



St. Johns
Classical Academy
School Culture Plan
2025-2026

Mission

To develop graduates in mind and character through a classical, content-rich curriculum that emphasizes the principles of virtuous living, traditional learning, and civic responsibility. We are building intelligent, virtuous American citizens.

Motto

SJCA's motto, which scholars recite every morning, is *"I will Learn the True, I will Do the Good, I will Love the Beautiful."*

Culture Statement

At St. Johns Classical Academy, we build a culture grounded in truth, goodness, and beauty, inspired by the Western classical tradition. Our scholars, teachers, and families are united by a commitment to strong academics, virtuous character, and responsible citizenship.

We believe every scholar can grow and thrive when challenged with a rich curriculum and clear expectations. Our teachers lead by example, modeling the character and wisdom we aim to instill in our scholars.

Our school is a place of respect, focus, and thoughtful discussion. We welcome different backgrounds and beliefs, all while working together to build knowledge and character. Guided by our nine core virtues—Citizenship, Courage, Honesty, Humility, Integrity, Perseverance, Respect, Responsibility, and Wisdom—we prepare students not just for school, but for meaningful lives and leadership.

In every part of our school day, we strive to "Learn the True, Do the Good, and Love the Beautiful." That's the heart of who we are.

Hallway Expectations

Routine / Expectation	What does it look like?	Why do we do it?
Greeting students as they enter the building or classroom	Staff should welcome every student in a positive way; friendly compliments, “good to see you,” and words of encouragement. Enforce uniform policy and make corrections (remove hoodies and non-uniform jackets, tuck in shirts).	• Attitude can be contagious, and we should model the type of behavior we want students to have. • Our goal is for a student to have five positive interactions with an adult before they enter the classroom.
Walking in the Hallway	Students are expected to control their behavior, remain at level “0”, and remain on the right side of the hallway (blue line) with their hands off the walls. When standing, they should have their feet in a square, with one empty square between each student. When walking, they should remain one arms distance behind each other.	• The purpose is to move efficiently so they can get back to learning and not distract other classes. • This limits the opportunity for horseplay and respects personal space.

Recess Expectations

Routine / Expectation	What does it look like?	Why do we do it?
Recess expectations and transitions	Once class has transitioned to the recess area, the teacher will give clear instructions on areas they can and cannot play. <u>Reiterate expectations:</u> • Keep hands and bodies to themselves. • Do not jump off equipment. • Feet first down the slide. • No climbing fences or trees. • No throwing rocks, dirt, or grass. Use attention-getter and have the class line up, have students fix their uniforms, and remind them of hallway expectations. Teachers must be in assigned positions/stations throughout recess to ensure safety.	• It is important for students to have a safe environment for playing and we want our students to be polite and kind. • Classes must enter the hallways in the appropriate manner to be respectful to other classes in progress. • Any student not being safe for themselves or others will be addressed.

Restroom Expectations

Routine / Expectation	What does it look like?	Why do we do it?
Restroom Times: When are the appropriate times for students to go to the restroom?	Train students to avoid missing instruction by requiring them to go during whole class restroom breaks, recess, lunch time, and during independent work. Students should be given opportunities while transitioning to co-curricular. All scholars must have a hall pass when moving unaccompanied.	- Limit time away from instruction and minimize distractions. - Teaches time management and self-government skills. - Using a hall pass will communicate to other teachers and administration that the scholar has permission to be out of the classroom.
What is the nonverbal signal for going to the restroom? What should a student do if the teacher denies the request? What if the student really must go?	Sign Language letter R  If a request is denied, tell them when they will be allowed to go to the restroom. "You may go once we are writing words in our notebook." Scholars must use a hall pass. If it is an emergency, the scholar shall ask the teacher privately and be required to use a hall pass.	This will allow students to respectfully ask to use the restroom without interrupting the class.

Whole class restroom break	Use class exiting and hallway procedure to move class to the restroom. Boys and girls will line up on their respective sides waiting to enter. A third line is waiting to return to class. Student restroom monitors shall be assigned for each side to supervise, keep track of available stalls, and ensure cleanliness prior to class leaving. • Boys should be reminded that the urinal is only for urine. • Do not flush anything other than toilet paper. • Students will always wash their hands and DO NOT allow students to overuse soap. • Leave it cleaner than you found it.	• Whole class restroom breaks are beneficial. It prevents scholars from missing instruction and provides an opportunity to create a leadership assignment for students. • While waiting in line, teachers can have scholars recite or ask questions to make productive use of the wait time.
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Transitions Expectations		
Routine / Expectation	What does it look like?	Why do we do it?
Transition Expectations: How will students transition from the classroom to Cocurricular, lunch, and recess?	Teachers will structure exiting and entering the class. Exiting: Stand up, organize their area, desk, and fix their uniforms. Choose students or groups/rows that have followed instructions to line up in the front of the classroom first or as assigned by teacher. The straight line will provide enough space (two feet in a square with empty square between each student). Once in the hallway, students will be at voice level “0” unless spoken to by an adult. Teachers supervise, praise and correct, and model appropriate hallway behavior.	• Maintaining positive control over the group will reduce opportunities for misbehavior. • Encourage and reinforce behaviors that demonstrate self-discipline and respect for other classrooms.

Cafeteria Expectations		
Routine / Expectation	What does it look like?	Why do we do it?
How will scholars get lunch?	<u>Grammar-</u> Classes will line up in the classroom with their lunch boxes. Teachers will bring class to the cafeteria and send those through the lunch line while also lining those with a lunch to line up at the entrance. Teachers must stay with their entire class until everyone is seated. <u>Upper-</u> Scholars will be released from their classroom to retrieve their lunch box and walk quietly to the cafeteria. Teachers must stand at their doors to monitor the hallway. The same procedure will occur when scholars are returning from lunch. <u>K-12-</u> Scholars in the lunch line may talk at voice level "1." Scholars will make selections and say "please" and "thank you" to cafeteria staff. Scholars will be responsible for getting everything they need before leaving the line. Once students have a complete lunch tray, they will carry it with two hands and walk directly to the cafeteria to their assigned lunch table.	This will allow scholars to get their lunch in an orderly manner and show courtesy to everyone serving in and supervising the cafeteria.
What are scholars' expectations during lunch?	All scholars must remain seated, eat, and talk at voice level "2" with their classmates. If they need something, they will raise their hand to ask for permission. If a student needs to use the restroom, they should raise the restroom signal (sign language R) and wait for an adult to arrive. Students will keep their area neat. Teachers are allowed to bring their class to the restroom 5 minutes early to use the restroom and wash their hands. Scholars will not be permitted to use the restroom unless it is an emergency.	The cafeteria can be a chaotic place, and while it is important for scholars to socialize, it also needs to be a safe place. They must be responsible enough to eat their food as well as socialize and leave their area clean and ready for the next class.

How will scholars clean up from lunch?	The lunch monitor will inform the class they have five minutes remaining. Scholars will ensure they are finished with their food and begin to clean their area. • Trash will be placed on trays and tables will be wiped down. After five minutes, the lunch monitor will tell the class it is time to go. (Grammar) They will throw trash away and line up in the assigned spot to wait for their teacher. (Upper) They will throw away their trash and walk to the stairs and quietly back to class.	• With approximately 1300 students using our cafeteria each day, it is important that we have an efficient procedure to transition, and that we do our absolute best to keep the cafeteria clean. • If the procedure is not followed, reteach and try again.
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Classroom Expectations		
Routine / Expectation	What does it look like?	Why do we do it?
Universal Attention Getter	<u>Non-Verbal (“Give me five”):</u> 1. The adult will stand up, square up, and hold up a high five hand. 2. All students will raise their right hands in the air in a similar manner, lock eyes on the speaker, and go to voice level 0. <u>Verbal:</u> 1. Adult will say “SJ” 2. Scholars will respond with “CA.” 3. Scholars will lock eyes on the speaker and go to voice level 0. The speaker will then quickly give the scholars the directions needed.	• This allows for a consistent way for teachers to get the attention of their class and team. • Attention getters should be taught and retaught consistently throughout the year. • It is every teacher's job to teach this to their class.

Entering the School – Starting the Day:	6 th -12 th grade scholars will enter the building at 7:05am. Scholars must get their items and go to their first period class prepared and ready to start the day.	• By knowing exactly where to go in the morning and what to do, we will ensure that the class is maximizing the learning time. • Scholars must show self-control as they enter school. This will also set the tone for instruction. • Faculty will discourage wandering. • <i>Uniforms must be corrected promptly at the start of the school day. Scholars are required to call home from the classroom phone. Corrections must be made ASAP. If the uniform cannot be corrected, the scholar will receive a demerit, and the Dean of School Culture will be contacted by the teacher to provide a uniform from the school closet.</i>
How will students enter the school at the very beginning of the day?	All teachers must greet the class at the door no later than 7:25am and perform a uniform check.	
What are spirit day guidelines?	K-5 scholars who arrive before 7:25am must go to the cafeteria. They will be dismissed to their classrooms at 7:25am and K-2 scholars will be escorted to the Academic building.	
What happens if a scholar is not in compliance with spirit day guidelines?	Scholars will sit along the hallway and read or study while one teacher per grade level monitors the hallway. Teachers will rotate this as a duty station.	
Where do I mark them down for not following guidelines?	(6 th -12 th) Announcements will begin at 7:30am. (K-5 th) Announcements will begin at 8:00 a.m. Teachers must display the weekly announcement slideshow during this time.	
	<u>Spirit Day Guidelines</u> Tops: SJCA spirit t-shirt – Shirts must be purchased from one of our approved vendors. Links to these vendors can be found on our website. PE shirts, Middle and High school house shirts, SJCA sponsored club shirts, SJCA polo shirt. Bottoms: Jeans or jean shorts to the knee. Jeans may not have any rips, tears, holes. No jeggings permitted. Uniform shorts or any khaki or navy-blue shorts to the knees. No athletic shorts unless you are in K-5th and have PE that day. Shoes: Scholars may wear their choice of shoes except for flip flops, crocs, or sandals. No open toed or backless shoes permitted.	• Spirit day should be fun, but not a distraction. • It is important to mark these scholars in the tracker and hold them accountable.

	<u>Spirit Day Participation Policy</u> If scholars do not follow the spirit day guidelines as outlined above, they will lose the privilege of participating in the following spirit day. They may be eligible to participate again in the month after. If a scholar fails to follow the guidelines for a second time, they will lose the privilege of participating for the remainder of the year. Please note: No refunds will be issued for payments already made.	
Student Noise Expectations: What should it sound like in your classroom? Are there different times for different noise levels?	The teacher will assign the proper voice level for specific activities based on the following scale: level 0- silent level 1- whisper level 2- group talk level 3- presentation voice	• Students need to know the expectations for their voice level. • It is important that we have a universal language to share those expectations. • It will minimize misunderstandings and build responsibility.
Desk/Table Sitting and “Ready to Learn”: What are the student expectations for paying attention to the speaker?	Scholars sitting at their table or desk must be engaged and ready to participate. Teachers remind scholars to be in the “Ready to Learn” position: Sitting tall, feet on the floor, arms folded flat on desks, focusing on whoever is speaking, and raising hands to ask or answer questions.	• The “Ready to Learn” position requires them to control their bodies, actively participate, and avoid distracting others.
Standing: What does appropriate standing look like?	Students will stand with their hands at their sides. There is no running, jumping, or touching the walls or other students while inside.	• Students must show self-control while standing. • This process will maximize learning time, prevent injuries, equipment damage, or conflicts.

Classroom Disruptions: How should students react to unforeseen disruptions (bell system, loud noise outside, etc.)?	Students should ignore all classroom disruptions. Students should not use it as an excuse to get off track. If necessary, teachers will use an attention-getter ("Give me five") to return the focus of the class.	• Disruptions are a natural part of the day. • We want to practice temperance and stay focused to not waste learning time.
Calling Out: When may students talk without raising their hands?	Students will always raise their hands to respond unless directed otherwise. If conducting a Socratic seminar or brainstorming session, they may respond while maintaining courtesy to others.	• Students must show self-control and courtesy when speaking in class. • Calling out is distracting other scholars and the teacher, and it slows down the learning process. • Moreover, it is disrespectful because the student calling out is not waiting his/her turn and is dominating the airtime in the class.
Raising Hands: What does appropriate hand-raising look like? How will a student focus when others are speaking?	Teachers ensure that this is a shared experience and call on different students. Students should not make noise (ooh ooh's or similar) or wave their hand. Calling out answers, without raising their hands, is not appropriate. When another person is speaking, their hands should be down.	• Waiting for permission to respond creates a respectful learning environment. • This is one of the most critical elements of successful classroom management. • Raising hands while another is speaking is inconsiderate. • Active listening involves trying to understand and waiting until the speaker is done to respond.
Choral Responses: What should choral responses sound like?	When a teacher asks students to read, talk, or chant in unison, it should sound like a normal, energetic reading voice (not "droning") for reading and total enthusiasm (without yelling) for chants. It will sound harmonious when done well.	• Enthusiasm helps bring joy to a class. Droning reading or lackluster chants sap the class of enthusiasm. • All class members are responsible for keeping their enthusiasm high. • Their responses indicate how well they are engaged and usually indicate their interest.

Request to get out of their seats. Throw away trash/pencil exchange/needs a tissue.	Students will use a non-verbal gesture to request a new pencil, throw away trash, or get a tissue. <i>1-pencil R-restroom 3-drink 4-tissue 5-question or answer</i> Upper school has more freedom in using hand signals in the classroom.	• This is done to accomplish what is needed with as much courtesy as possible while minimizing distractions.
Expectations of politeness: How we teach courtesy, gratitude, and respect.	Students will be required to show gratitude by saying “please,” “thank you,” and “you’re welcome.” Students should show courtesy by being supportive of others and by holding doors open, offering to carry items, and helping others. Students will address all adults (teachers, assistants, interns, office staff, after-school teachers, school custodians, etc.) by Mr., Ms., Mrs., and Miss. and their last names. They will respond with yes or no sir and ma’am.	• We teach all the things we want our students to do. All staff and students should show courtesy and perform acts of service. This is an easy way for us to show our respect for others. 1. It is a sign of respect in American culture to call people older than you by titles (Dr., Mr., Ms., Mrs., Miss.) 2. It signals to your teachers that you understand that they have a special responsibility and that you commit to respecting them. 3. These courteous behaviors will benefit them outside of the classroom.
Visitors in the classroom: How should students greet administrators, guests, and other visitors to their classroom?	When an administrator or guest enters the classroom, the classroom ambassador will get up from their seat quietly and greet them using this script: “Good morning/afternoon, sir/ma’am. Welcome to Mr./Ms./Mrs. _____’s classroom. My name is _____. We are currently studying_____.” The classroom ambassador then shakes the visitor’s hand and returns to his/her seat.	• One of our three schoolwide rules is “Be polite.” Greeting visitors to our classrooms makes everyone feel welcome in our school and encourages a culture of kindness, respect, and courtesy.

Counselor: When may a student see the counselor? Does the counselor need to come to pick up the student?	If a student would like to see a counselor, students should notify their teacher who will in turn notify a counselor by email or text message. Once available, a counselor will come to the student's classroom to pick up students for services.	Students should feel free to talk with the counselor when they need to. However, they should not be allowed to leave class without a previously scheduled appointment.
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Top Quality Work: What does complete, top-quality work look like? What happens when a student turns in less than top-quality work?	Assignments are completed to the best of the students' ability. Work will be neat and legible, as developmentally appropriate, and meet all minimum criteria for success. Teachers will give feedback and hold students accountable for complete and neat work.	- Students need to master knowledge and skills. - We must have high expectations for our students. - Students will need to produce quality work in all aspects of their life at later times.
How should scholars show support during award ceremonies, etc.?	When congratulating a fellow student receiving recognition or an award, all students should clap their hands three times then put their hands back on their lap or to their sides.	Large groups of students clapping for sustained periods can be too noisy for some students and uses more time than is necessary for an assembly or other event.

Key Teacher Moves (See Best Practices)	
Use clear and concise directions	<u>Economy of Language</u>: give crisp instructions with as few words as possible (e.g. 3-word directions). Explain what to do and NOT what not to do. Check for understanding when complex instructions are given.
Narrate the Positive	Point out those that are following directions or performing well. The teacher will narrate specific students and actions they are taking that follow instructions “I like how Jacob has gotten straight to work on his writing assignment.” “The girls are standing in line so well waiting their turn to use the restroom.”
Control the learning environment	• Students will not speak or get out of their seat without permission. • This solves most classroom management issues. • Do not get into arguments with students. Teachers manage what is up for discussion and do not let students get the entire class off track. • You can create a competitively constructive learning environment where positive behaviors are praised and reinforced. Examples: • “Now I know you’re only 4th graders, but I have a 5th grade problem that I bet you could master!!” • “Wow, the front row has their history notebook and pencil out and are ready to learn!!”
Whole-Class Reset	Implement a structured whole-class reset to reinforce student behavioral expectations when standards are not met. Pause the class activity, request students to put away their materials, and ensure they are seated in a ready-to-learn posture. Clearly communicate your concerns about their behavior or effort and motivate them by providing constructive direction or challenges to encourage improvement.
Parent Communications	Communication with parents should be consistent and frequent, fostering ongoing engagement and trust. While the frequency of communication is important, each message should be concise and focused. Providing excessive or overly detailed information may increase the risk of misinterpretation or unintended conclusions. Therefore, clarity and brevity are essential to ensure accurate understanding and effective collaboration.