

# Sioux Center Christian School Foundational Information

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## Mission Statement

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The mission of Sioux Center Christian School is to disciple God's children by equipping them with a knowledge and understanding of Christ and His creation so that they can obediently serve God and others as they work and play.

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## Purpose of Sioux Center Christian School

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The Sioux Center Christian School is owned and operated by a society of believers for the purpose of providing elementary education that is directed by Scripture as interpreted by the Reformed confessions. This society is composed of parents, who have the primary responsibility for providing their children with a God-centered education, and all other members of the Christian community, who are also called to provide a Christian nurturing and instruction for covenant children. In sending their children to Sioux Center Christian School, parents entrust the education of their children to the board of trustees, which operates the school through its head of school, who is qualified to carry out the school's tasks in harmony with the purpose of the institution. Teachers and parents work together to further the Christian education of their children.

As a biblically Reformed Christian school, Sioux Center Christian School recognizes the centrality of the covenant and the Kingdom. Children of believers are to be seen and loved by the teachers as members of God's covenant and as citizens of His Kingdom. They are God's children in Christ and share in the calling of the believing community. As such, they are educated for discipleship that is obedient covenantal service, putting all areas of life under the Lordship of Jesus Christ. In this covenant-Kingdom activity they are, together with all believers, co-workers, partners with Jesus Christ.

All members of the Christian school community should encourage and require each other to demonstrate the character of faithful covenant children who delight in and honor God's laws. All interrelationships should be lovingly evaluated within the context of each person's role in the covenant and the Kingdom.

We exist to praise and glorify God's name in all that we learn and do. SCCS is dedicated to helping each student grow and develop spiritually, academically, and socially.

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## Statement of Faith

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The basis of Sioux Center Christian School is the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, the infallible and inerrant Word of God, as interpreted and expressed in the standards of the Reformed faith through creeds and confessions (the Heidelberg Catechism, the Belgic Confession, the Canons of Dort, the Apostles Creed, the Nicene Creed, and the Athanasian Creed). On this basis, the school affirms the following principles of Christian education:

The Bible. God, by His Holy Word, reveals Himself; renews human beings' understanding of God, of themselves, of others, and of the world; directs human beings in all their relationships and activities; and guides His people in the education of their children.

God. There is one infinite, holy, loving, personal God who speaks to believers in Scripture and reveals Himself in His acts of creation, fall, redemption, and restoration, as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. As finite human beings created in God's image, we declare that it is our purpose and privilege to worship, honor, serve, and obey Him.

Creation. The world belongs to God, who created it and faithfully sustains it by His providence. Creation is the theater of God's glory, displaying His power and majesty. God calls us to discover creation's resources, to receive these gifts with thanksgiving and delight, and to use them wisely as stewards and caretakers who are responsible to God and to our neighbor.

Sin. Our ability to carry out our human calling to honor God, serve our neighbor, and care for the creation is marred by the corrosive effects of sin, which touch every part of life, including education. Human sin brought upon all people the curse of God, alienating them from their Creator, their neighbor, and the world, distorting their view of the true meaning and purpose of life, and misdirecting human culture. Brokenness, disease, hate, arrogance, alienation, abuse of creation, and, ultimately, death are all the inevitable fruits of sin in our world.

Covenant. However, God has not rejected or abandoned His world but has turned it in love. He pledges to be faithful and to care for all His children. God always keeps His promises. We acknowledge with gratitude and joy that He is our God and the God of our children, that we are His people, and that this is His world.

Jesus Christ. Through our Savior Jesus Christ, there is renewal because He is the Redeemer of and the Light and the Way for our human life in all its range and variety. Only through Him and the work of His Spirit are we guided in the truth and recommitted to our original calling.

Redemption. As He promised, God, in love, sent Jesus Christ into the world to save it from sin and its consequences. The atoning death of the Son of God is the only payment for the debt of human sin, and Christ's resurrection is the only liberation from the powers of evil and death. The victorious Lord sends the Holy Spirit to create faith, cleanse and renew hearts, and build a community of love and holiness. It is this community's mission to proclaim and live this good news and to make disciples of nations.

Kingdom of God. Jesus Christ is the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords. His Kingdom is an everlasting Kingdom, and He reigns over all things for our good. To be a citizen of His Kingdom is a privilege, a joy, and a responsibility. Led by the Spirit, we place our every thought, word, and deed in service of Christ's present and coming reign, and we live daily in the confident hope of the triumphant return.

Schools. The purpose of the Christian school is to educate children for a life of obedience to their calling in this world as image bearers of God. This calling is to know God's Word and His creation, to dedicate their lives to God, to love all people, and to be stewards in their God-given tasks, talents, and calling. The Christian school enables and equips all its children to serve the Lord, to love their fellow human beings, and to care for God's creation. The school provides an environment of love and care with which students are nurtured. As an indispensable partner with the home and the church, the Christian school leads children to live according to biblical wisdom.

Parents. The primary responsibility for education rests upon parents to whom children are entrusted by God. Christian parents should accept this obligation in view of the covenantal relationship that God established with believers and their children. Parents partner with the Christian school to train up their children in the way they should go.

Community. Because God's covenant embraces not only parents and their children but also the entire Christian community to which they belong, and because Christian education contributes directly to the advancement of God's Kingdom, it is the obligation not only of parents but of the entire Christian community to establish and maintain Christian schools, to pray for them, to work for them, and to give generously for their support.

Staff. Staff members of the Christian school, living in joyful fellowship with God, model the love of Christ to children. Empowered by the Holy Spirit and dedicated to the highest standards of excellence and professionalism, Christian staff members view their work as a vocation, as a calling. The calling of a Christian staff member is to pass on the wisdom of the Christian tradition to students and to help them understand and apply the transforming power of the gospel to contemporary society and culture. In all things, they cooperate with parents, who have the ultimate responsibility for their children.

Students. Students are God's image bearers, entrusted to parents and the Christian community as His gifts. The Christian school encourages students to develop their gifts in response to God and in loving service to fellow human beings. Students are led to know God and to respond to Him in every dimension of the creation and in every aspect of their lives in obedient and faithful service. Christian schools must take into account the variety of abilities, needs, and responsibilities of students, and adults should view students as fellow disciples.

Curriculum. The Christian school curriculum is developed and organized so that children may come to know God more deeply and richly and live for Him more faithfully. Since human experience in all its rich variety is a good gift from the Creator who remains involved in His world, the Christian school curriculum explores all dimensions of creation. God's design for the creation and His will for human society and culture must be understood and obeyed. This is the way of godly wisdom. Students are taught to recognize the brokenness that sin brings to God's carefully designed world and are challenged to bring the healing power of Jesus Christ to a fallen world.

Educational Freedom. Christian schools, organized and administered in accordance with legitimate standards and provisions for schools, should be fully recognized in society as free to function according to these principles.

Sexuality. God wonderfully and immutably creates each person as male or female. These two distinct, complementary sexes together reflect the image and nature of God. Rejection of one's biological sex is a rejection of the image of God within that person and is against Christian belief and practice.

Marriage. The term "marriage" has only one meaning: the uniting of one man and one woman in a single, exclusive union. God intends sexual intimacy to occur only between a man and a woman who are married to each other. We believe that God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged in outside of a marriage between a man and a woman. Any form of sexual immorality (including adultery, cohabitation, fornication, homosexual behavior, bisexual conduct, bestiality, incest, or use of pornography) is sinful and offensive to God.

Life. All human life is sacred and created by God in His image. Human life is of inestimable worth in all its dimensions, including pre-born babies, the aged, the physically or mentally challenged, and every other stage or condition from conception through natural death. We are therefore called to defend, protect, and value all human life.

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### **Philosophy of Education**

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The philosophy of Sioux Center Christian School is expressed clearly in a document available in the SCCS office, upon request. The document is also linked under the employment section of the SCCS website.

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### **Teaching for Transformation Framework**

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#### **See the Story ↔ Live the Story**

Teaching for Transformation (TfT) provides a framework for the development of authentic and integral Christian learning experiences that are grounded in a transformational worldview, with a focus on seeing and living out God's Story.

*"There is not a square inch in the whole domain of our human existence over which Christ, who is sovereign over all, does not cry, 'Mine!'"*

Abraham Kuyper

The biblical truth that resounds in our Christian school's curriculum is that all things in the world belong to God. It is important that we not presume that this truth is obvious or apparent to all. The task of a Christian school teacher is to help reveal God's grand Story in all things. A teacher's task is one of Christian-story telling, of seeking out and helping students to "See the Story" in all areas of study. We do this by teaching under the principle of all things. Teaching for Transformation binds together all subjects and activities, providing a framework for the education we provide and what we want graduates to be. It helps us live out our mission by providing definitions of what it means to be a disciple (head), why we have discipleship habits (heart), and how we practice being a disciple (hands).

God created all things. Even after the fall, which indeed affects and infects all things, creation remains good. Redemption impacts all things, redirecting them to their God-designated purposes. Someday, all things will be fully restored, but the work of renewal begins now, and we are privileged to be co-workers with God in this process. It is into this story that teachers are called to invite each student. Through TfT, teachers design learning experiences that help students discover God's Story and His fingerprints in all things, with the hope that every learning experience will become truly transformational for every student.

#### **Explore (Head) – Desire (Heart) – Practice (Hands)**

While there is a high level of intentionality in the TfT framework that contains many unique core design practices and tools that all teachers are expected to use, the following three Core Practices serve as the foundation.

### **Core Practice # 1 – Storyline**

**Every Christian school classroom must have a powerful and compelling vision of the Kingdom that creates a longing and a desire within every student to play their part in God’s unfolding Story of creation-fall-redemption-restoration.**

*“And once you live a good story, you get a taste for that kind of meaning in life, and you can’t go back to being normal; you can’t go back to meaningless scenes stitched together by the forgettable thread of wasted time. The more practiced stories I lived, the more I wanted an epic to climb inside of and see through to its end.”*

Donald Miller

Every unit and every learning experience tells a story. The TtT framework tries, using the story discovered in each unit of study, to create a powerful and compelling image of God’s Story. The TtT framework invites students to imagine his or her place in God’s Story – now. TtT does this by connecting the story of each unit with opportunities to tangibly practice living in the grand narrative. Each student and teacher will begin to create a personal “storyline” and articulate how they see themselves living in God’s epic drama.

#### **SCCS School Storyline: Living God’s Story**

Concept	Description
<b>Creation</b>	The biblical Story tells us that God created and sustains all things. God gave life and controls all things. He made mankind to have special relationships with Him and gave mankind His creation mandate that directs human life. The creation is good, which refers to the physical and biological creation and also the cultural strands that God has woven into its fabric. Here the focus is on what God intended things to be like, the way it ought to have been.
<b>Fall</b>	The biblical Story tells us that all things have fallen as a result of sin and that every facet and part of the world is twisted by evil. The consequence is pain and suffering, brokenness and idolatry. Therefore, all things, human life and culture, have become distorted and shaped by idolatry. The widespread effects of sin are obvious, but God is still faithful and promises liberation from this bondage.
<b>Redemption</b>	The biblical Story tells us that although man fell into sin, God had a plan of redemption through the sacrifice of His Son. Christ came to earth to restore creation from the distorting influence of sin and to redeem all things so that we could get back on track with God’s original design and purpose. Through the redemptive work of Jesus Christ, who holds all things together, the power of sin has been dealt with. Now, as redeemed people, we look forward towards and participate in the restoration of the whole creation.
<b>Restoration</b>	The biblical Story tells us that we are called to live in the light of this coming restoration as faithful redemptive agents responding to God’s invitation to work towards ongoing redemption, as we fulfill our original mandate to take care of and develop His creation. God is sovereign in His ongoing work of redemption, and He calls us to join Him as His redemptive people, His agents of restoration. In response to Christ’s past and ongoing redemptive work, and with the active presence of the Holy Spirit, we can gratefully respond by living a life of service and partnership as all things move towards complete restoration. This will not be fully realized until Christ returns. One of the tasks of the Christian school is to call students to be involved in God’s redemption and transformation of His world and to set up sign posts to the coming Kingdom.

## **Core Practice # 2 – Biblical Throughlines**

**Every Christian school classroom must have an articulate and inspiring student profile that invites every student to imagine how to play their part in God's Story.**

*"The primary goal of Christian education is the formation of a peculiar people, a people who desire the Kingdom of God and thus undertake their life's expression of that desire."*

James K. A. Smith

What a complex challenge to imagine what it is to be a "peculiar" person in God's Story! SCCS has identified 11 biblical Throughlines to help us imagine who we are as peculiar people. When schools invite students to actively contribute to the formation of Christian culture, we need to challenge each student to develop Kingdom-building characteristics. These biblical characteristics help us all, teachers and students, to understand what our roles are and what our calling is. They provide us with chances to practice, opportunities to develop discipleship habits.

Teachers use Throughlines to connect each unit's learning outcomes to God's Story, as a type of "thematic Velcro", carefully choosing, together with the students, one or two Throughlines they want to learn about as they explore the topic. This process shifts the learning focus away from "what" the student needs to know to "who" the student is called to be. These Throughlines characteristics weave through the Bible and describe a calling to "be", not simply to "do". They can also be considered "wholines" because they describe who we are. Interestingly, Tft teachers often find that the students absorb the "stuff" of the unit better because they have a meaningful context for the learning.

Throughlines are big picture ideas around which we can organize curriculum. Throughlines are qualities/characteristics that we desire students to develop as God is revealed to them in all things. They are discipleship concepts that guide our living. These characteristics describe how we can become part of the restoration of creation. They answer, "How NOW shall I live?" Throughlines weave the big ideas into a transformational worldview. A key component of the Tft framework is that teachers are challenged not simply to tell the students about the Throughlines but to provide actual opportunities for the students to "live" the chosen Throughlines in each unit.

And what does God call us to "be"? He calls us to be Servant Workers, to be Justice Seekers, to be Earth Keepers, to be Community Builders. He calls us to be Creation Enjoyers, Truth Finders, Order Discoverers, and Beauty Makers.

And in all of these, He calls every disciple to be God Worshipers, Word Appliers, and Image Reflectors. Here we get a wider picture of the roles that God has called us to be as Christians.

Throughline	Description
<b>God Worshiper</b>	<p>Students understand that worshipping God is about celebrating who God is, what God has done and is doing, and what God has created. It is literally about standing in awe and wonder of Him and His promises. Students see this worship as a way of life and appreciate God's all sufficient grace and their faith journey.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● <b>Learning Target: I can worship God in all parts of my life.</b></li></ul> <p><i>Deuteronomy 6:4-9: "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. Impress them on your children..." (NIV)</i></p>
<b>Word Applier</b>	<p>Students weave The Big Story into all areas of life and apply the stories of Scripture, seeing God's faithfulness in the lives of His people, including their own. They will understand the summary of creation, fall, redemption, and restoration. They are</p>

	<p>reminded that every square inch we explore, learn, discern, or encounter in education and life is informed by a strong understanding of the Bible and will discern and inform decisions with Scripture.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Learning Target: I can apply God's Word in all areas of life.</b> <i>Colossians 3:16: "Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts." (NIV)</i></li> </ul>
<b>Image Reflector</b>	<p>Students bear the image of God in their daily lives. Being an image bearer isn't something we do. It is something we are. We learn to see God's image in others. The more Christ-like our actions are, the more clearly Christ's light shines in a dark world. Students are nurtured in the characteristics of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Learning Target: I can develop my talents and gifts to reflect God and serve others.</b> <i>Genesis 1:27: "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them." (NIV)</i></li> </ul>
<b>Truth Finder</b>	<p>Students will understand that when other "things" are more important to us than our relationship with God, they become idols. They need to learn to analyze a worldview by asking questions about what is being portrayed in regard to culture, values, and belief systems. Students will be challenged to identify, understand, and discern the idols of our time and times past and then to respond as modern day prophets.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Learning Target: I can recognize idols in my life and choose to focus on the true God.</b> <i>Romans 12:2: "Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will." (NIV)</i></li> </ul>
<b>Earth Keeper</b>	<p>Students will respond to God's call to be stewards of all of creation, including mankind. They will reclaim and relearn how to respectfully treat the world/universe and all things contained in it, which respects God.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Learning Target: I can respect and care for all parts of God's world.</b> <i>Psalms 24:1: "The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it." (NIV)</i></li> </ul>
<b>Beauty Maker</b>	<p>As image bearers of a creative God, students will glorify and praise God by creating that which is beautiful and pleasing to Him. This offering of creativity isn't optional – it's a joyful duty that students offer as a sacrifice of praise. Creation shouts that our God is a God who loves diversity, complexity, and creativity.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Learning Target: I can glorify God through my creativity.</b> <i>Colossians 1:16: "For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him." (NIV)</i></li> </ul>
<b>Justice Seeker</b>	<p>Students will act as agents of change by identifying and responding to injustices. The world is not as God intended it to be. Everything is tainted by sin. We need to</p>

	<p>respond to God's call to act as agents of restoration, His disciples, respecting the stories and hurts of others.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Learning Target: I can see injustice and try to respond with love and fairness.</b></li> </ul> <p><i>Micah 6:8: "What does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God." (NIV)</i></p>
<b>Creation Enjoyer</b>	<p>Students will discover, understand, and celebrate God's beautiful creation and give testimony to the presence of God in creation. Ordinary things become extraordinary when seen in new ways. We see joy in the interrelated creation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Learning Target: I can discover, enjoy, and celebrate God's creation.</b></li> </ul> <p><i>Psalms 65:8: "The whole earth is filled with awe at your wonders; where morning dawns, where evening fades, you call forth songs of joy." (NIV)</i></p>
<b>Servant Worker</b>	<p>Students will work actively to heal brokenness and bring joy to individuals and to culture. Being an image bearer means having the ability and responsibility to discover, respond to, develop, use, and improve the world God has placed us in. Students cultivate the desire and ability to offer hope, healing, and restoration to the world and its people, using our talents and gifts to serve God and others.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Learning Target: I can bring joy and healing to others through service.</b></li> </ul> <p><i>1 John 3:16: "This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters." (NIV)</i></p>
<b>Community Builder</b>	<p>Students will be active pursuers and builders of community in their classrooms, their neighborhoods, and in the global village they are part of. Our classrooms will be communities of grace where students will walk and work together in peace. We seek to be loving and joyful in our work and play.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Learning Target: I can understand and build community.</b></li> </ul> <p><i>1 Corinthians 12:12: "Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ." (NIV)</i></p>
<b>Order Discoverer</b>	<p>Students see God's fingerprints all over creation. God has created order out of chaos. There is purpose, and we are able to discover the order. God has a plan, and we are part of that plan.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Learning Target: I can see and rejoice in God's fingerprints throughout all of creation.</b></li> </ul> <p><i>Psalms 19:1-4: "The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands. Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they reveal knowledge. They have no speech, they use no words; no sound is heard from them. Yet their voice goes out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world." (NIV)</i></p>

### **Core Practice #3 – FLEx – Formational Learning Experiences**

**Every Christian school classroom must provide authentic (real work, real need, real people) opportunities for students to practice living the Kingdom Story. This practice then becomes a habit, with habits shaping who we are and what we do.**

*"It is nothing but a pious wish and a grossly unwarranted hope that students trained to be passive and non-creative in school will suddenly, upon graduation, actively contribute to the formation of Christian culture."*

Nicholas Wolterstorff

*"A man who carries a cat by the tail learns something that he can learn no other way."*

Mark Twain

Wolterstorff suggests, strongly, that students must be given the opportunity to do God's work NOW – to be active and creative in God's Story. Meaningful work creates a sense of purpose in their lives, and draws students more powerfully to God's Story. As the name suggests, Formational Learning Experiences are designed to form the students' hearts and actions as well as their minds, equipping students to become people who live and breathe God's Story. Research and experience suggest that formational learning best emerges from experiences that get at our gut and touch our heart. James K. A. Smith writes in *Desiring the Kingdom* that "Education is not primarily . . . concerned with providing information; rather, education most fundamentally is a matter of formation, a task of shaping and creating a certain kind of people. These people are distinct because of what they love and desire – the Kingdom of God."

#### **We promise to design formational learning experiences that:**

- **Invite** every student to explore their role in the Kingdom Story
- **Nurture** every student to desire to be a peculiar people
- **Empower** every student to practice their life's expression

#### **Application Statement**

I hereby declare that the information contained in this application is true, complete, and correct. I authorize, without reservation, Sioux Center Christian School and its representatives, employees, and/or agents to make any investigation of my personal, education, and employment history and my background.

I understand and support the mission, philosophy, and statement of faith held at Sioux Center Christian School. I also understand that if I were to become an employee of the school, I would be expected to be committed to behavior that is in keeping with biblical principles and the employee norms. My work and interactions with faculty, staff, and students should promote Christian convictions and maturity, give glory to God, and further His Kingdom.

I am a Christian and believe the Scripture of the Old and New Testaments to be the inspired Word of God, the only infallible rule of faith and practice. The Bible reveals the way of salvation in Jesus Christ (my Savior and Redeemer and Lord of all creation), requires a life of obedience to the Lord, and provides the key to understanding, to finding, and to interpreting purpose in life. I affirm and wholeheartedly agree with and commit to following the school's statement of faith.

One of the requirements for Sioux Center Christian School faculty and administration is to become members at and regularly attend a confessionally-Reformed congregation that supports the school. Faculty and administration are also to enroll any children in one of the local Christian Schools International (CSI) elementary or high schools. I understand and agree to follow these requirements.

Such a requirement is not to be interpreted as a judgmental statement in regard to other Christian traditions. It is rather a reflection of the founding principles of Sioux Center Christian School and the institution's efforts to develop an educational program based on those convictions. An applicant does not need to be a member of a confessionally-Reformed congregation at the time of their application. However, we want to be up front that if an applicant is offered a position, this is a requirement of employment. Once a new employee moves to this area and begins their job, they would be expected to find a church home and affiliate with one of the many churches in the area that fits this requirement.



Applicants must also seek to obey Scripture's instructions that all are called to put off things like sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires, and greed as well as things such as anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language, and to put on an attitude of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, patience, and, of course, love (Colossians 3). I agree to follow the school's Christian Code of Conduct should I be hired.

If I am hired, I understand that I am free to resign at any time, with or without cause and with or without prior notice, and the employer reserves the same right to terminate my employment at any time, with or without cause and with or without prior notice, except as may be required by law. This application does not constitute an agreement or contract for employment for any specified period or definite duration. I understand that no supervisor or representative of the employer is authorized to make any assurances to the contrary and that no implied oral or written agreements contrary are valid unless they are in writing and signed by the head of school.

I also understand that if I am hired, I will be required to provide proof of identity and legal authorization to work in the United States and that the federal immigration laws require me to complete an I-9 Form in this regard. I understand that any offer of employment is contingent on a successful background check.

I understand that any information provided by me that is found to be false, incomplete, or misrepresented in any respect, will be sufficient cause to eliminate me from further consideration for employment, or may result in my immediate discharge from the employer's service, whenever it is discovered.