

*Student Handbook*

*A Model for Designing a Student Handbook  
for a Local Bible School*

## *How to Use the Student Handbook Model*

This Student Handbook model is to help you develop your school's own *Student Handbook* so that it reflects the needs and expectations of your college and its national church community. You are encouraged to modify and amplify the contents of this model to suit your own setting, but be cautious about omitting any of the sections, which are generally necessary for any school.

This model uses NOTES to identify areas that will probably require individual cultural adaptation for your institution. Such notes would not be printed as a part of your *Study Handbook*; rather, they serve as a guide to those writing it. Such material is either [enclosed in brackets in a display font] or as display type in a box, as in the following example:

NOTE:—The college may want to designate a chapel service each week as student-led. This will give them a closely supervised practicum on planning and leading worship services. This same chapel may use speakers from the upper-level classes for the preaching.
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Often such a note will be followed by samples of content, which give you information and guide your writing your *Student Handbook*.

## Introduction

NOTE:—These introductory remarks would not be printed as part of your *Student Handbook*; they serve only as a guide to help you understand the need for and use of such a handbook

### ***What Is a Student Handbook?***

A student handbook is a guidebook that the school administration designs to acquaint the student with all aspects of the Bible school's life. This handbook will tell the student what to expect at the college, and what the college expects of him.

### ***Why Does a College Need a Student Handbook?***

The college should be concerned not only with academic performance but also with the personal conduct of each student; therefore, any Bible school will govern student conduct by the ideals and standards of the college and state these in the *Student Manual*.

Any student preparing for Christian ministry should seek to develop the ideals and standards of conduct set out in such a handbook in his life, whether at the college or away from the school.

### ***Mutual Responsibilities: College and Student***

As part of the application process, the Bible school should send each potential student a copy of the *Student Handbook*. The application and process should make it clear that each student is responsible to read and become familiar with the policies stated in it, and they should understand that they will be expected to sign an agreement to abide by these standards during their time of study at the Bible school.

At the beginning of each new school year, the college administration must conduct *New Student Orientation*, which must include an oral review of the *Student Handbook* and provide time for questions and clarification.

After reading the *Student Handbook* and attending the oral review, you should ask each student to sign a declaration stating that they agree to abide by the policies established by the college. This should become a part of their permanent file.

Example :

I have read the [Name of school] *Student Handbook* and have understood the oral clarifications given by the college administrators. I agree to abide by these policies as established by [Name of school] in the *Student Handbook*.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Welcome

NOTE:—This is a welcome letter from the chief Bible school's President/Director welcoming the new student and challenging the student to make the best use of the opportunity for Christian development afforded by the Bible school

### Example:

Life is a series of choices, not chances. I am delighted that you made the choice to attend [Name of School]. In the time you spend here, the Holy Spirit will mold, challenge and direct you. When you leave here, you will never be the same again. These can be some of the best days of your life, as you prepare yourself for labor in God's kingdom.

In classroom preparation, in times of worship in chapel and dorm prayers, in close fellowship with your instructors and fellow-students, and in living encounters with the Lord you will preparing yourself to make the fullest obedient response to God's call to proclaim the Gospel everywhere.

We welcome you to [Name of the School]. I look forward to getting to know you. I expect this to be an exciting year as together we learn at his feet, grow in his knowledge, and conform to his image. May God's richest blessing be yours.

[Name of President]

## *Spiritual Life Information*

Prayer and acts of devotion to God are vital to spiritual development. As such they are indispensable for preparation for Christian ministry. The following are some ways the college provides to promote and encourage the student's spiritual growth.

### *Chapel*

The [Name of School] chapel services provide a regular time of spiritual enrichment and growth in which the entire school community participates.

In contrast to the structured learning environment of the classroom, chapel services provide for the student's development in worship and the exercise of spiritual gifts. The chapel services are not designed to focus on the structured church program; rather, they serve to cultivate a vital personal relationship with God and corporate relationship in the Body of Christ.

*Students are expected to attend all regularly scheduled chapel services.*

### *Student Chapel*

NOTE:—The college may want to designate a chapel service each week as student-led. This will give them a closely supervised practicum on planning and leading worship services. This same chapel may use speakers from the upper-level classes for the preaching.

### *Student Ministries*

Preparing students for Christian ministry is the primary mission of [Name of School], so student assignments to church ministries provide practical development experience.

[Name of school] requires each student to complete [number] semesters of ministry involvement for graduation. This will usually occur in the local church, although other college approved projects may qualify as student ministry. The *Student Ministries Handbook* provides detailed instruction on these requirements.

### *Personal Devotions*

[Name of school] encourages every student to observe a time of prayer and Bible reading each day. Classes, study, meetings, and other college activities should not be allowed to rob time from communion with God.

NOTE:—The chapel is generally a good place for meditation and prayer and can often be kept open for student use for this. If that is not feasible for any reason, the school should provide some other designated place(s) for this, which this handbook should note.

### *Special Prayer Times*

In addition to regular devotional times, students are encouraged to set aside special times for prayer and fasting. Special needs and occasions often provoke calls for intercessory prayer.

NOTE:—The college may designate special calls to prayer and schedule them in any of the following ways: daily, weekly, monthly, or when an urgent need arises.

### *Fasting*

Students are encouraged to voluntarily fast a designated meal, expressing the rightful priority that the Lord holds in their lives. This will also provide for experiences in the discipline and blessed derived from fasting.

NOTE:—The college may wish to designate a specific day or meal each week for fasting. For example, many Bible school communities fast the noon meal on Fridays to intercede for Muslim evangelism.

### ***Spiritual Emphasis Week***

The [name of school] community devotes one week each semester to spiritual emphasis. These times of refreshing are intended to enhance the student's and faculty's spiritual development. A guest minister will be invited to speak to regular daily chapel services and special evening services.

NOTE:—The administration should provide extra time for worship and prayer during spiritual emphasis week. This can be done by shortening each class by 5–10 minutes thus allowing for a chapel time that is 20–40 minutes longer than regular services.

### ***Missions Emphasis Week***

Each year [name of school] gives special emphasis to missions during a designated week. Students are encouraged to special time to intercessory prayer for world missions and for missionaries of whom they learn. Often special efforts are made to focus on a region of the world through special speakers, displays, and prayer groups. This is also the time when the college community receives faith promises for yearly giving, which is to support missions projects through giving from the students and staff.

NOTE:—In addition to missions emphasis week, the college should consider scheduling a regular missions emphasis in one chapel service each week. Faith promise offerings would be received during this service each week.

### ***Counseling***

The [Title of person] is available to students who desire special prayer and counsel. In some cases, the [title of person] may ask other faculty or staff members to assist the student by providing further counsel and prayer.

## ***Academic Information***

[Name of school] has designed its academic program to prepare students for effective Christian ministry. To achieve this goal the Academic Dean's office provides ongoing guidance relating to the student's program of study, course enrollment, and graduation requirements. Students may be assigned to a member of the faculty to this academic guidance.

NOTE:—If it is possible, this faculty adviser should follow the student through his entire time at the Bible school, serving as his academic adviser during all periods of registration and whenever the student has questions about his program.

## ***Registration***

Resident students should arrive at the college at least one day before classes begin. This will allow time to register for classes, pay fees, move into an assigned dormitory room, and put things in order. Classes missed because of late arrival be counted as absences and will counted toward the total absences allowed for that study block.

## ***Grading System***

NOTE:—The scale below is an international grading scale that may differ from the system in your country. Adjust your grading scale according to the standard grading scale used at the college level in your country. You may also want to consider the grading scale of other Bible colleges if inter-school transfers might occur.

4.0	A	Excellent	93–100%
3.0	B	Good	85–92%
2.0	C	Satisfactory	77–84%
1.0	D	Pass	70–76%
0.0	F	Fail	69 and below

The college's grading scale should be clearly printed as part of the transcript form.

[Name of school] uses the following grading scale to record and report each student's level of academic achievement:

6.0	A	Excellent	93–100%
5.0	B	Good	85–92
4.0	C	Satisfactory	77–84
3.0	D	Pass	70–76
2.0	F	Fail/Repeat	69 and below
1.0	F	Fail/Repeat	69 and below

## ***Repeat Courses***

Required courses must be repeated if a study receives a grade of "F." In such cases, only the higher grade is computed in the student's overall grade point average. (See the *College Catalog* for information on "Grade Point Average").

NOTE:—The college should be sure that this agrees with its grading system, which is published in the *College Catalog*.

## ***Class Attendance***

Students are expected to attend all classes. If a student knows in advance that he or she will be absent, he or she should make prior arrangements with his or her instructor about assignments and classwork.

[Name of college] feels that systematic classroom instruction coupled with interaction among students and teachers are an indispensable means of learning and growing in the Bible school setting. Therefore, no student shall be allowed to pass a course if the total of all absences, excused and unexcused, is equal to or exceeds 20% of the class session time.

For example, if a student taking a two-unit course is absent more than *seven* (7) class sessions, he or she automatically fails the course. If the course is a required course, this means the student must repeat the course to receive the unit credit needed for graduation.

Block session scheduling commonly means that two hours of the same course are taught together with a ten-minute break between the two hours. The student must understand that missing a block session means that *two* (2) absences will be registered on his or her record.

An absence for any reason except for unavoidable emergencies or illness will be registered as an *Unexcused* absence. Both excused and unexcused absences count in the total allowed before automatic failure.

NOTE:—The college may want to specify how it will deal with students who are consistently late for class or who leave class early without the prior approval of the instructor. A common practice is to equate three tardies as one absence.

The course instructor will warn the student before the limit of absences is reached.

### ***Assignments and Examinations***

As a general rule, for every hour of classroom instruction, the student should expect to spend another two hours in individual study. Students should prepare a study schedule at the beginning of each block session and follow it closely to allow sufficient time for study. A Christian minister will always benefit from disciplined study habits.

All assigned work (research papers, reports, worksheets, etc.) will be due on the date that the instructor designates in the syllabus or in classroom discussion. Each individual instructor is free to determine penalties for failure to submit work on time. Generally, the instructor will describe these penalties in the course syllabus. The student is responsible for all work missed and assignments given when absent from class, and the due date set by the instructor remains mandatory.

Assignments must be completed and submitted on the assigned date, and tests and exams must be taken on the scheduled date. Late tests will only be administered for excused absences. All students are required to take final examinations on the scheduled day and time.

### ***Academic Excellence***

A student must achieve a 1.75 grade point average at the end of the first semester to carry a full load the second semester. A 2.0 grade point average should be maintained for all the remaining semesters while enrolled at the college (GPA based on a 4.0 scale).

NOTE:—Schools using a 6.0 or 5.0 scale will have to adjust these figures appropriately.

## *Library*

NOTE:—Library hours and general rules should be adjusted according to the needs and limitations of the college library. Consider reserve policy, schedule of fines, library hours, loan periods, lost books, and library courtesy. Also state what services the library provides, such as study areas, reference help, audiovisual equipment, etc.

## *Course Numbering*

The five elements included in the course number indicate the division of study, the level or year the course is offered, the semester the course is taught, whether the course is required or an elective, and the units of credit for the subject. The elements work as follows:

- PREFIX (*Letters*): Indicates the *division of study* of the course.
- FIRST DIGIT: Indicates the *level* (or year) in which the course should be taken.
- SECOND DIGIT: Indicates the *semester* in which the course is generally taught (1 or 2).
- THIRD DIGIT: Indicates whether the course is required or an elective. An even number (2, 4, 6, or 8) indicates that the course is required; and odd number (1, 3, 5, 7, 9) indicates that the course is an elective.
- FOURTH DIGIT: Indicates the number of *units of credit* offered for the course.

For example, BI 1222 indicates the following things about the course:

**BI** 1222—This is a course in the *Bible division*.

**BI 1222**—This should be taken in the first level, or first year of the program.

**BI 1222**—It is generally offered in the second semester.

**BI 1222**—It is a required course.

**BI 1222**—It offers two *units of credit*.

## *Financial Information*

Each student is required to pay all bills promptly.

- No student with unpaid school bills will be allowed to take final exams without the written approval of the school's financial administrator.
- No student will be allowed to re-enroll with unpaid bills.
- [Name of school] will not release a student's transcripts until all financial obligations to the school are paid in full.

## *Social Guidelines*

### *General Principles*

The Scriptures establish the basic principles that should guide Christian behavior and shape Christian character. Practices known to be morally wrong by biblical teaching are not acceptable for members of the [name of school] community.

Although the Scriptures do not provide specific teaching regarding all social practices, they do advocate self-restraint in that which is harmful or is offensive to others. Therefore, all activities that would be detrimental to Christian character, testimony, and fellowship are disapproved.

NOTE:—The school should determine the culturally specific social guidelines that will contribute to the purposes and goals of the individual school and national church, explicitly including them in the *Student Handbook*.

### *Dormitory Life*

Students should cultivate an atmosphere of mutual cooperating and goodwill in the dormitory. The dormitory is not only a place to live and share fellowship, it is also a place to study, so disruptive practices are disapproved especially during key study hours or late nights.

### *Personal Grooming*

All student apparel, whether worn on-campus or off-campus, should be modest, in good taste and neat and clean at all times. Good personal hygiene habits are an important part of a wholesome and Christ-honoring appearance.

### *Leaving Campus*

NOTE:—In the event that an urgent message may be sent to a student, the school should consider procedures regarding students leaving the campus. Security and safety concerns may also prompt this consideration.

### *Music*

NOTE:—The school should consider a policy regulating playing instruments and electronic equipment in the dormitory. This should reflect consideration for other's need to study, sleep, and share the waking environment in close quarters.

## ***Discipline***

NOTE:—The school will need to set out procedures for dealing with students who require disciplinary action. These procedures should be clearly stated in the *Student Handbook*. This should describe who is responsible for student discipline, possible penalties, and means of appeal.

## ***Housing***

### ***Housing Reservations***

Bed assignments are made for the school year. Returning students who wish to reserve a bed for the next school year may be given priority. All other bed assignments will be made on a first-come, first-served basis in accordance with the housing policy of [name of school].

### ***Dormitories***

Dormitories must be set in order each morning before classes and thoroughly cleaned at least once a week. All trash must be placed in the proper containers. Lights and other electrical appliances must be turned off when not in use. At the end of the school year, dorms must be vacated in good order with all furniture in place and keys returned to the appropriate housing director.

### ***Off-Campus Housing***

NOTE:—The school must consider its housing policy according to its own situation. Off-campus housing should be regulated. Normally all single students are required to live in the dormitory unless they live at home with nearby family.

## ***Student Activities***

### ***School Newspaper***

NOTE:—If applicable, the school should include information about the student newspaper. If the school publishes a student newspaper, appropriate information about how it's regulated, produced, and distributed should be explicitly stated in the student handbook.

### ***School Yearbook***

NOTE:—The college may publish a school yearbook if it is financially feasible. The yearbook should be a year-long project that is published and distributed at the close of the school year. The yearbook may serve as a memento for students as well as a public relations document.

A student-editor should be chosen by the school's administration, and the work of the students producing the yearbook should be closely supervised for appropriateness, good design, and cost by an appropriate faculty or staff member. The budget should be closely supervised by the school's business administrator.

### ***Campus Duties***

Christian living on a campus necessarily requires that each student assume responsibility for certain chores.

NOTE:—The school should consider specific work assignments, schedules, and means of supervision. A maximum of five hours of service per week is recommended, in addition to the work required for scholarship if applicable.

### ***Work Scholarships***

NOTE:—If applicable, students who are given the opportunity to work for their schooling are normally required to work 15 hours per week at assigned jobs, in addition to the campus duties required of all students.

### ***Christian Service***

NOTE:—The school should consider practical outreach ministry experience to be of equal importance with academic preparation. All students should be required to participate in Christian service through ministry in local churches, evangelistic outreaches, and other other school-approved outreach ministries that operate regularly during the school year or during scheduled times for extended ministry. The school should consider making specific arrangements for assigning, supervising, and evaluating Christian Service ministry.

### ***Student Council***

NOTE:—The school may wish to encourage the development of a student council, which could serve as the primary student organization on campus. If so, the *Student Handbook* should clearly describe the offices, privileges, and responsibilities of the student council.

### ***Class Officers***

NOTE:—The school may wish to encourage the election of class officers for each class. They will be responsible for coordinating class projects and organizing class fellowships.

## ***Student Services***

### ***Bulletin Boards***

Bulletin boards are located around the school to provide information to the students. Students are responsible to stay informed of all school activities posted on the bulletin boards. No student may post anything on school bulletin boards unless it has the signature of [person in charge of bulletin boards].

### ***Food Services***

NOTE:—The school should set the meal hours and snack times. Any other regulation about food and beverage should be clearly stated at this point in the *Student Handbook*, such as rules prohibiting removal of food from the cafeteria; taking food into classrooms, library, or chapel; etc.

### ***Health Services***

NOTE:—The school should provide a first-aid station for minor illness and injuries. In addition, the school should make appropriate arrangements with competent health professionals in the community to deal with health emergencies requiring medical assistance. The *Student Handbook* should describe these arrangements here.

The school may require each student to receive a thorough physical examination prior to acceptance as a student. In some cases, the school may waive the health certificate and require a physical examination at a clinic approved by the school.

### ***Copy Machine***

NOTE:—If applicable, students should be advised of the location and availability of a copy machine, cost per copy, and rules for use.

### ***Laundry***

NOTE:—The school will need to establish a policy regarding laundry, clearly stating in the *Student Handbook* the place, hours, and any other regulations pertinent to the local situation (e.g., one school may prohibit the use of dyes in school washing machines, another may prohibit the washing of clothes in dorm bathrooms or in campus cisterns).

### ***Mail***

NOTE:—Students should be made aware of how to send and receive mail and packages at the campus.

### ***Telephone/Fax***

NOTE:—Students should be informed of what telephones are available for student use for calls and/or faxes, the hours when calls may be received, and any other regulations such as arrangements for payment, etc.