

FAMILY HANDBOOK

THE HEARTHSTONE SCHOOL

A Division of Hearthstone Christian School

The Hearthstone School is a branch of Hearthstone Christian School, a day school in Brooksville, FL that was established for the sole purpose of supporting families who wish to continue educating their child(ren) at home but would also appreciate the protection and status of a private school student designation. We believe that each child is specific in his or her educational needs and desires, and each family should have as many options as possible. We want to do the worrying about all the legal requirements for you so that you can stay busy with the ministry God has called you to do – training your children in godliness and equipping them to shape their world and touch lives with the Good News of Jesus Christ.

ENROLLMENT REQUIREMENTS

1. Fill out and the online application found at www.heartstonechristian.org/
2. Send us via email (thehearthstoneschool@gmail.com), fax, or postal service the following 3 documents that are required for enrollment in all private schools in the state of Florida:
 - birth certificate. (You can send us a copy of a certified birth certificate.)
 - FL Department of Health immunization form (DH680), which you can get from your pediatrician **OR** the official immunization waiver form (DH681), which would need to be issued by your local health department. NOTE: All entering 7th graders must submit an updated immunization form that indicates a TDaP booster administered before the 7th grade school year.
 - A school physical (FL DH3040) dated no more than 1 year prior to your enrollment date. This is required for your first year at THS only.

We understand that these documents contain important and private information, so please be assured that we have no reason or legal requirement to share this information with any government or personal entity. It will remain secure and private.

3. Use the PayPal link on our website or send a check for one-time enrollment fee and tuition. (Any family formally withdrawing from The Hearthstone School within 30 days of enrollment will receive a full refund.)
4. Any high school students MUST provide THS an official written transcript of all high school credits earned from either a home-education program or previous school attended. No credits will be transferred for diploma consideration without a transcript.

5. Be sure to formally withdraw your child from the current school –

- If you homeschool, send a Letter of Termination to your local school district (See the Appendix for a template)
- If your child attends a public school, go into the office personally and sign a withdrawal form. Do NOT just stop attending as this can result in truancy compliance issues.
- If your child attends a private school, go to the office and ask for the proper procedure for withdrawing a student from the school. If you do not want or are unable to go into the office, send a letter formally withdrawing your child. This is especially important if your family receives a state scholarship such as the FTC tax credit, McKay, or Gardiner. (NOTE: The Hearthstone School can NOT accept any of these scholarships for any fee or tuition payment because your student does not attend a physical campus with us.)

ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENTS

1. You must maintain and submit a record of attendance. Florida law (Section 1011.60(2)) requires 180 days of school (or the hourly equivalent of instructional hours) – or more specifically:

(a) Kindergarten through grade 3: Not less than seven hundred twenty (720) net instructional hours.

(b) Grades 4 through 12: Not less than nine hundred (900) net instructional hours (170 school days).

Teachers (parents) must use the Attendance/Grade Verification Form found in this handbook's Appendix to keep a daily attendance record as required by Section 1003.23(2) F.S. **Any teacher found to not keep accurate attendance records at each semester's report period will be dropped from THS enrollment with no refund for fees/ tuition already paid.** Your school year will start on your first official day of attendance record-keeping, but please do not enroll any more than one month prior to intended official start date unless you are able to state an accurate start date in the future.

2. Teachers (parents) are responsible to submit grades, along with 3 work samples for all core classes (English, math, science, social studies), twice a year – at the end of the first semester and at the end of the school year. High school students must submit 3 work samples for every class in order to receive a high school credit. THS staff will work closely with high school parents to determine credit equivalency for classes. Work samples will not be returned; you may submit a copy of any original samples you wish to keep.

CURRICULUM REQUIREMENTS

Curriculum decisions at every grade level will require much prayer and discernment for each individual child’s educational ability, needs, and desires. Part of the benefit of homeschooling is the ability to pursue focused educational opportunities for your child. To that end, HCS desires to support your curriculum choices within the parameters of FL state law. If you have enrolled a student in high school, please refer to the section in the Appendix for Florida High School diploma requirements, as these are very important. The staff at THS desires to help you with any concerns or questions you have regarding curriculum choices. The following are requirements for all THS students:

- Students in K-5th grade must complete full-year course work in the following categories: Language Arts (We recommend a full spectrum: reading, grammar, composition, spelling, handwriting, and vocabulary), Math, Science, and Social Studies. We also strongly encourage you to utilize a Bible curriculum. Other course work should be considered secondary to these 5 subjects.
- Students in 6th-8th grade must complete full-year course work in the following categories: Language Arts (literature, composition, grammar), Math, Science, and Social Studies. We also strongly encourage you to utilize a Bible curriculum. Other course work should be considered secondary to these 5 subjects.
- High school students should be working toward completion of a 24-credit general high school diploma (See Appendix), with at least 6 credits earned per year, if possible.
- A final category, called Access, is specifically for special needs learners who do not possess the intellectual ability to complete full rigor coursework. In this category, parents should provide *access* to as much academic instruction at grade level as possible. This will be more important in the high school years. For special needs learners, parents should take their responsibility seriously for educating their unique learners for future self-independence in whatever areas that will be possible. Learning should focus on what is academically possible but also in consideration of realistic life-skill goals. Parents whose children would fit into this category should notify THS staff at enrollment.
- Parents should use the standard FL grade scale system as listed in the following chart:

NUMERICAL EQUIVALENT	Reg. Q.P.	H.A. Q.P.	A.P. Q.P.	1/2 Q.P.
A+ 98-100	4.33	4.83	5.33	2.16
A 93-97	4.00	4.50	5.00	2.00
A- 90-92	3.67	4.17	4.67	1.835
B+ 87-89	3.33	3.83	4.33	1.66
B 83-86	3.00	3.50	4.00	1.50
B- 80-82	2.67	3.17	3.67	1.335
C+ 77-79	2.33	2.83	3.33	1.16
C 73-76	2.00	2.50	3.00	1.00
C- 70-72	1.67	2.17	2.67	0.835
D+ 67-69	1.33	1.33	1.33	0.67
D 63-66	1.00	1.00	1.00	0.50
D- 60-62	0.67	0.67	0.67	0.335
F Failing	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

Grade/ Attendance Reporting Procedures

The Hearthstone School operates on a 2-semester school year model. Students' school year can begin at any date on the calendar, with the end of the first semester being 18 weeks (generally) from the school year start date. THS wants to provide flexibility for our families, so if you adopt a different calendar for the school year (such as schooling year-round), we will adjust your 1st semester report date accordingly.

Each family will be issued a 1st semester report date and a year-end report date once all enrollment forms and tuition payment have been received.

Teachers **MUST return the Attendance/Grade Verification form on or before that date.** Forms can be found in the Appendix. If it is determined that students are not attending school in compliance with Florida law, families will be dropped from enrollment immediately.

Attendance/Grade Report form can be submitted through email (theheartstoneschool@gmail.com) or mailed directly to 5053 Griffin Road, Brooksville, FL 34601. If you wish to fax your forms, please call first to assure that the fax machine is ready.

Students will receive a report card (Grades K-12) and/or transcript (unofficial, high school only) at the end of each semester in a .pdf format emailed to the parent.

RE-ENROLLMENT PROCEDURES

THS families can indicate on the Year End Attendance/Grade Verification form their desire to be automatically re-enrolled for the following school year with no additional paperwork/ fee required. However, all compliance paperwork (Year End Report) must have been submitted and all financial accounts settled for the current school year before re-enrollment for the next year will be granted.

Students who have withdrawn in a previous year (or earlier in the school year) may need to submit new paperwork and/or pay an enrollment fee.

WITHDRAWAL PROCEDURES

Families who desire to withdraw their student(s) from THS must complete the Withdrawal Form (found in the Appendix). Outstanding tuition will be pro-rated and invoiced. No transcripts/ report cards will be issued until all financial accounts are settled. The official withdrawal date will be within 3 business days of the date given by the parent on the Withdrawal Form and attendance compliance is expected up until that date. A final Attendance Report must be sent with the Withdrawal Form regardless of what day in the school year the withdrawal becomes official.

Accreditation

The Hearthstone School is not currently accredited by any regional accreditation agencies. In most cases, having an unaccredited high school diploma will not be an issue. In recent years as the homeschool movement has exploded, accreditation for private schools has become less important, almost inconsequential, to colleges. Most colleges are looking at two things when they consider the value of the high school diploma – the 24 required credits for graduation and the minimum required test scores for college admittance. However, families should check the enrollment requirements of their chosen college to confirm that a diploma from THS will meet or exceed eligibility requirements.

Additionally, not all accreditation is considered equal. There are many “Accreditation Agencies” out there that are not recognized by the Federal Department of Education or most main stream higher educational institutions. When checking an institution’s accreditation – make sure you ask the right questions. Being “affiliated” or a “member” of an accreditation agency is NOT the same as being accredited BY that agency.

Lastly, while accreditation is not typically an issue, we do recommend joining groups such as Home School Legal Defense Association (HSLDA), that advocate for all home school families, including private schools that cater to home educators. Membership to advocacy groups, such as HSDLA, gains families access to additional support and legal resources to help assist families should a question regarding accreditation arise.

Special Note ****If a student is looking to participate in college sports, the NCAA has specific standards. Families looking to have their student play college sports should contact the NCAA and verify they are properly completing all requirements necessary for acceptance.

Non-Discriminatory Admissions Policy

The Hearthstone School admits all students regardless of race, color, religious beliefs, or national and ethnic origin. The Hearthstone School does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religious beliefs, or national and ethnic origin in the administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, or school-administered programs.

High School Information

All THS students not on the Access track must be working toward a 24-credit general diploma as set forth by the Florida Department of Education. See the following chart for graduation requirements:

ENGLISH (4)	MATH (4)	SCIENCE (3)	SOCIAL STUDIES (3)	ELECTIVES (10)
English I (1)	Algebra 1 (1)	Physical Science w/ lab (1)	World History (1)	Health/ PE (1)
English II (1)	Geometry (1)	Biology w/ lab (1)	U.S. History (1)	Practical/ Fine Arts Elective (.5)
English III (1)	Additional math credit (1)	Additional science credit (1)	American Government (.5)	8.5 additional elective credits
English IV (1)	Additional math credit (1)		Economics (.5)	

IMPORTANT NOTE: Students wishing to participate in the Florida Bright Futures scholarship program or to be considered for admission to a Florida university (not a Florida community/ state college) immediately after high school must meet more specific guidelines within the above requirements:

1. The 2 additional math credits must be at an Algebra I level or higher.
2. Two of the additional elective credits must be a single foreign language (i.e. Spanish I, Spanish II).
3. One high school course must be an online course.

All THS high school students must maintain an overall GPA of 2.0 or higher and can not fail any subject. Parents are encouraged to require their student to receive a minimum of a C- in all high school subjects; however, THS will accept any grade of a D or higher.

Refer to the Curriculum Requirements for the grade scale that all THS students must use. This will insure that your student's transcript is equivalent to all Florida public school students. (You do not want to require a higher grade scale standard for your students as that will affect their competitive GPA standing with colleges/ Bright Futures.

Honors and Advanced Placement:

Parents must indicate on the Attendance/ Grade Report if their student is taking an Honors and/or AP class.

For a course to be considered Honors it must consist of one of the following:

1. Any college level course
2. Any course designated Honors by the curriculum's publisher

3. Any Foreign Language above level 2
 4. Any course designated honors by the FL DOE on their website
 5. AP courses offered by accredited institutions, CLEP credits
- *Parents are solely responsible for arranging for their student to take the AP exam. Results should be sent directly to The Hearthstone School. No photocopies or .jpeg images showing results will be accepted.

Dual Enrollment

At this time, it should be noted, that private school students (THS) can not dual enroll tuition-free. **This should be considered as you make a decision regarding THS.** If you are a homeschool family and you plan to dual enroll for the Fall 2019 semester, it may not make financial sense to enroll at THS because you can dual-enroll for free as a homeschool family. NOTE: You would need to turn in your own homeschool articulation agreement by May 31, 2019.

Requirements for Dual Enrollment:

THS does not add any requirement to the dual enrollment option that is not required by the college. Parents should check their local state college for individual requirements. In general, high school student who pass the PERT exam and have a minimum 3.0 GPA can enroll. Several forms will be required from THS before registration. Parents should provide ample time to receive that paperwork from THS staff. Parents are solely responsible to plan their student's dual enrollment classes to meet high school diploma requirements; however, THS staff will be available to help answer questions. Official transcripts from the college will be sent directly to THS.

FAFSA

Every senior planning to attend college should complete a Federal Application for Federal Student Aid. Most colleges and universities require this even if a student is most likely not eligible for federal aid. It allows the institutions to offer other financial aid packages, as well. This application usually opens in October and should be filled out as soon as possible. Use the following link for application:

<https://fafsa.ed.gov/>

Community Service Hours

Bright Futures and many other college scholarships have a community service requirement. A properly signed form on Organization Letterhead with printed contact information is required for community service hours to be added to the transcripts. Parents are not eligible to sign for their student's hours.

Florida Virtual School

THS students are allowed to take 2 courses per year through the FLVS Flex program. When applying, indicate that they are students of Hearthstone Christian School. It may be beneficial to contact us through email to let us know that you have applied so that we can get on the FLVS school portal and approve your course rather than wait for FLVS to contact us.

Standardized Testing

All THS high school students are strongly encouraged to take the SAT/ ACT college entrance exam; however, we feel this is a parent's decision so we have no official testing requirement for graduation. Colleges and universities will require these test results. Florida Bright Futures eligibility will also be determined by these test results. Students are allowed to take these tests as many times as they wish, and many colleges/ universities will accept a "super score" (using the best subject score from multiple tests in combination with other subject tests' best score)

IMPORTANT NOTE: Only test results from the PSAT given in October of a student's Junior year will be used to determine National Merit Scholar designation. Students must register at <https://www.collegeboard.org/> for tests.

Families are responsible for sending official results to individual colleges of their choice; however, if an official result is sent to THS, we can include it on the transcript which is sometimes accepted by colleges.

Graduation

Upon completion of all high school course work, THS students will be issued a standard academic high school diploma along with one official high school transcript. In order to graduate, all official transcripts from other educational organizations, i.e. FLVS, Acellus (certificates) and dual enrollment must be received. The final Year End Attendance/ Grade form must also be received and all financial accounts settled.

Transcripts/ Academic Referrals

All high school graduate transcript requests must be submitted via email to thehearthstoneschool@gmail.com. Each THS graduate will be given 3 free transcripts, but after that, transcript requests are \$4.00 each. Upon request, transcripts will be emailed directly to the college or university of your choice.

Sports Policy

The Hearthstone School does not offer competitive sports opportunities. Florida law provides opportunity for private school students to play on competitive sports teams at their locally zoned public schools. Certain paperwork is required that can be obtained from the public school. Cheerleading is not designated as a

competitive sport, so public schools can decide in each individual case. Please check with the proposed school to verify your eligibility.

Bright Futures Scholarships

The State of Florida offers three (3) different Bright Future Scholarships:

- Florida Academic Scholars (FAS)
- Florida Medallion Scholars (FMS)
- Florida Gold Seal Vocational Scholars (GSV) - For students with a minimum of three Career and Technical Education credits in one vocational program

Each award level has minimum eligibility requirements that include test scores, academic accomplishments, and community service hours. THS parents are responsible to understand what each award level requires and what courses will meet the minimum academic requirements – and to plan the high school years accordingly. THS staff is available and happy to help if needed.

See the following link for more information regarding the Bright Futures Scholarship: <http://www.floridastudentfinancialaid.org/ssfad/bf/>

As completion of the Senior approaches, parents should apply at the above link indicating that their child is a student at Hearthstone Christian School. Full transcripts will be entered within 30 days of graduation. Note: Students have until August 31 of their Senior year to apply for Bright Futures; however, application should be made much sooner, preferably no later than April to ensure that colleges have the scholarship information to make financial aid packages available in a timely manner.

FIRST SEMESTER ATTENDANCE/ GRADE VERIFICATION

The Hearthstone School

Student name: _____ Grade: _____

First semester curriculum used:

English/ LA: _____

Math: (indicate specific level): _____

Science: _____

Social Studies: _____

Elective 1: _____

Elective 2: _____

Elective 3: _____

Grade earned for first semester:

English: _____

Elective 1: _____

Math: _____

Elective 2: _____

Science: _____

Elective 3: _____

Social Studies: _____

Attendance Report

(Circle days attended, abbreviate month name on line)

1. _____ 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16
17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31

2. _____ 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16
17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31

3. _____ 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16
17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31

4. _____ 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16
17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31

5. _____ 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16
17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31

6. _____ 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16
17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31

YEAR END ATTENDANCE/ GRADE VERIFICATION

The Hearthstone School

Student: _____ Grade: _____

Second semester curriculum used:

English/ LA: _____

Math: (indicate specific level): _____

Science: _____

Social Studies: _____

Elective 1: _____

Elective 2: _____

Elective 3: _____

Grade earned for first semester:

English: _____

Math: _____

Science: _____

Social Studies: _____

Elective 1: _____

Elective 2: _____

Elective 3: _____

Attendance Report

(Circle days attended, abbreviate month name on line)

1. _____ 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16
17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31

2. _____ 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16
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17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31

The Hearthstone School
Withdrawal Form

Name of Student: _____

Grade: _____

Last day of enrollment with THS: _____

I verify that I have enrolled my student in another school OR have sent a Letter of Intent to the local school district indicating that I will be homeschooling from the above date forward.

Parent Signature

Date

Important note: The Hearthstone School will provide grades/ transcripts only for the last completed semester/ quarter that a student is enrolled at THS. No partial quarter transcript will be provided.