

Tennessee Association of Church-Related Schools (TACRS)

Governing Principles & Education Guidelines

TACRS is chartered as an association of Christian church-related schools for the purpose of serving and strengthening Christian education.

TACRS is committed to the Biblical principle that education begins with parents teaching their own children. God has entrusted children first and foremost into the care of families and only secondarily into the care of the church or the civil government. It is parents who are primarily and ultimately responsible to God for the training and education of their children.

TACRS believes that civil government (and all of its agencies) ought to take great care to respect and protect the right of parents to direct the care, training, and education of their children.

TACRS will seek to uphold the rights and responsibilities of parents by opposing any government regulation of private, church-related schools with respect to their selection of faculty, textbooks, and curriculum.

TACRS recognizes its responsibility to institute responsible guidelines in regards to record-keeping, testing, and academic programs for its member schools which will assist them in achieving academic success and meeting the high Biblical standards of Christian education.

- "Ye are the salt of the earth. . . Ye are the light of the world. . ." (Matthew 5:13-14)
- "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations . . . to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you . . ." (Matthew 28:19-20)
- ". . . Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for such is the kingdom of God." (Luke 18:15)
- "And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up." (Deuteronomy 6:7)

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Education Guidelines

1. **The Goal of Education** is to assist children in acquiring wisdom and godly character. Specifically parents, teachers, and administrators should endeavor to see that all children "increase in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man." (Luke 2:52)
2. **Qualifications of Teachers:** Teachers should be of good moral character, and should be able to demonstrate both a general competence in the subjects that they teach and an attitude of patience and compassion towards their students. Parents who choose to take direct responsibility for any part of their children's education are presumed to be competent and aware of their own gifts and limitations. Parents should be encouraged to seek assistance and guidance from teachers and administrators whenever they wish to. Educational diplomas and/or professional certification by itself should neither qualify nor disqualify any individual teacher.
3. **Academic Curriculum:** TACRS does not endorse any curriculum, nor does it require any member school to have its curriculum approved. Member schools are encouraged to thoughtfully and prayerfully consider the many options available to them from a variety of academic publishers and organizations and to be innovative in considering the varied needs of students.
4. **Length of school year and school day:** By statute, Tennessee requires that "Church-related schools shall be conducted for the same length of term as public schools." (TCA 49-50-801(c)). TACRS does not establish any arbitrary figure for the required number of instructional hours per day. Member schools are encouraged to evaluate the appropriate amount of time necessary to cover the material in their academic program and to work together with parents to establish a reasonable calendar which accomplishes their academic goals. The number of hours per day may vary depending on the academic program and the varying needs of the students. Students should master certain subject matter. It is not necessary they be required to spend an arbitrary number of hours doing so.

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Education Guidelines - continued

5. **Achievement testing:** Testing is a way of measuring progress towards some pre-determined goal. The goals of a specifically Christian education may or may not be in conformity with the goals being measured by national standardized achievement tests. Member schools are cautioned therefore about the use of achievement test scores. **TACRS** neither requires nor prohibits the use of achievement tests. Achievement test scores may be a useful aid as part of an overall assessment of the progress of an individual student. Member schools are encouraged to educate parents and teachers about the proper use and interpretation of standardized achievement tests and to use them appropriately.

6. **Permanent records:** Member schools should keep permanent records on each student enrolled, in order to document their educational program and accomplishments and to facilitate the student's pursuit of other future educational opportunities. Care should be taken to maintain the confidentiality of student records and they should not be disclosed to any third party without the permission of the student's parents or guardians. **TACRS** requests that its member schools send composite statistics about enrolled students twice each year. In the fall, total enrollment by grade should be submitted and in the spring, average achievement test scores (if available) by grade should be reported.

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7. **Policy Manuals:** Each member school should have its own written policy manual describing their educational program and purpose. Included in the policy manual should be a statement that:

"This school is classified by the Tennessee Department of Education as a "Category IV Church-Related School" and is exempt from accreditation requirements per TCA 49-50-801. As such, students transferring to public or accredited private schools may be subject to testing for grade level placement [or to determine what credits will be accepted in the case of high school students]. Students graduating from Category IV schools, although often accepted at colleges and universities may also be subject to additional testing requirements in order to be accepted."

The school's policy manual should also clearly spell out:

- the school's methods of academic evaluation,
- the corrective actions the school usually takes or recommends in cases where students are not making adequate academic progress,
- the school's standards of behavior,
- the disciplinary procedures that the school follows in dealing with violations of its standards of behavior,
- the conditions under which a student may be suspended or expelled from the school.

TACRS encourages member schools to adopt procedures that are consistent with the principles of Matthew 18:15-17.

8. **Accreditation:** Members schools are free to seek accreditation from other independent agencies and associations if they wish, but **TACRS** does not provide accreditation services.

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Education Guidelines - continued

9. **Membership:** Schools whose leadership subscribe to the historic creeds of the Christian Church (Apostle's, Nicene, Chalcedon) without reservation and who recognize the authority of the Scriptures in all matters of faith and practice may apply to the TACRS board for **Full Membership**.

10. **Revocation of Membership:** TACRS may revoke a school's membership at any time before the annual expiration date. A ninety day notice will be given to the school's administrator, advising them that a school's membership status is being revoked with the reason duly stated. Said school may appeal the decision to the TACRS Board of Directors if such appeal is made in writing within the ninety day period.