



# Family Handbook

Therefore, put on the full armor of God,  
So that when the day of evil comes,  
You may be able to stand your ground.  
~ Ephesians 6:13

But that you think clear, feel deep,  
Bear fruit well, the Friend of man desires.  
~ Matthew Arnold

## Harvest Community School

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Harvest Community School admits students of any protected class to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities accorded or made available to students at the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of protected class in administration of its educational policies, and athletic and other school administered programs.

# Table of Contents

Our Core Values	4
Our Beliefs about Education	5
Our Classes	7
Kindergarten	7
Primary	7
Elementary	8
Middle School	8
High School	9
Charlotte Mason	9
Our Connection to Mason	10
Our Curriculum	11
Our Symbols	12
Our Year (Calendar, Terms, Absences, Illnesses)	14
Our Week (Academic Days, Feast Days)	15
Our Day (Drop-Off, Food, Pick-Up, Interruptions, Headmaster)	16
Outside of School (Homework, Clubs)	18
Environment (Clothes, Devices, Chores, Grades)	19
Relationships (Character, Persons, Problems, Behavior)	21
Community (Contact, Students, Volunteers, Board)	22
Glossary	24
Our Principles	27
Recommended Resources	30
Our School Hymn	31
Source of Our School Motto	32
Our Assessment Profile	34

## **Our Core Values and Beliefs**

“Our desire is to glorify God by training up children to delight in the Lord Jesus Christ, to develop virtuous habits, and to discover joy in learning by the power of the Holy Spirit.” ~ HCS Mission Statement

### **Our Core Values**

Harvest Community School (HCS) is a small, Christian, non-profit private school based upon the philosophy of Charlotte Mason. HCS is a member of and is accredited by the South Carolina Association of Christian Schools (SCACS).

At Harvest, we believe in three foundational keys to education: Jesus, habits, and academics. We desire that children delight in the Lord Jesus Christ, our trustworthy and loving Savior. Families of students and teachers can grow in the Christian faith as we learn more about Jesus, His Kingdom, and the Good News that He offers. The source of our understanding of Christ is grounded in the Bible. We also see His handprints throughout the world and in our relationship with Him and with others. We hope that the Harvest community finds joy, wonder, and rest in our fellowship together.

Jesus is the cornerstone to other parts of this foundation (habits and academics). We do not separate education from the spiritual life of children. Children long to know and love God. We help them seek constant access to the Continual Helper who cares about their interests, duties, and joys of life. This recognition gives us an Ally in training virtuous habits. The Spirit, who comes down to us like a dove, offers us self-control in becoming more like Christ.

Some habits of life and learning that we foster are:

- Attention — to bring the whole mind to focus on something — “All other habits depend on this one, and it is a key to regulating the thoughts of our hearts.”
- Seeing and Listening — to make an effort to hear and see something — “This quickness is natural in the young child, but can become a habit of seeing all that is to be seen, hearing all that is to be heard, and retaining this ability through life.”

- Remembering — to think of again — “In order to recollect on demand, the student must fix the entire gaze of his mind on the fact, picture, or idea to be remembered.”
- Neatness — to attend to work carefully and neatly the first time — “If children get in the habit of turning out inferior work, then as men and women they will keep that habit.”
- Service — to respect self and others in serving God — “The more of a person we succeed in making a child, the better will he both fulfill his own life and serve society.”

These habits of life and learning enable children to focus on their academics. Students who pay attention can listen and see fully. They retell what they observe to help them remember. We rely primarily on narrative writing because stories imprint on the mind. Research shows that casual connections create a web of associations and forge strong memories. Children remember what inspires them to think. Because we encourage careful observation of living books, nature, art, and music, they have many opportunities to ponder and wonder. Our curriculum offers delightful living and builds broad background knowledge. Students who work carefully and neatly the first time have opportunities to learn more. Finally, the three foundational keys enable them to find and fulfill God’s calling and to serve others.

## **Our Beliefs about Education**

Harvest is a Christian school reflecting a Charlotte Mason style of education. Our ultimate aim is the formation of a child’s character through the three foundational keys (Jesus, habits, and academics). We welcome families who have not accepted Christ and we do not require a statement of faith of any family. However, we would like families to know our beliefs:

- All truths are God’s truths. His Spirit guides us to know Him through His Word (the Bible) and His world. The fount of wisdom and source of knowledge is with us — for administrators, teachers, parents, and children. (Isaiah 28:23-29, Romans 1:20)
- The world God created is both spiritual and physical. He gave us soul, body, and mind united. We ought to offer knowledge of God, the world, and humanity to

children as a unified whole, not boxed into secular and divine subjects. (Mark 12:28-31)

- He sent His Son to save us and to lead us to God. Jesus is the perfect teacher. He taught through stories and enthralled those who listened with awe and wonder about the nature of God and our relationship with Him. Jesus encouraged the habit of attention for He often urged people to listen the first time and understand. (Matthew 13:1-17, Luke 8:8-14, Hebrews 2:1-4)

- The concepts of authority and obedience bind us all for we must ultimately submit to God. We try to avoid wielding our authority by playing upon the emotions of children to force them to learn. Children long to know and do not need artificial rewards and prizes if we allow them to “think clear, feel deep, and bear fruit well.” (Matthew 19:13-15, Ephesians 6:1-4, Philippians 2:5-12)

- We are all born with a sin nature and make choices for good or for ill. Children must learn that their reason may be flawed because of sin. Learning to direct their will toward God’s will, their eyes toward His Son, and their ears toward whispers from the Holy Spirit will serve them well in life. (Romans 3:18-28, Romans 8:1-3, Matthew 13:9-19)

- Children are born persons — not products to be standardized, tested, graded — not percentiles. They can learn far more than we imagine. We ought to offer a way of learning that allows them to ponder and wonder about things beyond the constraints of the three testable R’s — the best of literature, art, music, poetry, and other riches. (Psalm 139:8-18, Matthew 11:25-30)

You may find some terms unfamiliar, so please check out the glossary in Appendix A. For a more extensive explanation of our principles, please read Appendix B of this handbook.

## **Our Offering**

“Education is a life. That life is sustained on ideas.... God has made us so that we get them chiefly as we convey them to one another, whether by word of mouth, written page, Scripture word, musical symphony; but we must sustain a child’s inner life with ideas as we sustain his body with food.” ~ Charlotte Mason

### **Our Classes**

We currently serve students in kindergarten through twelfth grade. We accept students in tenth grade and above on a case-by-case basis with approval of the board of directors. We offer multi-age classrooms to allow more flexibility for students to work at their own level. Since children excel in some subjects but struggle in others, they feel more competent. We strive to keep a small class size for individualized attention. While students still belong to a traditional grade level, the headmaster places them in the multigrade class that fits them best. Since history is the pivot of the curriculum, each class focuses on a specific window of time. Every year, the classes study different periods of time to develop a deep knowledge of history.

### **Kindergarten**

Kindergarten is a time before formal academics, which begin at or after the age of six. We help children discover the world by exploring the outdoors and through real tasks at school. We introduce informal, gentle academics through playing with objects (for beginning math concepts) or playing with letters (for beginning reading) depending on readiness. During the early years, children can soak up literary language by hearing living books read aloud and by memorizing and reciting poems, songs, and hymns They can tell what they know as they are able. We lay a foundation of living books, nature, number sense, and primarily good habits.

### **Primary**

Primary is when a foundation is laid for young students. Beginning readers have formal lessons in letters: learning their sounds, writing them with multi-sensory methods, and discovering word families. They sound out phonetic words and recognize by sight those which cannot be sounded out. Experienced readers review word patterns and read independently. Children work on penmanship and neatly

copy passages from living books when ready. They hear living books read aloud, memorize and recite poems, songs, and hymns, and tell what they know. Classic books, the best literature, focus on their time in history, maps, animals, birds, insects, plants, biographies, and fiction. They read and narrate two books of the Bible. They receive math lessons tailored to their grade level with the goals of building a deep sense of the numbers, basic operations by paying attention to real things, describing them, manipulating them, and practicing with mental math. Their foundation of science begins with gardening, nature study, and drawing their observations in a nature notebook.

## **Elementary**

The final foundational pieces are laid in Elementary. Students read and hear living books, memorize and recite as before, study speeches, tell what they know, and do more studied dictation. Having achieved oral fluency, they start writing what they know. Classic books, the best of children's literature, address their time in history, maps, animals, birds, insects, plants, biographies, fiction, and citizenship. They read and narrate several books of the Bible. They begin reading aloud and acting out plays by Shakespeare. Depending on what they already know in math, they deepen their understanding of very large numbers, the four operations (facts and procedures), fractions, decimals, factoring, graphing, arrays, measurement (scale, area, perimeter, and volume), and classification of by paying attention to real things and patterns, describing them, and manipulating them. They do simple experiments, study nature, and draw observations in their nature notebook and a science notebook with a special emphasis on observation and wonder (inquiry). They also read the biographies of great scientists from ancient time to today to follow the trail of investigation and discovery of new ideas. Because of their improved reading abilities, they read some books at home for homework and keep an agenda.

## **Middle School**

With a solid foundation built, middle school classes begin the history cycle again, concentrating on one historical period each year. Classic, living books address their time in history, geography, science, government, biographies, poetry, different genres of fiction, faith, citizenship, and Shakespeare. They read and narrate orally and in writing; memorize and recite; study speeches; begin formal grammar lessons; do more studied dictation; and begin studying Plutarch, a classic moral biographer.

Once they achieve written fluency, they start writing according to different literary structures. They keep a nature notebook, composition books for different subjects, and a science notebook. They continue to read and narrate several books of the Bible. They do simple experiments, study nature, and draw observations. For science, they notebook diagrams, experiments, nature study, and research. They transition to a textbook style of mathematics focusing on topics that prepare them for algebra and geometry. Honors students have the opportunity to start taking high school level classes for credit. More information is contained in the middle/high school addendum to this handbook.

## **High School**

High school classes continue the history cycle begun in middle school. Their classic, living books, written by literary giants, are more challenging and are found on lists of books students should read before entering college. They address their time in history, geography, science, speeches, government, biographies, poetry, different genres of fiction, faith, citizenship (Plutarch), and Shakespeare. They continue the staples of language arts (reading, oral and written narration, recitation, studied dictation, speeches, essays, formal grammar) and add to it structured writing. They continue to read and narrate several books of the Bible. While their science falls 8 into a more traditional stream focusing on one major topic each year (biology, chemistry, physical science, or a science elective) with lab reports, they still do experiments, study nature, and draw observations. They continue working through a traditional textbook progression of high school mathematics. As students draw closer to graduation, our guidance counselor helps them find opportunities to learn off campus: dual-enrollment, internships, and technical classes. More information is contained in the middle/high school addendum to this handbook.

## **Charlotte Mason**

Our core values and beliefs about education are rooted in the philosophy of Charlotte Mason, a British educator who devoted her life to improving the education of children. She believed that God set up natural laws for the development of children just as He set up physical laws that govern the universe. Her ideas about the laws of education emerged while she taught children and ran a school in the coal mining area of England. She wrote some geography books and began lecturing at a teacher training college. She offered a series of talks to give parents sound principles

for bringing up children. Parents interested in her ideas founded an educational union that expanded from early home education to public and private schools and correspondence courses for British families living abroad. She wrote six books outlining her philosophy and six volumes of poetry about the life of Jesus and edited an educational journal for decades.

Charlotte Mason's ideas did not leap "across the pond" to North America until fifty years after her death. While living in England, Susan Schaeffer MacAulay and her husband Randal enrolled their daughters in a Charlotte Mason school. She published a groundbreaking book about their delightful experience in 1984. Her book, *For the Children's Sake: Foundations of Education for Home and School*, inspired parents to homeschool and teachers to found schools based on Mason's philosophy. Around that time, Bobby Scott founded the Perimeter Schools in Georgia, and, ten years later, Maryellen St. Cyr, founded Ambleside Schools International in Texas. Because of this resurgence, Mason's six volumes as well as many books about her life and ideas were published. More private schools and online communities were founded. Free and retail curriculum became available. Researchers set up digital archives of her extensive records. In 2004, Macaulay, Scott, and St. Cyr collaborated with other teachers and professors in the book, *When Children Love to Learn: A Practical Application of Charlotte Mason's Philosophy for Today*. Today there are about thirty Charlotte Mason schools in the United States. Some charter schools in the Southeast have adopted her principles. In the past thirty years, generations of private school and homeschool students in Canada and the United States have flourished through her philosophy. They have graduated from college, joined the military, and pursued careers in a wide variety of fields.

## **Our History**

Around 2010, several teachers and home educators in Clarendon County became interested in Mason's methods. They studied her books and started an enrichment day called The Feast. They walked the trail at Santee National Wildlife Refuge in the morning and studied music, art, science, Plutarch, and Shakespeare together in the afternoon. By the spring of 2013, a few felt led by God to start a private school rooted in her philosophy. On June 6, 2013, the founders committed to launch Harvest Community School. God had put all the right pieces in place for doors of opportunity opened one by one. They filed articles of incorporation, applied for non-profit status, joined SCACS, and selected a curriculum. Over the summer, they

purchased a former charter school, books, furnishings, and 10 school supplies, got insurance coverage and inspections, and hired and trained two teachers for a primary and an elementary class. Harvest opened its doors on August 26, 2013 and, by the end of the first year, had expanded to three classes with twenty-five enrolled students and had called a board of directors.

The founders and board of Harvest have tried to follow God's lead in its growth since that first year. Teachers and classes were added to meet increasing demand and an administrative assistant was hired to support that growth. By the end of the third year, important administrative milestones were achieved: by-laws, budget, and accreditation by the SCACS. Harvest started offering extra-curricular activities, a yearbook, morning and after care, IEP evaluations through collaboration with the public school district, and support services on campus. Parents and extended family volunteered to make The Feast, community service, and extra-curricular activities rewarding for all involved. Several classes of seniors graduated and some high schoolers went off-campus for dual enrollment and work experience.

Modifications were made to the building year after year and, by the end of the fifth year, the building was at capacity. In the middle of our sixth year, the final building expansion for a maximum capacity of eighty students was completed. To support our teachers and classrooms, the building now has offices, storage areas, numerous classrooms, a teacher's lounge, and a big room for the morning meeting and middle and high school lunch and the Feast. Unless God intervenes, Harvest plans to stay within these boundaries.

Everyone's lives changed in 2020, and we learned how adaptable this style of education was. Like most schools that spring, we did not hold class inside the building but offered 'Rona school lesson plans for home learning – reading books, narrating and notebooking, and math packets. Teachers tried out weekly check-ins and virtual meetings. The school board spent that summer collaborating with the headmaster to develop plans and we opened the building to in-person learning in August 2020. Since then, the headmaster has worked to obtain grants, which has supported Harvest with cleaning services, supplies and equipment; upgraded Internet technology and support; electronic devices including a Promethean board for the big room; summer school; and educational intervention to help make up the COVID gap. We are grateful that, during the 2020-2021 and 2022-2023 school years,

we only had to close the school for a total of two days. The staff worked hard to follow our plans and nearly all learning was done in-person.

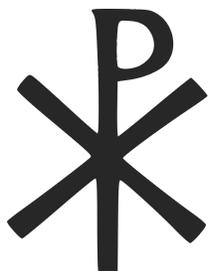
## Our Curriculum

The living books and resources we use at Harvest are based upon the work of the curriculum design team that helped launch Gillingham Charter School, the first of its kind in the United States. One of Harvest’s founders, Tammy Glaser, was part of that team of experienced Charlotte Mason educators. Rather than reinvent the wheel, they spent over two years adapting the AmblesideOnline (AO) curriculum to a school setting. AO, an online community of homeschoolers that began in 2000, has tested and tweaked their free K-12 Charlotte Mason curriculum for the past eighteen years. Tammy continues to collaborate with the AO community, Red Mountain Community School (a Perimeter School that opened its doors in Alabama in 2005), WONDERfield (a Charlotte Mason school in Ontario, Canada). In the summer of 2016, the staff of Harvest hosted informal meetings that led to two new ventures: Oak Cottage Homeschool Enrichment in Tennessee and Wildwood Learning Center in Ohio. Karen Glass interviewed us for her book on narration, *Know and Tell: the Art of Narration* and featured us in Chapter 9.

If the ideas of Charlotte Mason intrigue you and you would like to learn more, please look over the list of resources and opportunities in Appendix C of this handbook.

## Our Symbols

We are the Harvest Community School Knights. The word knight derives from an Old German word for servant. Jesus, who modeled service in the Kingdom of God, said, “For who is the greater, one who reclines at table or one who serves? Is it not the one who reclines at table? But I am among you as the one who serves” (Luke 22:27). Knights vow an oath of faith, loyalty, courage, and honor before their Almighty King. They live by a code of Christian principles that guide their service to others.



Our school colors are navy blue and gray as shown on our shield. The chi-rho symbol on our shield is the first two letters, chi (*X*) and rho (*P*) of the Greek word for Christ, *XPISTOS*. The first Christian Roman emperor Constantine put this symbol on his military

standard. It evokes the death of Jesus on the cross as well as His standing as the Christ, or the Anointed One.

Our school verse, Ephesians 6:13, ties into the idea of knighthood. “Therefore, put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground.” Knights do not depend upon their own strength. God gives them armor to wear: the belt of truth, breastplate of righteousness, shoes of readiness, and helmet of salvation. The shield of faith protects them from the flaming 12 darts of evil while the only offensive weapon is the sword of the Spirit, which is the Bible. Knights pray to the Spirit for the right words to say and the right things to do in the service of God.

On August 26, 2013, we welcomed our new students and sang the hymn, “Great Is Thy Faithfulness.” During that first summer, God had supplied our needs in so many ways. He gave us the building at an unbelievably low price. He gave us volunteers — some of whom had no connection to children at Harvest — to clean up the school yard, paint the walls, and scrub floors. Others donated books, computers, furniture, playground benches, and equipment. The “paper fairy” dropped off paper towels and toilet tissue, always in the nick of time. As the school has cycled through “summer and winter and springtime and harvest” for nine school years, we have witnessed God’s faithfulness. His Dear Presence has cheered and guided us through the easy times and through our challenges. He has given our school knightly strength for today and bright hope for our community’s tomorrow. The school hymn gives the Lord glory for how He has blessed our school.

Our school motto, “But that you think clear, feel deep, bear fruit well, the Friend of man desires,” comes at the end of a poem called “Progress.” The author, Matthew Arnold, was a British school inspector, who spent his free time writing poetry and social criticism. Ray Bradbury included Arnold’s most famous poem “Dover Beach” in his book *Fahrenheit 451* to illustrate why books should never be burned. “Progress” encourages us to live a deeper life by walking the new road laid down for us by Jesus. The three phrases, “think clear,” “feel deep,” and “bear fruit well” tie into Mason’s three instruments of education: life, atmosphere, and discipline.

If you would like to read our school hymn and motto, please go to Appendix D.

# School Rhythms

“But that you think clear, feel deep, bear fruit well, the Friend of man desires.” ~  
Matthew Arnold

## **Our Year (Calendar, Terms, Absences, Illnesses)**

At Harvest, we value your precious time at home. We have walked away from the kind of education that overwhelms the family. We focus our activities on the most vital to learning because multitasking hinders the habit of attention. Less is more when too much fragments the mind and doing less invites curiosity, imagination, and creativity. We recognize that children master different skills at different times, and we watch for readiness and guide them toward the next step.

Our method of education is mindful of time as well as persons. We want our children to be aware of time, whether we are studying persons throughout the centuries, the changing of seasons, or the movement of sun and moon. We seek an unhurried pace to give them time to pay attention, observe, ponder, and wonder. We limit random days off to get them into a rhythm of learning in the fall, winter, and spring terms. As a result, your summer lasts two weeks longer.

School Calendar - HCS has important dates listed on the school calendar. Please see the administrative assistant for a copy or check the website. We take off only a few of the traditional Monday holidays to avoid interrupting the routine. Because we set aside time for weekly lesson planning and training, we do not take off half-days for teacher in-service. The three major breaks are at Thanksgiving (three days), Christmas (two weeks), and Easter (a full week).

Terms - For middle school and below, we split our year into three terms that last about twelve weeks. We hold term finales to assess progress. A term finale is an exam with open-ended questions to allow children to show what they have learned. The primary classes orally tell what they know while elementary and above classes write their responses in paragraphs.

Absences - Students are allowed no more than ten unexcused absences a year. Excused absences require a doctor's note or written explanation upon return. Families need to seek advanced approval from the headmaster for non-medical

absences and to request school work from teachers one week in advance. After ten days of unexcused absences, the headmaster has the discretion to note truancy on transcripts and permanent records and/or to notify the county truancy officer.

Illnesses - Please do not send your children if they have had any fever or have vomited within 24 hours. They should not attend if they have a sore throat or are actively coughing for an untreated illness. For your child's comfort and the protection of students and staff, we ask that you err on the side of caution and keep your child home if they are not feeling well— particularly if others in your family are sick or if they have started antibiotics within the last 48 hours. If a child becomes sick during class, we will contact you to pick them up.

## **Our Week (Academic Days, Feast Days)**

We open every school day with prayer, Bible, and music. We fill our days with short, but memorable lessons. We scaffold a child's understanding by forging a chain of memory: children recall what they remember of the prior lesson, read a passage, share what they learned, and have a conversation about the text. The teacher's role is to introduce the material, monitor the flow of the lesson, and make comments only as needed.

Academic Days - Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays are full academic days. After the morning meeting, we head to our classrooms and read in short time blocks organized around faith, history, literature, geography, and science. Lessons are short to encourage the habit of attention. At some point in the day, independent readers read books from their classroom library, alone or in groups, while children who need reading instruction receive it. They make discoveries in math with manipulatives, notebook what they learn, and practice mental math. When a change of pace is needed, teachers shift to something different: memory work, nature study, or movement. Teachers assess what children learn through their oral narration or notebooking. Children orally tell what they know or draw or write what they understand in sketchbooks, composition books, and especially dedicated notebooks.

Feast Days - On Tuesdays and Thursdays, we offer an academic morning followed by a banquet of ideas — nourishing and inspiring but completely different — in the afternoon. On Tuesdays, we have picture study and handwork. On Thursdays, we have composer study and citizenship followed by groups of students doing

community service at the school, visiting our friends at the nursing home, and going on a nature walk somewhere in Summerton. On Tuesday and Thursday afternoons, we invite volunteers from our families to join us for The Feast. Our volunteers have the opportunity to assist in the classroom and share the riches of our curriculum and provide transportation for students leaving the campus.

## **Our Day (Drop-Off, Food, Pick-Up, Interruptions, Headmaster)**

The school day runs from 8:30 AM to 2:10 PM. We have a couple of procedures in place to ensure that dropping off and picking up your children goes smoothly. Keep the following in mind.

Drop-Off - Please do not drop your student off before 8:10 AM. If you plan to come into the building, please park in the public lot across the street from the hardware store (the intersection of Highway 301 and Dukes Street). The only entrance is at the door near the wheelchair ramp.

Snack - Please send a healthy snack that does not require any heating. Students stay more focused when they eat something light half way through the morning. To help them appreciate whole foods, young students tend a garden in science and grow vegetables.

Lunch - Because we do not provide meals, students must bring lunch. We encourage families to send nutritious meals with their children who work hard mentally and physically and play actively during recess. Sending a cold lunch gives your child more time to eat. Please contact your teacher to find out the class policy for heating lunches. A lunch should take less than two minutes to heat. Each classroom has a refrigerator to keep food cold and a microwave to be used at the teacher's discretion. Parents with primary students need to check with their child's teacher for their specific policy. Include something for your child to nibble on while waiting for hot food. Send utensils, cups, napkins, and plates with the lunch. Sodas are not allowed for students in middle school and below.

Pick-Up - Students cannot leave until 2:10 PM even if their rides are early. Because the driveway backs up quickly, we have strict policies. We cannot allow Duke Street to become backed up for any reason. If you need to pick up your child early, it must

be before 1:45 PM because the office will be closed. We will not dismiss students between 1:45 PM and 2:10 PM.

- Park in the public lot across the street from the hardware store if you plan to walk into the building.
- Drive around the block or park in the public lot if the school driveway is full.
- Be prepared to circle around the block if your student has not arrived.
- Follow the instructions of the adults escorting students and directing traffic.

Interruptions - We want your children to have a smooth day with the undivided attention of our teachers. To make sure their day is free of as few interruptions as possible, please keep in mind the following.

- We begin the day at 8:30 AM. Please be on time. Late arrivals interrupt precious class time and divert the teacher's attention from the task at hand.
- We end the day at 2:10 PM. We try to fill every moment of the day with meaningful work. Arriving early interrupts activities planned at the end of the day when the attention of students is most difficult to maintain.
- We have a sheet in the office for signing children in and out of school outside of the normal drop-off and pick-up times. Please go to the office to sign in or out and we will send for your child.
- We expect our teachers to be working with your children during the day instead of monitoring their phone. If there is an emergency, please call the school at (803) 574-1004. Please use agendas for elementary and above or Look at Me folders for primary and kindergarten or [MySchoolWorx](#) to communicate with the teachers and staff. If you have forgotten your password, please contact the headmaster.
- We respect family time. We do not expect our teachers to reply to requests after 5:00 PM and before 8:00 AM. Contact the headmaster in case of emergencies. All communication after school hours should be done through [MySchoolWorx](#).

- Please give your child's teacher one-week advance notice if you need assignments to take with you for approved absences.

Headmaster - Every day, the headmaster juggles a variety of shifting priorities to meet the demands of the school. If you would like to meet with her, please call the office and schedule an appointment so that she can give you her full attention. We will do our best to schedule one as soon as possible because your needs are important to us. She cannot drop time-sensitive tasks in the middle of the day except for an emergency and there is no guarantee you can be seen if you drop by without a scheduled appointment.

## **Outside of School (Homework, Clubs)**

Homework - We require very little homework of younger students because this style of education is rigorous. Your children should come home excited to talk about their day, play imaginatively, and spend time outdoors. We encourage you to ask open-ended questions about their favorite book, character, person in history, or object in nature. We hope you can set aside half an hour every day for your children to read books. You may need to read aloud to younger ones. All students have memory work every week (a Bible verse and/or poem). Primary students may have easy readers sent home as needed. Students in Elementary may have math facts to practice. Elementary students and above have a daily reading assignment to do at home. All required homework for those grades will be listed in their agenda. Middle and high school homework and the study hall policy are addressed in the high school addendum to this handbook.

Clubs - At the beginning of the school year, students and volunteers have an opportunity to sign up for extra-curricular activities. What we offer is based upon the interests of students and the availability of volunteers. This year, we are offering archery (which attended state tournaments last year), 4-H (several students won major prizes last year), chorus club, poetry club, and violin lessons. The same pick-up rules apply for students involved in clubs.

## School Atmosphere

“The question is not — how much does the youth know? When he has finished his education — but how much does he care? And about how many orders of things does he care? In fact, how large is the room in which he finds his feet set? And, therefore, how full is the life he has before him?” ~ Charlotte Mason

### **Environment (Clothing, Devices, Drawing, Chores, Grades)**

We desire a home-like atmosphere that promotes learning. We simplify the classroom environment to what students need most: maps, timelines, student art, and meaningful pictures. We want children to wear comfortable clothing for learning indoors and outdoors. We limit distractions that interfere with attention. We expect our students to take care of their classroom and school. We offer meaningful assessment that fosters a love of learning.

Clothing - While we have no formal dress code, we want students to wear comfortable clothing that is modest, wholesome, and respectful of others. No hats are worn indoors. The headmaster makes the final decision on whether an article of clothing is questionable. Students in the elementary classes and younger may get their clothes dirty or wet during recess, gardening, or nature study. Please send a change of clothes in a bag labeled with the child’s name if you feel it is necessary. They need to wear proper outer garments to school, even on cold, soggy days, because classes go outside in all kinds of weather. Please send rain gear, hats, scarves, gloves or mittens, and warm coats as appropriate. The school provides a rack to store boots.

Electronic Devices - At Harvest, we strive to offer a distraction-free environment to build attention. Research shows that students taking notes by hand remember more than those who type. Devices, however helpful, divide attention. Thus, we have a strict policy for them. We do not allow students to have cellphones (or smart watches that receive electronic messages or offer games) in class. Those who show good judgment may bring small devices or cameras on nature walks to take photographs if they restrain from posting pictures of students on social media. Please call the headmaster at (803) 574-1004 if you need to contact your student for an emergency. Some teachers permit e-readers for reading books on a case-by-case

basis. To encourage students to interact with each other before and after school, and on field trips, we do not permit playing electronic games then.

Drawing - We have many talented artists at Harvest and we encourage them to express their gifts in many ways — drawing a narration, illustrations, handwork, nature notebooks, etc. When students find that doodling helps them pay attention better in class, we accept it as part of who they are. Teachers have the discretion to decide appropriate times for doodling. **Students are not allowed to draw on others, clothing, or themselves at school because of distractions.**

Chores - Our school values personal responsibility. Chores offer opportunities for students to serve, work together as a team, and practice the habits of attention and neatness. They clean up after themselves in the classroom. They take ten minutes out of their day to perform a specific indoor or outdoor chore. Students are more careful in how they treat their environment when they must clean it.

Grading - At Harvest, we believe that a traditional grading system for students in eighth grade and below causes them to work for the wrong reasons. They are capable of learning far more than we imagine without artificial motivation systems. While we assess their efforts every day, we hold term finales (exams with open-ended questions) to record their knowledge three times a year. Since we want our high school transcripts to be competitive for scholarships and entrance into college, we grade students in ninth grade and above according to the South Carolina Uniform Grading Scale (UGS). Grading policy for high schoolers is addressed in the addendum.

Assessment Methods - Narration is the primary method of assessment at Harvest. It is an active retelling of what the student has learned. Narration requires the child to use the whole mind and memory and demands careful attention to a single reading of the material. Each student keeps language arts, mathematics, and nature notebooks. Elementary and above keep other notebooks with maps and timelines, drawings, and observations. Reading materials include fiction, fables, tales, poetry, biographies, the Bible, and historical narratives. They study nature first hand. We welcome parents and guardians to set up a time with teachers to review student work in these notebooks. We offer standardized testing every spring.

Assessment Key - We assign four levels of progress in an area: novice (N), apprentice (A), practitioner (P), and expert (E). A novice is a beginner who is new at learning a habit or narrating a particular subject. Most children who transfer to Harvest are novices in some habits. Even straight A students need time to learn how to pay attention well enough to retell a passage orally after a single reading. Those who excel at multiple choice, true or false, and fill-in-the-blank questions may take a term to learn how to narrate on paper.

- A novice seeks affirmation regularly and needs constant guidance.
- An apprentice, who can do some tasks independently, begins to make connections and to apply skills.
- A practitioner, who is well-versed in narration, habits, and/or academics, handles multiple concepts (making connections between subject areas), synthesizes (combines ideas and knowledge into greater meaning), and generalizes (extracts big picture ideas from different details).
- An expert, who possesses the highest degree of knowledge and ability, is self-directed in seeking new opportunities and creating.

Assessment Profiles - At the end of each term, we send home assessment profiles (report cards) to show student progress in narration, habits, and academics. We assess oral narration for all students and written narration for students in fourth grade and above. We review their work habits, citizenship and social responsibility, habits of mind, and self regulation. We share progress in language acquisition, second language, literature, science, mathematics, history, geography, Bible, citizenship, art, handicrafts, music, and nature study. Because students are persons born with innate strengths and weaknesses, we do not expect any student to receive expert results in every area. More information about assessment is in Appendix E.

## **Relationships (Character, Persons, Problems, Behavior)**

We desire an atmosphere for children to forge relationships with their Creator, community, and world. We guide our students in developing strong relationships with the adults at Harvest and with one another. We cherish what people in Clarendon County have to offer and seek collaboration with the community.

Character - Character training involves the development of virtue. It takes time to “sow an act, reap a habit; sow a habit, reap a character; sow a character, reap a destiny.” We connect habit training to the mind by taking a step back to sow ideas to make an act worthwhile. Living books give students opportunities to gather core principles to guide their actions. The study of the Bible and Plutarch (a Greek historian interested in character) touches the conscience and judgment of readers to see how character influences decisions that change lives. We ask that students be attentive and obey teachers or staff when asked. We look for courtesy, consideration, and respect for others. We encourage students to treat one another with kindness and dignity. We see honesty as the road to integrity.

Whole Person - We see children as born persons who have various strengths, needs, and weaknesses. We see outward behavior as a way to communicate thoughts without words. We strive to assess their internal motivations, and we wonder how the Holy Spirit is working in their lives. We tailor our guidance to what will help each student to grow in maturity. We encourage a positive attitude when dealing with frustrations and problems. We offer them different strategies in learning to regulate their emotions and check their behavior. We may address similar behaviors differently, tailored to the individual child.

Problem Solving - When disagreements between students arise, we guide them in finding a shared understanding of what happened. We come alongside and encourage those involved to share and to listen to other perspectives. We show them how their actions and words affect others. We let them solve their problems in a way that teaches them to respect self and others. We foster an attitude of responding positively to their point of view, keeping in mind the golden rule.

Challenging Behavior - Depending upon the situation, we encourage teachers to contact parent(s)/guardian(s) and/or headmaster about recurring challenging behavior. This communication should begin when a pattern is observed. In some cases, the headmaster and teacher may meet with families to work out an individualized behavior plan. We encourage changed behavior by assessing the situation, talking with the student, changing the environment, natural consequences, and training a more suitable habit to replace the unsuitable one.

**Student Relationships** - Students are asked to refrain from developing relationships with each other that go beyond simple friendship. At Harvest, we try to guide students in developing strong bonds. Relationships built upon mutual respect do not distract others and do support a successful learning environment. We expect conversations to be wholesome and pleasing to God's ears. We see Jesus as our model in doing what is best for the other person and looking out for one another. This kind of friendship paves the way for positive relationships as adults.

The following actions are not conducive to fostering respect: public displays of affection, any physical action that may be seen as romantic, conversations going beyond friendship as defined above, writing "love" notes, and harmful or hurtful comments about students, teachers, and families. Students are to keep their hands off other students for any reason. Students may not post pictures of one another on social media that would be considered cyber-bullying or harassment or go against these guidelines.

Any student who chooses to be disobedient to the rules and expectations set forth by Harvest administration will be subject to disciplinary action.

## **Community (Contact, Students, Volunteers, Board)**

**Contact** - Harvest posts information on the [website](#), Facebook, [MySchoolWorx](#), and text alerts. The headmaster will send important information (delayed openings or snow days) by text and MySchoolWorx. If you have any concerns, please talk to your child's teacher. Teachers will not contact you between 8:00 and 2:45 because they are teaching or preparing for class. Call the office at (803) 574-1004 to share urgent news during that time. To contact the headmaster, please call the office and the headmaster will get back to you. The chairman of the board, Reverend T. Denman Isgett, is also available to answer questions.

**Students** - Students come to Harvest from different settings: public, private, Montessori, and home school. They run the gamut of abilities from special needs to gifted and talented and everything in between. The demographics of our student population are similar to that of schools in the county. Students with special needs can thrive in the same classroom as their peers because the method is easy to scaffold. For copywork, a child with dysgraphia (writing challenges) only needs to copy one word while a peer might copy a whole sentence. During narration, a low

verbal student starts off with a couple of scattered words. Then, the more talkative classmates take turns adding on what they learned. When a child needs individualized attention or a short break, the headmaster or assistant can help out.

Volunteers - Friends and families of Harvest can volunteer in many ways: drivers and walkers for Thursday afternoons, field trip chaperones, classroom assistants on Feast afternoons (Tuesday and Thursday), maintenance on the inside and outside of the building, scribes to hear the narrations of primary students, fundraising, and furniture repair. We appreciate book donations, cleaning supplies, copy paper, wild bird seed, and other items. Please contact the headmaster if you would like to serve.

Board of Directors - Our board of directors is made of people who care about education. They bring various perspectives, gifts, and talents to the table. Their biographies are on the website. Chairman of the board Reverend T. Denman Isgett leads the other board members, Janet Mora, and Tammy Glaser in following the by-laws of Harvest and laws governing non-profit (501(3)c) organizations. Please contact the headmaster or chairman if you have questions about the school, board, or key documents.

## **Appendix A**

### **Glossary**

Book of Centuries - one of three notebooks in which a student draws artifacts from history in order of time. Every other page has a grid to reflect what happened year by year in history. It stores sketches of maps and of objects seen in museums and on field trips.

Commonplace Book - one of three important notebooks in which a student copies favorite passages from living books. It becomes a record of a person's literary journey and encourages them to ponder what they are reading.

Composer Study - the careful hearing of a great musical composition done so carefully that a student can describe details noticed about the music (instruments, pace, volume, dynamics, mood, pitch, and other terms). Three composers are studied each year so that a student who spends their entire school career at Harvest will know in depth the work of thirty-six composers.

Copywork - the daily habit of visualizing and copying words, sentences, or paragraphs from living books, depending on the readiness, to practice neat penmanship, spelling, capitalization, punctuation, grammar, and other mechanics

The Feast - an afternoon to enjoy a rich feast of enrichment. The Feast is so vital to our curriculum that questions about these activities are included in the term finale. The Feast includes a nature walk, community service, a visit to our friends at the nursing home, picture study, composer study, handwork, and citizenship. We currently have The Feast on Tuesday and Thursday after lunch.

Handwork (Handiwork, Handicraft) - the neat and careful use of hands, materials, and tools to make some beautiful thing that benefits another. The aim is for a student to develop a skill through slow, careful instruction. Some handwork is done for community service.

Living Book - a whole book written by a firsthand source or by someone with a passion for the topic. A living book is often a classic that has stood the test of time. Marks of a living book are imagination, originality, a human touch, fit and beautiful expression, tales well told, and pictures of life. A living book connects a student to the mind of a great thinker and fills it with worthy thoughts and inspiring ideas.

Narration - the daily habit in which a student retells what is read or observed. Oral narration trains a person to compose thoughts (give the main idea, sequence, share related details) and communicate in words. Once writing mechanics are mastered, a student writes their narrations. Written narration never completely replaces oral narration in the upper years. A thorough treatment of narration is in Karen Glass's book *Know and Tell: The Art of Narration*, which features our school in Chapter 9.

Nature Notebook - one of three important notebooks in which a student records and dates what is observed during nature study

Nature Study - the observation of nature done so carefully by sketching, drawing, or painting what is seen. Nature study lays the foundation of science because observation is a critical habit. Before they reach high school, students have firsthand knowledge of living things, processes of nature, and nonliving things.

Picture Study - the careful observation of a great work of art, usually a painting, done so carefully that a student can describe it vividly from memory when put away. Three artists are studied each year, so that a student who spends their entire school career at Harvest will know in depth the work of thirty-six artists.

Plutarch - a Greek historian (46 to 120 AD) who was best known for his parallel lives, in which biographies of famous Greeks and Romans are paired. He focused on character study. Shakespeare used Plutarch as the source for his Roman history plays. His work inspired the founders of the United States.

Recitation - the act of reciting a memorized passage (poem, song, hymn, Bible verse, speech, play) with clear, simple expression

Studied Dictation - the studying and visualizing of words from a passage in order to write the passage properly when dictated by the teacher. This process helps the teacher assess what lessons in spelling, capitalization, punctuation, grammar, and mechanics are needed.

Term - another way to say trimester. A term lasts eleven to twelve weeks. There are three terms per school year (fall, winter, and spring). High school students follow the traditional quarter/semester schedule.

Term Finale - the last few days of a term in which a student orally narrates or writes what was learned about a topic. They respond to open-ended questions to express what they know.

## Appendix B

### Our Principles

We apply educational methods based on the God-given nature of a child to connect students to God and His revelation in Scripture, Nature, and Providence. We hope they will love Him with heart, soul, mind, and strength and love their neighbors. We base our philosophy of education on Charlotte Mason's twenty principles.

The Nature of Children - Children are born persons — they are not blank slates or embryonic oysters who have the potential of becoming persons. They already are persons. (Psalm 139:13-16) Although children are born with a sin nature, they are neither all bad nor all good. Children from all walks of life and backgrounds make choices for good or evil. [All children are created in God's image and are within reach of God's grace. Educating every child is worthwhile.] (Galatians 6:7-8)

The Authority of Teachers - The concepts of authority and obedience are true for all people whether they accept it or not. Submission to authority is necessary for any society or group or family to run smoothly. [God has structured the universe so that blessing flows through authority therefore we believe that teachers have God-given authority and that authority must be respected for learning to take place.] (Ephesians 6:1-9, James 3:1) Authority is not license to abuse children, or to play upon their emotions or other desires, and adults are not free to limit a child's education or use fear, love, power of suggestion, or their own influence over a child to make a child learn. (Psalm 1:2, Psalm 32:8-9, Colossians 3:23-24)

Atmosphere, Discipline, and Life - The only means a teacher may use to educate children are the child's natural environment, the training of good habits and exposure to living ideas and concepts. This is what CM's motto "Education is an atmosphere, a discipline, a life" means.

- "Education is an atmosphere" doesn't mean that we should create an artificial environment for children, but that we use the opportunities in the environment he already lives in to educate him. Children learn from real things in the real world. (Psalms 19:1-4, Romans 1:20)

- “Education is a discipline” means that we train a child to have good habits and self-control. (1 Timothy 4:7, Hebrews 12:11)
- “Education is a life” means that education should apply to body, soul and spirit. The mind needs ideas of all kinds, so the child’s curriculum should be varied and generous with many subjects included. (Isaiah 28:23-24, 28-29, Genesis 2:7)

The Mind - The child’s mind is not a blank slate, or a bucket to be filled. It is a living thing and needs knowledge to grow. As the stomach was designed to digest food, the mind is designed to digest knowledge and needs no special training or exercises to make it ready to learn. Herbart’s philosophy that the mind is like an empty stage waiting for bits of information to be inserted puts too much responsibility on the teacher to prepare detailed lessons that the children, for all the teacher’s effort, don’t learn from anyway. Instead, we believe that children’s minds are capable of digesting real knowledge, so we provide a rich, generous curriculum that exposes children to many interesting, living ideas and concepts. (Mark 10:13-15, 2 Peter 1:5)

The Science of Relations - “Education is the science of relations” means that children have minds capable of making their own connections with knowledge and experiences, so we make sure the child learns about nature, science and art, knows how to make things, reads many living books and that they are physically fit. (Genesis 2:26-27)

The Habit of Attention - In devising a curriculum, we provide a vast amount of ideas to ensure that the mind has enough brain food, knowledge about a variety of things to prevent boredom, and subjects are taught with high-quality literary language since that is what a child’s attention responds to best. Since one doesn’t really “own” knowledge until he can express it, children are required to narrate, or tell back (or write down), what they have read or heard. Children must narrate after one reading or hearing. Children naturally have good focus of attention, but allowing a second reading makes them lazy and weakens their ability to pay attention the first time. Teachers summarizing and asking comprehension questions are other ways of giving children a second chance and making the need to focus the first time less urgent. By getting it the first time, less time is wasted on repeated readings, and more time is available during school hours for more knowledge. A child educated this way learns more than children using other methods, and this is true for all children regardless of their IQ or background. (Proverbs 2:1-8)

Guides to Moral and Intellectual Growth - Children have two guides to help them in their moral and intellectual growth — “the way of the will” and “the way of reason.” Children must learn the difference between “I want” and “I will.” They must learn to distract their thoughts when tempted to do what they may want but know is not right, and think of something else, or do something else, interesting enough to occupy their mind. After a short diversion, their mind will be refreshed and able to will with renewed strength. Children must learn not to lean too heavily on their own reasoning. Reasoning is good for logically demonstrating mathematical truth, but unreliable when judging ideas because our reasoning will justify all kinds of erroneous ideas if we really want to believe them. Knowing that reason is not to be trusted as the final authority in forming opinions, children must learn that their greatest responsibility is choosing which ideas to accept or reject. Good habits of behavior and lots of knowledge will provide the discipline and experience to help them do this. (Romans 7:15-20, 12:2, 2 Corinthians 10:5)

The Nature of Truth - We teach children that all truths are God’s truths, and that secular subjects are just as divine as religious ones. Children don’t go back and forth between two worlds when they focus on God and then their school subjects; there is unity among both because both are of God and, whatever children study or do, God is always with them. (John 1:9, 16:7)

The paraphrase of Charlotte Mason’s twenty principles is used with the express permission of Leslie Laurio, founder of [AmblesideOnline](http://AmblesideOnline.com). We added the information in brackets and Bible verses in parentheses.

## Appendix C

### Recommended Resources

If you would like to learn more, we recommend you review the following resources:

*For the Children's Sake: Foundations of Education for Home and School* by Susan Schaeffer MacAulay

*When Children Love to Learn: A Practical Application of Charlotte Mason's Philosophy for Today* edited by Elaine Cooper

*Know and Tell: The Art of Narration* by Karen Glass

*In Vital Harmony: Charlotte Mason and the Natural Laws of Education* by Karen Glass

*The Living Page: Keeping Notebooks with Charlotte Mason* by Laurie Bestvater

AmblesideOnline <http://www.amblesideonline.org>

The Mason Jar which aired an episode about Harvest on July 2, 2016

<https://www.circeinstitute.org/podcasts/the-mason-jar>

We also encourage you to attend the Large Room meetings for teachers, families, and anyone interested in learning more about Charlotte Mason. We meet once a month at Harvest to immerse ourselves in how our students are learning what they learn.

If you have a classical perspective, you may want to read *Consider This: Charlotte Mason and the Classical Tradition* by Karen Glass.

## Appendix D

### Our School Hymn

“Great Is Thy Faithfulness”

Great is thy faithfulness, O God my Father;  
There is no shadow of turning with thee;  
Thou changest not, thy compassions, they fail not;  
As thou hast been thou forever will be.

Refrain

Great is thy faithfulness! Great is thy faithfulness!  
Morning by morning new mercies I see;  
All I have needed thy hand hath provided;  
Great is thy faithfulness, Lord, unto me!

Summer and winter and springtime and harvest,  
Sun, moon, and stars in their courses above  
Join with all nature in manifold witness  
To thy great faithfulness, mercy, and love.

Refrain

Pardon for sin and a peace that endureth  
Thy own dear presence to cheer and to guide;  
Strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow,  
Blessings all mine, with ten thousand beside!

Refrain

Words by Thomas O. Chisholm

## Source of Our School Motto

“Progress”

The Master stood upon the mount, and taught.  
He saw a fire in his disciples' eyes;  
'The old law', they said, 'is wholly come to naught!  
Behold the new world rise!'

'Was it', the Lord then said, 'with scorn ye saw  
The old law observed by Scribes and Pharisees?  
I say unto you, see ye keep that law  
More faithfully than these!

'Too hasty heads for ordering worlds, alas!  
Think not that I to annul the law have will'd;  
No jot, no tittle from the law shall pass,  
Till all hath been fulfill'd.'

So Christ said eighteen hundred years ago.  
And what then shall be said to those today,  
Who cry aloud to lay the old world low  
To clear the new world's way?

'Religious fervours! ardor misapplied!  
Hence, hence,' they cry, 'ye do but keep man blind!  
But keep him self-immersed, preoccupied,  
And lame the active mind!'

Ah! from the old world let some one answer give:  
'Scorn ye this world, their tears, their inward cares?  
I say unto you, see that your souls live  
A deeper life than theirs!

'Say ye: The spirit of man has found new roads,  
And we must leave the old faiths, and walk therein? —  
Leave then the Cross as ye have left carved gods,  
But guard the fire within!

'Bright, else, and fast the stream of life may roll,  
And no man may the other's hurt behold;  
Yet each will have one anguish—his own soul  
Which perishes of cold.'

Here let that voice make end; then let a strain,  
From a far lonelier distance, like the wind  
Be heard, floating through heaven, and fill again  
These men's profoundest mind:

'Children of men! the unseen Power, whose eye  
For ever doth accompany mankind,  
Hath looked on no religion scornfully  
That men did ever find.

'Which has not taught weak wills how much they can?  
Which has not fall'n on the dry heart like rain?  
Which has not cried to sunk, self-weary man:  
Thou must be born again!

'Children of men! not that your age excel  
In pride of life the ages of your sires,  
But that you think clear, feel deep, bear fruit well,  
The Friend of man desires.'

By Matthew Arnold

## **Appendix E**

### **Our Assessment Profile**

Our assessment profile considers the whole person. We report how a student is doing in oral narration and written narration (composition), keeping in mind their ability to grasp the main idea and details, sequence the narrative, use literary language, and apply proper grammar and punctuation. We observe how they are doing in their work habits, citizenship and social responsibility, habits of mind, and self-regulation. We address their progress in language arts (phonetic awareness, penmanship, copywork, recitation, studied dictation), Spanish, literature, science, mathematics (mental calculations, work on paper, accuracy, understanding and application of concepts, correct reasoning, and problem solving), history, geography, Bible, citizenship, art, handicraft, music, and nature study.

If you would like a sample of our assessment profile, please contact the administrative assistant.