

**Student and Family Information Handbook 2023-2024**

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**Welcome to James Madison Academy**

Oswego Church of Christ

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**Our Purpose**

James Madison Academy (JMA) for educational freedom is a hybrid style of learning that combines the freedom of homeschooling with the structure of a school-like environment. The Academy was originated by local parents who were determined to find an alternative educational choice for their children that would provide a classical American educational experience with a Christian foundation. Students are free to interact, socialize and play in a safe, supportive environment so they can reach their fullest potential. The Academy was founded on a core conservative philosophy with fundamental belief in constitutional freedoms guided by traditional Christian values.

**Statement of Faith**

JMA is a LEAH Chapter and as such we are adopting NYS Leah Statement of Faith as follows.

Our Statement of Faith includes only those truths upon which all true Christians agree. It concerns the Authority of Scripture, Deity of Christ, the Person and Work of Jesus Christ (the Gospel) as revealed in Scripture. It is the faith once delivered to the saints (Jude 2, Ephesians 4:5) which distinguishes believers from non-believers. There are many other precious truths taught in the Bible over which godly men have differed in understanding. Therefore, this is not a statement of all that is important to believe, but of all that is essential to believe for Christian fellowship and unity. (Romans 15:1-7).

We affirm the spiritual unity of believers through our common faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and that individual doctrinal or practical differences which may exist, outside of the following, should not hinder the unity of Christian home educators.

**We believe:**

1. The Bible to be the inspired, infallible, divinely preserved Word of God, the supreme and final authority for all faith and life.

2. That there is one God, eternally existent in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

3. In the deity of our Lord Jesus Christ, His virgin birth, His sinless life, His miracles, His vicarious and atoning death through His shed blood on the cross, His bodily resurrection, His ascension, and His imminent bodily return in power and glory.

4. That man was created in the image of God, but fell into sin and is therefore lost, and only those who put their faith in Jesus Christ alone, not trusting in any personal works whatsoever, can be saved.

5. That salvation is the free gift of God brought to the sinner by grace and received by personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, Whose substitutionary death on the cross paid the penalty for man’s sin.

6. That the ministry of the Holy Spirit is to convict mankind; indwell, guide, instruct, and empower the believer for godly living and service.

7. That God created mankind in His image: male (man) and female (woman), sexually different but with equal personal dignity. Consequently, members must affirm their (and all others) biological sex and refrain from any and all attempts to physically change, alter, or disagree with their predominant biological sex. (Genesis 1:26-28, Romans 1:26-32, 1 Corinthians 6:9-11)

8. That God created and ordered human sexuality to the permanent, exclusive,comprehensive, and conjugal “one flesh” union of man and woman, intrinsically ordered to procreation and biological family, and in furtherance of the moral, spiritual, and public good of binding father, mother, and child. Consequently, members must affirm the sexual complementarity of man and woman and resist any and all same-sex sexual relationships.

9. That the term “marriage” has only one meaning: the uniting of one man and one woman in a single, exclusive union, as delineated by Scripture. (Genesis 2:18-25) God intends sexual intimacy to occur only between a man and a woman who are married to each other. (1 Corinthians 6:18; 7:2-5; Hebrews 13:4) God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged in outside of a marriage between a man and a woman.

10. That any form of sexual immorality (including but not limited to: adultery, fornication, homosexual behavior, bisexual conduct, bestiality, incest, and use of pornography) is sinful and offensive to God. (Matthew 15:18-20; 1 Corinthians 6:9-10.)

11. That the term “family” means either a married couple as defined above who are usually blessed with one or more biological and/or adopted children or grandchildren; or a single adult with one or more biological and/or adopted children or grandchildren.

**JMA Offers:**

● 2 Educational Programs – Thursday

● Partnership with

● Hybrid learning styles

● Curriculum swap

● Community outreach

● Volunteerism

● Fundraising

● Character Building

● Field trips

● Holiday gatherings

● Special Events

● Support meetings

● Annual showcase

● Annual picnic

**Code of Conduct:**

The purpose of the code of conduct is to promote behavior and actions consistent for all members. All students and parents will conduct themselves in a manner that reflects positively on Christ, on homeschooling, our academy and on our families at all times. All students will be held responsible for their general conduct in keeping with their level of maturity, showing regard for authority and the rights of others. We ask that students seek excellence, be honest, be kind, use appropriate speech, and respect others. These include but are not limited to:

No profanity, vulgar or insulting language toward other students, staff members, board members, teachers or volunteers. If a student has a grievance towards another member of JMA, they will be encouraged to speak to a board member and shall do so in a respectful manner.

No hitting, slapping, pushing, biting, scatching, etc.

No running inside the building, particularly in the Sanctuary.

Students in possession of any type of weapon, firearm, tobacco, alcohol or drugs will be expelled for the educational session.

Any intentional destruction or graffiti on Church of Christ property is grounds for immediate dismissal for the educational session.

**Dress Code:**

The goal of our dress code is to promote unity among our students, build a sense of community and belonging while also refraining from distracting clothing in the academic atmosphere. We implement a dress code rather than a non-flexible, uniform requirement. It is the responsibility of each student to comply with the dress code with the expectations that parents are monitoring their compliance. The JMA board commits to fairly enforcing the dress code during the operational programming. Although parents are not required to follow the dress code, we ask that you adhere to the expectations of appropriate clothing during JMA operations.

Clothing should be modest, covering all body parts including the midriff. No form fitting clothing, visible undergarments, torn/ripped clothing, sweatpants or spaghetti strap tops will be allowed. Leggings can be worn under skirts and dresses. Graphics on clothing will be prohibited. Shorts, skirts, and dresses should be an appropriate length and should not be shorter than the fingertips of the children when the arms are at rest.

The JMA board requires all participants to have t-shirts/polos/dresses that are red, white, blue, black or gray. Patterns in this color scheme will be deemed appropriate within the dress code (plaid, stripes, polka dots, etc). Pants/shorts/skirts can be blue, black or khaki.

With the intention of providing outdoor learning engagement to our students, we ask that all students wear appropriate footwear to prevent injury while maximizing participation.

**Responsibilities:**

Instructors:

The JMA board highly values its volunteers and instructors. While we understand that most instructors will be parent-led, we want to work to provide a high quality, integrated education to our students. Open and consistent communication with JMA Educational Coordinators and Board Members will help the educational session flow smoothly while ensuring instructor coverage. As a compensation for volunteer time, JMA parent instructors will receive free tuition for their children during their designated teaching time while also provided an additional session with free tuition. If an instructor fails to follow through on their committed session, the JMA board reserves the right to prorate the child's remaining tuition for that session for continued attendance. Basic responsibilities include but not limited to:

Instructors will complete and sign a safety training course prior to working with students.

Instructors must arrive on time, 15 minutes prior to the start of their session and have their classroom ready to use. At the end of their session, instructors are expected to leave their classroom in a clean, orderly manner, ready for the next use.

Instructors will plan and prepare their session ahead of time.

Instructors will have a prepared, back up lesson plan on file at the Church of Christ in the event of an emergency absence.

Instructors are expected to give as much notice as possible (24 hour notice) if absent due to illness. Instructors must make arrangements for a ‘substitute teacher’ if they know in advance that they will be absent due to traveling or appointments..

Instructors will provide parents a brief synopsis of the educational content that was delivered, educational objectives completed and assignments provided. This will be completed every 4 weeks.

Instructors will communicate with parents in person and on the JMA webpage as needed for announcements, reminders or updates.

Instructors will conduct themselves in accordance with the Code of Conduct.

If additional funds are needed for class, instructors are responsible for informing the board of educators for approval. All receipts must be retained.

Parents:

While JMA strives to support parents to the fullest extent during their homeschool journey, it is imperative that parents understand their responsibilities in accordance with their child’s educational needs. It is important to acknowledge that JMA is a cooperative effort on the part of parents, their children, teachers and the community. JMA expects that parents understand their responsibilities include and are not limited to:

Read and agree with the Code of Conduct and Statement of Faith and be familiar with policies and expectations before participating in James Madison Academy.

Responsible for giving the reports; Letter of Intent, IHIPS, and quarterly reports to the school district, and is responsible for their child’s homeschool education.

Arrive on time for educational programming with their child/children and give as much notice as possible (24 hour notice) to the facilitators via email or phone call, if absent due to traveling, appointments, or sickness.

Check email and JMA homepage periodically for this is the primary method of communication.

Respect and adhere to all guidelines and review and encourage children to do so.

Parents are encouraged to communicate with the child’s instructor to inquire how the child is doing in the classroom or any concerns they may have.

Monitor the behavior of their children while on Church of Christ property. It is critical that all families are mindful of the space provided and clean up any spills, messes or accidents their children may have or make while on church property during events, meetings, etc.

Students:

JMA is extremely grateful to the congregation of the Church of Christ for their generosity and kindness to us. We worship and praise the Lord for the respectful, working relationship with which he has blessed our academy and we ask that our students reflect this gratitude through their behavior to ensure the continuation of a positive relationship for the upcoming future. We ask that all students:

Respect church property.

Respect and obey authority and follow instructions in the classroom.

Respect their peers.

Conduct oneself in a safe and orderly manner.

Be prepared for class.

Set any cell phones to vibrate and keep phones in a pocket or backpack while on church grounds. Students will not text or make a phone call during the session unless specifically granted permission to do so from a JMA teacher or board member.

Will not bring video games to class.

Will not run or eat food inside the Sanctuary.

**Sickness Policy:**

JMA respectfully asks that you keep your child home from the program based on the following recommendations by the American Academy of Pediatrics. Sending your child to the program with any of the following signs and symptoms will likely result in a phone call from a JMA instructor to come and pick up your child.

● A fever of 100.0 F or higher. Children should be fever free for at least 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication before returning to the program.

● Diarrhea (defined as 3 or more watery or loose stools in one day, with or without fever)

● Vomiting within the last 24 hours

● A rash of any kind with or without fever (unless a doctor’s note is provided that states your child is not contagious)

● Severe coughing or sneezing that is disruptive to your child’s learning or that of the other children in the classroom

● Sore throats with marked redness and/ or white spots. If your child is diagnosed with strep throat, he/she needs to be home on antibiotics for at least 24 hours before returning to school.

● Any sticky or colored drainage from the eyes with redness of the “white part” of the eye could mean that your child has pinkeye, which is highly contagious.

● Colored drainage from the nose with a temperature of 100.0 F or higher

● Skin lesions that are “weepy’ (pus or fluid-filled)

● Severe episodes of asthma, including shortness of breath

● If your child seems too run down to participate in class or learn anything from their school day.

What symptoms are acceptable for my child to have and still go to JMA?

● Earaches in the absence of fever (they are not contagious)

● Mild cold or respiratory symptoms if nasal drainage is clear and the cough is mild

● Seasonal Allergies

● Mild sore throats without fever, marked redness or white spots

● Headaches in the absence of other symptoms

**Discipline Procedures:**

JMA board members will use citations for any violation of the Code of Conduct. When a citation is made, it will be documented and placed on site in the child’s file. Children who behave inappropriately during a class or group activity while away from their parents will be lovingly corrected by the on site JMA teacher. If behavior continues, they will be asked to step out of class and sit with the board member on site. When the child is ready to participate appropriately, the child may go back into the classroom. A behavioral citation will be recorded and placed in the student file. If disruption continues the parent will be notified and asked to participate in a meeting with JMA staff.

In summary, If a child is being uncooperative, disruptive, or disrespectful, the following procedures will be followed:

1) The child will be spoken to by the adult that is in charge.

2) If unacceptable behavior continues, the child will be asked to sit out of the activity for a period of time.

3) A citation will be reported in the student’s file.

4) If the behavior continues as a pattern, there will be communication between the child’s parents and the facilitators to discuss the plan of action.

**Safety Procedures:**

JMA board members take the safety of their children and your children very seriously. As we strive for a productive academic year, we will take extra precautions in ensuring the safety of every member, child, teacher, visitor, etc. JMA also requires all teachers and guest speakers to read and sign a Child Abuse safety course prior to working with any children. In maintaining the safety of the building while in use, main entrance doors will be locked from 9:15 am until 11:45 am. During the PM sessions, main entrance doors will be locked from 12:30pm-2:45pm. All guests entering the building during these times will be required to sign and sign out with a board member or teacher on site.

During educational programming sessions, all students will be signed in and signed out by approved adults only. JMA will maintain records of approved pick up persons while also securing a safety code for each child.

**Fees:**

JMA strives to be affordable and optional for all homeschooling families. While the board members work diligently to keep costs down or minimal, there are fees to maintain programming and use of the Church for educational and social events. JMA charges a yearly membership cost of $60.00 per family. This includes LEAH membership and benefits. If you are already a LEAH member the annual cost is $20.00 for your family to join JMA.

Additional fees will apply to educational programming. Please see the current fee schedule for further details.

These fees cover costs such as, but not limited to, education, field trips, supplies, rent, cleaning, website maintenance, building and outside maintenance, etc.