



"Patriots" Handbook

19 George Street
Lynchburg, Virginia 24502
434-237-1899
Fax 434-237-0820

A Ministry of the
Lynchburg Seventh-day Adventist Church

Desmond T. Doss Christian Academy currently serves K-10th grade and is supervised and accredited by The Potomac Conference of Seventh-day Adventists (www.pcsda.org/ed) is an accredited agency for private schools in the Commonwealth by the Virginia Council for Private Education, as authorized by the Virginia Board of Education.

Let the children come to me and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.

Matthew 19:14

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Our Mission..... 1
Our Vision..... 1
Our Philosophy..... 1
Non-Discrimination Policy 1
Applicants..... 1
IDEA Statement / Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Special Education Policy..... 2
Age of Entrance 2
Birth Certificate Requirements..... 2
Medical Examinations 2
Transferring Students 2
Application Approval/Probation Periods 3
Step 1. Visit..... 3
Step 2. Complete our Admission Packet Forms..... 3
Step 3. Pay Annual Registration Fee..... 3
Step 4. Set Up a Tuition Payment Plan..... 3
Step 5. Screening and Interviews..... 4
Step 6. Admission Decision 4
Step 7. Prepare for the first day of school..... 4
Registration, In Person..... 4
School Office 5
Swoop-the-Loop..... 5
School Hours and Arrival/Departure..... 5
Arrival:..... 5
Departure: 6
Before/After School Tutoring/Enrichment Program 6
School Cancellations..... 6
Professional Days 6
School Wide Communication 6
First Aid/Illness/Injury 7
School Lunches..... 7
Desmond T. Doss Christian Academy Cell Phone/Smart Device Policy..... 8
Uniform Bottoms and Tops..... 8

Socks/Tights..... 9
Belts/Shoes 9
Hair/Skin/Nails 9
Other Uniform Guidelines Including Casual Clothing 9
8th Grade Completion Requirements..... 10
A. Completion of an Individualized Course of Study for Eight-Grade Completion 10
B. Early Completion Requirements for the Elementary School 10
C. Performance-based Completion Requirements 10
DTD Grading Policy..... 11
Report cards & Parent Teacher Conferences 11
Incomplete Grades 11
Failing Grades..... 11
Ability to Offer High School Subjects..... 12
APPLE® Information..... 12
Honor Society & College Prep Testing 12
Homework..... 12
Absence/Tardy Policies 12
Excused/Unexcused Absences or Tardies..... 13
Making up Missed Work 13
Vacations and Make-Up Work..... 13
Field Trips..... 14
Quarterly and End of Year Awards Ceremony Special Recognition For 14
Internet Safety during School..... 14
Technology Rules and Guidelines:..... 15
Social Media and Cyberbullying 15
Personal Electronic Equipment..... 16
Media Policy..... 16
Serious Conduct Violations..... 18
Student Weapons/Threat Policy..... 18
Potomac Conference Parent-Teacher Conciliation Procedure..... 19

OUR MISSION

Desmond T. Doss Christian Academy exists to provide a quality education to all students who desire to develop a Christ-like character while pursuing excellence in spiritual, mental, social, and physical development.

OUR VISION

Changing the world, one child at a time.
(In honor of our inspiration, Desmond T. Doss)

OUR PHILOSOPHY

Since 1985, Desmond T. Doss Christian Academy (DTD) has borne the name of a humble servant of God who, by faith, did great things for the glory of the Lord. Desmond Doss became a medic during WW II because he wanted to save life, not take life. Without regard for his welfare, God provided him with superhuman strength and clarity of mind to save the lives of more than 75 wounded soldiers while under enemy fire. At his core, Desmond loved being a Seventh-day Adventist Christian. More than anything, he wanted to honor and obey the Lord by serving his fellow man. Even though what he did brought him worldwide fame, Desmond always remained humble and gave glory and honor to Jesus Christ, His Savior. (www.desmondoss.com) We teachers and staff members at DTD are honored to teach at a school that, like Desmond Doss, is rather humble. We share Desmond's desire to serve. Our school is known for setting goals for high standards, individualized attention, loving discipline, and strong relationships. But we strive to make our school a place where our students will find the love of Christ and decide to make Jesus their personal Savior. Like Desmond Doss, we are proud to be Seventh-day Adventist Christians. Seventh-day Adventist education (www.adventisteducation.org) recognizes the infinite worth of every individual. With God's help, we seek to provide an atmosphere where "one child at a time" our students develop a positive self-image and achieve personal goals of excellence.

ADMISSION INFORMATION

NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

It is the policy of Desmond T. Doss Christian Academy to admit students regardless of age, race, color, religion, national and ethnic origins. All students have the right to the school's privileges, programs, and activities.

APPLICANTS

Desmond T. Doss Christian Academy is open to young people of all religious denominations who come for excellence. Excellence in academic pursuits while developing an excellent character as they come to know Christ during their time here. Admission qualifications have been established to achieve our mission and philosophy because our school is a church-oriented educational institution. Students are welcome to attend if they want to be a part of a close-knit school community where kids respect God, their families, teachers, and friends. It is assumed upon application that the student and their family are willing to observe and respect the policies contained in this handbook.

IDEA STATEMENT / INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES EDUCATION ACT (IDEA) SPECIAL EDUCATION POLICY

Desmond T. Doss Christian Academy offers limited support for students with learning, behavior, or language challenges. DTD may not have the necessary equipment or staff to meet all potential required support needs of students who exhibit certain academic, physical, social, or language learning acquisition needs. Therefore, students who have certain academic, physical, social, or language needs may not be accepted at DTD. Should these problems be indicated after the student is enrolled, the school administration will assist the parent(s) in accessing assessments or services through local resources. If the child's discovered needs cannot be met, DTD reserves the right to request or require the student to be transferred to a school or program where assistance is available.

AGE OF ENTRANCE

Kindergarten candidates must be five (5) years old by September 30th of the current school year.

BIRTH CERTIFICATE REQUIREMENTS

All VA schools are required to have a copy of a student's birth record on file.

MEDICAL EXAMINATIONS

Medical examinations are required for all new students, including kindergarten. All applicants should be in good health. Any identified health condition should be shared with the administrator and appropriate faculty prior to admission to be sure the student is safe during school. This information will be regarded as confidential. A complete medical examination for all new students is required at registration. State law requires immunization against measles, rubella, diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis, polio, and Hepatitis B. DTD requires written proof of immunizations upon registration of new and current students, as per VA law. Families exercising their right to religious exemption to immunizations must provide a copy of their exemption form to be kept on file at the school.

TRANSFERRING STUDENTS

Students transferring from another Seventh-day Adventist school are required to present the most current report card, summary of attendance and scholarship, reading records, and/or other significant records from their previous school.

Students transferring from non-SDA schools must request all records be sent to DTD from their previous school.

Parents who are transferring their child(ren) from home-school to DTD will need to send as many details as possible prior to admission, including:

- 1) Names of curriculum used.
- 2) Copies of home school records, including samples of student work.
- 3) Testing results as required by the Virginia homeschool laws.
(www.doe.virginia.gov/parents-students/for-parents/home-instruction)

Our staff will screen home-schooled and new students transferring to DTD before admission to determine the best educational plan for them.

APPLICATION APPROVAL/PROBATION PERIODS

The admissions team and school board will regulate the admittance of all students. The school board reserves the right to refuse admittance to any student if he or she is deemed to be in disharmony with school principles. The school board further reserves the right to dismiss any student it deems disruptive to the scholastic or spiritual atmosphere of the school. All students are accepted on a probationary period of a 9-week school period or 90 calendar days. During the probationary period, the student's progress will be periodically reviewed by the principal and/or School Board, and any necessary action will be carried out.

ADMISSION PROCEDURE

If your initial application takes place in August, close to the start of school, our Admissions Team will need time to complete our application process, including the required academic screening with your child. Please be aware that your child's starting date may be delayed pending acceptance.

The following are the steps for application and admission to our school:

STEP 1. VISIT

DTD encourages interested families to schedule a visit. If possible, this visit will usually include a tour during school hours. You will be able to see firsthand our family-focused program and philosophy in action.

STEP 2. COMPLETE OUR ADMISSION PACKET FORMS

Completion of our packet can be done on live forms that are located on our website for your Convenience. Go to: www.desmonddoss.org and look under the 'Register' tab. You will see section tabs to click on for annual required registration forms for both new and returning students. You may also complete our admission packet in person. Our administrative assistant will be happy to answer any questions you may have, including registration fees and tuition rates. Please call 434-237-1899 or email dtdschoolsecretary@gmail.com. Be advised that students whose immunization records are incomplete or missing cannot attend school until these records are submitted.

STEP 3. PAY ANNUAL REGISTRATION FEE

Registration fees cannot be reduced. This fee covers the cost of textbooks, record-keeping supplies, handbook publications, classroom supplies, and various items your child will receive during the school year. *Registration fees are non-refundable.* Early registration fee collection begins in May. The amount is reduced if paid by a specific date. Contact our administrative assistant for that information. Families need to plan for this annual expense. Individual student registration fees must be paid before your child's first day of school.

STEP 4. SET UP A TUITION PAYMENT PLAN

We do our best to keep our tuition rates affordable. Please understand that our school is a non-profit ministry, and the tuition we receive is our primary source of income. Your timely and complete payments are essential. We offer the following options.

Prepayment: Many families prefer to pay the full amount upon admission prior to the first day of school; by doing so, they receive a prepayment discount.

For families paying full tuition, there are discounts on tuition for SDA membership and for second/subsequent children. Contact our administrative assistant for these specific discounts.

Payment Plan: If you are not paying the yearly tuition fee in full in advance, you will be guided to enroll with the payment organization we use, Blackbaud Tuition Management. We will assist you in that enrollment process during registration. Payments are set up in 10 equal payments per year, Sept-June. Tuition payments are due by the 15th of each month. Tuition is considered late on the 26th of the month. Failure to pay tuition on time will result in a late fee added to your bill.

Tuition Assistance: Because circumstances may change, families wishing to be considered for tuition assistance must apply every year. You will need to fill out a Tuition Reduction Financial Form. This form is not online. Please get in touch with the school's administrative assistant about this. You must also submit a copy of your current W2 tax form. Our finance team will contact and/or meet with you to determine your tuition payments. We desire to do our best and work with families who want their child(ren) to attend a Christian school.

STEP 5. SCREENING AND INTERVIEWS

When all forms, tuition, fees, and school transcripts have been received, we will contact you to schedule a time for student screening and, if needed, an interview with the principal.

STEP 6. ADMISSION DECISION

Once all the paperwork and financial steps are completed, our admission team will make all admission decisions with the DTD school board's approval. Upon their decision, you will be notified by phone call, email, or letter.

STEP 7. PREPARE FOR THE FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL

Once Admitted, be sure to read our handbook carefully. Please take special note of our dress code, cell phone/smart device, and attendance policies. Your family will be expected to abide by these fully. Also, check the tab on our website, Parent Resources, to download a copy of the school supplies your child will need to bring to class on his or her first day. You may also want to participate in the school's Work Bee. This allows the parents and students to meet other parents, students, and staff while helping to prepare the school for the upcoming school year.

REGISTRATION, IN PERSON

(Note: We plan to have the complete registration and payment process available on our website by August 2025. At that time, registration in person will no longer be necessary.)

In August (unless our administrative assistant verifies with you first), every family needs to attend our Registration Event, which is a drop-in event held in our gym on Thursday the week before school begins from 3-7. Registration is on our calendar this year for August 15. Our staff will assist you to complete steps 2-4 of our registration/application process if you have not already done so. If you cannot attend, you must make an appointment with our administrative assistant before this event to complete the financial part of our registration process so your child can attend on the first day of school.

SCHOOL INFORMATION & POLICIES

SCHOOL OFFICE

Currently, our school office cannot be accessible to the public near a ground-level entryway. Our administrative assistant's office is located on the second floor of our main school building. To gain entry during school hours, we posted a phone number for guests and family members to call. This number is located at the front, right glass door labeled 'School Entrance.'

SWOOP-THE-LOOP

When vehicles enter our campus from George Street to drop off or pick up children from school, drivers must turn to the right and travel in a circular motion in single-line formation. As they turn left twice toward building 13 and the main school building, each car should travel down as far as possible so that cars behind them might also access the farthest point in the car line. Please do not get out of your vehicle if you are in the swoop/pickup line. If you need to exit your vehicle or speak to someone, then please drive your vehicle out of the line and go to a parking space. Our goal is that swoop-the-loop will accommodate swift drop-off and/or pick-up. K-8 students are not allowed to walk through this line of vehicles to or from a parked car without being accompanied by an adult.



SCHOOL HOURS AND ARRIVAL/DEPARTURE

Monday-Thursday: 8:30 a.m. to 3:15 p.m.

Friday: 8:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. (See the school calendar for 12:30 dismissal Days.)

ARRIVAL:

In the morning, students may enter their homeroom class 15 minutes early. However, they need to wait in vehicles, supervised by a driver, until the school doors open at 8:15. No student should be dropped off to stand in front of the school before 8:15. A school staff member will supervise the front entrance only for the time it takes for entry, between 8:15 and 8:30. The front school entry and all classroom doors will be locked by 8:35. Because we do not have a ground floor school office to report to, students who arrive after 8:35 will be required to go to building #13. They will be escorted and enabled to enter the school's main door. The late arrival procedure will now require students to travel upstairs to our administrative assistant's office to obtain a tardy slip. They must bring this tardy slip to their teacher to be admitted to class. (Please read our Attendance Excused/Unexcused Tardy section of this handbook for further details.)

Note: Before 8:15 a.m., teachers are getting ready for school and should not be disturbed unless prior arrangements have been made. This is their only planning time. Mornings are not the best time to talk to teachers; they are busy greeting students and starting the day on time.

DEPARTURE:

Classes dismiss in time for students to be picked up between 3:15-3:30 pm M-TH or 2:00-2:15 pm F out in front of the main building and building # 13. The Swoop-the-Loop car line will form for pick-up, like for morning arrival. Families may elect to park their vehicles in our parking lot and then walk to the school building to escort their children to their vehicles.

Teachers will remain in front supervising departure pick-up until 3:30 M-TH and 2:15 Fridays. If families have not arrived by this time, their child(ren) will be brought into our new Before/After Program, and parents will be charged a fee, at minimum, a half-hour rate per child. (The Fee amount is pending and will be established prior to the first day of school in 2024.)

BEFORE/AFTER SCHOOL TUTORING/ENRICHMENT PROGRAM

This year we are offering a limited program for only DTD students who need before and aftercare. This program will supply a need we have for our age 13+ kids who are too old for daycare and their siblings. We plan to use this time for completing homework, tutoring as needed, and other enrichment opportunities that we might provide. There will be a fee to pay for the cost of this program. The program will be M-F, but exact times and fees have not been confirmed as of the publication of this handbook.

SCHOOL CANCELLATIONS

For closing or delays due to weather, watch for our name, Desmond T. Doss Christian Academy, to be listed on WSET Channel 13 on local TV.

Or go to www.wset.com/weather/closings

If the roads in your area are dangerous, we support your keeping your child off them. Your child's safety is always our priority. Please let your teacher know, and the absence will be excused. If our school needs to close early, you will receive text and/or email messages directly from the principal or your child's teacher.

PROFESSIONAL DAYS

The Potomac Conference of Seventh-day Adventists Office of Education designates professional days to provide the necessary in-service education for all Potomac Conference teachers. The school will not be in session on these days or may elect a half-day. Please check the school calendar listing all professional days, whether full or half. Half-day dismissals are at 12:30.

SCHOOL WIDE COMMUNICATION

Frequent, clear communication between school and home is essential for a positive school year for your child(ren.) We have digital options that make this process much more manageable. Our entire school uses an app called Classroom Dojo. Dojo is smartphone/tablet/laptop friendly. It is safe and private. Dojo is used to post important notes, reminders, and photos only their class can view. DTD families will be lost if they cannot use this app. Busy DTD teachers struggle to ensure that families not on Dojo get all the same important school news in another way. It is vital that at least one adult from every family connects to Classroom Dojo using some device on behalf of every child enrolled at DTD.

K-4 students have physical folders that go from school to home and back each day. These are important since we believe that, even in our fast, technologically changing world, it is still necessary for a well-rounded curriculum for students to continue to do paper-pencil work. If possible, an adult per every K-4 student must check their child's folder each evening.

The computer software program we use for collecting and reporting all our required school data is called Facts (Formerly RenWeb). Families with children in 3rd grade-10th grade will be given instructions from their teacher(s) on how to go into the Facts family portal to check assignments and grade status whenever they wish. This program also allows the principal to send occasional school-wide emails and text messages.

FIRST AID/ILLNESS/INJURY

We do not always feel good, but that does not mean we are sick. However, parents/families know their children best, and if you think that your child is getting sick, keep them at home. Use your best discretion. Students who show symptoms of contagious illness, including vomiting, fever, rashes, or diarrhea, should stay home. Students who have been home sick are not allowed to return to school until they have been symptom-free and fever-free for 24 hours. Parents will be called to pick up their student(s) if symptoms develop at school. During the school day, if a student develops a fever, throws up, looks visibly ill, or persistently complains of feeling sick, the teacher will usually notify families. Our school cannot house sick children for long periods, so it is expected that when their child is sick, families will respond ASAP to come pick up their child. If your child is mildly injured with a small cut or scrape, we will assist them in cleaning the injury, issue a Band-Aid, and offer an ice pack for slight swelling. Families may not be notified. Teachers will take photos of any injury they feel warrants more attention, and families will be notified ASAP by text or phone. Any head injury warrants an immediate phone call, and photos will be sent to families. All DTD teachers are required to have a current concussion protocol, CPR, and First Aid training. If there is an emergency, the school will call 911 immediately, provide first aid, and contact the child's family.

SCHOOL LUNCHESES

Students are required to bring a packed lunch to school every day at DTD. Please be sure they have plenty of healthy items that will help fuel their bodies and be able to think clearly. Also, be sure to include fluids, preferably water. Excessive sugar and caffeine do not keep children calm and focused for the school day. Consequently, soda and coffee are discouraged. Energy drinks are not allowed. We also discourage students from sharing lunches due to allergies and diet preferences. Approximately two Fridays per month, our school offers a hot lunch fundraiser option to purchase. Our hot lunch days are pre-published on the DTD School Calendar. Students may bring their own lunches on these days if they wish. The paid hot lunch food choice of the day will be one of the following: plain cheese pizza, vegetarian/beef hotdogs, or nachos. Watch for hard copy order forms that will be sent home on the Friday or Monday before a hot lunch. Hot lunch reminders will also be posted on Classroom Dojo. If your child opts to purchase lunch, they must turn in their form or tell their teacher so that they can be counted by the end of the school day on Wednesday. This is required to plan and have little or no food waste. We will not accept lunch orders on Thursday or Friday.

DESMOND T. DOSS CHRISTIAN ACADEMY CELL PHONE/SMART DEVICE POLICY

Student cell phones/smart devices (including smart watches) should be left at home. If brought to school, they must be placed in a designated safe box upon arrival. They will remain in this box until the end of the school day. Smart devices will be returned as each student is picked up from school, generally M-TH 3:15-3:30 and F 2:00-2:15.

If the student participates in an after-school event, their device will be transferred to the after-school adult leader until the event ends; it will be returned to the student upon pickup.

Any student who needs to phone their family during the school day will be granted permission to use our school phone.

Students who do not comply and decide to keep their cell phones/devices during the school day are subject, but not limited to the following:

- The device will be given to the principal. The student and the parent must see the principal to retrieve the student's device.
- If further action is necessary, the device will be given to the principal, who will provide it to the school board chairperson. The chairperson will speak with the family to arrange a meeting with the school board. After the meeting, the device will be returned to the family. Students/Parents/Guardians will be asked to read and sign compliance with our cell phone/smart device policy at registration.

Desmond T. Doss Christian Academy Dress Code Policy

Please write your child's name or initials in permanent ink on all clothing articles. Unmarked clothing left on our campus is donated after a short time.

UNIFORM BOTTOMS AND TOPS

- All bottoms (pants, shorts, capris) must fit properly. Shorts should not be shorter than fingertip length, with arms down by one's side. Bottoms may be grey, navy, black, or khaki in color. Only uniform and cargo-style (pockets or zippers on the sides) bottoms are allowed. No type of leggings, athletic, or form-fitting pants are permitted.
- Girls may wear uniform solid-color polo dresses, skirts, jumpers, or skorts. These must be no shorter than 3 inches above the knee. Any uniform plaid skirt or jumper is allowed. Girls are encouraged to wear shorts underneath for modesty.
- Polo shirt tops must be in uniform style (no logos). Shirts do not have to be worn tucked in. No fitted or short shirts are allowed. The shirt must fully cover the back of the pants when the student is bending forward. Any solid-colored polo shirt is allowed, except for wearing black polo shirts with black pants. Any solid-colored turtleneck (no logos) may be worn on cold days.
- If a student chooses to wear a t-shirt under their polo shirt, it must be white or a solid color with no prints or graphic designs/logos. When worn untucked, the t-shirt should not show below the bottom of the polo shirt.
- DTD sweatshirts/hoodies may be worn in class; these are referred to as Patriotwear. Please look for our Patriotwear order form, which will be available in August. In place of a DTD Patriotwear hoodie or sweatshirt, any solid-colored hoodie or sweatshirt may be worn during school if it is plain, meaning no prints or graphic designs/logos anywhere on it.
- Pull-over or button-up sweaters may be worn but must be a solid color without prints or designs.

SOCKS/TIGHTS

- Colorful socks of choice are acceptable. Solid-colored tights or leggings may be worn under skirts and dresses to keep warm.

BELTS/SHOES

- Belts are not required unless pants are loose-fitting and need a belt to fit properly.
- Students may wear any shoes, boots, or sandals they choose, except for flip-flops and slides; these are not permitted.
- Tennis shoes/sneakers are required for PE.

HAIR/SKIN/NAILS

- Hair should be well groomed. Distracting hairstyles or unnatural colors/tints/highlights are not allowed.
- Temporary or permanent tattoos and body graffiti are not allowed.
- Any color fingernail polish is permitted except black.
- Jewelry may be worn at school. If jewelry becomes a distraction or a safety issue, students will be asked to put the item(s) away in their backpacks and possibly not be worn at school in the future. DTD will not be responsible for any lost jewelry worn or brought to school.

Jewelry is defined @ DTD as:

For girls: necklaces, rings, wrist/ankle bands, or bracelets. Girls may wear one pair of earrings. [One pierce per each ear = one pair of earrings.] No hoop or dangle earrings below the ear lobe will be allowed for safety reasons. There will be no piercings other than one ear piercing per ear for girls.

For boys: necklaces, rings, wrist bands/bracelets.

OTHER UNIFORM GUIDELINES INCLUDING CASUAL CLOTHING

- All school clothing should be clean and in new to good condition. Hats, hoods, ball caps, visors, beanies, and bandanas are not to be worn inside except for specially announced events. However, they are permitted during outside recess. Hats/hoods are not to be worn during worship services.
- All casual day clothing should be clean, without holes or frayed, modest, with themes, pictures, and wording in keeping with Christian values. No themes including but not limited to rock bands, skulls, etc.
- Casual tops should not have openbacks or spaghetti straps. No cleavage should show. Modest tank tops may be worn on hot casual days, but the shoulder straps must be at least 2 adult fingers wide.
- Coats and jackets should be hung up or put in lockers/cubbies before school begins unless a teacher deems it necessary due to room temperature fluctuation. If students are cold in class, they may wear DTD Patriotwear, a solid-colored sweatshirt, or a plain sweater. Students/Parents/Guardians will be asked at registration to read and sign a compliance form with our dress code policy. By signing, families are agreeing to bring uniform clothing for their children to change into if they are not in uniform compliance.

ACADEMICS

8TH GRADE COMPLETION REQUIREMENTS

(As per Columbia Union code and Potomac Conference of SDA)

Students must earn passing grades in the following eighth-grade subjects to be eligible for graduation and recommendation for admission into secondary school:

1. Religion/Bible
2. Mathematics
3. English Language Arts – Where this subject area is listed under a more comprehensive title such as “Communication Skills” or “Language Arts,” some of the requirements listed below may be met within the discipline.
4. Physical Education
5. Science and Health Education
6. Social Studies
7. Fine Arts
8. Practical Arts
9. State History or Geography
10. Computer Education

A. COMPLETION OF AN INDIVIDUALIZED COURSE OF STUDY FOR EIGHT-GRADE COMPLETION

Schools may develop an individualized course of study for students professionally diagnosed with special learning needs. The local school, in cooperation with the local conference office of education, will supervise this course of study. Upon successful completion, a student may be granted a certificate entitled “Completion of an Individualized Course of Study” signed by the local conference superintendent, school principal, and teacher.

B. EARLY COMPLETION REQUIREMENTS FOR THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

The general policy of the Columbia Union requires a student to complete eight years of elementary education (grades 1-8) or (under certain conditions) to have reached age 13 before admittance to secondary school. Early completion of elementary school is defined as accepting a student with fewer than eight years of formal education into secondary education. To obtain approval for early completion, the following steps must be completed:

1. The faculty and principal must submit a letter of application to the local conference office of education, including the parent's written consent.
2. A program for early completion will be planned, and an application will be submitted before the sixth grade of schoolwork is completed.
3. The application must be approved by the local conference office of education and made a matter of record before a student may begin work on the early completion program.

C. PERFORMANCE-BASED COMPLETION REQUIREMENTS

Schools wanting to use a performance-based curriculum that requires students to meet minimal performance levels to qualify for graduation from the eighth grade must submit a local school board-approved proposal to the local conference office of education for approval by the local conference board of education.

DTD GRADING POLICY

Teachers use a variety of methods to assess a student's progress. These different forms of assessment measure your child(ren)'s grades. The grading system is as follows:

Kindergarten

- I= Independently achieves objectives and performs skills
- P= Progressing toward objectives and performing skills
- NT= Needs more time to develop

1st and 2nd grades

E= Excellent S= Satisfactory N= Needs Improvement I= Incomplete

3rd – 10th grades

- A= 90-100%
- B= 80-89%
- C= 70-79%
- D= 60-69%
- F= 59% and below

(Teachers may elect to use + or - to indicate higher/lower percentages)

REPORT CARDS & PARENT TEACHER CONFERENCES

These are prepared and sent home quarterly. Final report cards are mailed to families after the end of the school year. Teachers at DTD are required to schedule two parent-teacher conferences per year. These are on our calendar after the first and third quarters. Additional conferences may be required as needed to help ensure a student's success.

Honor Roll: Hard work is awarded at our school. Honor Roll Awards are granted to students in grades 3-10, in recognition of students who maintained a GPA of 3.50 or higher during their entire school year.

INCOMPLETE GRADES

If a student has extenuating circumstances (ex, lengthy illness) that prohibit him/her from completing assignments before the end of a grading period, he/she may be given an "I" to indicate an incomplete grade. The student will be given sufficient time to complete the missed work based on the amount of time that was missed. An "I" does not automatically indicate a failing grade; however, work not made up after the allotted time will result in a failing grade.

FAILING GRADES

The letter grade "F" is given to indicate that a student has not yet met the minimum requirements for the class. If a student is failing a class at midterm, it is suggested that the parents meet with the teacher to determine a plan to help the child improve. When an "F" is recorded as a semester grade in grades 9-10, the student has NOT earned the needed credit, and the course must be retaken. Students must receive a passing grade before credit can be given.

ABILITY TO OFFER HIGH SCHOOL SUBJECTS

Currently, Desmond T. Doss Christian Academy is a K-8th grade school with Junior Academy approval to offer 9th and 10th grades. We operate under the Potomac Conference of SDA Office of Ed. www.pcsda.org/, which operates under the Columbia Union of SDA office of Ed. www.columbiaunion.org/. Above the Columbia Union is the North American Division of the Seventh-day Adventist Office of Education. www.adventisteducation.org/. Many of our long-time students want to stay on our campus to complete part of or finish high school. When this is desired, we have joined the APLE® Program and Griggs, which offers 11th and 12th-grade online subjects as needed. DTD helps with enrollment, but APLE® sets tuition.

APPLE® INFORMATION

Accredited Program for Learning Environments (APPLE®) was designed cooperatively by the North American Division of Seventh-day Adventist Office of Education (NADOE) and Griggs International Academy (Griggs) to meet the needs of NADOE schools. By joining the APLE® Program: these schools can use a combination of Griggs courses and faculty to enhance their current programs or even to help their school offer additional grade levels. Junior and Senior academies can even offer core classes for which they do not have staffing. Occasionally, and with the approval of both conference and union, schools may offer a complete high school program using the APLE® Program. Students at such schools receive Griggs Maryland state-approved diplomas. For more information regarding the APLE® Program: www.griggs.edu/nad-services/APLE

HONOR SOCIETY & COLLEGE PREP TESTING

Our high school program works with a sister Seventh-day Adventist Senior Boarding Academy called Shenandoah Valley Academy (SVA) www.shenandoahvalleyacademy.org/ to offer Honor Society and college prep testing (Pre-ACT, Pre-SAT, ACT, and SAT) for our 9th and 10th grade students.

HOMEWORK

Minimal homework is assigned to provide additional practice and enhance student learning. The amount of homework will vary depending on the grade level. Each teacher has various homework policies and reasons for them. Contact your child's teacher with questions. Families/parents should be concerned if no homework is ever seen, or their child is not studying for tests. As a rule, homework is due the day after it is assigned. In some cases, specific due dates will be assigned. Late work may be accepted; your classroom teacher will notify you of his/her policy.

ATTENDANCE POLICIES

ABSENCE/TARDY POLICIES

DTD students should arrive each morning between 8:15 and 8:30 a.m. All students will be marked tardy if they arrive after 8:35 a.m. On any given day, if a student misses 90 minutes or more, they will be marked as missing a half day of school.

Important Statement: We strive for perfect attendance at Desmond T. Doss Christian Academy. Strong attendance is a vital part of your child’s academic success. It is very important that your child attend school during all scheduled hours. No amount of make-up work can take the place of lost in-class instruction. In the state of Virginia, five days of unexcused absence is considered a truancy problem. When students arrive late, their class is affected by the disruption. Chronic absences and tardiness are problems that plague most schools. We want our school to be different. So, instead of focusing on negativity, we hope to motivate and inspire all our families to attend school faithfully and be on time.

Classes that achieve a whole week where there were no students with unexcused absences or tardies will earn a reward of “Casual Dress Mondays the following week!” (or Tuesday if Monday is a scheduled day off)

For students who attend block classes, attendance will apply for each class.

EXCUSED/UNEXCUSED ABSENCES OR TARDIES

In case of emergencies over which the parents or guardians have no control, excused absences, and tardies will be recorded under the following circumstances, provided a written note is provided to the classroom teacher. All other absences and tardies will be unexcused.

- Poor weather conditions
- Transportation break-down
- Required court attendance
- Illness
- Doctor, dentist, counselor, therapist, or other professional appointments

MAKING UP MISSED WORK

Students are expected to make up any work missed due to late arrival or absence. Parents are responsible for requesting missing work for students in grades K-4. It is the student’s responsibility in grades 5-10 (with parents’ guidance) to request missing work. Teachers will give two days of make-up time for every day missed. Allowances will be made based on individual needs when determining a reasonable time. Parents should note that the longer it takes to complete the work, the more difficult the tasks become. Instead of benefiting the student, time extensions hurt the learning process. Work not made up within the time allotted will result in a zero.

VACATIONS AND MAKE-UP WORK

If possible, family vacations should be taken when there is no school. In the event a vacation conflicts with the school's calendar, and a student will be missing school days, advance notice of the upcoming vacation needs to be given to the teacher. This will allow the teacher adequate time to prepare the student's work. Unless otherwise discussed with the teacher, assignments will be due upon the student's return to school. Note: sending written make-up work assignments to be completed does not come close to missing the instruction that took place during the child’s extended absence.

FIELD TRIPS

Field trips are part of the curriculum and are considered school days. Students may not be excused from field trips simply because they do not wish to attend. If the cost of a field trip is an issue, please let us know. We sometimes have funds to help. We do not want students to miss attending. Our field trips are part of what makes our school special. We strongly discourage students from one class attending field trips intended for another grade level; however, in cases where it is necessary to pull a child from their regular classroom to attend another teacher's field trip, the following must be met:

- permission must be obtained from the field trip coordinator
- the student's parent must always accompany the child while on the trip
- all the work missed for that day must be made up.

QUARTERLY AND END OF YEAR AWARDS CEREMONY SPECIAL RECOGNITION FOR

Perfect Attendance: Is to be strived for by students at our school. Students who have achieved this will be awarded per quarter and at the end of the year at our awards ceremony.

Near Perfect Attendance: This award is given to students at our end-of-year awards ceremony who miss four or fewer (excused) days during the school year.

Teachers will also award each of their students at the end of the year for other worthy attributes that they have displayed, which is in keeping with our Seventh-day Adventist Philosophy.

TECHNOLOGY POLICIES

DTD has an Acceptable Use Policy registration form that details the information in our handbook. Each year, parents and students are expected to read and sign that they agree to comply before the student is given technology privileges.

INTERNET SAFETY DURING SCHOOL

Our goal is to teach our students to make smart, honest decisions as they use Internet apps, websites, and now (AI) artificial intelligence with ethics and standards based on Biblical principles. The Potomac Conference Office of Education has mandated that their SDA schools offering Internet access to students must also have a system preventing students from accessing illegal, potentially offensive, or dangerous material. Our Internet server has a filtration system, and our Chromebooks utilize GoGuardian to filter out offensive material, block websites, and allow teachers to monitor student screens. Still, like all filtering software, it is not 100% foolproof. K-10 DTD students are only to use school-supplied devices. No personal Internet or smart device is permitted by K-10 DTD students.

APPLE® students in eleventh or twelfth-grade courses online, however, need to bring their own laptops. APPLE® software is not supported by Chromebooks. GoGaurdian is not compatible with PCs. Therefore, parents of 11th and 12th grade students will need to provide their own Internet Filters for their students' laptops. Verification that there is a filter must be shown to the DTD APPLE® supervising teacher on each students' computer before the first day of school and any time the teacher requests thereafter.

TECHNOLOGY RULES AND GUIDELINES:

DTD provides students with opportunities to enhance their learning by using various devices at school. These devices are on loan. They are not to be taken home unless a teacher grants special permission. DTD devices need to be cared for gently. The devices are intended for multiyear use. Students receive supervision while using DTD devices, including Chromebooks, but are expected to behave maturely even when teachers are not watching them individually. Those who intentionally misuse our equipment, use social media, or go to unapproved/inappropriate Internet sites during school are subject to loss of use of DTD devices, Internet privileges, and/or other disciplinary actions. The use of electronic devices is a privilege, not a right, and will be revoked if warranted. Charges for replacing lost or damaged equipment/devices may be incurred.

Desmond T. Doss Christian Academy students are expected to comply with the following specific rules as related to all DTD devices and internet use:

- a. Never give out your home address, phone number, or any other personal information to anyone online.
- b. Use of any technology aspect to harm people or their work is prohibited.
- c. DTD devices/equipment are not to be harmed or damaged in any way. This includes scratching, writing, drawing, or placing stickers on devices.
- d. Care must be taken when downloading images, documents, etc., to ensure that no malicious software is accidentally installed. Therefore, opening links and downloading information may only be done with permission.
- e. Never use any storage device that came from an unknown source to save work.
- f. Respect all copyright laws.
- g. Do not view, send, or display offensive messages or pictures. Do not use profane, abusive, or impolite language to communicate. All materials accessed must be in accordance with school behavior rules. Never view, send, or access materials that you would not want your teachers and parents to see.
- h. Keep all passwords and login information secret.
- i. Print only with permission.
- j. Respect the folders, work, and files of others. Students should not copy other people's work or intrude into other people's files.
- k. Notify an adult immediately if you or someone else encounters materials that violate the rules of appropriate use.
- l. No school owned device or equipment should leave school property without permission.

SOCIAL MEDIA AND CYBERBULLYING

Through the Internet, students can access endless amounts of information and share ideas instantly by e-mail and social media. Parents and guardians of minors are responsible for setting and conveying the standards their children should follow when using the Internet. Therefore, viewing and posting on social media should only be done at home with parental supervision. Our school policy is that no social media sites should be accessed at school.

Access to the Internet varies depending on the grade level of the student. Grades K-2 have limited access to the Internet. They primarily use computers and iPads for testing, to practice reading, and to develop phonics skills. Grades 3-10 have access to the Internet on Chromebooks for testing, online textbooks, conducting research, and developing skills in math, keyboarding, and other subjects.

Cyberbullying is using the Internet to post texts or images intended to hurt or embarrass another person. Personal attacks and hateful/hurtful communications occurring at any time between DTD students will not be tolerated and will result in disciplinary action from the school administration.

It takes a collaboration of family, teachers, and students to create a successful safety net in this complex digital age. Individual students must understand and demonstrate accountability for their online activities and digital footprints. Responsible families will hold their children accountable for this process, just as DTD teachers promise to do.

PERSONAL ELECTRONIC EQUIPMENT

Personal electronic equipment (such as iPods, mp3 players, electronic games, cameras, etc.) should not be brought to school or school-sponsored functions without special permission. Electronic equipment brought to school or school-sponsored functions without teacher authorization will be confiscated and given back only when a parent comes to the teacher to retrieve the item. While DTD does its best to protect confiscated property, the school accepts no responsibility for its safekeeping.

MEDIA POLICY

It is the policy of this school to select resources that adhere to the principles laid out in scripture: "Whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable, if anything is excellent or praiseworthy – think about such things." Philippians 4:8

In class, all resources, including books and video selections, will be based on (but not necessarily limited to) the following:

- To provide appropriate materials to the students that will help them grow in their Christian faith and will lead them to fulfill God's purpose for their lives.
- To provide materials that will support the curriculum, considering the students' individual needs, interests, abilities, and maturity levels.
- To provide materials that will encourage knowledge growth, literacy development, and cultural-aesthetic appreciation. We desire always to inspire ethical standards and spiritual wisdom.

GENERAL CONDUCT BEHAVIORAL EXPECTATIONS

Students at Desmond T. Doss Christian Academy are expected to behave in a Christ-like manner and follow all rules during school, field trips, and school functions. They are to be kind and respectful of adults and all DTD classmates of any age. Please note: Our older students are known for their love and care of our younger students, a trait we highly value.

- Students should avoid impure, unkind, abusive language and taking God's name in vain.
- Honesty in all things is expected. No stealing, deceiving, lying, or other dishonesty.
- No student will be permitted to leave the school grounds during school hours unless scheduled by a parent, guardian, or teacher.
- Students must remain in their assigned areas. They must have permission from a supervising adult before they may move to another area.
- Students are expected to observe all classroom and playground safety rules.
- Students may use the school phone only with permission.
- Gum, food, and drinks are not allowed in the classroom except for in-room lunch or class parties. Daily water bottles are encouraged.
- Students are expected to clean, replace, or pay for any property that they damage.
- Toys, games, comics, pets, catalogs, collecting cards, and other non-school items should be kept at home unless given special permission. The classroom teacher must approve all literature brought from home for use during school.

Desmond T. Doss Christian Academy is a Christ-centered learning community that welcomes all whose behavior and lifestyle are consistent with the teachings of Scripture as understood by the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Students can remain in good standing provided they conduct themselves consistently with the teachings of the Seventh-day Adventist Church on sexual conduct, sexual orientation, and gender expression as set forth below. DTD upholds Biblical principles, which include, but are not limited to, behaviors related to sexual matters. Human sexuality is a gift from God, and it is to be respected within the confines of a marital union between a man and a woman. Sexual conduct outside of this union is not acceptable. The local school administration and board will uphold these Biblical principles. Students' gender expression must align with their biological gender at birth. Desmond T. Doss Christian Academy will only accept and retain students whose gender expression aligns with their biological gender at birth.

References: Biblical references - Gen 1:27; Gen 2:22-24; Gen 3:6-19; Jer 17:9; Rom 3:9; 7:14-23; 8:20-23; Gal 5:17; Rom 12:2; Prov 14:12; Prov 16:25; 2 Tim 3:16; Gen 2:7; Jer 13:17; 52:28-30; Eze 18:4; Acts 2:41; 1 Cor 15:45; Eph 5:28; Rom 12:1-2; Rev 18:13; 1 Pet 1:24; 2 Tim 4:22; 1 John 4:1-3; 1 Tim 6:14-16; 1 Cor 15:51-54; Gen 1:27; 5:1-2; Ps 139:13-14; Mark 10:6; Matt 5:28, 31-32; 1 Tim 1:8-11; Heb 13:4; Rom 1:21-28; 1 Cor 6:9-10; Mark 12:31; Matt 12:20; 1 Cor 6:9-11; 1 Cor 6:19

The Seventh-day Adventist Church's official statement on transgenderism:

<https://www.adventist.org/official-statements/statement-on-transgenderism/>

The Seventh-day Adventist Church's website on human sexuality:

www.humansexuality.org

SERIOUS CONDUCT VIOLATIONS

The violation of the following regulations may result in immediate suspension or dismissal by action of the school board:

- Continual violation of any school regulation or disrespect toward school personnel.
- Using narcotics, drugs, vaping, tobacco, or alcoholic beverages in any form or having them in one's possession.
- Using profane language, indulging in lewd or suggestive conduct, possessing or displaying obscene literature or pictures.
- Engaging in acts of dishonesty, deception, cheating, stealing, or plagiarism.
- Possessing or using knives, firearms, firecrackers, matches, or any other type of object that could do harm to others.
- Intentional destruction of school or public property.
- Fighting, threatening, or bullying another person.
- Leaving school property without permission.
- Promoting or being involved in any act of spiritualism (Satanic emblems or ideology, witchcraft, wizardry, etc.).
- Racist or prejudicial comments, actions, or paraphernalia.
- Discussion or involvement in promiscuous or sexual activity at school or during school functions.
- Deliberately committing any act that injures, degrades, or disgraces another person. This includes any form of sexual harassment.
- The use of any digital technology or other device to send, disseminate, or forward any image containing sexually explicit photos, videos, or other imagery of another person, whether that person is enrolled at the school or the distribution by such means or any indecent language or material, is strictly forbidden and shall be punishable by expulsion.
- The school board further reserves the right to dismiss any student it deems disruptive to the scholastic or spiritual atmosphere of the school.

STUDENT WEAPONS/THREAT POLICY

The staff and school board of Desmond T. Doss Christian Academy want to maintain a safe and peaceful environment for all students. Weapons of any type are inappropriate at school except in the rare case of a historical artifact (e.g., a non-loaded musket from the Revolutionary War) that might be shown for its historical value but handled in such ways as to be non-threatening. Such artifacts must have prior approval and only be viewed in the presence of an adult. In addition, toys that resemble these items should not be brought to school.

The term "weapon" will include:

- All classes of guns or knives
- Martial arts instruments, including clubs and sticks
- Exploding or fire-causing materials
- Shock guns and other "self-defense" materials
- Bows, arrows, slingshots, or any item non-essential to the school program
- Anything that has the potential to cause harm or threat to other individuals

If a student chooses to disregard the weapons policy by bringing such items described to school, depending on the situation, the local sheriff's office may be notified immediately. Permanent expulsion or further action of the board may result.

The term “threat” will include:

- Verbal communication, written plans, electronically transmitted comments or any messages that denote a wish to kill and or do any form of harm.

All threats will be taken seriously. We will take immediate action to protect our students, including calling the sheriff’s office. Permanent expulsion or further action by the board may result.

APPENDIX

POTOMAC CONFERENCE PARENT-TEACHER CONCILIATION PROCEDURE

On occasion, issues may arise between families and teachers. Most issues should be resolved through ordinary conversations between the family and the teacher. In the event of a significant concern, however, the following steps are to be taken:

1. The concerned family member should contact the teacher. Any meeting would be best served to begin with prayer.
2. If the family does not believe the issue has been resolved after speaking with the teacher, they should speak with the principal to find a resolution.
3. The principal might be able to resolve the issue in this initial conversation.
4. If need be, the principal might request written documentation of the situation. If so, the principal may ask the family for a copy of the listed written concerns. The teacher may also need to create a list of responses to the family’s concerns.
5. A meeting with the principal, family members, and teacher may be necessary. If the concern has not been resolved after these steps, then
6. The Potomac Office of Education may be called upon to help find a resolution or take further action they deem necessary.