

How to Start a Christian School in Eastern Canada



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PREFACE

A Christian school could be the most important ministry you will offer to your community. It should be an affirmation of Biblical educational principles not a negative reaction to public education. Students in good Christian schools aren't sheltered from reality; they are equipped with the truth in order to deal more effectively with the reality.

They say that the Battle of Waterloo, where the British defeated Napoleon, was won on the playing fields of Eton, an English boys' school. That means the attitudes, discipline, and principles students learned at Eton prepared them to win a great battle in their adult lives. The truth is the victor was determined long before the battle began. Many of our children are facing future battles unlike anything most of us have experienced. Their preparation today will have a lot to do with their victory or defeat in the future.

There are big challenges in starting a Christian school, challenges that will demand sacrifices. But isn't sacrifice at the heart of the Christian message? Jesus said, "*If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me*" (Luke 9:23).

Most likely, your school will start in barely adequate facilities. *How appropriate that the Lord who came into our world in a stable would be born into the educational world in humble surroundings!*

Your first staff will probably be small and unimpressive – *just like the twelve chosen to turn the world upside down by their teaching!*

In your first few years, you may face financial strains that drive you to your knees – *the best place for Christian leaders.*

In the final analysis, after seeing what God does in the lives of Christian school students, you will have a deeper understanding of King David's assertion: "*But who am I, and who are my people that we should be able to give as generously as this*" (1 Chronicles. 29:14)!

You may also recognize that your work today has the potential to help not only your children but generations yet to come.

"He decreed statutes for Jacob and established the law in Israel which he commanded our forefathers to teach their children, So that the next generation would know them, even the children yet to be born, and they in turn would tell their children. Then they would put their trust in God..." (Psalm 78: 5-7).

Please give the enclosed material your prayerful consideration.

ACSI is here to help you. Do not hesitate to call us at (705) 728-7344 or email: acsiec@sympatico.ca.

THE BIBLE AND THE CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

Introduction

We live in an age that boasts of an abundance of knowledge but suffers from a lack of wisdom. Today's senior citizen has seen more scientific advancements in his lifetime than happened in all history prior to his birth. Yet our society is increasingly beset with problems, especially among our young people. Despite the emphasis upon secular education as the panacea for all human ills, students today are experiencing alarming rates of social, physical and psychological troubles – troubles that aren't restricted to poor neighbourhoods or dysfunctional families. But is it surprising that many young people can't cope with life's realities since their education and their popular media dismiss or marginalize the God of Scripture - the author and sustainer of the real world? And even if they are part of a church going family, how can 2 or 3 hours of weekly Christian training compete with the influence of 35 hours of weekly secular education and up to 30 hours of entertainment where their faith is ignored or even mocked.

The academic quality of many secular schools is questionable too.

Academic knowledge alone cannot bear the burdens of man's existence. Facts, figures, concepts, and theories are powerless in themselves. The Bible says:

“Wisdom is supreme, therefore get wisdom.

Though it costs all you have get understanding” (Proverbs 4:7).

Job, chapter 28, tells us that wisdom has its foundation in the fear of the Lord, and that understanding comes when we depart from wrongdoing.

Colossians 2:3 further illuminates this truth, stating that all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are found in Christ.

In education, as in all areas of life, Christ is the key. Today, He is raising up Christian schools around the world.

Why Christian School Teachers Must Know Christ

Our children need to have teachers with outstanding Christian character. Jesus said, *“A student is not above his teacher, but everyone who is fully trained will be like his teacher.” Luke 6:40*

No one teaches from a moral or philosophical vacuum. One way or another a person teaches what he believes by his words and actions. As a former headmaster at Upper Canada College Prep School put it,

“A saintly person will teach saintly Mathematics and a degenerate will teach degenerate Mathematics!”

A teacher must present an outstanding Christian role model because his students will follow his example. Titus 2:7 states: *“In everything set them an example by*

doing what is good. In your teaching show integrity, seriousness, and soundness of speech that cannot be condemned, so that those who oppose you may be ashamed because they have nothing bad to say about us.”

James stresses how important that is, *“Not many of you would presume to be teachers, my brothers, because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly” (James 3:1).*

Jesus said, *“As a man thinks in his heart, so is he” (Proverbs 23:7). “Out of the overflow of the heart, the mouth speaks” (and therefore teaches) (Matthew 12:34).*

Christian school teacher must possess the spiritual gift of teaching as defined in Ephesians 4:11 because in a Christian school teaching is much more than passing on information or training young minds.

Scripture gives only one valid motivation for those believers who teach:

“He who speaks on his own does so to gain honour for himself but he who works for the honour of the one who sent him is a man of truth; there is nothing false about him” (John 7:18).

In Mark’s gospel, there is a warning for those who work with children.

“And if anyone causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to be thrown into the sea with a large millstone tied around his neck” (Mark 9:42).

The principles of Scripture need to be taught consistently both at home and at school as absolute truth. Timothy warns:

“For the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths” (2 Timothy 4:3-4).

One of the most glaring myth taught exclusively in secular education is evolution. Other philosophical myths are propagated as well. Humanism, materialism, and postmodern philosophies are common. It seems that a Christian worldview is one of the few philosophies that are unwelcome in secular education. In contrast, Paul instructs Christian teachers: *“Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and counsel” (Colossians 3:16).*

It seems to me that when a student receives messages at school that conflict with what he has been taught at home and in church he can become pretty exasperated. Who is right?

Paul says,

“Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.” (Eph 6:4)

Christian secular school teachers, administrators, and school board members have very important ministries and need our prayer support. But the crucial point is that according to Scripture all teachers who instruct children from a Christian home should be committed Christians themselves – and when the Bible speaks about education it applies to much more than Sunday school.

Why a Christian Perspective in Curriculum?

All truth is God’s truth. That is the essential message of a Christian worldview. There is no area of life and learning in which God is irrelevant. To teach subjects such as science, history, geography, literature, mathematics, excluding God, is either to teach half truths or in some specific cases outright lies. Students who are not allowed to learn about God’s truth as it applies in all areas of life are sheltered from the most important reality of all. And when an education leaves God out it implicitly says that he isn’t important enough to talk about at school.

Robert Louis Stephenson expressed it plainly, “The cruellest lies are often told in silence.” So when important, even vital truths are withheld from people who desperately need to hear and experience them, Stephenson says it is a cruel deception.

Paul sets the example for teaching from a truly Christian perspective: “*Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ*” (2 Corinthians 10:5).

He is not encouraging people to become religious "kooks." He wants people to have a clear perspective about what is real and what isn't. Paul says in Romans 12:2 that believers are responsible to develop distinctly Christian ways of thinking,

"Do not be conformed to the patterns of this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind."

But how can children develop renewed minds if they aren't allowed to be taught a Christian worldview?

In Science, Scripture contradicts the theory of evolution. It also sheds clear light upon the past, the present, and future, world ecology (*Genesis, Isaiah 35:7, Romans 8:18-23*), astronomy, atmospheric studies, and even atomic theory (*Hebrews 11:3*). And it teaches our responsibility to care for the environment and the health and well-being of people. A complete, true understanding of science cannot be separated from a knowledge of Scriptural principles.

History can't be understood fully without an awareness of Christ, the initiator of life, and a recognition that His return will be the culmination of all history. All major world events are part of God's plan and can only be fully understood as such.

God's infinite nature and the precision of His creation are clearly shown in Mathematics. "Mathematics is the language in which God has written the universe," said Sir Isaac Newton.

In English literature, each author presents his own philosophical and/or religious ideas in his work. Children need to be trained to discern those ideas and distinguish which are true and which aren't according to biblical standards.

"But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil" (Hebrews 5:14).

"Study to show yourself approved unto God, a workman that doesn't need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of truth" (2 Timothy 2).

Christian school curriculum must present a uniquely biblical worldview.

Why a Scriptural Understanding of the Learner?

Because only then can we know the nature of the child, his true value, and his need for love and discipline. In a Christian school, we recognize the unique, value of each individual child regardless of academic skills, athletic abilities, or physical appearance.

"So God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him; male and female he created them" (Genesis 1:27).

God has a plan for each person.

"Train up a child in the way he should go and when he is old he will not depart from it." (Proverbs 22:6).

There are no "evolutionary mistakes" in God's plan nor is there a hierarchy of personal worth based upon merely human standards.

The Christian School also recognizes humanity's inherent problem of our fallen nature :

"Surely I have been a sinner from birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me" (Psalm 51:5).

Because of our nature, we require firm, loving discipline, correction and guidance, especially during childhood.

And according to the Bible true discipline is a sign of love. God himself sets the example.

"For those whom He loves, He disciplines..." (Hebrews 12:6-7).

While children are image-bearers of God, they are not inherently good. They aren't wise, or naturally capable of choosing what is best for themselves, and they can't make good moral judgments based upon their own thoughts and feelings. They need loving guidance, correction and direction from their home, church and

Christian school. Especially these days all three need to operate with the same foundational beliefs and values.

Why Should Parents Consider Christian Schools?

- 1) Because Christian parents are responsible to raise and train their children in God's way. That responsibility can't be abdicated during school hours and given to the most convenient or least expensive educational institution.

"Fathers do not exasperate your children. Instead bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord" (Ephesians 6:4).

Because of the sincere but misleading attitudes of some unbelieving teachers and students.

"See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy which depends on human tradition and the basic principles of this world rather than on Christ" (Colossians 2:8).

- 2) Because negative peer pressure can be very damaging.
"Bad company corrupts good character" (1 Corinthians 15:43).
- 3) Because of the cost to Christian parents. Expenses and investments are two different things. For parents, money spent for education in a Christian School is not just an expense, it's an investment in the lives of their children. In secular education, too often the cost can be counted in the lives that have turned away from God because children can't reconcile secular teachings with Christianity. Of course secular schools students aren't all lost, but too many are. And too many more have damaged lives because they have been taught to apply non Christian or anti Christian values and attitudes to the practicalities of everyday living. Maybe that's why the Christian church is shrinking in North America and why so many teens are leaving it.
- 4) Because of the witness provided by Christian school students within the community. Almost all Christian school students have daily contact with non-Christian children in their neighbourhood. Many students report that they find it easier to share the gospel with non-Christian friends because of what they have learned in their Christian school. A prerequisite to living an effective Christian life is growth in the knowledge and love of the Lord. A Christian school offers ample opportunity for that.
- 5) Because God is raising up His school system in Canada today, to equip His children for tomorrow's world.
"Forget the former things, do not dwell on the past. See I am doing a new thing. Now it springs up, do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the desert and streams in the wasteland" (Isaiah 43:18-19).

SOME SUGGESTIONS FOR EARLY RESEARCH

- 1) Establish a prayer group of interested families and individuals to seek the Lord's guidance. This group can be assembled by issuing an invitation in the bulletins of local churches or by holding a public meeting. Develop a feasibility study and questionnaire.
- 2) Appoint a research committee from the prayer group.
- 3) Gather information on philosophy, curriculum, staffing, organizational structure and policies. Most schools are happy to share promotional materials and handbooks if you just ask. ACSI has a considerable number of sample materials.
- 4) Visit existing schools. Focus mainly on schools from communities similar to yours (i.e., schools planned for smaller communities shouldn't pattern themselves after large urban schools).
- 5) Draft a Mission Statement for your school (see sample on page 13).
- 6) Research possible school sites. Check with local fire, building, health, and zoning authorities for their requirements for a school structure. These authorities must approve any school building in order for the Ministry of Education to permit the school to operate. These requirements are established for the welfare of our students and must be followed.
- 7) Select your principal and along with him/her interview potential staff members.

Developing Your School's Statement of Faith

Your school's statement of faith presents the essential beliefs of all your staff and board members. It is critical for the hiring process. If a person disagrees with any part of it he/she should not have a position in your school. Many new schools adopt the ACSI Statement of Faith as their own. Basically, it is an interdenominational evangelical statement of faith much like that of the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada. Feel free to copy from the enclosed ACSI Membership Application the seven (7) articles of the ACSI Statement of Faith listed on the Membership Application.

Developing Your School's Philosophy Statement

It is important to develop a concise Christian philosophy of education that you can share with local churches and parents. Write down the basic philosophical principles that will apply in your school. This document will be a great help when you interview Christian teachers and when you are recruiting other staff. It should state clearly how the school views the child, the teacher, the family, the curriculum, and the foundations of Christian education. This document needs formal approval by the Board. There needs to be complete unity about this statement. See the following **sample** Philosophy Statement.

Sample Philosophy Statement

(This is only a sample. Do not feel obliged to use it.)

Write your school philosophy carefully.

Educational Philosophy of ABC Christian School

The philosophy of _____ Christian School is based on a God-centred view that all truth is God's truth and that the Bible is the inspired, infallible, authoritative Word of God. God created all things and sustains all things. Therefore, all creation is dynamically related to Him. Because man is a sinner by nature and choice, he can only glorify or know God by choosing God's free gift of salvation through His Son, Jesus Christ.

We aim to teach a Christian worldview. From this will come a balanced personality and proper understanding and acceptance of a person's role in life at home, at work, at play, and at worship—all grounded in the Christian concept of love.

This philosophy channels our energies to promote high academic standards while helping students gain skills in creative and critical thinking using the best curriculum available. The objective of our instructional programme is to enable the student to pursue the post-secondary education of his choosing, whether in college, university, or in vocational training.

Our responsibility for the student encompasses spiritual, mental, intellectual, physical, social, and emotional development. These areas are inseparable and through them run the consistent thread of truth. Therefore, it is our aim not to teach the Bible compartmentally or on the intellectual level alone—the thread must be woven throughout the total curriculum.

It is apparent then that the types of activities we employ or permit in the classroom or school programme will either strengthen or weaken our basic philosophy. God's truth must permeate all areas, or else we become textbook-oriented rather than student-centred. While the education of children is the responsibility of parents, the school functions as an agent for parents not just for the province, "*in loco parentis*," as teachers cooperate closely with families in every phase of the student's development.

Developing Your School's Statement of Purpose/Mission

Feel free to use this sample—simply insert the name of your school.

“An evangelical Christian school is an extension of the Christian home and church, and is established to train each student in the knowledge of God and the Christian way of life as well as in academic skills. By providing the highest standards for intellectual and spiritual development, our goal is to equip each child with the necessary tools to effectively pursue the vocation to which the Lord will lead him.”

Your mission statement tells the community in a concise manner what your school is attempting to do. It is the source from which all aspects of the school grow and it is extremely important.

Developing a Feasibility Study

Before a church or group begins a Christian school it important to evaluate the need for that school. This is called a feasibility study. The Bible gives support to such a study because it offers needed counsel. Solomon says, *“Plans fail for lack of counsel, but with many advisers they succeed”* (Proverbs 15:22).

“Again, make plans by seeking advice...” (Proverbs 20:18).

To build a Christian school, the foundation must be a strong commitment to Christ.

“Unless the Lord builds the house, its builders labour in vain” (Psalm 127:11).

Jesus, in speaking about the cost of discipleship, says, *“Suppose one of you wants to build a tower. Will he not first sit down and estimate the cost to see if he has enough money to complete it? For if he lays the foundation and is not able to finish it, everyone who sees it will ridicule him, saying, This fellow began to build and was not able to finish”* (Luke 14:28-30).

Sadly, some Christian schools have been started without first seeking the counsel of God and others as to the need for such a school. As a result, some schools have closed, leaving a bad feeling in the community toward all Christian schools.

When the results of the feasibility study are evaluated, the planning group can intelligently pray for God’s will regarding their plans. Hard data is much better to consider than feelings and emotions. A feasibility study will provide that hard data.

How do you go about making a questionnaire to serve as the basis for a feasibility study? What kind of information do you need to know? Some considerations might be:

1. How many Christian schools are there in the community now?
2. How close is the nearest Christian school?
3. What level of interest do the parents in your church or community display?

4. Will pastors and parents from other churches support you?
5. Can prospective parents support the school with the needed tuition?
6. If the answer to number 5 is "no," then what other source of funds could help meet the deficit?
7. Are there facilities that are adequate and legally appropriate to house the school?
8. Are there enough funds to begin the school?
9. How many grade levels should the school have?
10. What grade levels should you start with?

Sample Feasibility Questionnaire

Here is a sample questionnaire that might serve as a model for you to use in developing your own feasibility study. You may want to add or modify the model to meet your particular needs.

The "Anytown" Christian School Feasibility Questionnaire

The Anytown Christian School Feasibility Committee is seeking God's will regarding the starting a of Christian school in our community. In order to represent the total Christian community in these plans, we need your response to the following questions.

Each household is asked to complete this questionnaire and return it to:

**Anytown Christian School Feasibility Committee,
P.O. Box 1270,
Anytown, PROVINCE Postal Code**

1. Would you like to see a Christian school in your community?
Yes No Don't care
2. How long have you lived in Anytown? _____
3. Would you consider sending your children to a Christian school?
Yes No
4. What is your occupation/profession?
 Husband _____ Wife _____
5. Please indicate how many children you have who are currently enrolled in school.
 Grade K-3 ___ Grade 4-6 ___ Grade 7-8 ___ Grade 9-12 ___
6. Please indicate how many children you have who would attend Anytown Christian School if it started in September of this year.
 Grade K-3 ___ Grade 4-6 ___ Grade 7-8 ___ Grade 9-12 ___

7. What are your major reasons for wanting to have your child in a Christian School?
 Good Academics Christian philosophy Caring teachers
 Good discipline Bible Teaching Prayer is allowed
Other:
8. There are many reasons for sending children to a Christian school. What do you think should be the major goals of this school (circle only five).
- a) To learn to be a good citizen
 - b) To learn about and try to understand changes in the world
 - c) To develop skills to enter a specific field of work
 - d) To have an integration of biblical principles with academic subject matter
 - e) To learn to use leisure time
 - f) To learn to pray
 - g) To develop self-discipline
 - h) To learn academic skills
 - i) To learn about the Bible
 - j) To learn to solve problems and think independently
 - k) To be in a better environment
 - l) To prepare for college/university
 - m) To develop a Christian worldview
9. How would you rate the school(s) your children are presently attending?
 Superior Good Fair Poor
10. Comments concerning present conditions at their school:
11. Will you pray for Anytime Christian School?
 Yes No
12. Would you be willing to financially support the Anytime Christian School?
 Yes No
13. Would you be willing to assist in starting Anytime Christian School?
 Yes No
14. If tuition was \$_____ per year would you be interested?
 Definitely Perhaps Probably Not

15. Of the following, which type of sponsorship would you like to see for the school?

Single church sponsored Multiple church sponsored

Independent Single church/separately incorporated

Additional Comments:

THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Appoint a school research committee that may become the school board.

Committee Membership Qualifications:

- 1) Must be committed evangelicals actively involved in local churches.
- 2) Must meet the standards of 1 Timothy 3:1-13 and Titus 1:7-9.
- 3) If the membership candidate is a parent of a school-aged student, he/she should commit to sending that student to your school (unless the student has a mental, behavioural, or physical condition that your school is not capable of handling adequately).

Commitment to the philosophy of Christian schools in general and to your proposed school in particular is vital for committee members. *WARNING: It is a serious mistake to bring someone on the committee who lacks any of these three qualifications.* If you need the help of someone with a specific area of expertise, involve him/her as a consultant—not necessarily as a committee member.

Sometimes planning groups seek members from among the high profile professionals in their community (doctors, lawyers, public school teachers, principals, pastors, and wealthy executives). It is certainly possible that these people might be helpful on the committee but their professional status in itself is no guarantee. We recommend that you give the three listed qualifications the highest priority in making your choices.

For further information on the successful Christian School board we strongly recommend that each committee member read **Serving God on the Christian School Board** by Dr. Roy Lowrie (available through ACSI Eastern Canada office 705.728.7344).

It is important that the committee **has access** to the following resource people:

- 1) at least one Christian school educator,
- 2) a person with some accounting skills, and
- 3) a lawyer.

The committee should decide upon:

- 1) The Appointment, Structure, and Function of the School's Controlling Body
- 2) School Philosophy Statement of Faith, and Mission Statement (*see Appendix for samples*)
- 3) Qualifications for Staff, Students, Parents
- 4) All legal and financial matters
- 5) All promotional materials

A Christian educator should have considerable input into the choice of curriculum. Ideally that educator should be the future principal or a prime principal candidate. *Note: If the school committee become the official school board, no paid employee of the school (including the principal) can be a member of the board by law.*

VARIOUS ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURES FOR CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS

Category	Characteristics	Potential Benefits	Potential Concerns
<p style="text-align: center;">I CHURCH SPON-SORED Church and School are one Corporation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School employees are considered church staff • Church and school do not have separate budgets • Generally a specifically denominational doctrine is taught • Pastor is often Chief Executive Officer • Church Board has final authority • School committee/board doesn't have authority to make major decisions—only recommendations • Administrators have claimed their rent or equivalent to rent as a tax deduction for "minister's housing" • Often all staff are required to attend the church 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shared facilities, equipment, resources, and staff • The congregation becomes an obvious pool for student recruitment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • conflicts with Sunday school teachers over facilities equipment and resources • difficulties if either the church or school develops a significant debt, has a moral failure in leadership, or has a legal problem • A new senior pastor may not understand or appreciate the worth of the school and may limit or oppose church support • Difficult to find enough quality staff members who will all attend the church
<p style="text-align: center;">II CHURCH SPON-SORED but Separately Incorporated</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Church and school have separate budgets • Pastor is often Chief Executive Officer • Church Board has final authority • School board has more power than Category I schools, but is answerable to church board • Employees are not considered church staff 	<p style="text-align: center;">Same as above Plus</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The option to operate as an interdenominational school • If the church develops significant debt it does not necessarily harm the school 	<p style="text-align: center;">Same as above Plus</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the church is under no legal compulsion to take care of school debts <p style="text-align: center;">Potential for a church/school split</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">III INDEPENDENT Parent Elected Board/ Society/ Association</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School Board is the final authority • School board elected by parent/donor members • School Administrator/Superintendent is C.E.O. • School has its own budget/property/ etc. • All parents join the school "society" and vote on budget, board appointments, and other important issues (in this sort of school all parents must be Christians) • Annual meeting is held for elections/ budgets approval • No more than 3 board members from any individual church 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential to recruit students from the broader Christian Community • Independence to act in the school's best interest without the limitations of church concerns • The controlling board and leadership are completely committed to the school and to Christian school education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The authority structure can leave itself very open to "playing Politics," faction, and power groups among parents • Unlikely to have access to shared facilities equipment, resources, and staff • Only admitting families from Christian homes

VARIOUS ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURES FOR CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS (continued)

Category	Characteristics	Potential Benefits	Potential Areas of Concern
<p style="text-align: center;">IV</p> <p>MULTIPLE CHURCH SPONSORED</p> <p>Separately Incorporated Registered Charity and Governed like an Independent School</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School board has majority of members appointed/elected by sponsoring churches • Parents elect remaining board members • School board is autonomous. Sponsoring churches cannot veto school board decisions • School has its own budget/financial autonomy • Conducts annual meeting for election/budget approval 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involvement of several churches benefits student and staff recruitment and provides potential sources for financial support. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Doctrinal conflicts • Possible power politics when the majority of students come from one of the sponsoring churches • Board members appointed by churches may not have a strong commitment to the Christian school movement (they may just be appointed 'to fill an empty chair') • Only Christian parents can vote for the board
<p style="text-align: center;">V</p> <p>Board Run</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board is self perpetuating (<i>i.e. appoints new board and committee members</i>) • School has its own budget/financial autonomy • Is a federally incorporated registered charity • All major decisions made at the board level without the necessity for parental approval. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consistency of direction for the school • Minimal parent "power politics" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Possible lack of receptiveness to parental concerns

BOARD GOVERNANCE

ACSI develops the following in its Board/Administrator Conferences. As well, by invitation, ACSI staff will travel to your school to address Board Governance as it applies particularly to your school.

Primary Functions of the Christian School Board

- 1) Determine the mission, vision, and the core values
- 2) Assess the Organization in light of "mission performance"
- 3) Maintain Board Standing Policies

Primary Board Responsibilities

- 1) Select the Head of School and Empower the Position
- 2) Ensure Financial Solvency and Integrity
- 3) Help Represent the School Externally
- 4) Encourage and Nurture the CEO and Staff
- 5) Serve as “Final Court of Appeals” for Unresolved Internal Disputes
- 6) Evaluate and Improve Itself as the Governing Board

LEGAL AND GOVERNMENT CONSIDERATIONS

If your school is not operated as part of a specific church, we recommend that your school apply to the Federal Government to be incorporated as a Not For Profit Corporation. You should also apply to become a registered charity. Both of these applications can be made at the same time and should be done by a lawyer or other experienced professional. You have a right to include the school statement of faith in the incorporation papers and you should do so.

Incorporation limits liability, provides some protection for board members and staff. The cost of incorporation is between \$1000-\$3000. Every year a simple one-page report must be completed and returned to the government along with a small cheque (\$30 - \$50).

Registered charity status allows you to issue income tax receipts for donations and for that portion of tuition deemed to pay for the “religious“ part of education and for the full amount of donations to the school. These receipts can be issued to include donations given from the date you apply for registered charity status provided your application is eventually approved. The government has a definition and formula for use on the tuition receipts explained in Income Tax Circular 75-23 (available from Canada Customs and Revenue Agency: www.cra-arc.gc.ca).

Independent schools do not have to register for the GST or collect it unless they are selling products where they expect an annual income over \$30,000. They can receive a 50% rebate on the GST that they pay on their purchases even if they are not registered for the GST.

The annual government report for registered charities is about 5 pages long and not very difficult to complete.

Ministry of Education Requirements

The Ontario Ministry of Education requires that you complete and return an “Intent to Operate a Private School” form. The questions are very straight forward:

School’s name, sponsorship, address, principal, grades taught, approximate expected enrolment, type of curriculum etc.

There are **three important criteria for use of the actual school building**. The building must be approved as a school by the **public health, building, and fire departments**. They are looking for proper sanitary, zoning, lighting, and safety standards. **Make sure to have their approval in writing in your files.**

In Ontario, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick there is no requirement to hire provincially certified teachers. They can give schools more credibility, however. In Prince Edward Island all teachers must have either a provincial teaching certificate or an ACSI Teaching Certificate. Nevertheless we urge every school to have their teachers enrol in an ACSI Teaching Certificate programme. It will help them develop teaching skills specifically for Christian schooling.

In Ontario, there is no requirement to use Ministry of Education curriculum up to grade 8 but it is important to ensure that your curriculum covers all the topics addressed in the public school curriculum.

In Ontario, high school curriculum must follow Ministry guidelines if your school wishes to offer courses for academic credits that lead to a provincial high school diploma. Some Christian high schools do not offer Ministry approved courses and as a result, some have had significant problems getting their graduates into Ontario universities. This is not because of poor academic quality. It has a great deal to do with politics and the transfer of student grant money to the universities.

For any new independent school the Ministry of Education will send a representative to speak with your principal. The Ministry is concerned that you do an adequate job teaching language and math skills and that your curriculum includes the typical spectrum of studies (Science, Social Studies, Art, Music, Language, Math, Physical Education). At the time of writing this, there is no attempt by the Ministry of Education to limit your right to teach from a Christian perspective. We have found most Ministry personnel to be very pleasant, cooperative, and helpful.

For forms and further information contact the Ministry of Education (www.edu.gov.on.ca) at 416-325-2224 and ask for the Private School Department. If confusions or conflicts arise, consult with our office 705-728-7344. Your student's records (OSR) from their previous schools can be obtained by sending the school a letter signed by your principal and a document release form signed by the parents (see following samples).

Transfer of Ontario Student Records (OSRs)

Parental Permission to Transfer OSR

Date

*Somewhere School
Address1, Address2
City, Province, Postal Code*

Dear Principal:

Please use this letter as our (my) consent to transfer the O.S.R. (Ontario Student Record) for (student name) to (Anywhere Christian School). Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter.

Regards,

Legal Custodian Signature

NOTIFICATION OF ACCEPTANCE OF RESPONSIBILITY FOR OSR

Date

*Somewhere School
Address
City, Province, Postal Code*

Dear Principal:

Please accept this letter as written notification that (students name) has been transferred to (Anywhere Christian School) effective immediately.

(Anywhere Christian School) agrees to accept responsibility for the OSR and to maintain, retain, transfer and dispose of the OSR in accordance with the OSR guidelines.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter.

Regards,

*(Anywhere Christian School Principal's Name)
Principal*

attachment - legal custodian consent

Starting a School in Nova Scotia

Nova Scotia law says very little about private schools. Parents are not required to place their children in a school. However, parents are required to establish that their children are receiving an education that is equivalent to what they would receive in the public system. The law allows a lot of freedom to choose, and not very many guidelines.

Document Quality

Those starting a Christian school in Nova Scotia need not fear governmental interference as long a reasonable quality of education is provided. It is very important that the quality of education be documented by an independently standardized achievement test or test of basic skills. ACSI member schools tend to use the **Canadian Achievement Test 3**.

Official Visits

The fire marshal will visit the school at least once a year to evaluate the building and fire drill procedures. In addition to the fire marshal, the health inspector will visit the school annually. As long as the regulations are obeyed, you should have no problems with the inspectors. Although the Ministry of Education school inspector may visit the school, there is no pattern of regular visits. If he believes the school to be functioning fairly well, he may not visit the school at all.

Taxes

There is a provision for exemption from provincial sales tax. However, one must submit the school's curriculum to the Nova Scotia Department of Education for approval in order to qualify for exemption. It may be better to pay the tax than to establish a pattern of seeking approval from the public school system.

Memorandum

If one chooses to provide the school with its own legal identity, a memorandum must be filed with Registrar of Joint Stock Companies as a "not for profit" organization. For a nominal fee, you may purchase a copy of the law from the Nova Scotia Government Book Store in Halifax to use as a guideline.

Conclusion

Nova Scotia is a reasonable place to start a school. Regulations that you must obey are usually sensible and fairly enforced.

Starting a School in New Brunswick

The province requires an annual application to the Minister of Education, by the parents to have their children exempted from their obligation to attend public school as well as the school's annual completion of a questionnaire on its facilities and programme.

Facilities must be approved by District Medical Health Officer and the Provincial Fire Marshal.

An official of the Ministry of Education visits each school annually.

For Further Information:

Minister of Education for New Brunswick
P.O. Box 6000
Fredericton, New Brunswick
E3B 5H1
Fax (506) 444-4654

Application for Exemption From Attending Public School For the Year 20__

to
The Minister of Education
P.O. Box 6000
Fredericton, NB E3B 5H1

As parent(s) or guardian(s) of _____
Name of Child

who was born _____, we are fully aware that Independent
Month Day Year

Schools do not operate under the authority, direction, or supervision of the Minister of Education. We are further aware that the Minister of Education has a legal responsibility under the authority of the Schools Act, Section 57(2) to ensure that every child from seven to fifteen years of age inclusive, attends school in the school selected by the school board of the district, unless, in the Minister's opinion, the child is "under efficient instruction elsewhere." We believe this in no way undermines or lessens the biblical responsibility of parents to determine the standard and philosophy of the education for their children.

Because it is our conviction that our children must have an academic education based on the Word of God, we have made application for our son/daughter enrolled in _____, located in _____.

Public School District No. in which Parent(s)/Guardian(s) are resident: _____

Address of Parent(s)/Guardian(s)

Signature of Parent(s)/Guardian(s)

Postal Code

HIRING AND DISMISSING STAFF

According to the Ontario Human Rights Code, Section 23(a) you **can** hire teachers based upon their religion. Ads can be placed in public newspapers on this basis. However, you cannot make this a stipulation when advertising publicly for a bus driver or caretaker.

Salaries: You must pay people with equivalent training, experience, and responsibilities the same salaries. (i.e., you cannot pay a male teacher more, simply because he is a man.)

If you wish, you can pay extra for:

- 1) extra responsibilities (coaching, choir leadership, department head).
- 2) the sole or main supporter of a family as long as you specify that this applies to both men and women.
- 3) extra training or experience.

All teachers must receive written evaluations done by the principal at least once a year.

FOR ALL SALARIED POSITIONS MAKE SURE THAT YOU HAVE A WRITTEN JOB DESCRIPTION INCLUDED IN A TEACHING AGREEMENT

This agreement should be signed by the staff person, a representative of the school board and the administrator. Terms and process of dismissal should be included in this document, so should the responsibilities of the school board to the staff person.

**We urge you to include the sample paragraphs for Employment Contracts and the Personal Lifestyle (p. 33) or something very similar in your Teacher's Agreement (p. 32).*

STEPS TO FINDING THE RIGHT TEACHERS FOR YOUR SCHOOL

- 1) Pray for staff that:
 - a) want to seek God's Kingdom first as evidenced by their Christian walk and ministry,
 - b) love their students and their specific areas of teaching,
 - c) ideally have teacher training,
 - d) are willing to take in-service training in Christian school education,
 - e) are willing to do whatever it takes to do the job well.
- 2) Advertise broadly. You **can** require that all your teachers are evangelical Christians or even members of your denomination so make sure to state that requirement in your job ad. At the time of writing, major newspapers, including the Globe and Mail and Toronto Star will run ads for evangelical

Christian school teachers. For Ontario schools, if anyone questions your right to hire on the basis of religious beliefs, refer him to Section 23(a) of the Ontario Human Rights Code.

- 3) Ask for resumes to be mailed. Avoid having applicants complete a teaching application form. Chances are your form could be asking for information that cannot be legally requested (i.e., age, sex, marital status, physical health, university attended, year of graduation, etc.). Most resumes give much of this information anyway. Be careful of teachers who do not give any of the above information in their resumes or who do not show any evidence of involvement in church or other Christian organizations.

What to Look For In a Resumé

- 1) Overall presentation (neatness, organization, spelling). Effective teachers need to be neat, well organized, and competent in their use of English.
- 2) Educational background—some training in Christian school education is a real plus here.
- 3) Experience in some form of Christian ministry such as teaching Sunday school, working in a Christian camp or youth programme, involvement in some sort of Christian university group, or summer missions etc. Be very cautious about applicants who have never been involved in any sort of Christian ministry. Why would do they want to work at your school?
- 4) Always check letters of references. If you are seriously interested in an applicant check his or her references by phone. People who write these letters usually concentrate only on positive characteristics. Ask for some specific information about the candidates:
 - a) Character
 - b) Christian walk
 - c) Ability to control a class
 - d) Attitude toward authority
 - e) Ability to cooperate with peers
 - f) Trustworthiness
 - g) Diligence
 - h) Interests that might enhance your schools programme (e.g., coaching, music, drama, arts and crafts, woodworking, etc.
- 5) Ask, "Is there any reason you know why this person would not be a suitable teacher for a Christian school?"

Things to Watch Out For

- 1) Those who are weak on discipline.
- 2) People with credentials that seem too good to be true. They usually are
- 3) Those who are unwilling to be trained in a distinctly Christian approach to education. Sometimes teachers with a great deal of training and/or experience in secular education are least willing to develop a Biblical philosophy and

practise of teaching. Christian school leaders estimate that it takes a secularly trained teacher up to 3 years of in service training to become a fully functional Christian school teacher.

- 4) Those who want to teach in a Christian school because it will be easier than the public school, or the students will be better behaved, or “it will be good for me,” or “I need a job,” or “it is better than unemployment.” Teachers with any of those motives will be a detriment to your school.

Conducting the Interview

We recommend that the principal interviews each candidate and makes all hiring decisions. Interviews do not have to be long, especially when it is plain that a candidate is not suitable.

While candidates are waiting for their interviews allow them time to read the school handbook, statement of faith, and job description.

Interview ‘Musts’

- 1) Open and close your interview in prayer asking for the Lord’s clear direction for your school and for the applicant
- 2) Especially when interviewing a member of the opposite sex make sure to do **at least** one of the following:
 - a) Use a room with an interior window in the wall or in the door
 - b) Prop the door open
 - c) Have a third person present

This may seem to be an excessively cautious approach however, you must not give some troubled soul the opportunity to make an accusation against you and your school.

- 3) Introduce yourself and explain a bit about your interview procedure.

Questions to Ask

- How did you become a Christian?
- What are your habits regarding prayer and Bible Study?
- What is your home church?
- What is your involvement there?
- Do you agree completely with the school statement of faith? If no, or not completely, please explain.
- Why do you want to teach in a Christian school?
- What do you think should be the distinctives of a Christian school?
- What is your greatest strength as a teacher? (N.B., do not hire someone who can’t think of any!)
- What area of your teaching do you need to improve the most? (Be cautious of someone who can’t think of anything here too!)

- What would your spouse (if married) your parents (if single) think of you teaching here?
- How do you see your faith applying to your teaching in specific subjects (i.e., literature, science, history, etc.)?
- What approach would you take to the teaching of reading (sight, phonetic, whole language, word experience)? Only ask this of primary and elementary teachers.
- What outcomes would you require for students in your (Math, English, French, History, etc.) programme at the end of grade ____?
- What methods of student assessment would you use?
- Are you willing to do some in-service training in Christian school education either during the school year or in the summer?
- Would you send your child(ren) to this Christian school? (It is very important that new schools provide zero or low tuition for children of their staff members.)

In all of the following discipline questions note if scripture based responses are given.

- Describe your philosophy of discipline.
- What is the nature of a child?
- What behavioural standards would you set in your classroom?
- How would you enforce them?
- What would you do if a student:
 - swore at you?
 - failed to complete an assignment or homework on time?
 - cheated on a test?
 - stole something from a classmate?
 - told you he was “beaten up” by his parents (i.e., not just spanked)? (*Note: By law teachers are required to report all suspected cases of child abuse to Children’s Aid Society.*)
 - constantly spoke out during class?
 - was caught passing notes in class?
 - questions of your choice _____
- What would you do if a staff member or parent came to you and complained about the principal or a board member? *It is important to discuss the Matthew 18 principle at this point and make it clear that following it is a requirement at your school for everyone.*

ONLY if the candidate seems like a good prospect for a position in your school, show him/her the lifestyles contract addendum. Make sure the candidate understands and agrees with all aspects of your lifestyle requirement.

Close your interview in prayer.

Make sure the interviewers have a chance to discuss each candidate and are agreed regarding which applicant(s) will be offered jobs.

N.B. Make sure a police check is done for all serious candidates and always check references carefully before hiring. When speaking with references ask questions that are not addressed in their letters of reference.

Sample Teacher's Agreement

TEACHER'S AGREEMENT

THIS AGREEMENT made this date _____, in the City of _____, in the Municipality of _____, between **(School Name and Address)**, First Party, and **(Teacher's Name)**, Teacher, Second Party.

The First Party hereby employs the Second Party as a Teacher in the School for a one-year term, commencing Sept. 1st, 20__ and ending August 31st, 20__ (hereinafter called the termination date) at an annual salary of \$_____, (salary in words here) payable in ___ equal instalments, each instalment to be paid on or before _____ during the term of this contract.

In consideration, therefore, the Second Party accepts said employment and salary, and agrees to perform the duties of a Teacher as assigned by the Principal and the Teachers' Handbook in the school of the First Party in a diligent and faithful manner; setting forth a good Christian role model, however, to the following terms and conditions:

That the salary shall be subject to Government withholding provisions and other lawful deductions,

That assignment of the Second Party to classroom location, grade, subject, and extracurricular duties is to be made at the discretion of the Principal of the First Party after consultation with the Second Party, and

That the Second Party, subscribes to and is in full agreement with "Statement of Faith" and Personal Lifestyle Addendum as evidenced by their signature on both documents attached hereto.

Both parties agree to abide by the terms set out in the Teacher's Manual and by the Personal Lifestyles and Morality Standards.

The First Party further agrees that it will respect the Second Party's professional status as a Teacher. Should a dispute arise between the party of the Second party, (teacher) and the party of the First Part (the school), both parties agree to seek a resolution through the school administrator first. If that fails then through the school board. If a successful resolution is not found at this level then both parties agree to work with a Christian conciliation committee from the Christian Legal Fellowship or the Canadian Council of Christian Charities or through ACSI to resolve the matter in a manner that honours God and follows the teaching of 1 Corinthians. 6:1-7.

Lifestyle and Morality Standards

Personal Lifestyle And Morality Standards Required of Christian School Teachers

Staff conduct should comply with the school's policies, be consistent with the evangelical Christian commitment of the staff, and be a positive role model for the people we serve. Each staff person teaches, not only through classroom instruction but also by example. Therefore, to ensure a proper Christian role model, staff may not use (illicit drugs and whatever other substances you choose to include) or be perceived as endorsing or condoning their use. Similarly, we hold human life to be sacred beginning at conception and the traditional family model as endorsed by Jesus as the fundamental unit of society.

While not limiting examples in inappropriate behaviour deemed to be contrary to the teaching of Jesus and His followers as recorded in the New testament, the Christian school prohibits the following conduct by staff members:

- 12) Extra marital sexual intimacy or relationships (adultery),
- 13) Premarital sexual intimacy or relationship (fornication),
- 14) Reading or viewing of pornographic material,
- 15) Homosexual activity or relationships,
- 16) Theft, fraud, dishonesty, or any criminal activity,
- 17) Physical aggression or violent behaviour,
- 18) Abusive behaviour,
- 19) Sexual assault/harassment,
- 20) Lying, deceit or gossip,
- 21) Drunkenness,
- 22) Use of illegal substances, and
- 23) Promotion of hatred toward any group/individual.

This conduct is incompatible with biblical Christian standards and values. Such conduct or behaviour is just cause for dismissal without notice, as it fails by example to confirm a personal commitment to the teachings of Jesus, and is incompatible with the goals and objectives of the Christian school.

This policy is a term and condition of employment and is part of the Teachers Contract. All potential teachers must indicate their understanding and commitment to its validity and personal acceptance of the above stated policy annually with their signature and date prior to their acceptance of an offer of employment with this Christian school.

I clearly understand the foregoing, believe them to be consistent with Christian standards, and shall accept this as a term and condition of employment.

Signature _____ Date _____

FOR SOLVING SCHOOL PROBLEMS
A Very Important Principle for Christian Schools
By Dr. Paul A. Kienel

Matthew 18

The “me generation” philosophy of *“I’ll do it my way”* sometimes spills over into the Christian community. For example, when differences develop between individuals some Christians take matters into their “own hands” and by-pass the biblical procedure for solving problems.

A Christian school is made up of people...parents, administrators, teachers, and students. Like any other collection of earthly mortals, the people associated with a Christian school have the potential for misunderstanding, disagreement, and even wrongdoing. Nevertheless, it is God’s will that we live and work together in harmony. Jesus said:

“A new commandment I give you, love one another, as I have loved you, so you must love one another. All men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.” (John 13-34-35)

Due to our human nature we may at times irritate others, resulting in misunderstandings or strong disagreements. In Matthew 18:15-17, Jesus gives His formula for solving person-to-person problems. I call it *“the Matthew 18 principle for solving school problems.”* The following are the words of Jesus:

“If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over. But if he will not listen, take one or two others along, so that every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses. If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, treat him as you would a pagan or a tax collector.”

There are several clear principles that Jesus taught in solving people-to-people problems:

One Keep the matter confidential. The very pattern of sharing the problem only with those directly involved establishes the principle of confidentiality. The Bible has much to say about those who gossip or malign others with their words.

“A hypocrite with his mouth destroys his neighbour : but through knowledge shall the just be delivered.” (Proverbs 11:9)

Two Keep the circle small...*“If your brother sins against you go show him his fault just between the two of you.”*

The first step and most often the only step needed in solving a person-to-person problem is for one of the two people involved to initiate face-to-face dialogue. Most problems are solved at the two people level.

Three Be straightforward, “... *show him his fault ...*” Jesus tells us to be forthright and to love honestly. Sometimes it is difficult to be straightforward and tell someone the very heart of the matter. But restoration and improvement can only come when the issues are lovingly yet clearly presented. The Scripture says “... *faithful are the wounds of a friend....*” (Proverbs 27:6).

Four Be forgiving, “... *if he listens to you, you have won a brother.*”

This implies that once the matter is resolved we should wholeheartedly forgive and restore the person whose fault has offended us. Galatians 6:1 reads: “...*if someone is caught in sin you who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself or you may be tempted.*”

As I mentioned earlier, most school problems are resolved at the two people level. Forgiveness is the normal happy conclusion. But what is the Matthew 18 principle if the individual will not “*hear*” you, or openly disagrees with your version of the problem? Let’s say you are a parent of a student in a Christian school. You are unhappy with a teacher because you believe your child is being treated unfairly in the classroom. The two of you have met and talked together and you are not satisfied with the outcome of your discussion. What is the next step in the Matthew 18 principle?

Five The parent and the teacher should agree to share the matter with the school principal. At this stage the counsel of Jesus would be “... *take one or two others along so that every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.*”

Both parent and teacher should rehearse their version of the issue or issues with the school’s administration. Each person should come to the meeting in a spirit of prayer and humility, willing to submit to the Lord’s will in the matter and also willing to submit to reproof and correction if needed. Those of us who bear the name of Christ should joyfully conform to the will of Christ. An open and honest discussion among people who are sensitive to godly principles will most often reach an amiable solution. I estimate that 80% of school problems are solved at the two people level. Another 18% of school problems are solved at the three and four level which includes the school’s administration. This leaves 2% to be resolved at the level of the school board. The board represents the church or Christian school community. Let’s say a problem now exists and is not solvable by the normal channels of communication and established school policy. What is the next step in the Matthew 18 principle?

Six The school principal should explain the problem to the chairman of the school board. The chairman will decide how the matter will be presented to the board. Depending on the complexity of the problem, it may be appropriate for the board chairman to request that all persons involved be present at a school board meeting. The goal of such a high-level meeting is:

- 1) establish a clear understanding of the problem;
- 2) solve the problem;
- 3) give reproof and correction if necessary; and

4) offer forgiveness and wholehearted restoration of those who have made amends.

In summary, the Matthew 18 principle requires that parents talk to teachers about student problems before they talk to administrators. If unresolved at the two people level, the matter is prayerfully, and in an orderly fashion, moved upward in the school organizational structure. This is the Lord's way of solving people-to-people problems.

A Christian school is a ministry in Christ's name. Everything that is done in the context of the school must be done Christ's way. The world's methods of solving school problems are inappropriate.

Satan would like to destroy the normal flow of harmony and good fellowship in Christian school education. That is not possible if all of us follow the Matthew 18 principle of solving school problems.

Giving a Good Report

Commit yourself to giving a good report whenever discussing families, students or staff members. If you have a problem with anyone your first recourse is to go directly to the person and work out your differences according to Matthew 18. We are never to speak negatively about another person or school, to friends, family, etc.

G	R	E	A	T	G	R	A	T	E
o	e	d	n	e	o	u	l	e	v
o	p	i	d	s	s	m	w	a	e
d	o	f		t	s	o	a	r	r
	r	y		i	i	u	y		y
	t			f	p	r	s		w
	s			y		s			h
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CURRICULUM

There is a good variety of curriculum materials available for Christian schools from many publishers including:

A Beka Books - all subjects except Canadian History, Geography, and French.

All require the Canadian teacher to make substitutions or supplement to include Canadian content.

(www.abeka.com) Box 18000, Pensacola, Florida 32523-9160 USA
1-800-874-2352

Bob Jones Press - all subjects except Canadian History, Geography, and French.

All require the Canadian teacher to make substitutions or supplement to include Canadian content. (www.bjupress.com)

Bob Jones University, South Carolina 29614 USA 1-803-242-5100

Purposeful Design (ACSI) - Spelling Grades 1-6, Elementary and High School Bible, Preschool and Kindergarten Language arts, Elementary Math, Science, Literature, Art, elementary Health and more.

(www.acsicanadabooks.com)

ACSI Canada Bookroom (866)634-0128 (info@acsicanadabooks.com)

MFB Publications, (French curriculum) (www.mfbp.org)

4467 Third Ave., Niagara Falls, ON L2E 4L1 (905)358-9524

(debbie@mfbp.org)

Unfortunately, because of the relatively small number of schools in Canada, there is not a sufficient market here to make significant publication of Canadian Christian school texts feasible—not yet, anyway.

The American publications tend to be fairly good, academically. At times we may need to look with tolerant eyes at the distinctly American patriotic passages and U.S. spellings interspersed in the curriculum materials. Spelling can be corrected and American-specific passages should be skipped over or replaced/supplemented. However, the rest of their material provides a Christian curriculum for our Canadian schools.

Non-Traditional Classroom Settings

At least 2 organizations provide individualized study programmes in a non traditional classroom setting. They are:

Accelerated Christian Education Canada (www.acecanada.net)

Box 1360, Portage La Prairie, MB R1N 3N9 1-204-857-5375

Alpha Omega Publications

(<http://www.canadianhomeeducation.com/items.asp?Cc=CURAOANDSOS&iTpStatus=0&Tp=&Bc>)

528 Carnarvou St., New Westminster, BC V3L 1C4 1-604-524-9758

Many Christian schools use a mixture of Christian and secular texts. Check with schools in your area and with publishers for sample copies. For Canadian History and Geography there is little alternative but to use secular texts.

Perhaps the best opportunity to view a variety of publications is at one of our two-day Teachers' Conventions on the first Thursday and Friday in November (Ontario) and the last Thursday and Friday in October (Maritimes).

Other Helpful Publications

The Creation Science Association

(www.creationism.org/topbar/linksI18L.htm#CreationIntl_CANADA)

Many and various creation science books and videos

Christian Sex Ed Materials

Straight Talk (www.beverlyhadland.com/straight_talk)

Attn.: Bev Hadland Box 60072, Oakville, ON L6M 2S0 1-905-338-8581

Focus on the Family (www.focusonthefamily.ca)

Box 9800, Vancouver, BC V6B 4G3 1-604-684-8333

Exodus Global Alliance (www.exodusglobalalliance.org)

They have a senior elementary and high school curriculum that does a responsible job covering sexual issues including homosexuality.

PO Box 21039, Ajax, ON L1S 7H2 (416) 283-9797

Various Topics

Ontario Alliance of Christian Schools (OACS) Publications

(www.oacs.org/catalogue/default.asp)

790 Shaver Road, Ancaster, Ontario, L9G 3K9

P: 905-648-2100 F: 905-648-2110

Bible Curriculum

Bible for Today

P.O. Box 2000, Paris, ON N3L 3X5 1-519-442-4433

Lifeway (www.lifeway.com)

Positive Action for Christ (www.positiveaction.org)

ADVERTISING & RECRUITING STUDENTS

Once you have decided upon school policies and have them spelled out in a parents' handbook you are ready for four important steps.

- 1) Prepare an attractive brochure printed on quality stock to be delivered by bulk mail door to door and to be placed in churches, supermarkets, and community centres. Provide a supply to the local Welcome Wagon and real estate agents as well. Don't try to communicate everything about your school in the brochure! Cluttered, wordy brochures are seldom read. Neither are photocopies. The purpose of the brochure is to stir enough parental interest for attendance at your community meeting or for a phone call to ask for the school parents' handbook or to make an appointment with the principal. The brochure must be a concise, eye catching statement of the features and benefits of your school. The quality of your promotional material says much about the intended quality of your school. Don't send out photocopies unless they are more than one colour and professional in appearance. Spending more on quality advertising could easily result in more students.
- 2) Other advertising can be sought through interviews in local newspapers and on local television or radio shows.
- 3) Ask local churches for the opportunity to do a brief presentation about your school in a service (preferably Sunday morning).
- 4) Hold a community meeting. Unless your school is sponsored by a local church it might be best to hold your meeting in a relatively neutral setting such as a community centre. Even if your school is church sponsored, it is helpful to have this meeting in a neutral setting.

You may wish to bring an experienced Christian educator to address the philosophy of Christian schools in general and provide your own speaker (preferably the principal) to talk about the distinctives of your school in particular. Leave plenty of time for questions. Have brochures for interested families. Don't be discouraged at a low turnout to the meeting (15-30 people). Some of the largest schools in Canada have had this experience in their initial meetings.

In your first year you will probably do a lot of advertising creating considerable interest and expense but attracting very few students. Many people sit back and watch for a year to see if you will do it well. If you do a good job in your first year you will likely experience considerable growth in your second year.

THE SCHOOL HANDBOOK

Legal Issues

For legal purposes a school handbook is looked on by the court as providing a contractual relationship between you and parents. It is therefore vital that policies are clearly spelled out. Also, if you say you will provide a specific course or service in your handbook, you must do so or potentially risk legal problems. The courts may enforce your handbook rules regarding students and staff. The following disclaimers are recommended to be included in your handbook:

- 1) We reserve the right to make changes and amendments in school policies at any time by the action of our governing body (school board, church board, etc.) without prior notice.
- 2) We will attempt to keep tuition increases as low as possible but because future economic conditions cannot be projected, an increase may be required.
- 3) In the area of discipline, we reserve the right to suspend or expel a student whose behaviour ON OR OFF CAMPUS is in our opinion, a bad testimony for our school, disruptive, harmful to others, or illegal. This action may be taken at any time.
- 4) We reserve the right to search lockers, gym bags, brief cases or rooms (boarding schools) without prior notice for fire, safety or health concerns or whenever a violation of school rules is suspected.
- 5) We reserve the right to reject any new applicant on the grounds that he/she does not meet our entrance criteria.

We also strongly recommended that all parents and older students sign a form saying they understand and agree to abide by the rules in the handbook, recognizing that they may be amended from time to time. If the student does not abide by those rules he will be subject to discipline as seen fit by the school authorities.

Contents of Your Handbook Should Include

School Statement of Faith

Mission Statement

Philosophy

Statement of Core Family Values

Features and Benefits of the Programme:

- 1) Long Term and Short Term Goals
- 2) Organizational Structure of the School
- 3) Curriculum
- 4) Homework
- 5) Passing, Acceleration and Failure
- 6) Classroom Hours

- 7) Discipline Policy
- 8) Communication with parents
- 9) Uniform or Dress Code Policy
- 10) Application Procedures
- 11) Tuition Payment
- 12) Selection of Students
- 13) The Disclaimers mentioned in "Legal Issues"

STUDENT APPLICATIONS

You need to have an application form for students and/or families (samples on following pages). Make sure your form includes:

- a) Correct address and phone number for home and work
- b) Health insurance number
- c) Name and phone number and address of family doctor
- d) Home church (This type of question may be illegal at some point)
- e) A space for signatures confirming that the parents have read your handbook and Statement of Core Family Values and that they agree to having their children taught upon the basis described therein
- f) A space that acknowledges the right of the school to refuse re-enrolment or dismiss a student who by his/her behaviour or by the actions of his/her parents is harmful to the physical, psychological, or emotional well-being of other students or school staff members.

ENTRANCE TEST

Make sure to give all student applicants an entrance test in Math and Language skills to determine if you are able to do a good job teaching them. If you are not capable of providing special education classes don't accept students with serious learning problems. Also, beware of students with a history of serious behaviour problems. Your first year will be challenging enough!

Sample Student Application

Anywhere Christian School
123 Someplace Ave.,
City, Province Postal Code

Student Information		
Surname of Child	First Name of Child	Initial
Address		
City	Province	Postal Code
Parent's Home Phone	Cell Phone	Email
Citizenship		
Health Card Number		
Birth date (Month/Day/Year)		
School Information		
Entering Grade	Entrance Date	
Has this student repeated or advanced a grade? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		
If "yes," which grade(s)?		
Name of school attended this past year		
Address		
City	Province	Postal Code
Telephone Number	Fax Number	
List all previous schools attended (Most recent to least recent)		
1		
2		
3		
4		
Health Information		
Doctor's Name	Telephone Number	
Has the applicant any history of a physical or emotional condition or a learning disability which has required special attention or which may require special attention? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		
If "Yes," please explain.		
Is this child on medication? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		
If, "Yes," for what purpose?		
Why do you want to enrol your child at this school?		
Person(s) to contact in case of an emergency, if parents are unavailable		
Name	Relationship	Phone Number(s)
Name	Relationship	Phone Number(s)
Family Information		
Father		
Surname	First Name	Initial
Address (If different than child's)		
City	Province	Postal Code
Home Phone	Cell Phone	Email
Occupation	Employer	Work Phone
Marital Status: <input type="checkbox"/> Single <input type="checkbox"/> Married <input type="checkbox"/> Separated <input type="checkbox"/> Divorced		
Living with child: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Church Affiliation	

Mother	Surname	First Name	Initial
Address (If different than child's)			
City		Province	Postal Code
Home Phone		Cell Phone	Email
Occupation		Employer	Work Phone
Marital Status: <input type="checkbox"/> Single <input type="checkbox"/> Married <input type="checkbox"/> Separated <input type="checkbox"/> Divorced			
Living with child: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No			Church Affiliation
Siblings			
Name	Age	School Attending (if old enough)	
Name	Age	School Attending (if old enough)	
Name	Age	School Attending (if old enough)	
In signing this application, I (we) agree that:			
I (We) have read the Statement of Faith and Statement of Family Core Values in the school handbook and agree to support these statements in our home and have my (our) child educated in accordance with them;			
The school has full discretion in the discipline of my (our) child in accordance with it's discipline policy;			
The school has full discretion for the grade and class placement of my (our) child;			
The school reserves the right to dismiss my (our) child if he/she does not cooperate with the educational process or if the student or his/her parents are perceived by the school as a threat to the physical, psychological, or emotional well-being of other students or school staff members;			
I (We) understand that tuition rates do not cover the cost of operating the school and thus my (our) participation is needed in lending practical help and prayer support in a mutual effort to train our children;			
I (We) have read the policies relating to the tuition payments and agree to pay all tuition fees, and other financial obligations on or before the due date without a reminder and in accordance with these policies.			
I (We) hereby confirm that we have no unpaid debts at any other independent/private school.			
Signature(s):			
_____		_____	
Father		Mother	
_____		_____	
Guardian		Date	
For Office Use Only			
Entrance Test			
<input type="checkbox"/> Completed	Date:	<input type="checkbox"/> Fee Paid	
Registration			
<input type="checkbox"/> Accepted	<input type="checkbox"/> Acceptance Letter/Information Sent	<input type="checkbox"/> Fee Paid	<input type="checkbox"/> Not Accepted/Notified
Comments:			
Placement		Grade:	Starting Date:
Requests/Receipts			
<input type="checkbox"/> OSR Request Sent	<input type="checkbox"/> Received	<input type="checkbox"/> Health Questionnaire	<input type="checkbox"/> Received
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Recent Reports Cards	<input type="checkbox"/> Received
Other			

STATEMENT OF CORE FAMILY VALUES

With each new year we in Christian schools are faced with surprising new issues. One question that arises every now and then these days and will appear more frequently in the future is "How do we address student applications from 'alternate lifestyle' families?" (i.e., homosexual couples or polygamous families).

If your school has an open enrolment policy whereby you accept students from both Christian and non-Christian homes you cannot legally reject a student because he/she comes from an 'alternate lifestyle family'. You can however spell out what your school will teach about core family values (biblical standards for sexuality and your school's pro-life position) and require that parent applicants agree in writing to support that teaching in their homes.

There are two very important points that you must make clear in the Statement of Core Family Values:

- 1) That your school will not allow the teaching of hatred against any group of individual.
- 2) That the Statement of Core Family Values reflects the understanding of all your school board members, administration, and staff about the teaching of the Old and New Testaments on these subjects.

Sample Statement of Core Family Values

All members of the board, administration, and staff of Anywhere Christian School believe that the Bible is the written Word of God and without error in all its teachings. Because of our understanding of the Old and New Testaments our school teaches these Core Family Values:

- 1) That it is unacceptable for Christians to teach hatred against any group or individual.
- 2) That human life begins at conception and that an unborn child at any stage of development is a human being and should be treated as such.
- 3) That sexual intimacy is only morally acceptable within a marriage relationship.
- 4) That premarital or extramarital sexual intimacy heterosexual or homosexual including but not limited to intercourse is morally wrong.
- 5) That marriage is an exclusively heterosexual institution.

FINANCIAL MATTERS

Tuition and Budget

It is almost impossible for us to tell you how much to charge for tuition or what to pay teachers in your first year. The local economy, cost of living, likely enrolment, and cost of facilities all need to be considered.

In most schools staff salaries account for about 85% of the total school expenditure. Aim to make tuition cover salaries (including both portions of CPP and EI). One way to do this in the first year is to divide tuition evenly among the teaching staff after subtracting employers portion of CPP and UI. If you have a small school we recommend that in your first year you pay all teachers the same salary. Fees from entrance testing, registrations, book and uniform sales and income from fund raising should *ideally* be used for purchasing school equipment and other operational expenses.

Used student and teacher's desks and office equipment are usually available very inexpensively from various sources. Often our ACSI office will be able to give suggestions and direction. Many schools have each family buy school books from the school thus saving the school thousands of dollars.

Most ACSI schools have traditionally set tuition on a decreasing scale for each child in the family.

For example:

First Child in the Family	\$4000.00
Second Child in the Family	\$3000.00
Third, Fourth, Fifth, etc.	\$ 900.00

But we urge schools to work toward having the same fee for every student with no family discounts. After all, what is there about the education you are offering the 2nd or 3rd child in a family that makes it less valuable than the education you give the family's first child?

When families enroll in your school it is wise to have them pay the registration fee and the first and last months tuition before the opening day of school. The registration fee should be non-refundable. Also we recommend that you require families either to pay the entire tuition before opening day or give the school post dated cheques for the first day of each month before the student(s) start attending classes. Unfortunately, not all Christian families act responsibly or with integrity regarding meeting financial obligations. Our tuition payment policies need to protect the school and keep those few unreliable parents from avoiding their responsibilities.

What about Grants from Foundations?

Foundations support organizations that have proven over time to be fiscally responsible. They almost never give to organizations that are in serious debt. Fiscal responsibility needs to be a hallmark of our schools. That means we need to charge enough tuition to pay our bills and more. That also means we must not carry parents who do not meet their financial obligation to the school—except in very specific circumstances.

Tuition Assistance

Most schools try to make provision for some students from low income families. The ideal way to accomplish this is to have money in the bank for scholarships and have interested families apply. It is important to use a tuition assistance form (see page 48) and to check the accuracy of the information each family gives. Be wise in giving tuition assistance. Not every family that thinks they need help really is in need. If you are incorporated and you trade tuition for work you must give the helping family a T4 slip for the value of the tuition traded. As of 2007, scholarships are no longer taxable so you do not need to give families T4 slips for the amount of their scholarship.

G.S.T.

Be sure to keep a record of the GST your school has paid for books, equipment, etc. At the end of the academic year, you can claim a refund of 50% of that amount even though you do not charge any GST to your school parents.

Fiscal Year

We strongly encourage you to establish July 1 to June 30 as your fiscal year (instead of using the calendar year). It will make budgeting and planning much simpler.

Tax Receipts

At the time of writing, schools can issue parents with an income tax receipt for that portion of tuition that pays for “religious education.” According to Revenue Canada, religious education includes Bible class, devotions, chapel services, and possibly music but in their definition, all other subjects are “secular.” For more information on this contact Revenue Canada and request information circular 75-23 (or search for it on their website: www.cra-arc.gc.ca/formspubs/menu-eng.html).

Some parents have successfully claimed tuition for children under the age of 6 “as child care expenses.” The school can give a regular receipt for the full amount of tuition but not a charitable receipt (except for the portion for religious). The Parents then deal directly with Revenue Canada if they decide to claim it as “child care.”

Debt

Any sponsoring organization that expects a Christian school to be a profit-making proposition is in for a surprise. The economic realities of most Christian schools are tight budgets, limited resources, and personal sacrifice. That is why it is so critically important to stay out of debt of any kind in the first few years of operation.

Some organizations have made the enormous mistake of purchasing school buildings in their first few years of existence and burdening themselves with crushing mortgages. A school is not a building. It is an extension of the hearts and minds of its teachers and leaders. Therefore, the first financial priority for the school board should be the prayerful selection and care of the principal and teachers. They are channels through which the Lord ministers to your students.

The first question some parents ask a Christian school principal is, "What curriculum do you use?" We encourage you to investigate a variety of publishers but far more important is the "living curriculum," the teachers. The board needs to provide adequately for them not just by paying living wages but by ensuring that they are not overloaded with teaching responsibilities. In-service training opportunities like the annual ACSI Teachers' Convention and Summer Institute are essential for improving teachers' skills and therefore the quality of your school.

School debt problems almost always require teachers to be underpaid and overworked. Consequently, the entire ministry of the school suffers. Because of debt, buildings often own schools rather than vice versa. Of course we all need facilities in which to operate but please be warned: Buildings do not make a school but they can break one.

Plan wisely and spend especially carefully in your first few years.

Sample Tuition Assistance Application

Tuition Assistance Application

Please note:

Although we would like to see as many students as possible in a Christian school, we are under **NO** obligation to provide tuition assistance for *ANY* student. This form is merely an **application** for assistance. The school will make any decision regarding approval of assistance. In addition, a report must be submitted on the character of the students whose families are requesting this assistance.

Please make sure to include a copy of your previous year's *income tax return*, a list of *all family income* from all sources and a *list of your expenses*.

Family Name: _____

Child's Name: _____ **Grade:** _____

Service you are willing to provide to the school:

- organizing fund-raising free transportation caretaking
- coaching refereeing club leadership
- before/after school supervision teacher's helper

Do you own your home? Yes No

Total Tuition for your family: _____

Approximate field trip costs: _____

Amount of assistance requested: _____

Special circumstances of which we should be aware:

I certify that all information provided here is true and accurate and that I have given a complete disclosure of our financial affairs.

Signature _____ Date: _____

School Representative(s) may arrange a meeting with you before a decision is made. All decisions will be given careful consideration and prayer. The school will try to contact all applicants within one month of application.

*** Please complete the back of this page**

Monthly Family Income & Expenses

(Divide all annual income and expenses by 12)

Income

Received by	Taxes Withheld	Source of Income	Amount of Income
Father	_____	_____	_____
Mother	_____	_____	_____
Child	_____	_____	_____
Child	_____	_____	_____
Child	_____	_____	_____

Total of Monthly Income

Benefits you have:

- | | | |
|---|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dental Insurance | <input type="checkbox"/> Drug Plan | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> LTD | <input type="checkbox"/> STD | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ |

Expenses

Tithe	_____
Car Payments	_____
Car Gas & Repairs	_____
Insurance & License	_____
Rent/Mortgage (including Property Tax)	_____
Heat	_____
Electric	_____
Water	_____
Maintenance	_____
House Insurance	_____
Food	_____
Clothing	_____
Entertainment (including sports)	_____
Gifts	_____
Life Insurance	_____
Other	_____
Loan Payment(s)	_____
Phone	_____
TOTAL OF MONTHLY EXPENSES	_____

Would you be interested in receiving financial counselling? Yes No

Description of Loans:

EXPENSES

SALARIES (typically 80 to 90% of budget)

Principal _____ (usually teaches 50-70%
of the time for schools with
enrollment of 60 or less)

Teachers _____

Employers Portion of CPP & EI _____

Ontario Health Insurance _____ (only applicable if school
income is over \$400 000)

Substitute Teachers (\$50 - 150 a day) _____

Caretaker (usually part-time) _____

Secretary (usually part-time) _____

Sub-Total _____

(Note: In the first year schools don't usually have an employee benefits programme)

Please note: Some portion of salaries may be traded off for tuition. For an incorporated charity, this requires that the value of the trade off be added to the total income portion of the parent's T4 form.

BUILDING & GROUNDS

Rent _____

Heat _____

Light _____

Water _____ (N.B. Check Ministry of
Health requirements if your school is on a
well.)

Insurance _____ (Public Liability \$2 million
recommended minimum)

Postage _____

Phone _____

Grass/Landscaping _____

Snow Removal _____

Sub-Total _____

EQUIPMENT

Desks & Office Equipment _____

Chalkboards & Equipment _____

Stationary _____

Art supplies _____

Science Equipment	_____
Computer Equipment	_____
Phys Ed & Sports	_____
Music	_____
Kindergarten	_____
Janitorial Equipment	_____
Public Liability Insurance	_____
Miscellaneous	_____
Sub-Total	_____

ADVERTISING & PRINTING

Ads, Flyers, Handbooks (<i>including delivery</i>)	_____
Letterhead & Report Cards	_____
Sub-Total	_____

MEMBERSHIPS & TEACHER TRAINING

ACSI membership: # of students x \$18.50	_____
Plus School Fee	\$100

Teachers' Convention 1st year members	No Charge
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Convention Dates: Ontario and Maritime locations. See www.acsiec.org

Other in-service training	_____
Sub-Total	_____

BOARD/ ADMINISTRATORS' CONFERENCE

Ontario - First Saturday in February Delegates x \$75.00	_____
Maritime - Last Saturday in October Delegates x \$45.00	_____
Sub-Total	_____

MISCELLANEOUS

Legal Incorporation & Charitable Status	_____
Uniforms	_____
Books	_____
Sub-Total	_____

TOTAL EXPENSES	_____
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