes on the safety of any student. A student shall not show a pattern of intimidation, harassment, or bullying another student through words or actions. Such behavior includes: direct physical contact (such as hitting or shoving), verbal assaults (such as teasing or name-calling), and social isolation or manipulation.

Bullying is a **pattern** of aggressive, intentional, or deliberate hostile behavior using words or actions which cause fear, intimidation, or harm. Bullying involves an imbalance of power. The behavior may be motivated by actual or perceived distinguishing characteristics, such as, but not limited to: age, national origin, race, ethnicity, religion, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, physical attributes, physical or mental ability or disability, and social, economic, or family status.

Bullying includes **cyber-bullying**. Cyberbullying, as defined in 105 ILCS 5/27- 23.7, is bullying through the use of technology or any electronic communication, including without limitation any transfer of signs, signals, writing, images, sounds, data, or intelligence of any nature transmitted in whole or in part by a wire, radio, electromagnetic system, photoelectronic system, or photo-optical system, including without limitation electronic mail, Internet communications, instant messages, or facsimile communications. Cyberbullying includes the creation of a webpage or weblog in which the creator assumes the identity of another person or the knowing impersonation of another person as the author of posted content or messages if the creation or impersonation creates any of the effects enumerated in the definition of bullying in this Section. Cyberbullying also includes the distribution by electronic means of a communication to more than one person or the posting of material on an electronic medium that may be accessed by one or more persons if the distribution or posting creates any of the effects enumerated in the definition of bullying in 105 ILCS 5/27- 23.7(b).

All incidents of bullying should be immediately reported to the Dean of Students. The Dean of Students will involve the School Social Worker and Senior Leadership Team, as necessary.

Faculty and staff who witness acts of bullying take immediate steps to intervene when safe to do so. Each complaint of bullying should be promptly investigated. This policy applies to students on school grounds, while traveling to and from school or a school-sponsored activity, during the lunch period, whether on or off campus, and during a school-sponsored activity.

Students can rely on the Dean of Students to promptly investigate each complaint of bullying in a thorough and confidential manner. Any student who engages in bullying may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including expulsion. If the complainant student or the parent of the student feels that appropriate resolution of the investigation or complaint has not been reached, the student or the parent of the student should contact the Head of Administration.

UCA will make every reasonable effort to conclude any allegations within 10 days of reported bullying. UCA will make reasonable efforts to keep a report of bullying and the results of investigation confidential. UCA prohibits retaliatory behavior against any complainant or any participant in the complaint process.

All faculty, staff, students and parents will receive a summary of this policy prohibiting intimidation and bullying at the beginning of the school year, as part of the Community Handbook.

The State of Illinois has resources in [bullying prevention](#) that are available to use.

Non-Harassment Policy

UCA is committed to providing all students with a safe and supportive school environment. Members of the school community are expected to treat each other with respect. Faculty are expected to teach and to demonstrate by example that all members of the community are entitled to respect. Harassment of a student by another student or by a teacher or other staff member is a violation of school policy. This includes (but is not limited to) harassment based on race, national origin, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, or disability. Punishable harassment is conduct, including verbal conduct, (1) that creates (or will certainly create) a hostile environment by substantially interfering with a student's educational benefits, opportunities, or performance, or with a student's physical or psychological well-being; or (2) that is threatening or seriously intimidating.

Smoking, Alcohol, & Drug Policy

UCA administration is authorized to discipline students for gross disobedience or misconduct, including but not limited to:

1. Using, possessing, distributing, purchasing, or selling tobacco or nicotine materials, including without limitation, electronic cigarettes.
2. Using, possessing, distributing, purchasing, or selling alcoholic beverages. Students who are under the influence of an alcoholic beverage are not permitted to attend school or school functions and are treated as though they had alcohol in their possession.
3. Using, possessing, distributing, purchasing, selling, or offering for sale:
 - a. Any illegal drug or controlled substance, or cannabis (including medical cannabis, marijuana, and hashish).
 - b. Any anabolic steroid unless it is being administered in accordance with a physician or licensed practitioner's prescription.
 - c. Any performance-enhancing substance on the Illinois High School Association's most current banned substance list unless administered in accordance with a physician or licensed practitioner's prescription.

- d. Any prescription drug when not prescribed for the student by a physician or licensed practitioner, or when used in a manner inconsistent with the prescription or prescribing physician or licensed practitioner’s instructions. The use or possession of medical cannabis, even by a student for whom medical cannabis has been prescribed, is prohibited.
- e. Any inhalant, regardless of whether it contains an illegal drug or controlled substance:
 - i. that a student believes is, or represents to be capable of, causing intoxication, hallucination, excitement, or dulling of the brain or nervous system; or
 - ii. about which the student engaged in behavior that would lead a reasonable person to believe that the student intended the inhalant to cause intoxication, hallucination, excitement, or dulling of the brain or nervous system. The prohibition in this section does not apply to a student’s use of asthma or other legally prescribed inhalant medications.
- f. Any substance inhaled, injected, smoked, consumed, or otherwise ingested or absorbed with the intention of causing a physiological or psychological change in the body, including without limitation, pure caffeine in tablet or powdered form.
- g. “Look-alike” or counterfeit drugs, including a substance that is not prohibited by this policy, but one:
 - i. that a student believes to be, or represents to be, an illegal drug, controlled substance, or other substance that is prohibited by this policy; or
 - ii. about which a student engaged in behavior that would lead a reasonable person to believe that the student expressly or impliedly represented to be an illegal drug, controlled substance, or other substance that is prohibited by this policy.
- h. Drug paraphernalia, including devices that are or can be used to:
 - i. ingest, inhale, or inject cannabis or controlled substances into the body; and grow, process, store, or conceal cannabis or controlled substances.
 - ii. Students who are under the influence of any prohibited substance are not permitted to attend school or school functions and are treated as though they had the prohibited substance, as applicable, in their possession.

Student Dress Code Policy

UCA students must dress for school in such a way that they are ***prepared for learning***.

*Students are **not** allowed to wear any of the following:*

- Clothing that reveals undergarments
- Clothing that does not cover the midsection
- Clothing that harms the community with profane, vulgar, or intentionally-offensive messaging
- Clothing that references drugs or alcohol with words or pictures
- Leg-clothing higher than the midpoint of the student’s thigh
- Clothing of spandex material (outside of appropriate sports occasions)
- Pajama clothing

*Students are **not** allowed to **bring** any of the following items with them to class:*

- Pillows

- Blankets
- Slippers/thick socks (students must wear shoes at all times of the school day)

** Note: Faculty & staff reserve the right to ask students to remove hats and hoods in any UCA environment where they consider learning to be disrupted. There may be occasions throughout the year in which students are asked to dress in formal attire.*

Faculty & staff who observe a student in violation of the outlined dress code policy will submit a referral to the Dean of Students in real-time. Given the severity of the violation, an immediate intervention may be requested. UCA students will only receive dress code referrals from faculty/staff members of their same gender. However, the Dean of Students reserves the right to address any student as it relates to dress code violations.

If there is a concern related to a student's attire, a conversation between administration and the student/parent may be requested. If a parent/guardian has a concern related to a student's attire who is *not* their child, they should contact the Dean of Students and not the student directly.

UCA reserves the right to amend the Student Dress Code Policy at any point in time during the school year.

Student Technology Policy

Laptops

The use of school-issued laptop computers on campus is a privilege which the school grants to any student who is willing to assume the responsibility of abiding by the guidelines set forth in this document. The following rules for laptop use apply to all portable electronic devices (e.g. cell phones or mp3 players with memory and/or internet capability).

As with textbooks and other class materials, students/families assume financial responsibility for any damage to UCA laptops and/or computers. If a laptop computer appears to have been stolen, the student will immediately report the incident to the Dean of Students, who will involve the necessary parties for an investigation.

Students may only use their school-issued laptops in a classroom with a teacher present and with teacher permission. The student must adhere to any additional guidelines which the classroom teacher may require. The use of the laptop may in no way disrupt or distract from the learning environment. **Students may not use a personal, non-UCA device at any point during the school day.**

Cell Phones & Electronic Communication Devices

The goal of the cell phone policy is to ensure a higher quality of education within the classroom, by eliminating the distraction of cell phones and smart watches. Research shows that when students do not have the freedom to access their phones during school hours, they are more engaged socially and academically.⁶ While cell phones serve many important purposes today and can improve aspects of our lives, they are also a consistent source of distraction for class & social engagement with one another.

⁶ awayfortheday.org, 2022

At UCA, students will...

- Turn off or silence their cell phones and smart watches.
- Place cell phones and smart watches in the classroom Cellphone Tree when entering a classroom, Study Hall or during Chapel.
- keep their school-authorized computers & chargers on their person throughout the school day.
- be allowed to use their phones before 1st Period, during lunch, in the hallway during passing periods, after 7th Period, or if directed by a faculty/staff member.

At UCA, students will not...

- use devices for taking pictures or video recording without permission.
- use devices in restrooms, dressing rooms, or other areas where there is a reasonable expectation of privacy.

UCA is not liable for lost and/or damaged personal electronic devices.

Within this policy, Personal Electronic Devices include, but are not limited to:

- Cellular phones
- Audio and MP3 Players
- Camera and video recording devices
- Electronic watches with audio and video functionality
- Headphones (wired and wireless)

There will be consequences issued by both teachers and the Dean depending on the incident. For example, a student refusing to place their phone in the classroom tree or lying about their phone will lose cell phone privileges for the day and a parent/guardian will be notified. We understand this is a new policy for students this year, so unless there is blatant refusal, please know that teachers will extend grace and warnings before contacting a parent/guardian.

In the event of a family emergency or a time-sensitive matter, parents and guardians should contact the school office at 708-980-1040 so that the school can notify their student. Please note that if there is an urgent matter on the student's end, your student (or a staff member) will contact you from the main office phone.

Threat Policy

If a student makes a verbal, cyber, or written threat of acts of serious or fatal harm, or if a weapon(s) (or anything perceived to be a weapon) is found on campus, a prompt investigation will occur. The threat may result in the student's expulsion, regardless of the intent of the threat.

Food Ordering Policy

Students are not allowed to order food through any delivery service (UberEats, DoorDash, Grubhub, etc.). Likewise, **parents are not allowed to order food through a delivery service for their student. All food that any delivery driver attempts to drop off will be turned away.** Please plan accordingly.

Consequence Referrals

All UCA faculty and staff are expected to submit consequence referrals to the Dean of Students following any infraction. Each infraction receives an appropriate consequence and restorative practice support set forth by the Dean of Students.

The aim of restorative practices is to develop community and to manage conflict and tensions by repairing harm and building relationships. When a student receives any sort of consequence based on an infraction, they are required to complete a Restorative Justice assignment while serving their consequence (i.e. morning detention, Saturday School, in-school suspension, etc.). These assignments will promote **Unity, Social & Emotional Learning, and Accountability**, which are the guiding principles of UCA’s Restorative Practice.

MTSS for Student Misconduct:

MTSS = Multi-Tiered Systems of Support

Tier 1	
<p>The Student</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Student is defiant, disrespectful, rude, or demonstrates uncooperative behavior ● Student has inappropriate attire ● Student is hiding their cellular device or refusing to put cell phone/smart watch in the classroom cellphone tree ● Student shows mild PDA (ublic Display of Affection) ● Student uses mild vulgarity/cursing ● Student has 1-3 tardies ● Student has 1 instance of academic dishonesty 	<p>Interventions/Consequences</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● For all student behaviors listed, students will receive a verbal warning from the teacher. ● After a warning, the teacher communicates possible consequences which includes his/her own classroom detentions where teachers choose time and date. ● The teacher administers the in-class consequence appropriately.
Tier 2	
<p>The Student</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Student is intentionally defying cell phone policy and lying about their phone ● Student is being destructive to school property or a fellow student’s property ● Student has habitual occurrences for Tier 1 infractions even after warnings ● Student has 3-5 tardies ● Student has 2 instances of academic dishonesty ● Students demonstrates aggression and mild verbal or physical fighting ● Theft from UCA or any UCA community member 	<p>Interventions/Consequences</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Dean will collect the cell phone or smart watch for the day ● The Dean, in collaboration with the teacher and SSW, creates an Intervention Plan or Behavioral Contract for the student ● The Dean will contact parent/guardian, set up a meeting, and communicate the plan ● Student is given a detention or some other Restorative activity (service project, pay for stolen item, etc.)

Tier 3

The Student

- Student has demonstrated inappropriate sensual behavior on campus
- Student engaged in physical, verbal, or cyber bullying
- Possession or threat of having a weapon on campus or at a UCA related function
- Possession, usage, or distribution of drugs, alcohol, or tobacco on campus or at a UCA related function
- Verbal, cyber, or written threats made toward UCA or any UCA community member
- Violent fighting and/or aggression
- Student has 5-7 tardies
- Student has 3 or more instances of academic dishonesty

Interventions/Consequences

- The Dean and Senior Leadership Team will contact and meet with parent/guardian and student to determine if the student can be restored to the UCA community or will need transfer support.
- If applicable, a plan will be created for the student's restoration to the UCA community.

Holistic Support & Learning

Why Holistic Support & Learning Matters

UCA seeks to empower a diverse community for the flourishing of all creation; flourishing is holistic and has more than one component. The policies described below have been designed to promote holistic flourishing for each individual student and for the UCA community. UCA believes that no individual is capable of holistic flourishing without the power of Christ working His will in our lives. We also believe that we have been given a responsibility to take care of our bodies and minds so that we can do his good work on earth. Because of this, UCA recognizes that no two students' needs are the same. As expressed in our mission statement, it is UCA's desire for students to feel *empowered* to advocate for their needs and respect the *diversity* of others' needs.

UCA uses evidence-based practices in holistic support interventions and holistic learning instruction. It is the goal of the School Social Worker to assess social-emotional needs, provide school-based strategies to manage stress and emotions, and give community-based referrals for additional assistance when necessary.

Holistic Support Process and Policies:

Holistic Support Process:

How Can UCA Faculty, Staff, and Students Communicate Student Concerns?

A Student Support Referral is an electronic form which gathers information about student concerns and are viewed and responded to by the Student Support Team (SST). There are various categories of concern: Classroom Emotional Regulation, Trauma Disclosure, Mental Health Concern, Physical Health Concern, Family Concern or Need. In the cases where there is more than one concern, the submitter can include a secondary concern.

How Can UCA Parents Communicate Student Concerns?

UCA believes that parents are just as instrumental in student flourishing as any faculty/staff member; parents are valued and should be listened to when they identify a need for their student. If there is a student or family concern that parents want to communicate, they can contact UCA's School Social Worker, Ms. Mikitka, (mmikitka@weareuca.org) at any point.

This worker will notify parents/ guardians of social work sessions within the first 8 meetings with a student, as The Illinois Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities Code at 405 ILCS 5/3-5A-105(a) states the following:

"Any minor 12 years of age or older may request and receive counseling services or psychotherapy on an outpatient basis. The consent of the minor's parent, guardian, or person in loco parentis shall not be necessary to authorize outpatient counseling services or psychotherapy. However, until the consent of the minor's parent, guardian, or person in loco parentis has been obtained, outpatient counseling services or psychotherapy provided to a minor under the age of 17 shall be initially limited to not more than eight 90-minute sessions."

Social Work Meeting Policy:

There are 3 ways in which a student can see the School Social Worker.

1. A student is eligible for Social Work services through their finalized Individualized Service Plan (ISP) or 504 plan. Goals and accommodations are implemented in this plan by the School Social Worker and other UCA support staff members.
2. A student can schedule a 30 minute appointment on the School Social Worker's calendar. This link will be shared with students during the first week of school and can be accessed at any time. No more than one appointment per week is permitted, unless there is an extenuating circumstance for additional support that is necessary. The School Social Worker reserves the right to reschedule the meeting based on the day's demands and priorities - this includes utilizing clinical judgment if a conversation can wait to take place before or after school.
3. A student can ask their teacher to visit the School Social Worker - this should be only used in cases of crisis or emergency. Students will sign in and out of the Social Work room to return to class in a timely fashion. The student will not be marked as tardy or absent from their class.

If students are not able to be met with during the school day, they are welcome to see Ms. Mikitka in her office while she is in the building (8AM-4PM) for any additional support.

Mental Health Emergencies:

If a student is an immediate danger to themselves or someone else during school hours, the Head of Administration (and/or other member(s) of Senior Leadership Team), and the student's parent(s)/guardian(s) will be immediately notified. UCA's Imminent Harm Protocol Plan will be followed in response. If a student is experiencing an emergency outside of school hours, please contact the following resources...

National Suicide Prevention Hotline

Phone Number: 988
Texting Crisis Line: 741-741, text "MHA" to talk to a trained counselor

Illinois Department of Child and Family Services (DCFS)*

Phone Number: 1-800-252-2873
*contact to report abuse or neglect

The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children*

Phone Number: 1-800-843-5678
*contact after 911 call (missing/runaway)

Illinois Warmline*

Phone Number: (866) 359-7953, then dial 2, then dial 5
Hours: 8-5pm, Monday-Friday
*contact if student wants to speak with a licensed counselor, will connect to crisis lines if necessary

The Trevor Project*

Phone Number: 1-866-488-7386
Text: type "START" to 678-678
*contact for crisis intervention and prevention for LGBTQ+ youth

Crisis and Referral Entry Services (CARES)* (For IL Families with Medicaid)

Phone Number: 1-800-345-9049
*CARES links parents to suicide screening and assessment, will send a professional for community mental health referrals

Good Samaritan Policy

Who you surround yourself with matters. UCA students are empowered to honor their classmates as a part of their learning community, including advocating for support if a student does not do it for themselves. **However, it is not the responsibility of any UCA student to provide mental health support for others.**

Therefore, if a UCA student observes another student struggling at any point during the school day, they are to notify any faculty/staff member to request Social Work support immediately.

There are no consequences if a student reaches out to a faculty/staff member. However, if students are found congregating during class hours at any part of the building, this is considered avoiding class instruction, which will result in a consequence referral.

Mandated Reporting Policy

All UCA administration, faculty, and staff are mandated reporters (325 ILCS 5/4). If a student discloses abuse or neglect, UCA employees are legally mandated to report the disclosure to the Department of Child and Family Services (DCFS). **If a disclosure is shared, it needs to be reported. UCA administration, faculty, and staff are not disclosure investigators.**

This mandate comes out of The Abused and Neglected Child Reporting Act (325 ILCS 5/et seq.), which states the following:

*“The Abused and Neglected Child Reporting Act is a state law intended to protect the health, safety, and best interests of the child in all situations in which the child is vulnerable to child abuse or neglect. The legislation requires the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS), upon receiving reports made under this Act, to offer protective services to prevent further harm to the child and to other children in the same environment or family, to stabilize the home environment, and to preserve family life whenever possible...Mandated reporters include social workers, school administrators, and both certified and non-certified school employees...**Failure of mandated reporters to report child abuse and neglect is a Class A misdemeanor...**The law provides immunity from liability to mandated reporters who report suspected child abuse or neglect, or who assist in an investigation of such.”*

If there is a disclosure of abuse or neglect that does not involve a UCA student's parent(s)/guardian(s), then the student's parent(s)/guardian(s) will be notified that a call was placed to DCFS. If there is a disclosure of abuse or neglect that *does* involve a UCA student's parent(s)/guardian(s), the student's parent(s)/guardian(s) cannot be notified that a call was placed, as this interferes with the DCFS investigation.

If a student discloses current or past abuse/neglect to a faculty/staff member, the faculty/staff member will notify the School Social Worker immediately to report the disclosure to DCFS. The School Social Worker is involved for the purposes of faculty/staff support and proper documentation.

UCA has finalized a policy with the Department of Child and Family Services. Investigators or case managers cannot speak to UCA students without prior notification to UCA that they are coming to the building to speak with a student. Any interviews conducted by DCFS with a student will be supervised by the School Social Worker. If a student is interviewed about a disclosure that does not involve their parent/guardian, that student's parent/guardian will be notified that their student met with an investigator at school.

Holistic Learning Principles:

UCA's mission statement expresses a commitment to prepare students to participate in the flourishing of all creation. At UCA, students are given opportunities to learn how to better explore self, empathize with their neighbors, and participate in responsible, Christ-centered relationships with others in their communities.

The Holistic Learning Principles are shared to the right (adapted from CASEL's Framework for Social-Emotional Learning, 2022). These principles are driven by three skill sets of the broader, social-emotional learning framework:

- (1) Cognitive Regulation Skills
- (2) Emotion Skills
- (3) Interpersonal Skills

(*SEL Every Day*: Srinivasan, 2019)

Past studies have shown that at least 80% of staff and community buy-in is necessary for holistic learning programs to be successful in schools. Allowing all UCA stakeholders (administrators, faculty/staff, and students) to share student concerns helps the School Social Worker address, and even prevent, mental health crises. An organized Holistic Learning Program also contributes to a healthy school culture, keeping lines of communication open between faculty/staff and students on a regular basis.

Just as Holistic Supports are given in tiers of intervention, opportunities for Holistic Learning are also shared at different levels within the UCA Community. These opportunities are outlined on the next page.

Holistic Learning at UCA

- **Self Awareness**
- **Self Management**
- **Social Awareness**
- **Relationship Skills**
- **Responsible Decision Making**



Tuition & Fees Payments

We believe an education at Unity Christian Academy is worth the investment you make as a family. We also believe that in our pursuit of excellence and diversity as a Christ-centered school, we are called to ensure that this valuable education is affordable for any family who desires to partner with us.

Economic diversity isn't just something we hope for; it is a core value of UCA and an added-value for our families as we seek to empower students to impact an incredibly diverse world. Our means-based tuition model naturally flows out of this value. A means-based approach to tuition is primarily focused on what a family can afford in relation to their household size and household income.

It is the expectation that all payments for tuition and fees are paid on time and in accordance with the terms outlined in each family's customized tuition contract. We encourage families to make all payments via **Blackbaud Tuition Management**. Families may also choose to make payments in the office via cash, check, or card. Effective August 10, 2023, there is a 3.5% fee added to card payments in the office to cover the fees that Unity Christian Academy is charged for processing those payments.

Should an issue arise regarding your ability to make a timely tuition payment, please contact Mr. Okuley directly via email (nokuley@weareuca.org) to schedule a phone call or appointment. To ensure every family receives the attention they deserve, walk-in requests for meetings of any nature are discouraged. The preferred method for scheduling all meetings with any member of leadership, faculty, or staff is email. Past due balances of over one month jeopardize student attendance. Families will also lose enrollment status if their entire balance is not paid prior to July 15. After July 15, families may only re-enroll when this balance is resolved. There will be a \$40 late fee added to a tuition payment that has not been received more than seven (7) days after the date the payment is due. This fee is non-refundable. Any NSF check returned will result in a \$25 charge. After one NSF check, tuition must be made using cash, money order, or credit card.

Tuition includes all required textbooks, educational materials, and day-long learning excursions. Additional fees are occasionally charged for transportation, out-of-town field trips, and other student activities. Athletics and co-curricular activities are **\$150 per season**. If a student participates in three activities, the third is free.

Unity Christian Academy
Empowerment. Diversity. Unity. Excellence. Flourishing.

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