

WHY COVENANT?

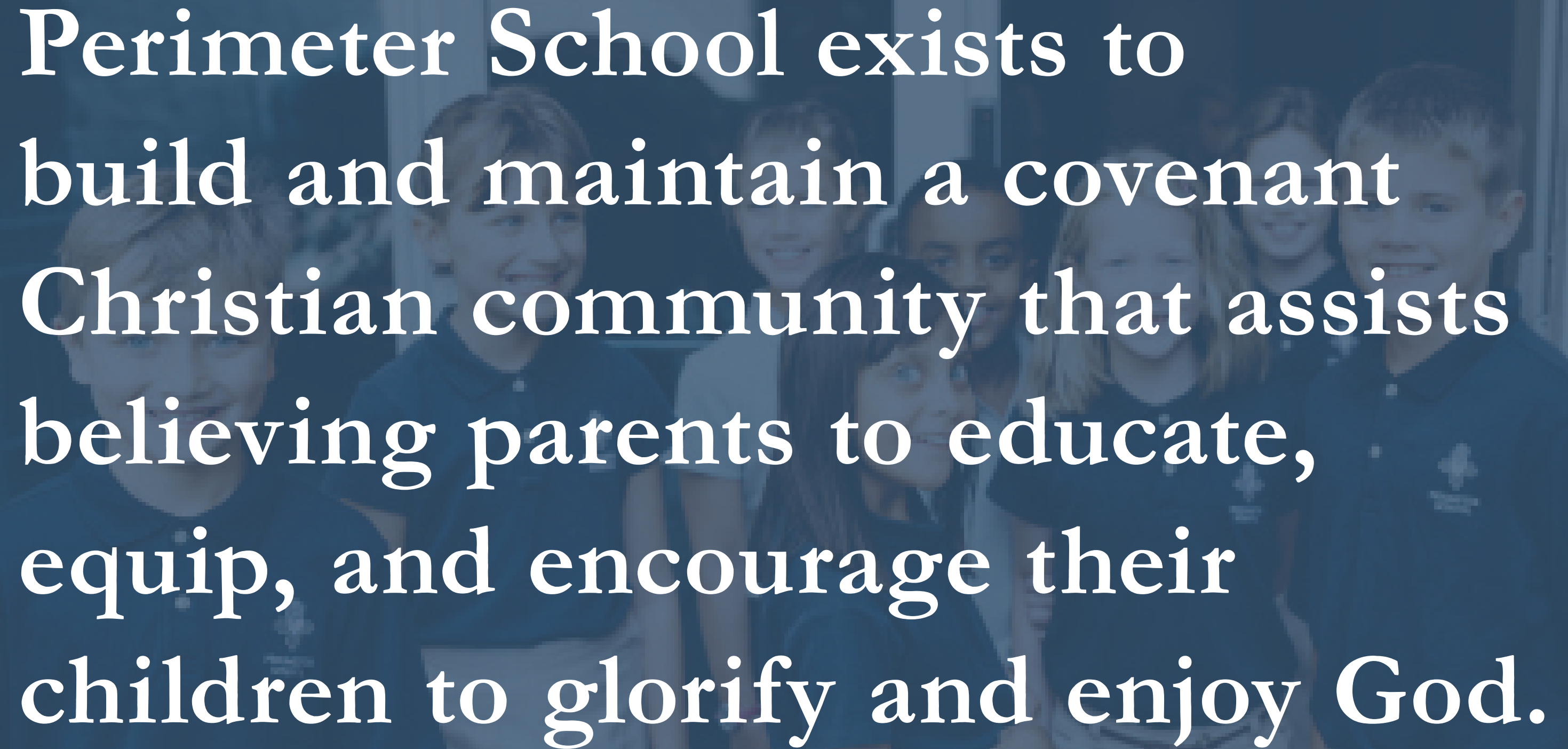


PERIMETER SCHOOL

A Covenant Christian Community

EST. 1983

FOUNDATIONS AND BELIEFS



Perimeter School exists to
build and maintain a covenant
Christian community that assists
believing parents to educate,
equip, and encourage their
children to glorify and enjoy God.

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An Introduction to Covenant

What Is a Covenant School?

In the realm of Christian school education worldwide, if a school is mentioned as being “covenant,” those who are somewhat familiar with the term would simply say that a covenant school is a Christian school for only Christians and is usually Presbyterian in its origin. A covenant school is far more than this. Even saying that it is a school for Christians raises questions as to who has to be a Christian (parents or students or both?), how that judgment is made, does it include the faculty, is church membership required, and many others.

Here we will attempt to define the ideas, foundations, and other particulars of a covenant school to more clearly explain its nature.

What Constitutes a Covenant?

A familiar definition of a covenant would be “an agreement, usually formal, between two or more persons to do or not do something specified.” This does in part apply to the covenant school in that multiple agreements (or covenants) are either affirmed or newly established between the parents of the student and other parties. It is important that all enrolling and existing families of Perimeter School clearly understand and commit to the following four covenants.

THE COVENANT OF GRACE

The Covenant between God and His People

This foundational covenant is the basis of all teaching, living, and playing in the covenant school. Sincere belief and surrender to the truth of this covenant is necessary for all school parents to enter into relationship with Jesus Christ and to become a part of the covenant family. Being a part of this covenant involves belief and trust in this truth.

Following the breaking of God’s covenant of obedience by Adam and Eve, mankind was unable to ever again meet God’s standard of holiness and righteousness. Sadly, a perfect relationship was broken. But willingly and lovingly, Jesus came and established a new covenant by doing what God required as a result of Adam’s sin, perfect obedience to the law and payment of the penalty of death by a substitutionary sacrifice on the cross. This blood atonement opened the door to restore a love relationship between God and all those whom Jesus chose before the creation of the world to be adopted as His sons and daughters. Early on, God began to define this covenant of grace with His people when He said to Abraham in Genesis 17, “I will establish my covenant as an everlasting covenant between me and you and your descendants after you for the generations to come, to be your God and the God of your descendants after you.”

This covenant of grace that Jesus provided is seen from Genesis to Revelation. It tells us that, as fallen sinners, we cannot possibly live righteously enough to satisfy God’s holy demands (Romans 3:10-12). What we could not do, God did for us in Christ. The righteousness of Christ that satisfied God was imputed to us. We did not deserve it. God’s restoring us to life was an act of pure grace (Romans 3:24; Ephesians 2:8-9).

While the mercy of God would keep us from getting what we deserve, the grace of God amounts to our getting the opposite of what we deserve - His favor instead of His condemnation. Instead of living with the penalty of the curse, the penalty was removed, and, through the Holy Spirit, we are created anew to live as image bearers, reflecting God in our thoughts, words, and actions.

In the atmosphere of most school education, it is sometimes difficult to grasp the idea of a covenant of grace. In schools, you receive rewards based upon what you earn. You get what you deserve determined by someone else’s judgment of how you performed in comparison to their expectations of you. If you did not receive good rewards, you did not deserve them because you did not do something well enough - according to the teacher’s perspective.

If you did not make the grade, then there is something wrong with you, and you are not worth as much as those who received the rewards. The obvious remedy to that is to do better. You can examine the nature of the problem as to why you did not do well, apply sensible corrective techniques, and do better next time. Then you will be all right.

If, per chance, you do not do better and cannot seem to do better, you can always change your determination of whose judgment is important to you. If you cannot get the grades your teachers or parents want you to get, you may be able to get the attention and admiration of your peers by acting up in class or by breaking rules with them. Somewhere, you will surely be able to live up to someone's expectations and thereby be an acceptable, valued person.

The obvious problem with this is that it doesn't work because it never deals with the real problem - namely the broken, fallen, sinful heart of the person who longs to be loved and accepted. Because of a fallen nature, this person can never live up to expectations well enough. Therefore, such persons continue to live in the shame, false appearances, cover-ups, denial, and fear that were characteristic of Adam and Eve. There is no hope in this. There is no grace in this. There is no life in this. In the covenant school, the atmosphere of the covenant of grace does not mean students will not achieve what is expected. Students are always encouraged to do their best, **but the love and acceptance of our students is based on who they are, not on what they do.** The love of Christ is unconditional. Because our work will always fall short, Jesus gave us His perfect report card! This profound truth is where covenant school education begins.

Adapted from Donovan Graham, "Teaching Redemptively," pp. 28, 29.

THE COVENANT REGARDING OUR CHILDREN

God's Blessing on the Children of Believers

When parents are brought into the covenant of grace on the basis of their faith in Christ, they receive the blessings and privileges of this covenant relationship, promised not only to His elect **but also to their children.** In the words of Charles Hodge:

"In the sight of God, parents and children are one. The former are the authorized representatives of the latter; they act for them; they contract obligations in their name. In all cases, therefore, when parents enter into covenant with God, they bring their children with them ... And so, when a believer adopts the covenant of grace, he brings his children within that covenant, in the sense that God promises to give them, in His own good time, all the benefits of redemption provided they do not renounce their baptismal engagement" (*Systemic Theology*, vol. 3, p. 555).

The scriptures confirm this teaching in numerous verses, such as this one: "'As for me, this is my covenant with them,' says the Lord. 'My Spirit, who is on you, and my words that I have put in your mouth will not depart from your mouth, or from the mouth of your children?'" (Isaiah 59:21).

The "baptismal engagement" to which Hodge refers simply means that our students must come to faith and trust in Christ themselves in order to receive the full redemption benefits of the covenant. It is an engagement, not a

marriage. As children of at least one Christian parent, covenant children receive special benefits afforded by God for a season. It is our hope and prayer that all students of Perimeter School will surrender their hearts to Jesus and come fully into the covenant of grace.

THE COVENANT BETWEEN SCHOOL PARENTS

The Role of the Church in Raising Children

At the time of baptism of children in the Presbyterian Church, the entire membership is asked to make a solemn pledge to assist the Christian parents in the training and nurturing of their covenant children. The idea that parents should be concerned about the future of someone else's children, including taking responsibility to pray for them, teach them, and love them unconditionally, is almost a foreign concept today.

We believe it takes the community of believers to effectively assist parents in the training of the next generation. In Psalm 78, God commands His people to make His deeds known to all their descendants so that "they will place their confidence in God" (Psalm 78:7). At Perimeter School, all parents accept the responsibility of being a "covenant dad" or a "covenant mom" to the other students in our school.

This covenant between our parents to assist one another is biblical, rewarding, life-changing, and sometimes even challenging. Allowing another parent to contact you with a concern about your child's heart or behavior takes great humility and the ability to resist defensiveness. Hopefully, the knowledge that this



parent genuinely cares about your child makes such conversations a blessing and a privilege of having the prayers and encouragement of the covenant school family. It is beneficial to seek counsel and support from another parent's wisdom, gained through both trial and error with their own children. **Parenting is hard, and we need one another.**

THE COVENANT BETWEEN HOME AND SCHOOL

The Role of the School as a Fourth Wall

The Bible indicates in Deuteronomy 6 that parents are given the primary responsibility in educating their children. Some parents choose to delegate all or part of this task to a school. The role that the covenant school assumes in this task can be described as the school becoming a “fourth wall” to the three walls of the home, thus completing the structure of education.

As a fourth wall, the covenant school teacher takes seriously his/her task of teaching while communicating regularly with parents his/her vision, content, delights, and prayers for the students. Parents volunteer to assist the teacher in numerous ways of support, including teaching. As a result, the parents and teachers of the school come into a covenant that allows an extension of home into the school. School policies are made to govern relationships and responsibilities by a School Ministry Team made up of school parents and administrators. This team works hard to strengthen all four walls for the preservation of the covenant.

The responsibilities of the parents in the covenant school include formal instruction of their children as well as informal training. To accomplish this requires meeting, teaching, supervising, playing, praying, serving, and caring for the students, teachers, staff, and other parents. The school expects that its parents will take their covenant promises seriously and joyfully. Not only do we desire to prepare the next generation, but also we desire for parents to enjoy and spend quality time with their children.



A Christian's Response to Covenant

No one can earn or merit the covenant of grace; otherwise, it is a misnomer. Christ alone met the conditions or requirements of the old covenant of works or obedience in order to establish a new covenant. Yet there are needed responses that flow from the awesome nature of this covenant, coming hopefully from the love of God placed in us (John 14:15). As Susan Hunt has stated, “Enjoying this (covenant) privilege requires an intentional, disciplined pursuit” (*Heirs of the Covenant*, p. 37). The following responsibilities make up the disciplined pursuit of the covenant school family.

GENERAL RESPONSIBILITIES OF ALL COVENANT SCHOOL FAMILIES

- To rule over creation and transform the culture for Christ, rather than having it rule over us. This is called the creation or cultural mandate and includes relationships with God, man, and nature (Genesis 1:28; 2:15).
- To “eat, drink, or whatever (we) do, do it all for the glory of God” (I Corinthians 10:31).
- To study to show yourself to God as one approved ... who correctly handles the word of truth (II Timothy 2:15) and takes captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ (II Corinthians 10:15).
- To “conform no longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind” (Romans 12:2).
- To provide times of private and corporate worship of God for their family (Hebrews 2:12).

- To honor, serve, and empty ourselves to serve other families and those in need (Philippians 2).

COVENANT SCHOOL PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES

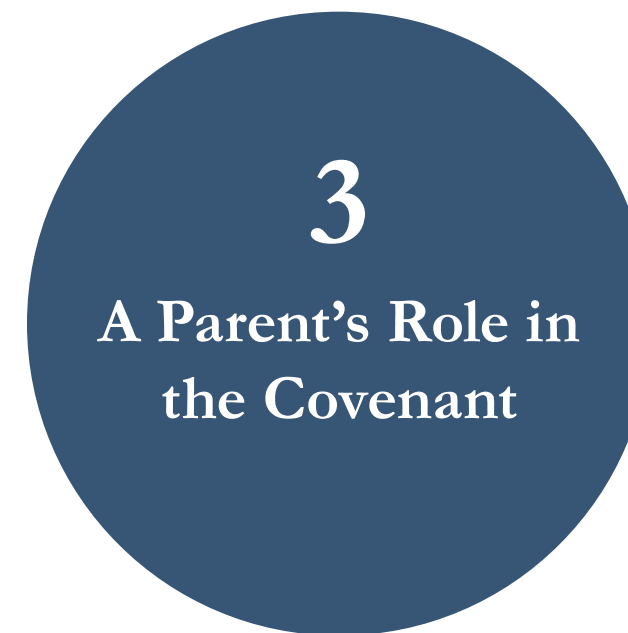
- To teach their children God’s truth informally through experiences in life, “when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up” (Deuteronomy 6:7).
- To teach their children God’s truth formally through reading the Scriptures regularly and carefully, “so that they can listen and learn to fear the Lord your God...” (Genesis 31:12; Ephesians 6:4).
- To explain to their children their benefits as covenant children including hearing God’s Word, praying and being prayed for, receiving the sign of the covenant in baptism, and growing up as a part of the community of faith through relationships at home, school, and church (Hunt, p. 98).
- To present the gospel to their children through word and deed with the desire that the covenant of grace will be embraced early in their lives (Matthew 19:14; Acts 2:39).

COVENANT SCHOOL STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

- To recognize that to abide forever in the covenant of grace means to embrace Christ as his/her personal Lord, not just the God of his/her parents (Acts 16:31), and once converted, to live to glorify God and enjoy Him forever.
- To respond in obedience and gratitude for the benefits of being a covenant child.
- To see his/her vocation as a student a calling by God and just as important as any other vocation, requiring serious work and collaborative learning.

COVENANT SCHOOL TEACHER RESPONSIBILITIES

- To assist parents in the Christian nurture of their covenant child (*PCA Book of Church Order*, chapter 56).
- To perform services for the edification of fellow believers, including relieving each other in outward things (i.e. assisting parents teaching their own children), according to their abilities and necessities (*Westminster Confession of Faith*, XXVI of Communion of Saints, Chapter 24, Article 2).
- To proclaim the awe, power, and wonders of God to the next generation (Psalm 78:4).
- To approach teaching children reverently and in the fear of God to avoid being a stumbling block to them (Luke 17:2).



Why Then a Covenant School?

In helping assist the parents of covenant children in their responsibilities of educating their children in the truth, a church may choose to go beyond the normal weekend ministry and provide a daily school. There is no biblical obligation for this form of assisting parents, but it is a wonderful benefit to those who seek help from a larger body of Christ in raising their children. We are grateful that Perimeter Church has chosen to provide this ministry.

Since this type of school contains covenant children, parents fulfilling their covenant responsibility to those children and to one another, teachers practicing their covenant responsibility to the next generation, and a foundation resting on the covenant of grace, the school is called a covenant school.

Because the responsibility for nurturing and educating children is given to parents by God, the covenant school operates not in place of but as an extension of the home. The covenant school should bask in the covenant of grace that makes it possible. While this is a good summary, there are numerous other implications of the covenant to explore and implement in establishing a covenant school.

What Is the Parent’s Commitment to the School?

From its foundation, our leaders knew that Perimeter School would not be a school best suited to every family.

Parents (not the church or the state) are called to make the educational decision for their children. In our desire to make Perimeter School an extension of the home for our covenant families, we have established beneficial commitments for our parents. They are significant in that they involve perhaps our greatest calling beyond our salvation: to raise up a godly generation of disciples of Christ. These covenant commitments give us great opportunity to retain the joy in being our child's teacher.

PARENTS ARE COMMITTED TO A BIBLICAL VIEW OF RAISING CHILDREN.

- Our ultimate responsibility to educate our children according to Deuteronomy 6:6, 7
- Our submission to the authority of Jesus Christ, the leadership of our church, and civil authorities
- Our regular practices of spiritual growth that include personal, family, and corporate worship and prayer

PARENTS ARE COMMITTED TO THE EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY OF PERIMETER SCHOOL.

- Allowing the school to assist us in the individual education of our child
- Obedience to the schoolwide policies governing all students
- Praying regularly for all school staff, faculty, and other school families
- Being the motivator to assure our child fulfills his/her school responsibilities



- Submitting upon entering the school to a compatibility period in order for the school and the home to determine if our covenant school is a good fit

PARENTS ARE COMMITTED TO PUNCTUAL ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENTS AT SCHOOL FUNCTIONS BY BOTH PARENTS AND STUDENTS.

- Schoolwide campus meetings
- Parent-Teacher conferences
- Class parent meetings
- Regular school days
- Enrichment Days (including field trips and service projects)
- School drop-off and pick-up times

PARENTS ARE COMMITTED TO TEACHING AND CHAPERONING ENRICHMENT DAYS AND FIELD TRIPS AS REQUIRED.

- In all grades, both covenant mothers and covenant fathers are required to lead Enrichment Days and service opportunities.
- In grades one and two, parents are asked to plan, coordinate, and teach learning experiences (Friday Enrichment Days) during the year and assist with several others. The exact number of these experiences may vary each year depending on class size.
- In grades three and above, parents will plan and participate in Enrichment Days. In addition, covenant parents (either mother or father) agree to assist the teacher with various tasks at his/her request. This may involve teaching specific skills, planning and supervising outside activities and trips, planning parties, etc.

PARENTS ARE COMMITTED TO A BIBLICAL MODEL AND PRACTICE OF COMMUNICATION.

- Following requested channels of concerns or criticisms by going first to the appropriate party (teacher, parent, principal, etc.)
- Refraining from giving bad reports or gossiping about issues with others
- Bringing constructive suggestions to the administration or School Ministry Team in writing
- Letting the administration know whether or not the school's commitment to competent teaching, comprehensive curriculum, regular feedback, proper supervision, cooperation with the home, and/or love

- and respect for your child is being met
- Letting the administration know if any of your commitments cannot be met in advance so that arrangements can be made

PARENTS ARE COMMITTED TO TRUSTING AND PARTNERING WITH TEACHERS AND PRINCIPALS IN DISCIPLINING THEIR CHILDREN.

- Encouragement, prayer, and forgiveness of students as well as correction
- Pursuing formation of godly habits of thought and behavior
- Consultation with administration as to proper consequences for serious offenses
- Recognition that behavior off-site and outside of school hours may also result in school discipline
- Removal of their child from school if behavior warrants such
- Recognition that the school retains the final word on a student suspension, probation, or expulsion

PARENTS ARE COMMITTED TO ACCEPT THE BREADTH AND SCOPE OF PERIMETER SCHOOL'S PROGRAM, REALIZING THAT THE SCHOOL CANNOT MEET THE EDUCATIONAL NEEDS OF ALL COVENANT CHILDREN.

The school retains the right, after careful testing and examination, to deny admission or re-enrollment to any student whose needs are not best met by its program. **This may include required testing, outside tutoring, or therapy in order for a student to be enrolled or to remain enrolled.**

PARENTS ARE COMMITTED TO THE SCHOOL AS A NON-PROFIT MINISTRY OF PERIMETER CHURCH.

- Recognizing that members of Perimeter Church are given enrollment priority if other admission standards are met
- Recognizing the school's tuition does not cover all expenses and the desire for 100% annual participation of all our families in our Covenant Fund (this fund provides scholarship assistance, capital needs, and faculty support and development) and the Georgia GOAL Scholarship Program (by redirecting state tax dollars to Perimeter School)
- Recognizing the school's submission overall to the authority of the Session of Perimeter Church

- Recognizing that the Georgia GOAL Scholarship makes it possible for many families to be part of our covenant community, for families and businesses to participate in this program by redirecting a portion of their Georgia taxes to benefit students and families in our own community.

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A Child's Role in the Covenant

What Is a Covenant Child?

HOW IS HE/SHE IDENTIFIED?

Specifically, a student is a covenant child if he/she has **at least one believing parent**. I Corinthians 7:14 describes the children of a believing father or mother as “holy” and set apart, thus receiving the privileges and benefits of the covenant.

WHERE DOES HE/SHE STAND SPIRITUALLY?

A covenant child may or may not be a follower of Christ. Though raised in a loving Christian home and church from infancy, **the child must profess his/her own faith in Christ, repent, and surrender his/her will to Him to be saved**. Until that time, God works in a covenantal way in the life of the covenant child. Though not a guarantee, he/she may accept Christ early in life through a gradual rather than dramatic process. Psalm 103:17-18 affirms God's love for covenant children: “But from everlasting to everlasting the Lord's love is with those who fear Him, and His righteousness with their children's children - with those who keep his covenant and remember to obey His precepts.”

WHAT SHOULD WE EXPECT OF A COVENANT CHILD?

In the book of Genesis, we find not only the beginning of God's covenant with man, but also the detail of man's beginning as the crown of God's creation. We begin to discover what being “made in the image of God” means, as well as the importance of personhood. **A child is a person, having the potential that Adam and Eve received as the first man and woman**. As God is one God in three persons, mankind was created with a personality not the same as but a reflection of his/her Maker.

What are some personal qualities that all children possess as image-bearers? Dr. Donovan Graham helps us with some of this list, as cited in his book *Teaching Redemptively*:

- Rational – the ability to think and reason
- Responsible – the ability to willfully act according to one's beliefs
- Communicable – the ability to learn languages, to speak, to write, and to read with others
- Exercising dominion – the ability to rule over and use God's creation appropriately
- Faithful – the ability to act consistently upon one's commitment and belief in truth
- Affective – the ability to feel, show compassion, express anger, and enjoy laughter
- Creative – the ability to produce ideas, objects, inventions, music, buildings, etc.
- Moral – the ability to discern right and wrong and to make choices
- Social – the ability to interact socially and intimately with other people in relationships
- Active in work – the ability to carry out tasks responsibly and creatively to the glory of God
- Complimentary – the ability to express recognition for the goodness of others

These personal qualities of all covenant children are critical to recognize and understand as we build our school programs, structure, and curriculum. These are also vital to consider as we establish expectations of our students.

WHERE DOES HE/SHE STAND SPIRITUALLY?

To describe a child's potential, especially in relation to Adam's personality before the fall, is obviously only part of the story. After the fall, each of the qualities mentioned above were distorted, and thorns and thistles entered the ideal garden of our existence. Thus today, in our society and in our own lives, we often see irrational thinking, stubborn will, poor communication, arrogant dominion, hatred instead of compassion, apathy and destruction instead of creativity, immorality, perverted relationships, laziness, and perfectionism.

Though a covenant child is blessed by God, he/she still retains a sinful nature all of his/her life as a fallen image-

bearer marred by sin even after the covenant is ratified in his/her life by conversion. Since we know our children have this sin nature, we must be careful at home or school never to deny it with the misconception that somehow “my child would never lie” or dwell too much on it with a perspective that never sees past his/her nature to his/her worth as a person. The common and special grace of God in the life of a child can produce ideas and actions to His glory. Through the refining fire of our imperfection and moral failures, God calls children that follow Him (Matthew 9:12, 13).

HOW DO WE HELP A CHILD DEAL WITH HIS/HER NATURE?

Charlotte Mason in her *Philosophy of Education* summarized this well: “I am considering the child as he is, and am not tracing him, either with Wordsworth to the heights above, or with the evolutionist, to the depths below, because a person is a mystery. That is we cannot explain him or account for him as he is. This wonder of personality does not cease when a child goes to school.”

It is important to understand that this topic deals not primarily with effective control, which is unfortunately a litmus test for schools today, but rather with the proper discipline and nurturing of the covenant child that prohibits his/her sin nature from destroying and inhibiting his/her potential as an image-bearer of Christ.



The Formation of Habits

Too often, as parents and teachers, we find ourselves in a “reactive” mode to a child’s selfish and uncontrolled nature, having never put into place training to help him/her avoid and re-channel some of his/her actions. One effective way to be proactive with children in discipline is the formation of godly and practical habits that help to train the will of the child. (These habits were reinforced in the homes and schools of the Parents National Education Union, founded by Charlotte Mason in the 19th century, re-emphasized by Susan Schaeffer Macaulay in *For the Children’s Sake* in the 20th century, and are continued by Perimeter School in the 21st century.) They are timeless life skills and include the habits of attention, thinking, remembering, neatness and order, truthfulness, responsibility, courtesy, self-control, obedience, and fortitude. Sounding a great deal like good manners, **these habits are best instilled and most effective as they are initiated at home and reinforced at the school.** That way the school operates as an extension of the home.

The Focus on the Heart

We must keep in mind that regardless of the methods or disciplines that man may effectively use, only the Spirit of God can truly transform the character of a child. Behavior, good or bad, does not always reflect the true condition of a child’s heart. As John Calvin said, “Regeneration is the reformation of the image of God in us.” This reformation takes place not in manipulating behavior but in true heart change.

In spite of the best habit formation, children (like their parents) will still fall into sin and hurt others as well as themselves. When the home, school, and church work together to inform, rebuke, forgive, set consequences, and restore the erring child, perhaps no greater growth in Christian character takes place! Yet, when any of these institutions is too weak, too harsh, or uncooperative, harm can be done. That is why these integral forces must be bathed in prayer for wisdom, discernment, strength, and compassion, always looking to probe the heart of the child.

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Perimeter School's Role in the Covenant

How Is a Covenant Child Best Educated?

WHAT ARE THE FOUNDING PRINCIPLES OF PERIMETER SCHOOL?

In 1983, a small group of parents of covenant children at Perimeter Church, led by its pastor Randy Pope and his wife, Carol, chose to start a covenant school instead of another Christian school. They began a school that provided a unique structure to meet what they believed were the needs of young children. The school began with one first grade class of six students. In 1986, with three grades and 24 total students, a headmaster was hired, and the school gradually grew to the capacity of the Norcross and now Johns Creek location, established in 1996. As years have passed, some modifications and improvements have been necessary, but those same core values and principles have been retained. With some revisions, the original values included:

- Keeping children at home in the early years to be nurtured primarily by their own parents in those critical years when values are rooted and imitated.
- Beginning formal education at age five but shortening the school day of grades K-3 to allow more time at home and to be outdoors.
- Providing an opportunity in school, as well as out, for parents to teach and/or mentor the covenant children of their child's class.
- Limiting class sizes to small numbers to improve teaching, relationships, and a sense of being home

at school.

- Focusing in grades one and two on the disciplinary subjects of reading, writing, math, and Bible, leaving inspirational subjects including history, science, art, music, and even outreach for parents to teach on Fridays. This one-day-a-week rotating parent teaching came to be called "Friday Enrichment Days."

HOW HAVE THOSE PRINCIPLES BEEN AMENDED AND STRENGTHED?

- Our belief remains that children are best served by parents as the primary educators, but a proper developmental approach to kindergarten at age five can benefit some children. We do not structure our kindergarten program to be highly formal or strictly academic. Grades are not issued.
- The length of the school day in third grade has been expanded to make Tuesday through Thursday full days in order to better prepare students for the transition to full day fourth grade. Mondays and Fridays are still half days.
- It is a joy for us to serve Perimeter School parents by offering Adventure as an optional full-day offering for kindergarten through third grade, featuring developmentally appropriate experiences that spark the imagination. Offered Mondays through Fridays, students may enroll in just one or up to all five days.

WHAT ARE OUR MAJOR PRINCIPLES OF PRACTICE? (WHY WE DO WHAT WE DO)

Like the schedule and the structure, it is our desire that all the components of the school should reflect what we believe is best for covenant children. A child is not a receptacle to be filled, a product to be molded, or a mind to be manipulated. A child is a person.

Education is an Atmosphere

When the covenant child is seen in the proper balance of his/her potential and his/her nature, then the atmosphere of the school becomes critical to allow his/her growth and the flourishing of his/her personhood.

We believe in creative engagement of the student's ideas, gifts, and skills rather than teacher-centered instruction, which sees a child simply as an empty receptacle to be filled with the teacher's ideas and thoughts or as a machine to fill out worksheets. At its extreme, the child is seen not as a person but a product, an outcome that is defined by the student's compliance with the teacher's program.

We believe that the proper atmosphere of a school is destroyed when grades and rewards become the motivating force of the classroom. This focus again robs children of their innate desire to love to learn, replacing it with “carrots” that, when removed, leave children frustrated and apathetic and dishonoring their created being. Though Perimeter School does introduce grading in the later grades to prepare students for high school, we work hard to properly motivate children without bribes or competition.

We strive to create an atmosphere that contains a variety of actions but is never chaotic or without purpose. It may be noisy or perfectly quiet. It is built on a respect for God, for teachers, and for fellow classmates. It focuses on exploration and discovery. It recognizes that the Holy Spirit of God guides us into all truth and can surprise us with an entirely unexpected lesson on any day!

Finally, we strive to create a safe “home away from home” for children with a variety of giftednesses, personalities, physical attributes, and styles of learning that God has created in them. This safety is not provided simply as a part of discipline and structure. By providing a broad curriculum that can appeal to the greatest number of individual interests as possible, by encouraging collaboration, and by gifted teaching, learners of different styles can operate in an atmosphere of grace and servanthood. Admittedly, it is a hard task to challenge each child right where he/she is, but with the Holy Spirit as the guide, we can see all students grow in knowledge of the truth, according to how God created him/her.

Education Is a Discipline

This principle is to be understood as training, not punishment. Though children are encouraged to share ideas and creative thought, education requires an intentional plan by the teacher to give students tools to refine and direct their thinking and develop habits and skills. Though their minds are inspired, training how to express, edit, and focus their thoughts is a part of our approach. Collaboration and work with others is also of great importance.

We encourage our parents and teachers to ask this question often: **“Am I preparing my child for the road ahead, or am I too often trying to prepare the road ahead for my child?”**

Giftedness, talent, and brilliant ideas can often be useless if a child is not trained in humility, servanthood, and self-control. Our teachers are diligent to pray for the fruits of God’s Spirit to be growing in the minds and hearts of their students.

Education Is a Life

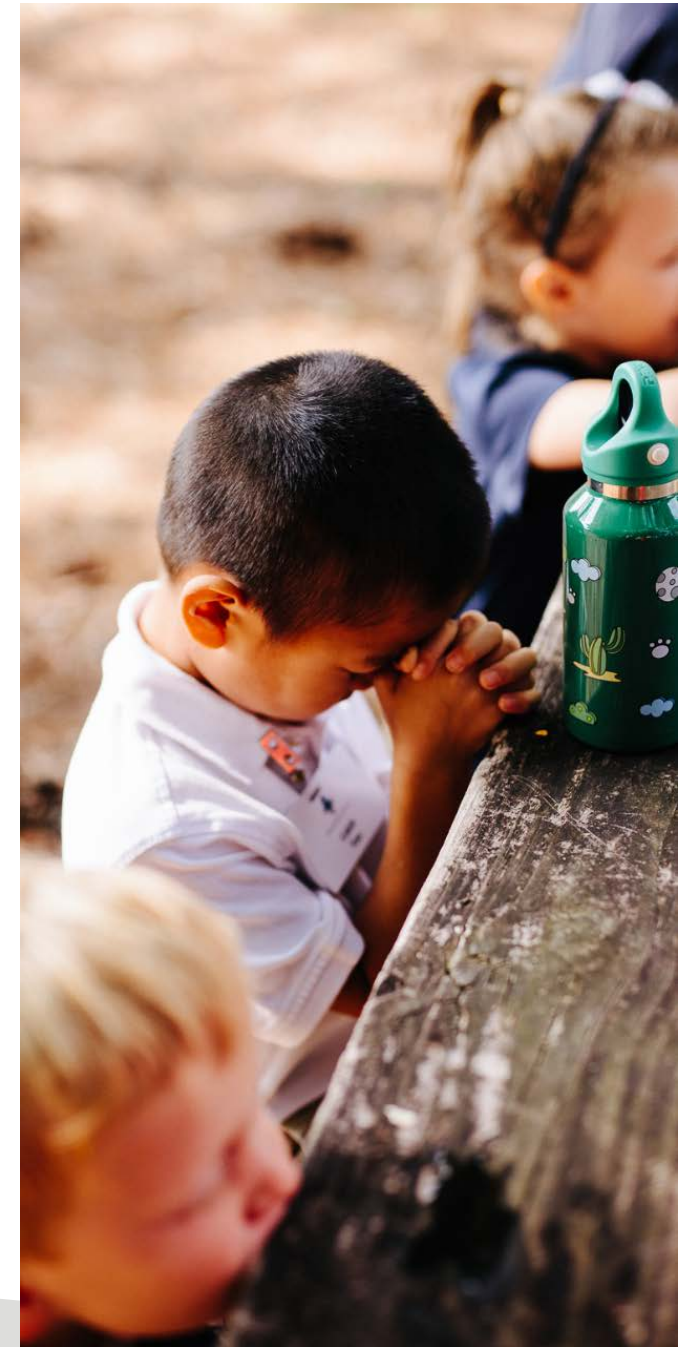
Like nutritious food for the body, the mind of a child feasts on ideas, not just facts. It is often amazing what ideas our children can come up with, and, as long as they fit the subject at hand, they ought to be encouraged. As parents, perhaps we have at times been too quick to react to the seeming misbehavior of our child until we heard the idea behind the action. All knowledge has an informing idea that makes it nourishing. The idea to build a treehouse, to write a play, or to paint a portrait, can energize a student to learn the facts, discipline his/her mind, and gain the knowledge that makes the idea become reality. Ideas can be coated with facts so that both are ingested easily.

This is a life-long process. As parents model the love of learning and creating new ideas to their children, the children will flourish in schools where innovation is encouraged. The use of living books full of interesting ideas rather than dry, fact-filled texts is critical to the life of covenant education. We become what our minds feast upon.

Education Is the Science of Relations

“He/She surely knows his/her _____.”
What would you fill in here for your child? Video games, Disney movies, American Girl dolls? Whatever we fill in, it is with this knowledge that our child has developed a relationship.

In our hectic lifestyles, we often find ourselves



“acquainted with all, but master of none.” Our knowledge at best is too often superficial. The goal of education should be to bring ourselves into greater knowledge and thus greater relation to God, other people, the natural world, and things that are good (Philippians 4:8).

We see these priorities as far back as Adam and Eve when God commanded Adam to build a relationship with the animals by naming them and with the garden by working it. A child’s knowledge of God, the great men and women of history, and the beauties of nature will enrich and fulfill his/her life, for we are created for relationship. A part of this teaching involves the application of a child’s beliefs into his/her understanding of the history of mankind, the stewardship of God’s gifts, the place of technology, the treatment of friends, the respect for authority, and many other relations.

In the mind of God, all knowledge is unified, for in Him it all holds together (Colossians 1:17). In our finite minds, we must divide knowledge into subject areas. But we must always remind students that these are manmade distinctions. Our hope is that our students will never lose their awe and wonder at the amazing creativity of God and His relation to all things.



Perimeter School’s Commitment to Its Families

WE WILL ENCOURAGE, ADMONISH, AND PRAY THAT YOUR CHILD WILL UNDERSTAND AND LIVE OUT OUR STUDENT MOTTO:

I am a child of God, I ought to do His will, I can do what He tells me, and by grace alone, I will.

This motto deals in a sense with all that has gone before in this document. Our students, upon seeing themselves as covenant children immensely blessed by God, will respond, compelled by their love for their Father. This response will include learning what they ought to do, why they ought to do it, and realizing that they can do it through Christ who strengthens them. As the learning process continues, they will grow through the trials and successes to see how it is the grace of God that transforms their mind and their will in conformance with His own. Indeed He has already laid out good works for him/her to accomplish (Ephesians 2:10).

WE WILL PROVIDE A QUALITY ACCREDITED EDUCATION OF MIND, BODY, AND SPIRIT

Perimeter School believes that its educational program not only meets the developmental needs of covenant children but in doing so, provides a rigorous academic program to challenge its students to overcome their weaknesses and develop their gifts. We do this in part by high expectations of our students and communicating with them in an uplifting rather than condescending manner.

As C.S. Lewis states, “Is this not how the higher thing always raises the lower? A mother teaches her baby to talk by talking to it as if it understood long before it really does” (*Mere Christianity*, p. 167). Our school’s facility, program, and faculty are fully accredited in Grades K-8 by the Georgia Accrediting Commission (GAC), an officially recognized accrediting agency of the Georgia State Department of Education. We are also a member of the Atlanta Christian School Association and ChildLight Schools

WE WILL SUPPLY A SOLID AND BROAD CURRICULUM

Perimeter School is not a “back to the basics” or “classical school” in regard to curriculum, for we believe the personality of a child needs a richer feast. Our curriculum guide is extensive, broad, rich in content, thorough, and infused by the Word of God. We include a taste of all areas of knowledge, since those who struggle with some traditional content are often delighted and motivated by art, nature, or music. Our approach is to inspire children with great books and great minds.

But also, we believe that real life is also our curriculum. The joys and sufferings of people around us, the challenges of getting along with each other, and the impact of local, national, and worldwide events are also our broad curriculum.

WE WILL HIRE, SUPPORT, AND CONTINUE TO TRAIN A COMPETENT AND QUALIFIED FACULTY AND STAFF OF BELIEVERS

With one's walk with Christ being the key qualification, the school is committed to hiring, training, and supporting teachers, staff, and administration who love children and desire to help parents nurture them in knowing Christ. It is our desire to celebrate parenthood and encourage good parenting as we hope our parents in turn will encourage good teaching. Our teachers all have full college degrees, many with master-level credentials, years of experience, and teaching in the area of their specialization and passion. They are desirous to be continual learners, following reading and training programs assigned by the administration. Continuing education opportunities are also encouraged and funded by the school Covenant Fund. The covenant with parents is key in our philosophy, and teachers are committed to honest, regular, and coherent feedback to their students' parents. A true partnership is sought and prayed for.

WE WILL PLACE YOUR CHILD IN A SAFE AND QUALITY FACILITY TO ENHANCE LEARNING

Our church, designed to be a safe home for its members, graciously helps provide the buildings and grounds of Perimeter School. We are concerned with your child's well-being, cleanliness, and safety while a student here. The facility meets and exceeds all accreditation standards for both public and private schools in the state of Georgia. Most importantly, it provides the magnificent atmosphere for both the indoor and outdoor learning that our children need.

WE WILL MAINTAIN AN ATTENTIVE AND SUPPORTIVE ADMINISTRATION

Our head of school and principals desire to do more than "run" the school; they also act in a pastoral role to families. We strive to maintain a safe home for children at school, teaching them the principles that make the school an effective mission to those in the surrounding community and beyond. We desire feedback to improve our program, which we see as dynamic and ever-changing to meet the challenges of education in a rapidly changing world. We commit to pray for our families and our faculty, being vulnerable and transparent enough to share our prayer needs with you as well. We commit finally to carry out, by God's grace, the policies of Perimeter School in a humble and servant-hearted manner.

WE WILL SET POLICY AND ENCOURAGE COVENANT LIVING THROUGH PRAYERFUL PARENTS ON A SCHOOL MINISTRY TEAM

Operating under the authority given by the Session of Perimeter Church, the School Ministry Team (SMT) pledges to serve the school by setting and reviewing school policies that will help accomplish the school's mission. The School Ministry Team is composed of 18 current parent, along with the principals and head of school. Their goal is to represent, shepherd, and encourage all our covenant families. They will gladly read and respond to written suggestions from our families. They further commit to asking God to help us view the good of the school as a whole without regard to personal interests. Finally, they pledge to strengthen and preserve the foundational beliefs of the covenant school in order to retain its distinctiveness.

WE WILL COMPLY WITH ALL STATE AND FEDERAL POLICIES REGARDING ADMISSIONS AS IS FITTING TO A CHURCH-OWNED SCHOOL

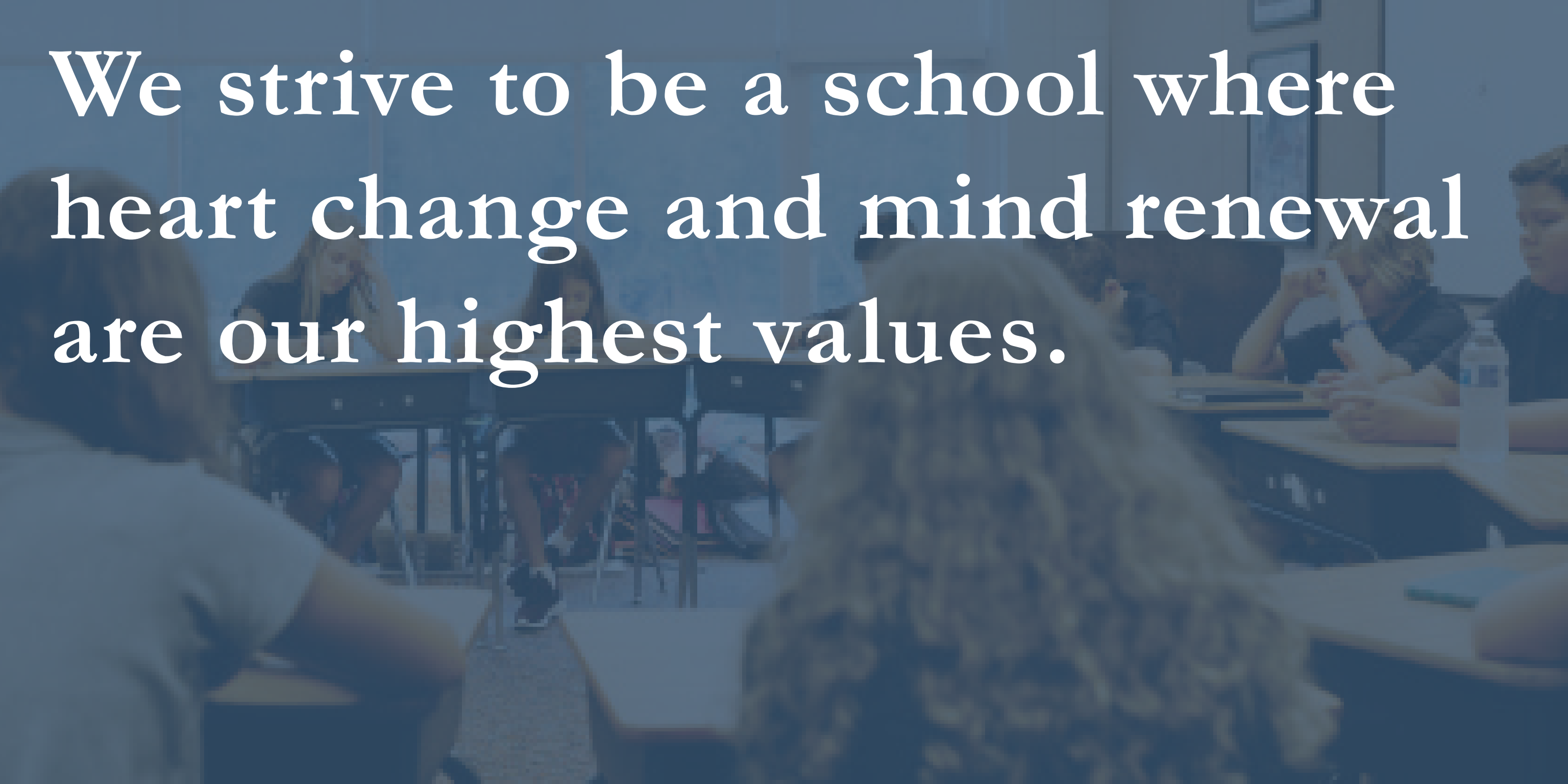
Perimeter School admits students of any race, color, or national or ethnic origin to all rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, or national or ethnic origin in administration of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





OUR BELIEFS

- We believe the Bible alone is God’s infallible and authoritative Word to man. It is the only standard by which faith and practice are to be measured.
- We believe in the inspiration and inerrancy of the 66 books making up the entire Holy Scriptures.
- We believe God is a triune God – the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
- We believe in the majesty and sovereignty of God.
- We believe that God spoke and purposefully created the universe out of nothing.
- We believe that God created men in His image. Through their relationship to Adam, all men are sinners by nature and do themselves practice sin. They are thus alienated from God, their neighbor, and the world.
- We believe that at the fall, this image of God in man was broken, resulting in man’s total depravity.
- We believe in God’s gracious plan of redemption, as described in The Old and New Testament.
- We believe that Jesus Christ is the only Savior of sinners, the only way to the Father. He died as a substitute for sinners and was resurrected to life so that they might be reconciled to God.
- We believe that eternal life is a free gift that is received through faith alone in Jesus Christ. Eternal life is neither deserved by anyone, nor can it be earned or merited by the performance of good deeds.
- We believe that God applies the salvation earned by Jesus Christ to man through the Holy Spirit.
- We believe that persons not under the covenant of God’s saving grace are condemned to a literal place of eternal punishment and separation from God. God’s word reveals that there will be a final judgment of man, the consequences of which lead either to heaven or hell.
- We believe that the chief end of man is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever.
- We believe children of believing parent(s) are rightly called “covenant” children, thereby receiving special benefits from God exclusive of salvation.
- We believe in the priority of the church and the necessity of local church membership by believers.
- We believe that a representative form of government is the most biblical and practical way to operate a covenant school.
- We believe we must show compassion and mercy to persons who choose non-biblical lifestyles and violate the sanctity of human life, while not embracing the choice.
- We believe that the term “marriage” has only one meaning: the uniting of one biological man and one biological woman in a single, exclusive union, as delineated in Scripture (Genesis 2:18-25). We believe that God intends sexual intimacy to occur only between a man and a woman who are married to each other (1 Corinthians 6:18; 7:2-5; Hebrews 13:4). We believe that God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged in outside of a marriage between a biological man and a biological woman.
- We believe that in doctrinal issues there must be unity in the essentials and love in the non-essentials.



We strive to be a school where heart change and mind renewal are our highest values.



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