**SEEDS in a Pod**

Family Handbook

*(Rev. August, 2022)*

**SEEDS IN A POD
A Christian and Classical Home School Pod**

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## VISION

## As our acronym stand for Serve-Equip-Educate-Disciple-Send, our goal is to glorify God by preparing students with the tools necessary for a lifetime of learning and encouraging them to live and think within a Christian worldview grounded in the Old and New Testament Scriptures. (Matthew 18:5; 2 Timothy 3:16 – 4:5; Proverbs 22:6; Matthew 28:18-20; Matthew 10:16)

## MISSION STATEMENT

## Our mission is to support and enhance the efforts of homeschooling families by providing classical and Christian tutorial service, which employs the methodology of the Trivium, the educational foundation of our Western culture.

## CHRIST-CENTERED

## In all its levels and teaching, SEEDS in a Pod seeks to:

1. Teach all subjects as parts of an integrated whole with the Scriptures at the center, inspiring students to love God with all their minds and hearts.
2. Provide an example of biblical Christian life through our staff and Board members.
3. Encourage every child to begin and develop his relationship with God the Father through Jesus Christ, His Son.

# CLASSICAL EDUCATION

# In all its levels and teaching, SEEDS in a Pod seeks to:

1. Emphasize grammar, dialectic, and rhetoric approaches in all subjects:
* ***Grammar****: The fundamental facts and rules of each subject, & basic data that exhibit those rules.*
* ***Dialectic****: The ordered relationship of particulars in each subject*
* ***Rhetoric****: The coherent, articulate expression of truths learned in the grammar & dialectic stages.*
1. Encourage every student to develop a love for learning and live up to his/her academic potential.
2. Provide an orderly atmosphere conducive to the attainment of the above goals.

## NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

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## SEEDS in a Pod adheres to a policy of racial nondiscrimination in the admission of students.  It admits students of any race, color, national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the study center. The study center does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national and ethnic origin in the administration of its student admissions policies, employment policies, educational policies, grant and scholarship programs and athletic and other study center administered programs.

## STATEMENT OF FAITH

## The following Christian beliefs shall be taught and reflected in the policies and practices of SEEDS in a Pod at all grade levels.

At least one parent must sign to be in agreement with this statement, and both parents must sign that they have acknowledged and agree that all classes will be taught in a manner consistent with the Statement of Faith.

1. We believe that the Bible, consisting of the sixty-six books of the Old and New Testaments, is the Word of God, inspired by the Holy Spirit, inerrant in the original writings, infallible, and the final authority in matters of faith and life. We believe that the Bible derives its authority from God its author, and not from the opinions of men.
2. We believe that there is one living and true God, eternally existent in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. We believe the God we serve is the creator and sustainer of all things, and the source of all truth. He is all powerful, all knowing, holy, righteous, just, good, loving, and full of mercy.
3. We believe that God upholds, disposes, and governs all creatures, actions and things, and that God, in His ordinary providence, makes use of means, yet is free to work without, above, or against them at His pleasure.
4. We believe that because of Adam’s sin all mankind is in rebellion against God. For the salvation of such lost and sinful people, regeneration by the Holy Spirit is absolutely necessary.
5. We believe in the true deity and full humanity of our Lord Jesus Christ. We believe in His virgin birth, in his sinless life, in His miracles, in His vicarious and atoning death through His shed blood on the cross, in His bodily resurrection from the dead, in His ascension to the right hand of the Father, and in His personal return in power and glory.
6. We believe that salvation is by grace through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ alone, and that good works, done in obedience to God’s commandments, are the necessary fruits and evidences of a true and lively faith.
7. We believe in the present ministry of the Holy Spirit, by whose indwelling the Christian is enabled to live a godly life.
8. We believe in the resurrection of both the saved and the lost: those who are saved to the resurrection of life and those who are lost to the resurrection of damnation.

# EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY

1. God enjoins parents, not the Church or State, to “bring children up in the training and admonition of the Lord” (Ephesians 6:4). Therefore, we seek to honor and assist – not usurp – the role of parents in teaching their children.
2. We believe that God’s character is revealed in His Word and in every facet of creation. Therefore, we teach that all knowledge is interrelated and instructs us about God Himself.
3. God commands us to love Him with our minds as well as with our hearts (Matthew 22:37). Therefore, we seek to inspire children at all levels and teach them how to learn, through the proven classical method.
4. We want to come alongside parents as they teach their children that all they do should be done “heartily, as unto the Lord” (Colossians 3:23). Therefore, we seek to encourage quality academic work and maintain high standards of conduct.
5. Above all, our highest goal is to provide a vigorous educational environment that challenges our students to live and think from a Christian worldview.
6. We believe that God created Adam and Eve – one man and one woman according to His image to have dominion over the Earth in His stead – Male and female, He created them. Thus, we aim to educate young boys to be godly men and young girls to be godly women prepared to maintain the stance that marriage is between one man and one woman as outlined in the Bible by God as the author of the marriage institution. (Genesis 1-2)
7. We reject the views that the definition or classifications of gender according to the authority of oneself or any man created governing bodies outside of the male and female gender identification as created by God himself according to the Bible in Genesis 1:26-27

## COMMUNICATION POLICY

## We consider it a great privilege to assist families in educating their children. We are committed to upholding and supporting parental authority in the lives of students.

Communication should follow biblical standards. In all matters, conflict should be handled as set forth in Matthew 18 and James 3. The failure to follow those biblical standards can be deeply harmful to individuals and institutions, and may result in action by SEEDS in a Pod, up to and including expulsion of students or termination of tutors at the Board's discretion.

In an effort to respect our Board members’, tutors’ and the Administrator’s time, please initially contact them via iGradeor email with any thoughts or ideas that you would like to discuss. If a phone consultation is necessary, please email to schedule a mutually convenient time.

***Parents to Tutors:*** If an issue should arise regarding individual tutor rules or procedures, the parent should speak to the tutor before discussing the matter with those in authority over the tutor.

***Parents to Administrator*:** If an issue should arise concerning rules, procedures, programs, finances, facilities, or curriculum, parents are encouraged to send an email to SEEDS in a Pod's administrator. Parents may also submit matters by email to Board members for consideration at regularly scheduled Board meetings.

***Tutors to Parents:*** If an issue should arise concerning a student’s learning or behavior, tutors should speak directly with the student’s parents before discussing the matter with Board members.

## STUDENT DISCIPLINE POLICY

## We will seek to provide an environment where students are encouraged and challenged to exemplify Christian behavior. Actions that jeopardize the safety and well-being of students and staff must be dealt with firmly and expediently.

Discipline will consist of:

1. Restitution**,** apologies (public and private)
2. Measured disciplinary action (excluding corporal punishment)
3. Restoration of fellowship

Parents will be notified of disciplinary action as soon as possible after each incident, as well as any other concerns or warnings given to a student by a tutor or Administrator. The tutor will carry out the majority of day-to-day discipline. There are instances, however, in which a stronger warning or more severe penalty is warranted. The following offenses may necessitate such action.

1. Disrespect shown to tutor or POTD.
2. Dishonesty in any situation relating to SEEDS activities, classes or assignments, including but not limited to lying, cheating, plagiarism, or stealing
3. Rebellion, i.e., outright disobedience in response to instructions
4. Fighting, i.e., striking in anger with the intention to harm another
5. Unkind, obscene, vulgar, or profane language as well as using the Lord’s name in vain
6. Continued disruptive class behavior
7. Inappropriate use of technology or device

If any of the above actions occur, the student will be sent from the classroom to the administrator and will not return for the remainder of that class. At the completion of class, an apology from the student to the offended tutor will be required. The administrator may require the student and family to meet with the Board who will decide whether further action should be taken. Restitution or other measures deemed appropriate may be requested. In severe cases where there is no change in the student’s actions or assistance from the parents, the child will be expelled for the remainder of the academic year.

**Suspension:** The Board will normally follow the protocol below. In cases where change is evident and the student appears repentant, exceptions are possible. The Board will determine in its sole discretion (in consultation with the tutor(s)), if an exception is to be made. Appeals for exceptions will not be recognized.

* **FIRST OFFENSE** – Warning, restitution/apologies, suspension for remainder of the day. (Missed work must submitted on the following class day or a grade of zero will be recorded.)
* **SECOND OFFENSE** – Restitution/apologies, suspension for two class days. (Missed work must be submitted on the following class day or a grade of zero will be recorded.)
* **THIRD OFFENSE** – Student will be expelled for the remainder of the academic year.

**Expulsion*:*** We realize that expelling a student is a very serious matter and should always be carefully dealt with on a case-by-case basis. Repentance, restitution (repairing damage through work, apologies, etc.) and forgiveness are fundamental to our discipline policy. However, should a student and his/her parents fail to eliminate behavioral problems before a third offense occurs, the student will be expelled.

**Serious Misconduct:** Should a student commit an act with such serious consequences that the Board deems it necessary, the protocol defined above may be bypassed and suspension or expulsion imposed immediately. Examples of such serious misconduct may include, without limitation: acts that seriously endanger the safety of other students or staff members; gross violence/vandalism to the facilities; violations of law; or other deliberate acts in clear contradiction of Scriptural commands. Students may be also subject to discipline for serious misconduct which occurs outside of SEEDS in a Pod hours.

**Re-admission:** Should an expelled student desire to be re-admitted to SEEDS in a Pod at a later date, the Board will make its decision based upon the student’s attitude and the family’s oversight at the time of re-application.

## PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

## While parents have contracted with SEEDS in a Pod to reach their education goals, the parents retain the responsibility for the education and upbringing of their children. As much of the children’s work is prescribed to be completed at home, *SEEDS in a Pod requires close parental involvement with their children in their SEEDS assignments*. Each family is expected to participate in the following ways:

1. Pray for your children, their tutors, and the direction of their education.
2. Oversee class work, and work with your children on assignments to be completed at home.
3. Provide diligent instruction on non-SEEDS days.
4. Attend all parent-tutor conferences. Informal conferences may be held if necessary at the request of the parent or tutor.
5. Read and respond (when necessary) to all paperwork, emails, or iGrade messages sent home by SEEDS in a Pod. This is essential to your child’s success at the Study Center.
6. Serve as Parent of the Day on a rotational basis (see description following).
7. Communicate your ideas for improvement. We want to hear from you!

## PARENT OF THE DAY (POTD):

## The POTD plays a vital role in the smooth operation of SEEDS on Tuesdays and Thursdays. He or she provides on-going assistance to the tutors students, and Administrator throughout the day.

## PARENT OF THE DAY RESPONSIBILITIES

First, it must be emphasized that the POTD must be on-site at NLF Church before students arrive for class. Please arrive between 7:20 and 7:30 to assist in setup. The POTD’s help is most essential at the very start of the school day. A manual will be provided of specific duties. As the POTD, you will be in a position of authority, thus we recommend you review the Student Code of Conduct prior to your POTD duty. Your responsibility will be to encourage students to follow the code of conduct (i.e., no running in the building, treating one another with kindness and adults with respect, being a good steward of the facility, etc.) and to bring any concerns to the attention of the Administrator.

In general, your role will be to assist in the setup and breakdown of the study center, ring the bell between classes, direct the children, and clean specific areas. You may be asked to sit in on a class and help tutors with making photocopies or other various tasks. You are responsible for assisting the administrator all day and are required to stay until the end-of-day duties are completed. You are requested to remain on the premises the entire day.

Most of your time will be spent in the lobby area, and as there is less to do during the morning hours, you are free to bring reading material and/or a laptop. If you have children who are school-age and can sit quietly and do their work, you are welcome to bring them. All children must adhere to SEEDS’s Student Rules of Conduct. We ask that you please find child care for any children who cannot meet these criteria.

Please wear comfortable, modest clothing.

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# DRESS CODE

# The dress code has been implemented in the interest of harmony between students and parents. We believe it will enhance the atmosphere of the classroom and orderliness of students. Hopefully, the dress code will not be an issue; however, if infractions occur, please note that deviations from the dress code will be addressed in the following manner:

*First time violations, with no other violation of the Student Rules of Conduct will result in a warning and an email to the parents. Subsequent violations will result in the student's removal from class until a parent can bring proper clothing.*

If in doubt regarding a clothing article, bring it into SEEDS prior to wearing it to ask the Administrator if it is appropriate. (See attached Board approved Student Dress Code)

# STUDENT RULES OF CONDUCT

# This is the basic code of conduct that SEEDS in a Pod requires all students to obey. If POTD or tutors observe students disobeying these items it will be brought to the administrator’s attention.

1. Students are expected to observe Christian standards of behavior and conversation. For example, students must speak honestly, respect their peers and submit to authority.
2. Prompt and cheerful obedience is expected. Talking back or arguing with tutors, administrator or the Parent of the Day is not permitted.
3. Students must comply with the dress code in all respects.
4. Chewing gum, snacks, etc. are only permitted when and where designated.
5. Electronic devices are not permitted.
6. Students are expected to be aware of and avoid the off-limit areas of the church building. Students should not play on or around cars in the parking lot.
7. Running is not allowed in the church building.
8. Students are expected to treat all class materials and facilities with respect and care.
9. Students are expected to treat one another with kindness and respect. Teasing, criticizing, name-calling and other forms of verbal or physical abuse are not permitted.
10. Students are expected to treat prayer and class discussion with proper reverence. Jokes, songs, or behavior that trivialize or exhibit disrespect towards God are not permitted.
11. Public displays of affection in the context of boy/girl relationships are not permitted at SEEDS in a Pod. Jokes and teasing on this subject are not permitted.
12. Any missed work due to absences should be completed in a timely manner as set forth in the Home Assignment Policy.
13. Students may not speak out of turn during class time and must raise their hand and be recognized by the tutor prior to speaking.
14. Disruptive class behaviors are prohibited.
15. It is expected that students will work diligently, participate in class discussions and concentrate on their work while in class .
16. Students accept responsibility to complete all homework assignments in a timely manner.
17. Students recognize that they are to be held responsible for their conduct, both in action and attitude, by their parents, tutors and those in authority at SEEDS in a Pod.
18. Plagiarism is strictly prohibited.

# STUDENT ATTENDANCE POLICY

A student enrolled at SEEDS in a Pod is expected to be present and on time every day the Study Center is in session.

1. **Short-term Absences:** If a student needs to be absent from the Study Center for one to two class days, for any reason, the parents should contact the administrator as soon as possible, and should also email the tutors via IGrade, requesting any make-up work necessary.
2. **Long-term Absences:** If a student needs to be absent for three or more consecutive class days, the parents should notify the Administrator in writing, explaining the circumstances. The Administrator will then instruct the tutors to compile the necessary schoolwork that the student would otherwise miss. In most cases, the tutors will send assignments via IGrade as soon as they are able. Notice of long-term student absence should be given as soon as possible to limit the amount of missed schoolwork
3. **Extended Absences**: SEEDS recognizes that students may take extended absence(s) during the academic year. However, when extended absences are voluntary (not due to emergency or illness), all schoolwork should be completed within the time specified by the tutor(s). To that end, we recommend that students complete the known assignments (such as posted reading, projects, and papers) prior to their voluntary extended absence.

*PLEASE NOTE: SEEDS does not require tutors to plan and post assignments beyond ONE week in advance. For assignments which may be posted during a voluntary absence, students are expected to make-up those assignments within the same number of days (upon their return) as the length of the absence, not to exceed two weeks.*

1. **Make-up work**: Students may take make-up tests and submit any other make-up work before or after class. Students or their parents should discuss these arrangements with the tutor and take the initiative in completing the missed work.
2. **Promptness**: Students are required to arrive and be ready to begin Devotions and announcements promptly at 8:00 a.m.

# HEALTH AND MEDICAL PROTOCOL

# Annually-updated health forms and copies of current medical insurance cards are required for each enrolled student. Medications to be dispensed for a defined period of time are to be placed in a clearly-marked container and kept in the Office with specific instructions given to the Administrator. An epi-pen may, however, be kept in the Office year-round.

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# CLASS PREPARATION, GRADING, AND AUDITING POLICIES

## iGRADE

# SEEDS in a Pod utilizes a web-based application called iGrade. iGrade is used by tutors to manage their classes online while providing parents and students with homework assignments, class information. The Administrator will also send out and receive academic communications from families through iGrade. It is private, secure, and easy to use.

## Each student and parent is assigned his/her ID number which will be the same for each of the classes. Families will have constant access to posted assignments as well as grades. Students and/or parents and tutors will also use this method to contact each other rather than through personal email accounts. *It is the responsibility of the parents as the homeschool supervisors to track the progress of their student.*

## HOME ASSIGNMENTSTutors will post assignments for non-SEEDS days via iGrade to reinforce concepts taught in the classroom. The principal reasons for home assignments are:

## Students often need some amount of extra practice in new or specific concepts, skills, or facts. In certain subjects, regular practice at home may be necessary for mastery.

## Repeated, short periods of practice or study of new information are often a better way to learn than one long period of study.

## Home assignments enable parents to monitor the current topics of study in class.

**Assignments for students in grades 1-4** should take approximately thirty minutes per subject per day on Mondays and Wednesdays except Friday math assignments.

**Assignments for students in grades 5-6** should take approximately forty-five minutes per subject per day on Mondays and Wednesdays for the first semester except Friday math assignments. Beginning in the second semester, 5-6 will receive homework on Fridays.

**Assignments for students in grades 7-12** should take approximately one hour per subject per day on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays.

All assignments for a given week are to be be posted by Friday at noon, and will include all assignments for the following week, in addition to the following Monday.

# CLASS MATERIALS

# Parents are responsible for purchasing required materials from the book lists and curriculum lists for their student(s) before summer class assignments are posted in August. Students will not be excused from assignments for the reason of “not having the book or text.”

## UNPREPARED STUDENTS

1. Grades will be reported on an on-going basis and can be viewed via IGrade. A parent will know if a student has not turned in an assignment by seeing an “m” in place of a grade for that assignment on his/her IGrade account.
2. Unprepared students will not be permitted to hold back the rest of the class. For instance, if one student has not purchased his/her literature book, the rest of the class will proceed as scheduled. In some classes, tutors assign activities that require the students to know material in order to participate meaningfully. For most classes, tutors have uploaded attachments to IGrade for students to bring to class with them. An unprepared student may sit quietly and pay attention while not participating in the discussion/activity. If, however, a pattern has developed in which assignments are frequently not completed or attachments are often not printed out, the student will be sent to study hall to complete the work or wait out the class period. An unprepared student who is disruptive will always be removed from class.
3. Parents of students 1-6 are asked to message the tutor in advance via iGrade if a student will not be in class and/or completing an assignment. For instance, parents may write, “We are handling this assignment at home.” This will provide information to the tutor so he/she may adapt to the situation and the student can receive an “Excused” rather than a “0” on the assignment. To maintain grade-integrity, SEEDS in a Pod cannot in good faith provide a student any grade if fewer than 50% of the assignments are submitted. If this occurs, the student would be placed in the category of having audited the class, (see description below).
4. Parents of students 7-12 are asked to message a tutor in advance via iGrade if a student will not be in class. Students are required to fully participate and submit all assignments from tutors in order to receive a grade from a SEEDS class.

## GRADESGenerally, percentage grades are given. Parents retain the option to assign the letter grade.

While we are a service to home educators, SEEDS’s high school courses must not be depreciated by students selecting which assignments to complete.  In order to maintain a high standard and to have meaningful grade percentages, the service offered to parents of SEEDS high school students requires completion of all tutor assignments. If parents desire their high school student to be able to "opt out" of assignments, they may discuss the option of having the student audit the class, and it will be indicated as such on the SEEDS transcript.

## ADVANCEMENT POLICY

#  For the benefit of the student and the classroom dynamics, SEEDS policy states that if, by the end of the school year a student has earned less than 70% cumulatively in a given subject, SEEDS in a Pod will not advance the child to the next level unless additional instruction is given during the summer. Upon return the following year, that student will be placed under probation for the first six weeks. If, at the end of the six-week period, the student’s grade average in any class falls below a 70% threshold, he/she will be prohibited from continuing in that class for the remainder of the school year.

An 80% final grade is required for a student’s advancement the following year into Math, Chemistry and Physics .

# À LA CARTE CLASSES

# À la carte class costs are listed on the appropriate grade-level Enrollment Form found on the website.

Students who are enrolled full-time will be given priority over students who take a class on an *à la carte* basis. Classes which have not yet reached capacity will remain open to full-time applicants through July 1.  Part-time applicants who may lose their spot in a class will be notified and given the option of switching to full-time. After July 1, the open spots will be filled on a first-come, first-served basis without respect to full-time or part-time status. In other words, after July 1, no part-time student will lose his spot in a class even if another student wishes to enroll on a full-time basis.

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# ADMISSIONS PROCESS

# Enrollment for new applicants begins March 30.

# New applications are accepted in the order received. Generally, once a class reaches fifteen students, the class is closed, and future applicants are placed on a waiting list

# Interviews may be conducted for all applicants, even if the class is full, in case of an opening. The family interview will be scheduled for parents and student(s) with SEEDS in a Pod Board members and/or administrators. The Board will notify the family of the decision to accept or decline admission based on the application, interview, and class openings.

# Students applying for full-time admission will be given admission preference over students who wish to attend on a part-time basis until July 1.

# Classes which have not yet reached capacity will remain open to full-time applicants through July 1.

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## FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENT

SEEDS in a Pod is a donation based hybrid homeschool pod. Parents will be notified of the entire 2022-2023 projected budget (spending) ahead of time. For 2022-2023 school year, the entire budget will be allocated to the tutors. In the event that the donation does not meet our budget, Andrew Natanael and Nike Monica have committed to be responsible for the difference. This commitment is taken on a yearly basis; therefore, we urge that parents give generously and joyfully according to the Holy Spirit’s calling to ensure the continuation of this ministry. Donation can be made via Venmo or checks made payable to Andrew Natanael or Nike Monica.

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## SNOW CANCELLATION/DELAY POLICY

## Upon a snow cancellation, tutors are to post alternate assignments for their classes and be available via iGrade at the time of their regularly scheduled classes. For example, if a class would normally be scheduled for 8:30 AM, the tutor should have the alternate assignment posted within by two hours (10:30 AM). A student with questions should be able to have them answered via iGrade at that time as well.

If a delay is announced, it will be for only one hour (9:30 AM). Cold weather WILL NOT be considered a cause for delay. A Board representative and the Administrator will make the final decision for a cancellation. Families will then be notified immediately by email or text if a cell number has been provided.