

DORCHESTER ACADEMY

Parent & Student Handbook

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This handbook states the enduring policies of Dorchester Academy. Information that changes from year to year — directories, calendars, daily schedules, and the schedule of tuition and fees — is published in the appendices, which are reissued annually.

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1. About Dorchester Academy

Vision Statement

All Dorchester Academy students will maximize their personal potential to become productive, responsible citizens through our academic, athletic, spiritual, and leadership opportunities.

Mission Statement

Our mission is to provide a safe, Christian environment for educating and training students to become their best selves, equipped with the knowledge, skills, and habits needed to lead successful lives as contributing members of a global community.

School History

With a primary concern for excellence in education under a Christian ideology, Dorchester Academy, Inc. was founded in 1966. Many concerned individuals worked diligently to promote this comprehensive educational alternative. The first Board of Trustees was composed of Dr. F. L. Shuler, President; Hugh Parler, Jr., Vice- President; Patricia H. Walters, Secretary; D.M. Rogers, Director; and Dr. J. Gavin Appleby, Director.

School Philosophy

Dorchester Academy was founded in 1966 by a group of interested parents whose primary concern was for excellence in education under a Christian ideology.

The spirit of the Academy is of the present, and its outlook is towards the future. The school offers an outstanding program of primary, elementary and secondary education designed to challenge and enthusiastically excite youthful minds, comprehend and associate knowledge, develop skills and provide experienced guidance towards perception, companion, empathy and a consciousness of Christian values.

Dorchester Academy believes in the individual worth of each student and endeavors to cultivate in each, the highest principal of honor, moral integrity and character, a sincere regard for spiritual values, a deep regard for academic excellence and a personal responsibility for his community and country.

Accreditation and Memberships

Dorchester Academy, an educational day school offering academic instruction in preschool through grade twelve, is fully accredited through Cognia (formerly AdvancED/SACS CASI). As an accredited institution of the Cognia network, the school is one of tens of thousands of schools and systems worldwide committed to continuous quality improvement through accreditation. Dorchester Academy is also a member of the South Carolina Independent School Association (SCISA) and adheres to SCISA standards for its academic and athletic programs.

Objectives

As determined by the Board of Trustees, the objectives of the school are as follows:

- to provide a challenging college-preparatory curriculum that develops the academic potential of each student;
- to create an environment that encourages creativity, an appreciation for learning, and diversity;
- to develop rational, independent, and articulate thinkers;
- to encourage responsibility, self-discipline, commitment to environmental stewardship, and respect within the school community;
- to promote physical fitness and good sportsmanship through a competitive athletic program; and
- to encourage moral and spiritual growth.

Communication

The official website of the school, **dorchesteracademy.org**, is updated regularly. The school also publishes newsletters and updates by email, shares information on its official social media accounts, and uses text alerts. Families may contact the school at **info@dorchesteracademy.org**. Directory information for the Board of Trustees, administration, faculty, and staff is published annually in Appendix A. Of note, parents and students should routinely monitor FACTS where teachers post key information about their respective classes.

Patriotism

All students should be proud to be part of Dorchester Academy and should always practice the American traditions of fair play, courtesy, and respect for the rights of others. Dorchester Academy will not tolerate any disrespectful action by a student toward the flag of the United States of America or the National Anthem. Students are expected to stand at attention during the National Anthem and to participate in the daily Pledge of Allegiance.

Chapel and Daily Devotions

The school recognizes the Biblical fruits of the Spirit for spiritual and character development, taken from Galatians 5:22–23: *"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law"* (NASB).

Each school day at Dorchester Academy begins with a devotion to supply food for the spirit, and each participant should respect this moment of meditation. Chapel meetings are held regularly, typically on Wednesdays. Local ministers, volunteers, and other community members are often invited to participate in Chapel services, which are intended to provide a spiritual focus for the week. All students are required to attend and to show an attitude of respect. Students report to Chapel with their homeroom teachers, and parents are encouraged to attend as often as possible. See the Dress Code section for standards of Chapel attire.

2. Governance and Leadership

The Board of Trustees

Dorchester Academy is governed by an elected Board of Trustees. The Board concentrates on policy and on the long-range, strategic interests of the school. Its responsibilities include selecting, supporting, and evaluating the Head of School; establishing the policies and direction of the school; approving the school budget and setting tuition and fees; and holding the Head of School accountable for administering school policy fairly and effectively.

Consistent with the governance principles of the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS), neither the Board nor any individual trustee becomes involved in the day-to-day operation of the school. Operational matters, including personnel decisions, curriculum administration, admission decisions, and individual student discipline, lie within the authority of the Head of School. Trustees who receive complaints about operational matters will refer them to the procedures described in Section 4, Grievance Procedures.

The current membership of the Board of Trustees is published annually in Appendix A.

The Head of School

The Head of School (referred to in some school documents and contracts as the Administrator) reports to the Board of Trustees and serves as its professional advisor. The Head of School is responsible for the day-to-day operation of the school, including the selection and supervision of staff; the admission, discipline, and enrollment status of students; the direction of the curriculum and the policies and procedures necessary to implement it; and the coordination of activities and communication among parents, the school, and the community. Throughout this handbook, references to "the Head of School" include the Head's designee.

The administration, faculty, and staff directory is published annually in Appendix A.

Parent–Teacher Organization (PTO)

The PTO's projects and events benefit Dorchester Academy as a whole; the group is therefore given priority on all events. Current PTO officers are listed in Appendix A.

Booster Club

The Booster Club's projects and events benefit the athletic program at all grade levels; the group is therefore given second priority on all events. Current Booster Club officers are listed in Appendix A.

Coaches, Sponsors, and Volunteers.

Working with Dorchester Academy students is a privilege. Employees and volunteers, whether teaching, coaching, or sponsoring a class or club, are expected to serve as role models for students and to maintain a professional attitude regarding their responsibilities and confidentiality. Loyalty to Dorchester Academy, the school administration, and the Board of Trustees is essential

to school unity. Using social media, texting, or any other medium to send unprofessional messages or defamatory statements that do not encourage and support unity at Dorchester Academy is prohibited. As such, such activity is grounds for immediate removal from assistance with school clubs, athletics, and other activities.

Substitute Teachers

Substitute teachers are to be shown the same respect as regular classroom teachers, and all directions given by a substitute teacher are to be followed. Disrespect toward substitute teachers will not be tolerated. Substitute teachers are expected to follow the Personnel Handbook, to abide by the school dress code, and to complete substitute training.

3. This Handbook and General Policies

Purpose and Status of This Handbook

This Parent & Student Handbook serves as a guide for parents and students regarding the policies, procedures, and general information applicable to Dorchester Academy. It is not a contract, and it does not alter the terms of the Enrollment/Tuition Contract. The Head of School reserves the right to interpret and enforce the policies in this handbook and to determine their application to particular circumstances.

Reservation of Rights. Dorchester Academy reserves the right to amend, supplement, or rescind any policy or provision of this handbook at any time as the school deems appropriate and necessary for effective operation. Changes may take effect before they are communicated, reprinted, or substituted in this handbook. Because information that changes annually, such as directories, calendars, daily schedules, and the schedule of tuition and fees, is published in the appendices. The appendices are reissued each year and supersede any earlier versions.

Enrollment Is a Privilege

Attendance at Dorchester Academy is a privilege, not a right. Any student who does not conform to the standards and regulations of the institution may forfeit this privilege. Dorchester Academy may request the withdrawal of any student at any time who, in the judgment of the Head of School, does not fit the spirit of the institution, regardless of whether the student conforms to the specific rules and regulations stated in this handbook.

Community Standards

All students will be recognized by the name and gender listed on their original birth certificates.

In response to the United States Supreme Court's decision in *Obergefell v. Hodges* (June 26, 2015), which created a constitutional right to same-sex marriage, Dorchester Academy's position is as follows: The school continues to base its admission and hiring practices on Biblical standards regarding sexual morality. The school will not accept a student who is in a same-sex relationship, nor allow an enrolled student to remain in attendance while involved in such a union. All decisions regarding attendance and enrollment are based on the Biblical standards stated in God's Word. The school stands on the inerrant Word of God, which teaches that all persons are created in God's image and are made to glorify Him (Genesis 1:27; Isaiah 43:7), and that God's design was of two distinct and complementary sexes, male and female (Genesis 1:27; Matthew 19:4), a fundamental distinction that God has embedded in the very biology of the human race. The school therefore opposes efforts to alter one's bodily identity to refashion it to a perceived gender identity.

Discrimination. Conduct, whether intentional or unintentional, that subjects another person to unwanted attention, comments, or actions because of race, national origin, age, gender, physical characteristics, or disability robs that person of dignity and is not permitted, for we are all created in His image. Dorchester Academy does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, or national or ethnic origin in the administration of its educational policies.

Bullying. Mistreatment of others will not be tolerated. Behaviors identified in the school's list of demerit infractions may, when accumulated over time, constitute bullying and will be addressed under the school's disciplinary policies.

Marriage, Pregnancy, and Parenthood. Students who are married, who are or become pregnant, or who have children are not permitted to attend Dorchester Academy.

Security Cameras. Security cameras are installed in classrooms, hallways, and throughout the campus. Cameras are not installed in areas where there is a reasonable expectation of privacy, such as bathrooms and locker rooms. Access to live and recorded footage is strictly limited to the school administration and to the teacher directly involved in an incident. Parents and guardians may not view classroom recordings unless they are the teacher whose classroom is being recorded.

Fundraising, Solicitation, and Distribution of Materials

No individual, organization, club, class, or team may conduct a fundraising activity in the name of Dorchester Academy or use the school's name, logo, mascot, or other identifying marks for fundraising without the prior written approval of the Head of School. The Head of School must approve all school-sponsored fundraising events, sales, and special projects (see Section 18, Special Projects).

No posters, signs, flyers, handbills, advertisements, or other printed materials may be displayed, distributed, or sold anywhere on the Dorchester Academy campus without the prior approval of the Head of School. Likewise, no solicitation of funds, goods, services, memberships, or other support is permitted on campus without prior approval from the Head of School.

4. Grievance Procedures

Concerns are resolved most quickly and fairly when they are raised with the person closest to the matter. School grievances should follow the steps below, in order.

1. **Step One — The Teacher or Staff Member.** Parent and student concerns should first be directed, by note or email, to the teacher or staff member with whom the parent or student has the concern. Parents should not appear at a teacher's door unannounced; if a conference is needed, it should be scheduled through the main office so that the learning environment is not interrupted. A conference will include, but is not limited to, the parent(s), the appropriate staff member, and the Head of School or another representative appointed by the Head of School. Student participation in the conference will be at the discretion of the Head of School.
2. **Step Two — The Head of School.** If the grievance is not resolved at Step One, parents or students may present the grievance to the Head of School in writing. The Head of School will meet with the student and with the other persons involved or concerned. The Head of School is the final authority in all operational matters, including matters of instruction, personnel, and individual student discipline.

The Board of Trustees governs through policy and does not manage or adjudicate personnel, disciplinary, or other day-to-day operational matters; those lie exclusively within the authority of the Head of School. Suggestions regarding school policy may be submitted in writing to the Head of School, who will convey them to the Board of Trustees.

5. Admission and Enrollment

Admission Requirements

Prospective students may be required to take an entrance examination covering reading comprehension, vocabulary, and mathematics. Copies of transcripts and disciplinary records from previous schools must be presented. The school reserves the right to determine grade placement of all students based on the documentation submitted and to determine the credits awarded. Credits transferred in will be calculated on the South Carolina Uniform Grading Scale or may be awarded as non-weighted credit. Dorchester Academy further reserves the right to decline an applicant based on prior academic or disciplinary records, including but not limited to arrests for criminal activity or expulsion from another academic institution. As noted in the Enrollment/Tuition Contract, Dorchester Academy is the sole judge of a student's qualification for annual admission.

All students, first-time applicants and students reapplying for another year, alike, are required to meet South Carolina DHEC immunization requirements, and continuing students must meet those requirements annually. As a private Christian school, Dorchester Academy reserves the right to decline admission to any student who does not meet South Carolina's immunization requirements. Medical exemptions, whether for currently enrolled or first-time students, are reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

Upon acceptance, students must present a health certificate that includes a record of proper immunization as defined by SC DHEC, a birth certificate, a photocopy of their Social Security card, and records from their previous school, including test data, report cards, and behavioral records, if any.

Dorchester Academy enters into enrollment contracts only with a student's legal guardian, unless the legal guardian grants the school written permission to discuss all student matters with a specified contract holder. The parent or guardian whose name is on the contract will receive school information. Dual-custody arrangements must be listed on the student's contract. The parent of any student needing special care because of custody issues should meet with the Head of School so that proper care is taken to ensure the student's safety.

Enrollment and Registration

Currently enrolled students have priority to re-enroll for the upcoming school year. Enrollment contracts for the upcoming year are sent to families in the spring. Contracts returned after the early-enrollment deadline lose the discounted tuition rate. Payment plans for the upcoming school year begin in June (twelve-month plans run June through May). Contract holders choose their payment plan, monthly, quarterly, 60/40, or in full, at contract signing. A fee (Appendix B) is incurred if the contract holder later changes plans.

New students, and students who have been withdrawn for one year or longer, must complete a New Student Enrollment Packet and pay the application fee (Appendix B). Upon acceptance, a new student, or a student re-enrolling after a withdrawal of two years or more, must pay the non-refundable new-student registration fee (K5–12; Appendix B).

Enrollment decisions are based on a review of class size and of the student's records, including test data, report cards, and discipline. Students entering K5 must be five years of age on or before September 1, and students entering first grade must be six years of age on or before September 1, unless otherwise approved by the administration. Once a child has a legal name, the child may be placed on the Preschool Waitlist; see the Admissions page of the school website.

Any student planning to participate in the interscholastic athletic program must have a physical examination meeting SCISA requirements. All student health conditions and required medications must be reported to the school, and the main office must be notified promptly of any changes.

Month-to-Month Contract for New Families

To give the school and new families flexibility to assess the school's suitability for a child's needs while ensuring that the school can maintain a harmonious and effective educational environment, new families enter into a month-to-month enrollment contract. Administrative fees are paid in full upon enrollment and are not spread across the school year. Families pay on a month-to-month basis for as long as the contract remains in effect, and the contract renews automatically each month unless either party discontinues it.

At the end of each month, the school and the family evaluate the fit among the student, the family, and the school. The evaluation considers whether the school's programs, resources, and environment are meeting the student's academic and social needs; whether the family's educational goals are being met; and the student's academic progress, behavior, and overall adaptation to the school. Either party may terminate the contract at any time by providing written notice at least fourteen days before the next payment is due. If the evaluation determines that the family and the school are not a suitable fit, the school may request that the family transition out of the school with proper notice.

Changes to Student Information

At the beginning of each year, the school provides each family a printed packet of information from FACTS. Please correct any errors and return the corrected forms to the school receptionist promptly. All information must remain current.

Withdrawal

All withdrawals are subject to the requirements stated in the school contract. The parent or student should submit a written withdrawal request to the Head of School, the Guidance Counselor, and the Financial Director. Tuition is not reimbursed, and registration fees are non-refundable. For students withdrawing before the school year begins, the non-refundable registration deposit will not be returned. Requests for further refunds may be made to the Head of School and may incur fees. Records will not be transferred while a financial obligation to the school remains outstanding.

6. Tuition and Financial Policies

Tuition

The Board of Trustees sets the tuition and fees of the school. The current schedule is published in Appendix B. Tuition payments may be mailed to 234 Academy Road, delivered to the office during posted business hours, or placed in the drop box outside the office window. All fees must be paid in full before a student is officially enrolled or re-enrolled for the upcoming year.

Tuition is due on the date selected in FACTS, with a ten-day grace period. A late fee (Appendix B) is assessed on any balance remaining past the tenth day. Students whose tuition is delinquent more than sixty days will not be allowed to participate in academic or athletic activities until the account is paid. Records will not be transferred to another school while a balance remains outstanding.

Cafeteria privileges are suspended for families whose lunch accounts are delinquent beyond the threshold stated in Appendix B. Students on delinquent lunch accounts may receive the economy meal until the account is satisfied, but other food options, such as ice cream, snacks, breakfast, and the like, will not be available.

Building Fund

Each family is required to contribute to the Building Fund as set by the Board of Trustees. The total family requirement and the annual installment amount are stated in Appendix B. The Building Fund payment is due when the enrollment contract is signed and returned to the school office, and it may be satisfied as follows:

- New families may pay the total requirement in annual installments over twelve years, or in full when the first child is enrolled.
- If a family has no student enrolled for one year and then re-enrolls, the family's previous Building Fund payments are credited toward the current requirement.
- If a family has no student enrolled for more than one year, the full requirement is assessed upon any new enrollment.

7. Campus Access and Visitors

Visitors

All visitors must enter through the front door, report to the Main Office, and state the purpose of the visit. Approved visitors are issued a Visitor's Pass, which must be worn visibly at all times while on campus. Under no circumstances may visitors, regardless of age, accompany students in school without the prior permission of the Head of School. By state law, and for the safety of our children, all parents and relatives must sign in at the office before picking up a student from class. Any person visiting the school may be subject to a search of person or property.

Conferences with Teachers

Parents wishing to schedule a conference with a teacher, counselor, or administrator should email that person or phone the office for an appointment. Texting and social media are not authorized methods of contacting teachers. Parents may not interrupt homeroom or instructional time unannounced. A conference will include, but is not limited to, the parent(s), the appropriate teachers, and the Head of School or another representative of the school appointed by the Head of School. The Head of School will determine whether the involved student(s) will attend the conference.

Main Office and Teacher Center

The telephone in the Main Office is for school business only. School personnel cannot be responsible for delivering personal messages to students, so parents should anticipate needs and plan accordingly. The school can honor requests to deliver emergency messages only. So that the school remains in compliance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), students and visitors are not allowed in the Main Office or the Teacher Center without permission.

8. Emergencies and School Closings

Emergency Procedures

Dorchester Academy maintains a Crisis Management Guide for the purpose of keeping the school safe. A copy is available in the front office.

School Closings

In the event of an emergency school closing, school officials will make notification through the school messaging system to the contact number recorded in FACTS. Every attempt will be made to post the most current information on the school website, www.dorchesteracademy.org, and on the school's official social media pages.

9. Attendance and the School Day

Attendance Policy

Under South Carolina law, a student is permitted up to ten absences in a year-long course and up to five absences in a semester-long course. This state requirement governs the award of Carnegie credits in high school. Students who leave school early are counted absent from the classes they miss.

Kindergarten – Grade 5

To receive half-day attendance credit, a student must remain on campus until 11:30 a.m. A student missing more than ten days may be required to repeat the school year or to attend summer programming to be promoted. An attendance conference will be held if a student has missed more than ten days and is not academically on grade level.

Grades 6 – 12

A student missing more than ten days or ten class meetings in a year-long course, or five in a semester course — excused or unexcused — will not be promoted at the end of the school year, and will not receive credit for the course, unless the student makes up the missed time through seat-time recovery. Seat-time recovery is completed over the summer at the hourly fee stated in Appendix B. A tardy of more than fifteen minutes, or a departure more than fifteen minutes before the end of class, constitutes an absence.

To receive one Carnegie unit of credit for a high school course, the student must meet the attendance requirements. The school will consider unique situations in which students do not meet the minimum attendance requirements. Students whose excessive absences are approved will be assigned missed and make-up work.

School functions and pre-approved college visits (two per year) approved by the Head of School are not counted as absences; however, students remain responsible for any work missed, including tests, homework, and projects. Students enrolled in dual-credit courses or at the Dorchester County Career and Technology Center must comply with those programs' attendance rules and may be required to attend classes there even when Dorchester Academy is closed.

Parents are encouraged to monitor attendance through FACTS. Conferences will be held when a student has accumulated five unexcused absences in a year-long course or three in a semester course. Exception: parents may petition the Head of School in writing for Medical Homebound instruction when illness or accident results in excessive absences. A physician must complete a Medical Homebound form for each nine-week period the child is homebound (see Appendix D).

Absence Documentation

Documentation for absences, a parent's note or a doctor's excuse meeting the criteria below, must be provided within 48 hours of the student's return to school. For a student who exceeds the allowed absences, leniency will be applied in cases of bereavement within the immediate family or extended student illness exceeding five consecutive days. Otherwise, all absences are treated

equally. A doctor's note is valuable documentation and will be taken into consideration, but it does not erase or cancel an absence. The absence remains in the student's attendance record.

Doctor's note criteria: a doctor's note must be the original or must be received electronically directly from the doctor's office. Copies are not accepted, and notes may be verified directly with the doctor's office.

Make-Up Work

Students are responsible for making up missed work in accordance with school policy. Excessive absences, with or without a doctor's note, will affect a student's ability to receive credit for a course or to be promoted. Final decisions regarding academic standing in cases of high absence rates rest with the Head of School. It is the student's responsibility to obtain homework and classwork assignments when absent. Classwork, quizzes, and assessments are made up on the timeline and at the discretion of the course instructor. Unexcused absences in excess of three days will result in a zero in the gradebook without the opportunity to make up work, unless the student notified the instructor in advance of the absence and abided by the agreed timeline for making up the work. For excused absences, students receive up to three days of make-up time for each day absent, counted from the date of return.

High School Make-Up Work

High school students are responsible for securing the information and assignments given during their absence.

- A student who leaves early for an athletic event, school activity, or planned appointment must take any tests, and turn in any assignments due that day, before leaving.
- A student who arrives late must take any tests, and turn in any assignments due that day, during lunch or after school.
- Missed tests and make-up assignments must be completed within a period equal to the days absent, with a maximum of five days for major grades. (For example, a student who missed two days of school has two days to complete major assignments.) Minor assignments, homework, and participation work are made up on the teacher's timeline. Students may be required to use lunch, recess, or after-school time to make up assignments and should return from an absence prepared to spend extra time doing so.

Seat-Time Requirements

A student who does not meet the attendance requirements for a course is not eligible to take the final exam until the required participation ("seat time") is fulfilled. Seat time must be completed by the last weekday of the second week of December for the fall semester and by the last weekday of the first week of May for the spring semester. Failure to fulfill seat time by these deadlines results in ineligibility to take the final exam and a grade of zero on it. The seat-time fee is stated in Appendix B. The administration will assess attendance records to determine whether repeating the course is necessary. In extreme cases, the Head of School reserves the right to require that seat time be made up before these deadlines, with advance notice in writing.

Medical Appointments

Doctor and dentist appointments should be scheduled outside school hours whenever possible. An appointment card or doctor's statement should accompany any appointment that must take place during school hours, and teachers should be notified of necessary appointments in advance. Student attendance is required for promotion (see the attendance policy above).

The School Day

Arrival, dismissal, and grade-level schedule times are published in the Daily Schedule in Appendix C. Students who are not seated in homeroom by the start of the school day are considered tardy and must sign in or be signed in by a parent. Any student arriving late or leaving early must sign in or out at the front office. Students in K5 and below who arrive during morning announcements and the daily devotion will wait in the lobby with a parent until a staff member walks them to class, so that the devotion is not disturbed. All students must leave campus by the posted dismissal deadline (Appendix C) or will be sent to After-Care.

Early Dismissal and Leaving Campus

A student leaving early must be signed out in the front office by a parent or guardian, or by an adult approved in writing by a parent or guardian. Student drivers may sign themselves out if written permission is on file with the front office. Verbal permission is not sufficient. For early sign-out, a note must be sent to the teacher or office staff before the student is released. If anyone other than a parent is picking up a child early, the office or teacher must be notified, and staff reserve the right to call the parent to verify the person picking up the child.

Students are not allowed to leave campus for any reason other than a medical appointment or a family emergency as approved by the administrative staff. Students may not leave campus for lunch, haircuts, or errands. Students in grades 8–12 who leave early may not return to school the same day unless pre-approved by an administrator, and a student who signs out needs a medical excuse to return the same day. Leaving campus early results in an unexcused absence in the classes missed. In the case of illness, the nurse or office staff will contact the parent for permission for the student to go home. Students must be present for three class periods (not including lunch) to participate in practices, athletic events, or other school activities that day.

Students may not transport other students unless written permission is submitted by the parent of the rider and the parent of the driver. Career school students must sign in and out with the front office each time they leave or return to campus.

Car Rider Procedures

Children being picked up by parents or other designated adults exit through their assigned doors. Parents are asked to pull as far forward as possible to ease dismissal, with other drivers pulling up behind, and to remain in line and use the pull-through driveway. School staff release students to the appropriate cars. For the safety of all students, drivers exiting the campus must observe pedestrian right-of-way laws.

After School Hours on Campus

Dorchester Academy encourages student participation in school-sponsored activities. However, the school cannot be responsible for students left on campus after the official school day ends. Students and parents should know in advance the time and place of an activity and its expected ending time, and parents are urged to be with their children at all school events. A student left on campus after dismissal to wait for a practice or game is not the responsibility of the school, which does not have the resources to monitor such students. A student under the age of twelve may be sent to After-Care, with the daily After-Care charge billed to the family's FACTS account. A student repeatedly left on campus in this way is subject to a fine and possible ineligibility to participate in the sport or activity.

Students are not permitted simply to "hang out" in any building or on the grounds after regular school hours. Students found in any room or building without administrative permission or supervision are subject to disciplinary action.

After-Care

To support the successful completion of homework and to provide supervision after school, Dorchester Academy offers After-Care on school days until the closing time posted in Appendix C. Students must be registered in advance so that staff have the necessary paperwork and contact information. The monthly fee (Appendix B) is billed through the family's FACTS account.

10. Academics

Graduation Requirements

Dorchester Academy offers a College Preparatory Diploma with the following requirements:

Subject	Units
English	4 units
Mathematics	4 units
Science	3 units
Social Studies	3 units
World Language or Career and Technology Elective	1 unit
Computer Technology	1 unit
Personal Finance	1/2 unit
Physical Education	1 unit
Electives	6 1/2 units
Total	24 units required

Dorchester Academy will award a General Diploma only under extenuating circumstances, upon the recommendation of Special Services and with the approval of the administration. Students may also qualify for a High School Certificate of Attendance based on their academic needs.

Promotion Requirements

Promotion to the next grade is contingent upon completion of certain requirements in the elementary, middle, and high schools.

Grades 1–4. A student who does not master grade-level reading in the first or third grade must repeat the entire grade unless satisfactory summer tutoring is provided.

Grades 5–7. Failure of Language Arts, Reading, or Mathematics will require the student to repeat the grade. Failure of any other combination of two subjects will make repetition of the entire grade mandatory unless the work in both classes is made up during the Summer Session with the approval of the administration.

Retaking a Course

In accordance with the South Carolina Uniform Grading Policy, students may retake the same course at the same difficulty level under the following conditions:

- Only courses in which a grade of D or F was earned may be retaken. The exception is eighth graders taking courses for Carnegie units, who may retake a course regardless of the grade earned. It must be the identical course.

- The course must be retaken during the current academic year or no later than the next academic year.
- The student must retake the course before enrolling in the next sequential course, unless the administration grants special approval.
- The student's record will reflect all courses taken and the grade earned each time. The exception is eighth graders taking courses for Carnegie units: their records and GPAs will reflect only the ninth-grade retake grade, whether that grade is higher or lower.
- A student who repeats a course in which a D was earned receives credit only for the repeated course.

Career and Technology Center

Elective credits meeting Career and Technology Education requirements may be earned in grades 10–12 at the Dorchester County Career and Technology Center (DCCTC). Credits vary by course, and additional attendance may be required for certain courses. Please check with the Guidance Counselor for credit verification. A student attending DCCTC remains a Dorchester Academy student, and any behavioral issue at DCCTC is subject to the same consequences at Dorchester Academy.

SC Virtual School and Other Courses

Students may register for online courses through SC Virtual School. These courses are recorded on the school transcript and averaged into the GPA in accordance with the Virtual School transcript, including its drop/add requirements. Because these classes are self-directed, students should be motivated and organized before attempting them. Approval will not be granted to take a course through another institution if the course, or a comparable one, is offered by Dorchester Academy.

Honors Program

Students in grades 8–12 may participate in Honors classes. Selection for entry into the Honors program in eighth grade is based on performance in seventh-grade English and Mathematics. Students entering grades 9–12 must earn a 3.70 unweighted GPA or higher to enroll in Honors or Dual Credit courses.

Honors courses meet the following criteria established by the State Department of Education:

1. They use a syllabus separate from that of college-prep and tech-prep classes;
2. They require the reading of texts and supplemental materials, including primary and secondary sources, that significantly differentiate the course requirements;
3. They show evidence of rigor sufficiently beyond the scope of a regular college-preparatory course;
4. They show evidence of critical, reflective, and problem-solving thinking practices;
5. They require project or performance-task assessments, either culminating or interim; and

6. They may serve as preparation for future Advanced Placement courses.

Honors credit is given only for core content courses: English, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies. All electives are weighted as college prep, including third-year courses (except Dual Credit courses offered through Dorchester Academy) and any distance-learning, virtual school, or DCCTC class.

Dual Credit Courses

Dual Credit refers to college courses offered through an accredited college or university in which students earn both college and high school credit. Students entering grades 9–12 must earn a 3.70 unweighted GPA or higher to enroll. Only Dual Credit courses offered through Dorchester Academy are included in the high school GPA. Students wishing to take additional courses for college credit may do so and will receive one high school Carnegie credit per three-hour college course, but such courses do not count toward the Dorchester Academy GPA. College tuition, fees, and textbook costs are paid by the student directly to the college, and there is no reduction in Dorchester Academy tuition for taking fewer courses here.

Students should remember that all college classes are used to calculate the LIFE Scholarship GPA. Poor performance in dual-credit classes jeopardizes LIFE Scholarship eligibility, and students unwilling to commit to excellence should not take these classes. A student who fails a dual-credit course taken to complete required graduation credits must attend summer school to graduate, unless an applicable Virtual School class is offered.

Advanced Placement Courses

Advanced Placement (AP) courses are offered periodically for students who are academically ready for challenging college-level work beyond the honors curriculum. Students may register for these courses if they meet minimum school-established scores on the PSAT, SAT, or ACT; have earned an A or high B in Honors courses; and show consistency in completing homework and classwork. While these criteria are recommended, parents may choose to waive their child into an AP class even if the student does not meet them. The syllabus for any AP course must be pre-approved by the College Board. All students in AP courses take the College Board examination and pay the exam fee. High performance may result in college credit or advanced placement. The Commission on Higher Education does not allow students who did not take an approved AP course to receive AP credit on their transcripts even if they pass the exam. Colleges, however, will recognize the exam score and, depending on their policies, may offer college credit.

Unique Learning Plans

Dorchester Academy recognizes that all students are unique. A student with a history of, or a medical diagnosis for, a specific learning or physical challenge may apply for a Unique Learning Plan (ULP) — a set of strategies designed to level the playing field for students whose challenges hinder their access to education. Dorchester Academy works closely with Exceptional SC to fund this program. The school reserves the right to decline to serve a student under a ULP if appropriate need and documentation are not provided, and to refuse admission to, or release, a student whose needs cannot be met within the school's environment and services. All new families must inform

the administration, before admission, of any need their student may have for special services. The school reserves the right to terminate a contract if such information was not provided at enrollment.

Testing Programs

All Dorchester Academy students participate in standardized testing (MAP and PSAT) from kindergarten through tenth grade. In eleventh and twelfth grades, students may opt to take the SAT or ACT at their own expense.

Textbooks

Textbooks are the property of Dorchester Academy and are issued to students accordingly. Damage from misuse is evaluated by the issuing teacher and the Head of School, and the responsible student and parent are charged a damage fee. Textbooks are replaced as needed, with the faculty recommending replacements annually. Questions concerning material in textbooks should be directed to the Head of School. Some courses, including but not limited to dual-credit courses, require students to purchase additional materials.

Transcripts

No fee is assessed for a transcript requested for a school, college, employer, or the armed services. Transcripts are sealed and mailed to the appropriate institution upon the written request of the student or parent. Records will not be transferred while fees payable to the school remain outstanding.

Grades and Weighting

Teachers in grades 5–12 assign grades on the following scale, in compliance with the South Carolina Uniform Grading Policy (SC UGP):

Grade	Range
A	90–100
B	80–89
C	70–79
D	60–69
F	Below 60

No grade above 100 is recorded on a report card. Grades 5–12 have a minimum of four assessments in each of three categories: Major (50%), Minor (30%), and Participation (20%, which may include classwork and homework).

Students in grades 8–12 taking Carnegie units take exams at the end of each semester. Exams count for 10% of the semester grade. Grades are calculated as follows: Quarter 1 (40%) + Quarter 2 (40%) + Exam 1 (10%) = Semester 1 average; Quarter 3 (40%) + Quarter 4 (40%) + Exam 2

(10%) = Semester 2 average. The final grade for a year-long course is the average of the two semesters. For a semester course, the semester grade is the final grade.

South Carolina Uniform Grading Scale

Dorchester Academy complies with the Uniform Grading Policy adopted by the General Assembly of the State of South Carolina. The scale converts the numerical grades on the report card to the grade-point average reflected on the student's transcript, using a quality-point system. Grades earned in all academic courses, including designated courses taken in the eighth grade, are used to compute GPAs. College-prep courses are computed on a 5.0 scale, Honors courses on a 5.5 scale, and Advanced Placement and dual-credit courses on a 6.0 scale. The current South Carolina Uniform Grading Policy is available from the SC Department of Education at ed.sc.gov.

Exams

Exams are given to students in grades 8–12 for their Carnegie-unit courses. Final examinations are administered during the last two days of each semester for block classes, and at the end of the year for year-long classes. All students must remain in the examination room for the entire period. The final grade, after averaging the final exam, appears on the permanent record. Students will not be permitted to take exams — and therefore cannot complete the course — if financial obligations are outstanding or if the course's attendance requirements have not been met.

GPA and Class Rank

Dorchester Academy follows the SC Uniform Grading Policy and ranks all students in grades 8–12, regardless of when they enrolled, on the basis of all subjects in which they earn a Carnegie unit.

Academic Letters

Beginning at the end of the tenth grade, a student is eligible to receive an academic letter upon achieving a 4.7 GPA on the South Carolina grading system.

Scholarships

Appropriate SAT or ACT scores, class rank, and cumulative grade-point averages may qualify students for the state LIFE Scholarship or the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship at South Carolina two- and four-year colleges. Additional scholarship applications are available in the Guidance Office.

Summer School

Dorchester Academy may offer a Summer Session for students requiring make-up work. The student must pass with a grade of 60 or above, corresponding to the school's grading scale. Non-traditional summer (credit-recovery) work consists of thirty hours of documented seat time of tutoring approved by the Head of School. At its completion, a maximum yearly average of 60 replaces the failing course grade on the permanent record. End-of-course tests may be required to validate that the student has the skills necessary for subsequent courses. Students taking high

school courses may repeat only one course in summer school. Subsequent failures must be repeated during the school year. All summer coursework must be approved by the administration in advance, and it is the student's responsibility to report summer school grades to Dorchester Academy. No additional high school courses may be taken over the summer for Carnegie credit unless approved by the administration.

Report Cards

Grades are accessible online at any time, and teachers post assignments on the web for parent and student access. Parents are encouraged to keep up with attendance, lunch balances, assignments, grades, demerits, and announcements by enrolling in email reports from FACTS. Because teachers are required to keep grades and assignments current in FACTS, printed progress reports are not issued.

Report cards are issued quarterly to all students in grades 5–12. For the first quarter only, no grade lower than 50 is recorded. After the first quarter, the grade earned, however low, is recorded. No grade higher than 100 is recorded. Students in grades 1–4 receive a standards-based report card each quarter. Students earning all As and Bs for the quarter are placed on the Honor Roll. Students earning all As are placed on the Head of School's List.

11. Scheduling

Class Schedules

Scheduling in grades 8–12 is done with the advisement of the Head of School and/or the Guidance Counselor, in accordance with diploma requirements and options. Schedule requests are made each spring and finalized during the summer. Pre-registration determines the classes needed for the next year, and teachers are hired according to that need. Seniors who meet graduation requirements may be eligible for early release after the end of the second block of the day. Parents must sign an early-release form granting permission, and there is no reduction in tuition for early release.

Schedule Changes

Schedule-change requests are permitted during the first full week of school only, and requests may be declined because of schedule conflicts. A student does not have to be failing to drop a subject. The drop/add period and attendance requirements for any distance-learning course — dual credit, virtual school, or DCCTC — are honored according to the issuing institution's program and transcript.

Course Changes and Withdrawal from a Course

1. Under the SC UGP, a student who withdraws from a course after three days in a half-unit course, or five days in a one-unit course, is assigned a grade of 51 and zero quality points, unless the student transfers to a different level of the same course. The 51 is calculated in the student's overall grade-point ratio.
2. A student must have written permission from a parent, the guidance counselor, and the school administration before dropping a course. The teacher will be notified.
3. A student who adds a course after the drop/add period is responsible for all material missed in that class.
4. Grades for college courses, or any other courses taken from another institution independent of Dorchester Academy, follow that institution's policy.

12. Graduation Policies

Early Graduation

Students advance to the senior class only by calendar promotion. A student desiring to graduate early must:

1. Submit a written request for early graduation to the Head of School by August 1 of the upcoming school year;
2. Have previously completed English I, II, and III;
3. Have taken the SAT or ACT; and
4. Attend an approval conference with the Head of School, the Guidance Counselor, and the student's parents to determine whether early graduation is in the student's best interest.

A student graduating early is not eligible to be a graduation speaker. However, as required by the SC Uniform Grading Policy, all graduating students, including early graduates, are ranked.

Graduation Participation and Honors

To participate in graduation ceremonies, a student must successfully complete the required units of study. To receive the Valedictorian or Salutatorian award, a student must have attended Dorchester Academy for the tenth, eleventh, and twelfth grades. Junior Marshals and Commencement Speakers are governed by the same rule. All graduating seniors are ranked according to the SC Uniform Grading Policy.

The Top Five senior graduates, determined by cumulative weighted grade-point average across all courses completed for Dorchester Academy GPA credit in grades 8–12, are selected for commencement speeches after all senior exams are graded. The Top Six Junior Marshals, determined by cumulative weighted grade-point average across all courses completed for GPA credit in grades 8–11, are selected at the end of the first semester.

Students selected for these honors must maintain their eligibility by having no major policy violations in academics, attendance, or discipline. Juniors must have completed a curriculum of core high school courses of which at least ten are honors level or above by the end of the junior year. Seniors must have completed a curriculum of core high school courses of which at least fifteen are honors level or above. The Head of School may replace any student with violations with the next student in the class ranking.

13. Student Conduct and Discipline

Disciplinary Philosophy and Responses

All members of the school community must demonstrate by their actions a willingness to live within the rules and expectations of Dorchester Academy. The school seeks to ensure a positive learning atmosphere — a safe, nurturing environment based on honesty, respect, responsibility, and discipline. In operating the school, the administration may address student behavior through a range of disciplinary responses, from a relatively minor detention to expulsion. Continuous or willful disregard of a teacher's guidelines — demonstrated by noncompliance with general guidelines, specific rules, or requested actions — will be viewed as a conscious statement of the student's desire to be separated from the school community. Although these consequences apply primarily to middle and high school students, the Head of School may apply them to any student. Middle school consequences start over each semester. High school consequences continue for the entire year.

One of the educational objectives of Dorchester Academy is to develop good citizenship. Students are expected to conduct themselves in an orderly manner at school and at school-sponsored activities, as misconduct on and off campus reflects on the school. Students should be polite, thoughtful, and courteous always. Movement in hallways must be quiet and orderly. And every student should take pride in helping to keep the grounds and buildings clean.

The Board of Trustees has, by policy, authorized the Head of School to administer all student discipline and to impose consequences — including detention, in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, probation, removal from contract, and expulsion — in the manner the Head of School deems just and proper. Teachers document and handle minor discipline problems that arise in their classrooms and are encouraged and supported by the Board and the administration in using approved methods of discipline to maintain a learning environment.

Food is not allowed in classrooms except at teacher-approved special events. Clear water is allowed in spill-proof containers. A container that leaks when turned on its side or upside down is not permitted.

Participation in a "prank day" of any kind on school property is prohibited and will be addressed at the discretion of the Head of School.

Middle and High School Demerit System (Grades 6–12)

Dorchester Academy implements a demerit system as part of its overall discipline policy. The demerit chart provides general guidelines, but final decisions rest with the Head of School or, in the Head's absence, the Administrative Team. Each situation is considered individually, and administrators use their judgment to determine the most appropriate response. Not every possible behavior or situation can be anticipated or listed in advance. When an incident arises that is not specifically addressed in this handbook, disciplinary action is at the discretion of the Head of School.

Administrators record demerits in FACTS as promptly as possible. Every effort is made to contact parents when a student receives a third demerit. However, it remains the student's responsibility

to communicate with parents, and the parents' responsibility to monitor FACTS regularly for updates and demerit entries.

Accumulated demerits carry the following consequences (Middle school totals reset each semester. High school totals continue for the year.) Detention and suspension fees are listed in Appendix B.

Demerits	Consequence
5	Parent contact; one-hour after-school detention and detention fee (Appendix B). Middle school students may incur a lunch detention at the teacher's discretion.
8	Parent contact; two one-hour after-school detentions and detention fee (Appendix B).
10	Parent contact; in-school suspension and ISS fee (Appendix B); may not attend or participate in any extracurricular event on the day of suspension.
12	Parent contact; out-of-school suspension; missed assignments and graded work may be made up; reduction of classwork/participation points; may not attend or participate in any extracurricular event on the day of suspension.
14	Parent contact; out-of-school suspension; zeros on graded work; reduction of classwork/participation points; may not attend or participate in any extracurricular event for one week.
15	Required parent conference; student placed on probation; club membership evaluated; possible ineligibility to represent the school in any club, sport, trip, or special event for the remainder of the probationary period; possible revocation of senior privileges, if applicable; may include daily lunch and snack detention.

Demerit values by infraction. Where a range is shown, the value assigned within the range is at the administration's discretion.

Infraction	Demerits
Antagonizing another student	1
Creating a disturbance in class, the hallway, the bathroom, or the lunchroom	1
Dress code violation	1
Excessive talking	1
Food or drink (other than clear water in a leak-proof container)	1
Possession of a hat on school property during school hours	1
Littering or failing to clean up after oneself on campus	1

Infraction	Demerits
Not shaving	1
Public display of affection; not keeping hands to oneself	1
Repeatedly coming to class unprepared	1
Sitting at a teacher's desk; touching or removing items from a teacher's desk	1
Use of profanity	1
Leaving the cafeteria without permission	1
Being in an unauthorized location; using a bathroom other than the one assigned to your grade level	1
Cutting in line	1
Disobeying a faculty request on campus or at any school event	1
Leaving class before the bell	1
Failing to keep an appointment made with faculty (make-up work or other)	1
Removing items from the Teacher Center not intended for student use (prizes, supplies, snacks, catering, drinks, etc.)	1
Unauthorized device brought to class (phone not off and away; smart watch; headphones; earbuds; etc.)	1
Repeated inappropriate verbal behavior	1–2
Repeatedly insulting, demeaning, or belittling others; harassment	1–5
Pushing or shoving another student	1–5
Unsportsmanlike conduct: pushing, shoving, rough play	1–5
Unsafe handling of a school iPad or Chromebook	1–5
Violation of digital citizenship (using another student's password or login; filming without permission; hacking; inappropriate language, screen names, or photos; etc.)	1–10
Using school devices for anything other than an assignment	1–10
Repeatedly being out of class	2
Displaying inappropriate content on devices on campus	2
Disrespect to a teacher	2
Minor destruction, vandalism, or misuse of school property or the property of others	2–4

Infraction	Demerits
On-campus or leaving-campus driving violation	2 – revocation of driving privilege
Repeated inappropriate aggressive behavior	2–3
Not signing out during school hours before leaving campus (with written approval to leave)	2
Going to the parking lot without administrative approval	2
Tampering with any safety device	2
Falsifying a sign-in/sign-out sheet, including making times or names illegible	2
Willful violent or harmful behavior on campus or at any school event	2–5
Leaving campus riding with others without written approval during school hours	3
Being the first to make physical contact that results in a fight	3
Opening an outside door to let others in without teacher permission; leaving outside doors open	3
Possession of over the counter or prescription drugs (EpiPens, inhalers, and glucose tablets excepted, if approved by the school nurse in advance)	3–15
Cutting class or leaving campus without permission	5
Threats or intimidation: gestures, electronic communication, or a written, verbal, physical, or sexual act perceived to have the effect of harming another	5
Discrimination: conduct, intentional or unintentional, that subjects another person to unwanted attention, comments, or actions because of race, national origin, age, gender, physical characteristics, or disability	5
Major vandalism, destruction, or misuse of school property or the property of others	5–10
Cheating, lying, plagiarism, or unauthorized use of AI, including talking during a graded assessment	5–10, plus academic consequences (a zero on the assignment or point deductions as appropriate)

Infraction	Demerits
Consistent defiance of the basic routine of the school, school rules, or school authorities	10
Fighting	10–14
Possession of explosives or fireworks on campus or at any school event	10–15
Possession of alcohol or alcohol containers, tobacco, nicotine pouches, vapes, or similar items on campus or at any school-related event	12–15
Threatening anyone on campus with a weapon or with deadly harm	12–15
Possession of a knife or similar item on campus or at any school event	12 – expulsion
Assault: attacking another student with malicious intent	Up to expulsion
Possession of a firearm on campus or at any school event	15 – expulsion
Assault of a faculty member	Expulsion
Violation of the cell phone policy	Device placed in a sealed bag; returned at the office

Honor Code

All Dorchester Academy students abide by the Honor Code: **"A Dorchester Academy student will not lie, cheat, steal, show disrespect, or tolerate those who do."**

Personal honor requires that every person act honorably in academic work and in every other phase of school life. Personal honor involves respect for oneself and for others — their feelings, rights, and property — and the desire to obtain the best possible education. A Dorchester Academy student is on his or her honor to prepare and submit only his or her own work, and to refrain from giving or receiving help on tests, examinations, and assignments unless the teacher has given prior permission. Each student is charged with the responsibility to see that the code is broken neither by his or her own actions nor by the actions of another student, and to report infractions and actively discourage lying, cheating, stealing, and disrespectful behavior in others.

Honor Code violations include but are not limited to giving or receiving assistance on a test, report, project, or other assignment; copying another student's work; and knowing plagiarism. Any Honor Code violation results in a zero on the work in question and, where applicable, club probation, and is accompanied by the assigned number of demerits.

Searches

Anyone entering the school campus may be subject to search, including search with a metal detector. The school has the right to search students and their belongings — including, but not limited to, lockers, cars, cell phones, book bags, and purses — without expectation of privacy and

reserves the right to confiscate any object it believes may be illegal or potentially dangerous. If an item confiscated from a student belongs to a third party, Dorchester Academy is held harmless from any third-party claim. Visitors to the school are likewise deemed to have consented to searches of person, property, and vehicle by the Head of School or a school designee, including canine searches by the Sheriff's Department. DSS and law-enforcement authorities have the right to come onto campus and interview students as necessary.

Alcohol, Tobacco, and Drugs

Alcohol, smoking, tobacco, vaping devices, and similar products are prohibited on the Dorchester Academy campus for students, staff, and visitors alike. The school has the right to conduct random drug and alcohol testing and may administer a breathalyzer test to any student, or a student's guest, as a condition of admission to school or to any school activity or event — at any time during the school day and at all school-sponsored or school-related activities, whether on or off school grounds. All students and their guests are deemed to have consented to such tests. The school also has the right to arrange random canine searches, conducted by law-enforcement officials, for exploratory sniffing of the outsides of lockers, of vehicles parked on school property, and of any other areas of school property deemed appropriate.

It is a violation of school policy to have, handle, ingest, or transport alcohol, marijuana, controlled substances, or products used as paraphernalia during any school-sponsored activity, during school, or while under the jurisdiction of the school, whether on or off the premises. "Drugs" include but are not limited to alcohol; inhalants; non-prescription drugs not provided by parents; imitation controlled substances; anabolic steroids; and controlled substances.

A student who brings a drug, as defined above, onto school property — including school vehicles — or to a school-related activity, whether on or off school property, will be suspended from school and is subject to expulsion by the Head of School under the Expulsion procedures below. The student may also be referred to the criminal or juvenile justice system.

Weapons

It is a violation of school policy to have, handle, or transport any weapon, dangerous object, object that can reasonably be considered a weapon, or substance that could cause harm or irritation to another individual. A student who brings a weapon, as defined below, onto school property — including school vehicles — or to a school-related activity, whether on or off school property, will be suspended from school and is subject to expulsion by the Head of School under the Expulsion procedures below. The student may also be referred to the criminal or juvenile justice system. The Head of School may determine, based on the facts of a particular case, that special circumstances exist and that another disciplinary action is appropriate.

Weapons include, but are not limited to:

1. Bombs, stink bombs, or any device containing combustible materials;
2. Explosives, fireworks, snapper pops, caps, or any device containing combustible material and a fuse;

3. Knives or facsimiles of knives of any size or shape, bows and arrows, blades, and other sharp devices;
4. Razor blades, box cutters, and other cutting devices;
5. Ammunition, bullets, shells, or any object that could be considered ammunition;
6. Sprays such as mace or pepper spray;
7. Guns of any kind, including starter pistols, BB guns, stun guns, cap pistols, water pistols, hunting guns, and toy guns;
8. Any other object or substance that could cause injury or concern for injury, including but not limited to slingshots, ice picks, multi-fingered rings, metal knuckles, nunchucks, throwing stars, darts, and clubs; and
9. Homemade weapons, such as pens or pins used or fashioned as darts or weapons intended to injure.

Sexual Misconduct

Sexual harassment and other improper sexual behavior on school grounds are prohibited. As stated in the Tuition Contract Agreement, Dorchester Academy has the right to suspend or expel a student for scholastic or disciplinary reasons, and the Head of School is the sole judge of the sufficiency of the cause. Any act of improper behavior not specifically addressed in this handbook is subject to immediate review by the Head of School, who will assign the consequence deemed just and proper.

Social Media Conduct

Students are expected to represent themselves and the school honorably online. A student who posts videos or pictures made at school, or at a school-sponsored activity, that the school considers inappropriate faces disciplinary action under the demerit chart. If an issue arises at school regarding a social media post or message made off campus, the student may likewise be disciplined. Cyberbullying is addressed in Section 14, Technology.

Administrative Detention

Administrative detention consists of after-school detention or work detail assigned by the Head of School, either directly or on the basis of accumulated demerits. The hourly fee is stated in Appendix B. A student who is unable or unwilling to complete the assignment will be given an out-of-school suspension.

In-School Suspension (ISS)

The daily ISS fee is stated in Appendix B. A student who serves ISS may not participate that day in sports, clubs, or school-related extracurricular activities. The student is responsible for completing all classwork, homework, tests, and any specially assigned work during the first half of ISS and may be assigned work detail.

Out-of-School Suspension (OSS)

Out-of-school suspension is the most severe form of discipline short of expulsion or dismissal, and the administration determines when it is required. A student serving OSS is listed as absent with excuse and is required to make up missed assignments. The student is not permitted on school grounds and may not participate in or attend any school-sponsored function, activity, or extracurricular event during the suspension. A suspended student found on campus or at a school function is subject to arrest for trespassing. Out-of-school suspensions are assigned immediately, regardless of school-sponsored activities, and a student receiving OSS also loses driving privileges.

Disciplinary Review

A student who exhibits a habitual pattern of irresponsible behavior, or who has violated a particularly serious school rule, will undergo a Disciplinary Review — a meeting attended by the Head of School, relevant faculty, the parents, and the student. The purpose of the review is to assess the student's citizenship and the fit between the student and the school, and to address repeated disciplinary concerns as quickly as possible. A student who undergoes a Disciplinary Review may be placed on probation and, if so, is ineligible for positions of leadership (forfeiting all offices held) and for any athletic or academic honors given by Dorchester Academy for one year following the review.

Expulsion

In some cases, expulsion is the only appropriate response to a student's conduct. Consistent with the governance principles of the National Association of Independent Schools, the Board of Trustees establishes the school's discipline and enrollment policies, and the Head of School — not the Board — administers those policies in individual cases. The decision to expel a student therefore rests with the Head of School, whose decision is final. Neither the Board of Trustees nor any individual trustee participates in, reviews, or decides an individual disciplinary matter.

When expulsion is under consideration, the following process applies:

1. **Suspension pending decision.** The Head of School may suspend the student pending a final decision. During the suspension, the student is not permitted on school grounds and may not participate in or attend any school-sponsored function, activity, or extracurricular event. A student found on campus or at a school function while suspended is subject to arrest for trespassing.
2. **Review of the matter.** The Head of School will gather the relevant facts, which may include statements from staff and students, and will give the student and the parents an opportunity to meet with the Head of School and be heard before a final decision is made.
3. **Decision.** The Head of School will decide whether to expel the student or to impose an alternative consequence, which may include returning the student under a probationary contract tailored to the student's circumstances. The decision will be communicated to the parents in writing and is final.

An expelled student may not be present on school grounds or at school functions. Tuition and fee obligations following expulsion are governed by the Enrollment/Tuition Contract.

Preschool Discipline

Students in K2–K5 are subject to the policies of the Preschool Handbook.

Elementary Discipline (K5 – Grade 5)

Elementary discipline follows the progression below. "Consequence" refers to an age-appropriate classroom or administrative consequence.

Behavior	1st Offense	2nd Offense	3rd Offense	4th Offense
Unauthorized device brought to class (cell phone, smart watch, headphones, etc.)	Warning; put away in bookbag by student	Confiscated; parent contact (item returned when parent acknowledges it will not be brought back)	Confiscated; item and student sent to the office; parent contacted; item picked up by parent	—
Unsafe handling of a school iPad or Chromebook	Warning	Classroom consequence (item taken away for a period of time); parent notified	Referral to administration; consequence; parent contact	Item taken away for the remainder of the semester or year
Digital citizenship violation (using another student's password or login, filming without permission, hacking, inappropriate language, screen names, or photos, etc.)	Removal of device for a period of time; parent contact	Referral to administration; consequence; parent contact	Referral to administration; consequence; parent contact	—
Academic honesty (talking during an assessment, looking at another student's test or quiz, plagiarizing)	Parent notice; zero given for the work	Referral to administration; parent notice; zero given for the work	Referral to administration; parent meeting; zero given for the work	—
Defiance of a staff member	Classroom consequence	Classroom consequence; parent contact	Referral to administration; consequence; parent contact	—

Behavior	1st Offense	2nd Offense	3rd Offense	4th Offense
Unsportsmanlike conduct (tackling, pushing, shoving)	Consequence	Consequence; parent contact	Referral to administration; consequence	—
Play fighting	Warning	Classroom consequence	Classroom consequence; parent contact	Referral to administration; consequence; parent contact
Fighting	Referral to administration; consequence; parent contact	Referral to administration; consequence; parent contact (required counseling)	Suspension; possible referral to the Head of School for expulsion	—
Harassment or bullying (documented via device during school hours or by a teacher or staff member)	Referral to administration; consequence (bullying report); parent contact	Referral to administration; parent contact (required counseling); second consequence	Suspension; possible referral to the Head of School for expulsion	—
Foul language	Verbal warning; classroom consequence	Written notice to parent; classroom consequence	Written notice to parent; referral to administration; consequence	—
Disruptive behavior	Warning (one-on-one check-in with the student)	Classroom consequence (recess, lunch, or timeout); parent contact	Referral to administration; consequence; parent contact	Referral to administration; consequence; parent meeting

14. Student Technology and Devices

Acceptable Use

Dorchester Academy is not responsible for the loss or theft of any personal electronic device, or for damage or unauthorized access to equipment or the data it contains.

As with traditional classroom assignments, some technology-based assignments may need to be completed at home. If an internet connectivity problem at home limits a student's ability to complete assignments, the student should use school computers before or after school or plan to use the county library.

Students are expected to show consideration and integrity when using electronic devices and the internet on campus, and to follow these guidelines when using school devices:

- A student caught using the internet in an unauthorized way — visiting social media sites or accessing unauthorized websites or programs — may have internet privileges revoked, with disciplinary action taken under the demerit system.
- Anyone found tampering with, mishandling, or vandalizing computers or networking equipment will be held responsible for damages and will incur demerits.
- It is unlawful to record someone without permission. Teachers and students may record (audio or video) only when consent has been granted. Using any electronic device to save, send, or store inappropriate or pornographic images through the school system, or to forward them through any other device, may result in suspension and further legal action.
- Student files should be saved to the cloud (e.g., Google Drive). Anyone caught altering or accessing someone else's files without permission will be disciplined immediately.
- Cyberbullying — taunting, threatening, or harassing others through the internet, social media, or other electronic means — will not be tolerated. The administration reserves the right to discipline a student for cyberbullying on or off campus if the actions are intended to affect another student, or adversely affect a student's well-being, while at school.
- Students are required to read and sign the Chromebook Agreement and the Technology Agreement.
- Dorchester Academy reserves the right to examine any electronic device and search its contents at any time if there is reason to believe school policies, rules, or regulations have been violated.

Cell Phones and Smart Devices

See "Personal Electronic Devices Procedures," a separate publication.

15. Student Life

Lost and Found

The lost and found accumulates a large supply of jackets, sweaters, backpacks, folders, and similar items over the course of a school year. Parents and students are welcome to come to the office before or after school to search for missing items. All items remaining at the end of each quarter are donated to charity.

School Lunch

Dorchester Academy is committed to offering a quality, nutritional lunch at school each day. Offerings include a hot lunch, a chef salad, and individual and side items such as ice cream. Students in grades K2–12 order lunch weekly through the FACTS lunch component. Teachers take attendance in FACTS, and the systems operator alerts the lunchroom staff to absences so that excess food is not prepared. Parents may log onto FACTS to view lunch-account activity. Students in grades 6–12 may add ice cream daily in the cafeteria. Grades K5–5 order ice cream on Fridays. Parents who do not want their child to add ice cream, or a certain kind, should notify a staff member. Students are not allowed to leave campus for lunch.

Recess

Students in grades K2–8 have a supervised recess period during the school day and must remain within sight of their teachers. Recess is a time for students to develop social skills, exert energy, and enjoy the outdoors. Occasionally it is held in the classroom or gymnasium because of inclement weather. Teachers and administrators reserve the right to revoke recess at any time from an individual student or a class.

Parties

Birthdays. Student birthdays may be celebrated by sharing refreshments with classmates during the lunch period. Parents should arrange all birthday celebrations in advance with the classroom teacher. If invitations are sent to school to go home with students, an invitation should be sent for every child in the class.

Class Parties. Elementary class parties may be planned for Halloween, Christmas, Valentine's Day, Easter, and the end of the year. Halloween and Valentine's parties should be simple in nature. Other class parties must be approved by the Head of School.

Off-Campus Parties and Trips. Dorchester Academy is not responsible for any party or trip not officially sponsored by the school. Students planning off-campus parties or trips may not make announcements or collect money during school hours or use the school's name in any way for promotion or fundraising, including on social media.

Field Trips

Field trips are an extension of the classroom: each must have an academic purpose and be followed up with appropriate activities. To participate, a student must have a signed Parental

Consent Form. Students are expected to behave in a manner appropriate to the occasion and to remain with their group at all times. Teachers supervise field trips with assistance from parents. Parent chaperones may be asked to help provide transportation. Chaperones are selected from among volunteers and will not exceed the needs of the group. The bus fee per trip is stated in Appendix B.

Chaperones

- Teachers may assign parents to lead specific groups of students. Each chaperone is responsible for supervising those students for the duration of the trip.
- Chaperones must be parents, grandparents, legal guardians, aunts or uncles, older siblings, or school employees, and must be at least twenty-one years of age.
- Chaperones should not bring guests, including siblings, unless the teacher has granted prior permission.
- Chaperones must abide by the student/teacher dress code for the trip.
- Chaperones should refrain from using cell phones on the trip except in emergencies and may photograph and post other students to social media only with the approval of those students' parents or guardians.
- Students should never be left unattended. Be especially watchful when students use public restrooms.
- Please do not purchase food or gifts, or provide opportunities, that are not offered to all students in the class or pre-approved by the teacher.
- Smoking and the purchase or consumption of alcoholic beverages are prohibited for the duration of any school-sponsored trip.
- Please follow the procedures outlined by the teacher even where there is a difference of opinion, except on a matter of safety. Teachers have the ultimate responsibility and depend on your support. If an issue arises, complete an Incident Report upon returning to school.
- Timelines are critical. Please be punctual and arrive at the meeting spot a few minutes early.
- All chaperones may be subject to a criminal records check, and all overnight chaperones must have completed a background check.

Drivers

Drivers must comply with all chaperone expectations, plus the following:

- Each driver must carry a copy of the field trip/emergency care permission form for each student in the vehicle; teachers provide these forms before departure and collect them upon return.
- Drivers must be parents, grandparents, legal guardians, or school employees, and must be at least twenty-one years of age.
- Each driver is responsible for supervising the students in his or her vehicle during the trip.

- Drivers should not use cell phones while driving, or during the trip except in emergencies.
- Drivers must not start the vehicle until all students are seated with seat belts fastened and all doors closed. Children should sit as far back in the seats as possible and wear seat belts at all times. Children under thirteen may not ride in the front seat of a vehicle with a passenger-side airbag.
- Drivers must drive defensively, follow the preplanned route, stay within legal speed limits, and make no unauthorized stops.
- Drivers must not take controlled substances that might impair driving, such as pain medication or muscle relaxants, and must not be under the influence of alcohol or use tobacco products for the duration of the trip.
- Vehicles should provide only G-rated entertainment.
- The following adult-to-student ratios are maintained at all times: K5–grade 4, 1:5; grades 5–12, 1:7. Bus ratios may differ.
- Drivers must complete a driver form, provide copies of their driver's license and insurance card, and have a Motor Vehicle Record on file in the office. All drivers may be subject to a criminal records check.
- Bus drivers must additionally submit a copy of their commercial driver's license (CDL) passenger-class license to the office.

Class Organizations

Class dues and finances. The class treasurer and sponsors are responsible for depositing money and reporting accurate, itemized monthly financials covering dues collected, income and expenses from projects, and the bank-account balance. If a student leaves Dorchester Academy, funds the student paid in class dues, minus expenses already deducted for prom and the class gift, are refunded. Funds the student raised revert to the class account. All money derived from class fundraising belongs to the class and not to individuals. If funds remain in a class account at the end of the senior year, the class determines their disposition by majority written ballot. They may divide them equally among the students, maintain a perpetual class account, or donate them immediately to a 501(c)(3) organization such as Dorchester Academy.

Ninth grade. Class officers, president, vice-president, secretary, treasurer and class historian, are elected from contracted students in the fourth quarter of ninth grade. A student who has had significant disciplinary action during the current school year may be prohibited from election and must vacate an office if such an offense occurs while serving. If an office becomes vacant, the vice-president succeeds to the presidency. Any other vacancy is filled by class vote. The school liaison (a member of the administration) must be present at all class club meetings, and each club follows the Special Projects Policy, which is provided along with officer responsibilities at a meeting with the class sponsors.

Tenth grade. Class dues begin in the tenth grade, with the amount set by vote of the class members. Dues are collected to fund the class gift and prom (see the Special Policies Manual for more information on dues).

Junior class. The junior class is responsible for funding the Junior/Senior Prom, hosts the Homecoming Dance in the fall and the prom in the spring, and provides funds toward the senior gift to the school. The junior class officers propose class sponsors to the Head of School and include a brief biography covering education, employment, and affiliation with Dorchester Academy. Faculty and staff may not serve as class sponsors. The Head of School must approve class sponsors who are required to pass a background check in order to volunteer with students. Sponsors assist the class in preparing for prom and the class gift, attend club meetings, assist with fundraising projects approved by the administration, and offer guidance and support to all class members in accordance with Board-approved policy. No sponsor may hold a class meeting during the regular school day without the administration's permission, and no special meeting may be held that excludes class members or sponsors. Meetings should be scheduled before or after school or during the lunch block. Junior and senior classes may not raise money for a class trip. No money other than class dues may be raised before the junior year. Juniors may hold up to three fundraisers in addition to Homecoming and prom and an optional "junior prom" for younger students, if approved in advance by the Head of School, does not count against that limit.

Senior class. The senior class has sponsors consisting of two couples, both approved by the administration. Faculty and staff may not serve as class sponsors. The sponsors supervise all school-affiliated class fundraising events. The senior class is responsible for funding the Senior Class Gift and is given third priority on all events after the PTO and the Booster Club (see the Special Policies and Procedures Manual). The campus allows meetings and announcements exclusively for school-supported activities, and the senior class may not sponsor fundraisers using the school's name for unapproved events or trips.

If prom is held off campus without approval. Should the students decide not to hold prom on campus, there is no need for class sponsors or class officers, and no promotion of an off-campus activity not approved by the administration is allowed. If there is no prom, money raised through class dues and fundraisers is used for the class gift.

Prom

The Junior/Senior Prom is sponsored by the junior class and organized by a teacher prom committee. The Head of School has final approval of prom dates. Juniors and seniors must complete the prom form (Appendix D) and submit it to the office at least two weeks before prom. In order to attend the prom, all juniors must have paid their current dues and all seniors their share of the class gift.

- **Invited guests.** A guest who is not a Dorchester Academy student must be in the ninth grade or above but under twenty-one years of age; must be a student, or a graduate, in good standing at his or her high school and never expelled from any school; must provide, with the completed form, a copy of a driver's license showing age, and must carry that license at the prom; and must provide high school information in advance so the Head of School can verify good standing with the other school.
- **School attendance.** Students must be in attendance for the full day (as required by their schedules) on the last school day before prom in order to attend.

- **Conduct.** Prom is a school function. Accordingly, all applicable rules, regulations, and policies of Dorchester Academy, including its zero-tolerance policies, apply to all Dorchester Academy students and invited guests. A law enforcement officer is on the premises during prom with a breathalyzer in the event one is needed.
- **Prom night.** All students and invited guests must arrive by the published start time. Once inside, students may not exit and re-enter. A student who leaves may not return to participate in the prom. Students and their belongings, including purses, coats and jackets, are subject to search by the designated chaperones or school designee at any time, and students may not bring food or drink into the prom.
- **Waiters and waitresses.** Waiters and waitresses are chosen from students in good standing, must complete the prom form and follow school policies, must arrive one hour before the start time, and assist at the beginning and end of the processional line, keep food on the tables, and pick up trash.

School Clubs

The administration selects sponsors for school clubs. A club sponsor guides the organization, assists with the election of officers, attends all club meetings, and assists with special projects approved by the administration. Students may not distribute trinkets or food while campaigning for club office.

Beta Club (Grades 9–12)

Beta Club members must exhibit ethics and responsibility. Ethics includes integrity, good conduct, and good moral character. Violating the ethics of the club may result in immediate and automatic removal from the club under the school discipline plan. Responsibility includes paying club dues, attending meetings as required by the club by-laws, and participating in club activities and functions. Failure to fulfill these responsibilities results in consequences ranging from probation to removal from the club. Seniors with a cumulative 4.0 receive Beta Club stoles at graduation.

Membership requirements are as follows:

- A cumulative weighted GPA of 4.0 (an average of 90). The GPA and average are cumulative, not rounded, and are based on end-of-year averages from prior school years: ninth-grade eligibility is based on the eighth-grade end-of-year average; tenth grade on the end-of-year GPAs for grades 8–9; eleventh grade on grades 8–10; and twelfth grade on grades 8–11. Honors classes are converted to a numerical average and not rounded.
- Induction of new members is held at an assembly.
- Members must meet all other participation requirements of the National Beta Club Constitution. Students who have had an Administrative Disciplinary Review are not eligible to be inducted, or to participate, for one year from the date of the infraction, and must submit a written statement of remorse to the sponsor before reinstatement.
- If a member's semester average falls below an unrounded cumulative 90, the member is placed on probation until an unrounded cumulative 90 is regained at the end of the semester.

If it is not regained by the end of the following semester, membership is withdrawn. Members on probation may attend meetings but may not vote or hold office.

- Eligibility status is sent to students before the drop/add period each year.

Junior Beta Club (Grades 6–8)

Membership requirements are as follows:

- A cumulative average of 90 in the core content areas, reading, English, mathematics, science, and social studies. The average is cumulative, not rounded, and is based on end-of-year averages from prior school years: sixth-grade eligibility is based on fifth grade; seventh grade on grades 5–6; and eighth grade on grades 5–7.
- Induction of new members is held at an assembly.
- Members must meet all other participation requirements of the National Beta Club Constitution. Students who have had an Administrative Disciplinary Review are not eligible to be inducted or to participate for one year from the date of the infraction and must submit a written statement of remorse to the sponsor before reinstatement.
- If a member's semester average falls below an unrounded cumulative 90, the member is placed on probation until an unrounded cumulative 90 is regained at the end of the next semester. If it is not regained, membership is withdrawn. Members on probation must still attend meetings but may not vote or hold office.
- Eligibility status is sent to students before the drop/add period each year.

Fellowship of Christian Students

Purpose: to promote Christian fruit by serving the school and community. Membership opens each August and is unlimited. Members must be willing to attend club meetings and participate in club projects and activities, must abide by the No Pass–No Play policy, and may not have had a disciplinary review with the administration.

History Club

The High School History Club was created for students passionate about exploring and preserving the past. Members organize historical reenactments, visit historical sites, collect and preserve time capsules, and archive and restore Dorchester Academy's historical artifacts. The club gives students a platform to deepen their understanding of historical events while developing research, critical-thinking, and presentation skills. Members of the club also raise funds to offer an annual History Club scholarship to a senior member.

Interact Club

Purpose: to sponsor monthly community service projects at the school, local, national, and international levels. Sponsored by the local Rotary Club, the Interact Club opens for membership in early September each year, and membership is unlimited. Members are divided into committees, must be willing to attend meetings and participate in service projects, may not miss more than two meetings, must abide by the No Pass–No Play policy, and may not have had a disciplinary review with the administration.

Student Government

Purpose: to provide leadership opportunities for students. Elections are held in grades 8–12 each September for two class representatives and one senator. The senator serves on the Executive Committee. Members must attend meetings, abide by the No Pass–No Play policy, and may not have had a disciplinary review with the administration.

Ambassadors

The Dorchester Academy Ambassadors (grades 8–12) is a student-led organization dedicated to fostering a welcoming environment. Members represent the school by assisting with events, giving tours to and mentoring new students, and promoting school spirit. The club builds leadership and communication skills and creates a supportive community for all students. Officers are selected by the Head of School in September, and members must have been Dorchester Academy students for the two preceding consecutive years. This group of distinguished Raiders is well known for its maroon blazers adorned with the school crest.

School Rings

The wearing of a school ring is a privilege granted by Dorchester Academy. Juniors are permitted to order the school ring and participate in a ring ceremony.

Yearbook

Senior superlatives. The Challenger staff conducts the senior superlative process.

Miss and Mister Challenger. The Challenger staff holds an election among the high school classes to choose a female and a male representative from each class. Class representatives are announced on the Friday of voting week. When voting, students should keep in mind the following guidelines: representatives should be in good academic standing, should have completed at least two years at Dorchester Academy, should be active in school and community, and may not have been previously featured on a Miss & Mister Challenger page. Representatives are asked to take a picture on make-up picture day and to obtain and submit a letter of recommendation to the staff.

Student Parking and Driving

Driving to school is a privilege, not a right. Students must park only in their designated area. Parking is not permitted on the roads entering or exiting school property. Parking in front of the gym is a fire-code violation, and handicapped parking next to the buildings is reserved. Parent and student drivers may not block driveways or exits at any time.

Once a student drives onto campus in the morning, the student may not leave until the end of the school day, and the parked vehicle is off limits until then. Students may not sit in cars before or during school and may not return to the parking lot during the school day without permission from a teacher or the front office. Students returning from the lot must re-enter through the front doors, not side doors, unless accompanied by a teacher. Drivers are responsible for the actions of their passengers while driving on campus.

A student observed driving recklessly will have driving privileges revoked for a period determined by the Head of School, with longer revocations, up to the remainder of the school year, for additional offenses. The administration also reserves the right to revoke the driving privileges of students with disciplinary offenses.

16. Dress Code

General Standards

The Dorchester Academy dress code requires students to demonstrate clean and neat dress. The basic responsibility for the appearance of Dorchester Academy students rests with the parents and the students themselves. Students must be well groomed at all times, with neat and clean clothing and hair. Students are preparing for their futures in the world of work and should demonstrate the ability to dress appropriately. Modes of dress and styles of hair for all students shall conform to standards of good taste, modesty, and neatness.

When the administration or a teacher notes improper dress, the student will be temporarily removed from class and given administration-approved school apparel, which must be returned in good condition at the end of the day, or a fee (Appendix B) will be charged to the family's FACTS account. Teachers, volunteers, parents, and substitutes must abide by the dress code while in the school. The dress code is enforced through the demerit system. Tattoos must remain inconspicuous and not visible on exposed skin, including at school activities on or off campus.

Dress code common sense — be honest with yourself. Is it too short, too tight, or too revealing? Is it disruptive, offensive, or provocative? Does it draw inappropriate attention to parts of the body? If the answer to any of these questions is yes, do not wear it, out of respect for yourself and for Dorchester Academy. A student who breaks the dress code will be required to take the necessary steps to correct the concern, and all incidents are recorded in FACTS. A student who breaks the dress code more than three times in a year is considered in defiance and will be disciplined accordingly. **If it is in question, do not wear it to school.**

K2 – Grade 5 Dress Code (All Days Except Chapel Days)

- All clothing must adhere to standards of modesty, be neat, fit properly, and be in good taste.
- No vulgar, obscene, or otherwise inappropriate symbols, language, art, or wording is permitted on clothing; no endorsement of alcoholic beverages or tobacco products is permitted; and labels that mimic inappropriate products are not acceptable.
- No bare midriffs.
- No pajamas or hats, except on special dress-up days.
- Shorts and skirts must be visible beneath shirts and sweatshirts without constant tugging to pull them down.

Grades 6–12 Dress Code

- No clothing with vulgar, obscene, or otherwise inappropriate symbols, language, art, or wording; no endorsements of alcoholic beverages, tobacco products, or other contraband; and no labels that suggest, imitate, or resemble inappropriate content, which today's fashion often mimics.

- No bare midriffs; no strapless, backless, or spaghetti-strap tops or dresses (all straps and tanks must be "three fingers," or approximately two inches, in width); and no clothing significantly revealing the back.
- Shorts, skirts, and dresses must be no shorter at any point than the student's fingertips with arms extended and resting at the sides; any tears or shredded areas must likewise fall below the fingertips.
- No nylon shorts, bike shorts, sweatpants, yoga-style pants (bell-bottom or legging), leggings, jeggings, athletic shorts, bathing suits, or boxer shorts.
- Undergarments must not be visible, and pants must be worn correctly with the waistband situated appropriately.
- No pajamas.
- Boys must be clean-shaven at all times, with no facial hair and no hair exceeding the collar.
- No piercings except ears for girls; no nose rings; no earrings for boys.
- Only natural hair colors are permitted.
- Shoes must be worn at all times during the school day; shoes with skates, cleats, army-style boots, and bedroom slippers are not proper.
- Hats and ball caps are not allowed in the building; a student repeatedly in violation may be told to keep them in a locker or not bring them to campus.

Note: special dress, costumes, or attire may be worn for special occasions when approved by the administration.

Chapel and Awards Program Dress

All students wear casual-dressy clothes on Chapel days (Wednesdays) and for awards programs. For boys, this means a collared shirt (tie requested) tucked into dress pants, with closed-toe shoes; jeans are not allowed. Boys in K2–grade 5 may wear dress shorts, such as khaki, on Chapel days in hot weather. For girls, this means a dress, skirt, or dress pants or capris with an appropriate blouse, and appropriate shoes or dressy sandals. Camouflage clothing, hoodies, and sweatshirts are not allowed on Chapel days.

Field Trip Dress

Dress for field trips must be approved by the school administrative staff. Students represent the school and should always dress in a manner befitting the integrity of a Dorchester Academy Raider. Unless the activity requires casual clothing, students are expected to adhere to Chapel-wear guidelines. The administration's approval is required in advance if the destination calls for an alternate dress code.

17. Health

Injury and Illness

Any injury or illness must be reported immediately by the student to the teacher in charge, who will send for the appropriate personnel to assist. The parent or guardian will be notified as necessary. In a serious emergency, 911 is called first and the parents are notified next; if the student must be transported to the hospital before the parents arrive, the Head of School or a representative of the school will accompany the student. Teachers file a Student Incident Report with the nurse for any injury on school property, and any such injury should be reported immediately.

Students may not attend school within 24 hours of a fever (without fever-reducing medication) or of vomiting related to an illness. A student sent home from school with a fever or vomiting related to an illness may not participate in school activities for 24 hours.

Medications

The school provides supervised storage of prescribed medication upon the written, signed request of the parent. The request must contain explicit instructions for administering the medication, and the medication must be in its prescribed bottle. Any medication brought to school must be given to the receptionist. Only the receptionist, the administration, or a person appointed by the administration dispenses prescription or non-prescription substances, with parental permission, and all medications are taken in the presence of school personnel. The school does not provide over-the-counter medications (e.g., Tylenol, Tums, cough drops). Parents may send them with a signed Permission to Administer Medication form, in the original container, in a sealed bag labeled with the child's name and dosage. Questions on this policy should be referred to the administration.

Head Lice

Dorchester Academy has a no-nit policy, which provides for the exclusion of a child from school and school-related activities until all head lice, eggs (nits), and egg cases have been removed. Upon returning, the child should be checked by the office before returning to class.

School Insurance

As required by the South Carolina Independent School Association, Dorchester Academy carries catastrophic insurance coverage on all registered students. Additional student insurance may be available for purchase by parents.

18. Athletics

Dorchester Academy offers a complete athletic program for Middle and Upper School students, of which the school is extremely proud. The Athletic Director organizes all athletic events, identifies coaches for employment, maintains the athletic facilities, and supervises the program. In addition to a varsity program competing in the South Carolina Independent School Association, the school fields junior varsity and junior high programs, allowing younger athletes adequate training and guidance before reaching the varsity level. B- and C-team programs are offered when participation allows. Alcohol and smoking are prohibited on the Dorchester Academy campus.

Athletes may not drive themselves to an away game in which they will be playing. An athlete who does so is ineligible to play in that event and/or the subsequent event.

Eligibility

To practice with or participate on any Dorchester Academy athletic team, a student must be a contracted student and must have met the daily attendance requirement to be counted present, namely three periods of the regularly scheduled day, excluding lunch. The only exceptions are bereavement and a doctor's excuse (meeting the criteria in the attendance policy) for the student or for a parent, guardian, sibling, or grandparent. Students must pass a physical examination and file a parent permission slip before participating in practice. Eligibility rules apply to all students.

No Pass–No Play

Eligibility is determined by report-card grades for the first, second, and third quarters and by yearly averages for the following year. Junior varsity, junior high, and varsity students must pass all courses to be eligible for sports at Dorchester Academy. A student who fails a course may recover the course during summer school and regain eligibility. Any student ineligible for athletics under SCISA rules may not play in any interscholastic contest, including scrimmages, and a student who was not a member of the team in good standing at the time of the season's last game is not eligible for any post-season game, such as an all-star, parent–student, or faculty–student game. Questions regarding eligibility should be directed to the Athletic Director, who governs this policy.

SCISA Code of Conduct

All student-athletes, coaches, and spectators are expected to follow the SCISA Code of Conduct at all athletic events. Any fines or fees levied against a coach or player for misconduct are paid by that coach or player. See the Dorchester Academy Athletic Handbook for more information.

19. Guidance

The administration and the Guidance Counselor strive to help each student use his or her abilities to the fullest, make sound choices, and develop self-understanding. Both academic and personal counseling are available. Guidance services at Dorchester Academy include the following:

1. schedule advisement and changes;
2. testing services;
3. college and vocational counseling;
4. college visitation;
5. college catalogs and applications;
6. scholarship and grant information;
7. college transcript preparation;
8. referrals for special education services (psychological testing; vision and hearing screening; etc.);
9. referrals for Unique Learning Plans (ULPs); and
10. referrals for mental-health counseling.

Seniors applying for college must submit paperwork to the Guidance Counselor two weeks before the due date.

20. Facilities Usage

The policy concerning use of school buildings and property was established by the Board of Trustees. Use of the facilities after school hours requires a waiver unless the event is school-sponsored, and authorization must be cleared with the Head of School and/or the Athletic Director. Events are scheduled on the school calendar to avoid conflicts between groups. Tobacco use and consumption of alcohol are prohibited in all facilities. School buildings, the gym, the athletic fields, and the lunchroom may be used for school purposes and certain designated civic affairs. The rental fee and damage deposit for outside use of a building are stated in Appendix B. The user is responsible for all clean-up to the satisfaction of the Head of School and/or the Athletic Director before the deposit is returned and must complete a Facility Use form (see the Athletic Handbook).

Gymnasium Policies

The Board of Trustees has adopted the following gymnasium policies:

1. Authorization to use the gym must be cleared by the Head of School and the Athletic Director.
2. The Athletic Director issues keys to all head coaches, who must keep the gym locked when it is not in use.
3. Food and drink are allowed in the gym during home games only if purchased in the concession area; all trash goes in the receptacles provided. Ice may be used from the ice machine with the Athletic Director's permission.
4. Smoking is prohibited in the gym at all times by order of the Fire Marshal.
5. Tennis shoes must be worn on the gymnasium floor.
6. The gym may not be used for athletic or other activities unless the sponsor, coach, or parent responsible for the activity is present; there is no running or playing in the gym without adult supervision.
7. No one is allowed on the stage or in the locker or dressing rooms without the permission of the coach or teacher in charge of the activity.
8. Each coach is responsible for cleaning the gym; the school provides maintenance supplies, and school maintenance personnel thoroughly clean the floor and restrooms as needed.
9. No one touches the sound system except the Head of School, the Athletic Director, or their designee.
10. There is no "free shooting" on the basketball court during halftime of any game.
11. The Head of School and/or the Athletic Director will enforce any rules not covered under this policy; see the Athletic Handbook for gym rental information.

21. Special Projects and Fundraising

Objective. This policy provides guidance and establishes rules and regulations to govern and limit the number of fundraising projects held annually by organizations affiliated with Dorchester Academy.

Applicability. The policy applies to all extracurricular fundraising activities, clubs, and groups outside normal classroom efforts, including class organizations, the PTO, and the Booster Club. The school's insurance policy prohibits the presence of dogs in the school facility or on school grounds. Please help keep the facilities clean by taking all trash to the trash cans after events.

1. **Approval and scheduling.** The Head of School must approve all events and projects before they are scheduled, is authorized to approve an event and later inform the Board of Trustees, and maintains the master calendar. The Head of School must approve the date of every event to prevent two or more organizations from duplicating fundraisers at the same time.
2. **Pre-approved events.** A list of fundraisers is approved annually by the administration.
3. **Facility usage.** There is no facility fee for use by a Dorchester Academy-affiliated organization; however, any group using the facilities must clean them after each event to the administration's satisfaction, or a cleaning fee (Appendix B) will be assessed.
4. **Vendors.** Vendors, including food trucks, incur a flat fee per event (Appendix B).

Alma Mater

*Brotherhood and fellowship
at our school abound.
Forward together — onward forever,
never giving ground.
Unity and loyalty, dignity and truth,
we'll give these to you
and bravely fight and strive.*

*Dorchester Academy, long may you stand;
hallowed halls of memories be our guiding hand.
Mighty Raiders, oh, we are marching
to triumph and to success.
We bear the shield of honor
and promise you our best.
Hold high the torch of wisdom
with spirit and with good cheer;
we hail thee, Alma Mater,
DORCHESTER ACADEMY!*

(Composed by Mrs. Miriam Berry Jordan)

Appendices

The appendices contain the information that changes from year to year. They are reissued annually by the school office and supersede all earlier versions. The policies in the body of this handbook remain in effect until formally amended.

Appendix A — Directories (Published Annually)

The directories below reflect the school year in which this appendix was issued.

Board of Trustees

Name	Position
Rachel Pendarvis	Chair of the Board
Todd Williams	Vice Chair; Director — Finance
Brittany Wamer	Secretary; Director — Academics and Stakeholder Engagement
Boyd Owens	Director — Athletics
Stacy Gaillard	Director — Development
Luke Downey	Director — Technology
Trent Pendarvis	Director — Buildings and Grounds

Administration

Name	Position
Colonel Scott Gibson III	Head of School
Ruth Anne O’Cain	Assistant Head of School
Heather Judy	Upper School Coordinator
Gracie Lott	Lower School Coordinator
Michael Nelson	Athletic Director
Shelly Hodge	Financial Director
Cayce Collins	Guidance Counselor
JT Whetsell	Director of Operations
Emily Howle	Director of Special Services

Faculty

Name	Position
Gracie Lott	Lower School Coordinator
Sara Pope	K2 Teacher
Kristen Hatchell	K2 Assistant
Kaysie Drumheller	K2 Teacher
Darla Kirven	K2 Assistant

Name	Position
Sherry Collins	K3 Teacher; DSS Director
Chloe Berry	K3 Teacher
Corey West	K3 Assistant
Elizabeth Brown	K4 Teacher
Nichole Goodman	K4 Teacher
Teresa Kizer	K4 Assistant
Deb Bair	K4 Assistant
Jess Brooker	K5 Teacher
Melissa Smith Byrd	K5 Teacher
Sherry Brownlee	1st Grade Teacher
Jennifer Weathers	1st Grade Teacher
Sandi Wimberly	2nd Grade Teacher; Educational Technology Coordinator
	2nd Grade Assistant
Jennifer Berry	3rd Grade Teacher
Kacey Horton	4th Grade Teacher
Robine Jackson	5th Grade Math and Science Teacher
Erin Johnston	5th Grade ELA Teacher
Kelly Connor	Lower School PE/ Intervention
Vonnie Knight	Lower School Art Teacher
Heather Judy	Upper School Coordinator, High School Social Science
Colonel Scott Gibson, III	Head of School, 6th grade Grammar Teacher
Amber Donohue	Middle School Math Teacher
Bailey Downey	Middle School Reading Teacher
Victoria Strang	Middle/High School Art Teacher
Thomas Sandifer	Middle School PE Teacher
Enia Woodard	Middle School Science Teacher
Rachel Chapiesky	Middle School English Teacher
David Mullins	Middle School Bible Teacher
Ashton Orvin	Middle School Social Studies Teacher

Name	Position
Julie McAlhany	High School Government, Yearbook, Media Coordinator
Kim Showler	High School English Teacher
Taylor Traxler	High School Math Teacher
Becky Smith	High School Computer Science, Economics, Personal Finance Teacher
Nick Chinnners	Assistant AD, Assistant Varsity Football Coach, Weightlifting, High School Biology Teacher
Lynn Murray	High School Anatomy, Middle School PE Teacher
Bryan Jordan	High School U.S. History Teacher
Ruth Anne O’Cain	Assistant Head of School , High School Bible, Pro Team
Michael Nelson	Athletic Director, Varsity Football Coach, Weightlifting, High School Physics Teacher
Cayce Collins	Guidance Counselor, High School Chemistry Teacher
Becky Reeves	Librarian/Intervention
Jesse Cockcroft	Music Teacher
Erwin Mendez	Spanish Teacher

Cafeteria Staff

Name	Position
Kimmi Judy	Cafeteria Manager
Becky Welch	Cafeteria Assistant
	Cafeteria Assistant

Support Staff

Name	Position
JT Whetsell	Maintenance
Jan Pendarvis	Nurse
Nan Clayton	Office Secretary
Wendy Kizer	Administrative Assistant

Booster Club Officers

Name	Position
Brian Reeves	President
Jamie Carn	Vice President
Kara Pendarvis	Secretary
Maggi Bryant	Treasurer

Parent–Teacher Organization (PTO) Officers

Name	Position
Elizabeth Brickle	President
Holly Britt	Vice President
Charlie Bonnette	Secretary
DiDi Mizzell	Treasurer
Chloe Berry	Teacher Liaison
Tiffany Jordan	Hospitality Coordinator
Katie Eadon	Fundraising Coordinator

Appendix B — Schedule of Tuition, Fees, and Charges (Published Annually)

Tuition rates and payment-plan details are set by the Board of Trustees and distributed with the annual enrollment contract. The fees below are referenced throughout this handbook.

Item	Amount
New Student Enrollment Packet application fee	\$25.00
New-student registration fee (K5–12; non-refundable)	\$500.00
Building Fund — total family requirement	\$1,000.00
Building Fund — annual installment (due in April)	\$100.00
Payment-plan change fee	Set by the Financial Office
Late fee on past-due tuition (after the ten-day grace period)	5% of the past-due balance
Lunch-account delinquency threshold (cafeteria privileges suspended)	\$200.00
Seat-time recovery (per hour)	\$25.00
Administrative/after-school detention (per hour)	\$25.00
Detention fee at 8 accumulated demerits	\$50.00
In-school suspension (per day)	\$100.00
After-Care (monthly, per student)	\$170.00
Dress-code apparel not returned in good condition	\$25.00
Field-trip bus fee (per trip)	\$5.00
Facility rental (outside groups, per building)	\$150.00 plus \$50.00 damage deposit
Facility cleaning fee (affiliated groups, if cleaning is unsatisfactory)	\$150.00
Vendor/food-truck fee (per event)	\$75.00

Appendix C — School Calendar and Daily Schedule (Published Annually)

The school calendar — including the first and last days of school, holidays, exam days, and scheduled events — is distributed each year and posted at dorchesteracademy.org.

Daily Schedule

Item	Time
Doors open	7:35 a.m.
School begins (students seated in homeroom)	7:55 a.m.
Doors close; students arriving later are tardy and must sign in	8:00 a.m.
K5-and-below escort from lobby (during announcements/devotion)	8:15 a.m.
Dismissal — K2–K3	2:20 p.m.
Dismissal — K4–Grade 5	2:25 p.m.
Dismissal — Grades 6–12	2:35 p.m.
All students off campus (or sent to After-Care)	2:45 p.m.
After-Care available (Monday–Friday)	Until 6:00 p.m.

Appendix D – Forms

The following forms are available from the school office and, where noted, are reproduced below: the Medical Homebound form (available from the office), the STEM Participation Waiver, and the Prom Form.

STEM Participation Waiver

As a participant in STEM instruction at Dorchester Academy, I understand the importance of safety, responsibility, and respect for the tools and materials provided. By signing this waiver, I agree to the following terms:

1. **Proper use of tools and equipment.** I will use all tools and equipment only for their intended purposes, and I will follow all safety guidelines and instructions provided by the instructor.
2. **Maintenance and care.** I will handle all tools and materials with care to avoid damage and injury, and I will promptly report any damaged or malfunctioning equipment to the instructor.
3. **Clean-up responsibilities.** I will clean up my workspace after each class session and properly store all tools and materials in their designated areas.
4. **Respect for shared resources.** I will be considerate of other students by keeping shared spaces tidy, and I will not misuse or waste supplies.
5. **Consequences of misconduct.** I understand that failure to adhere to these guidelines may result in restricted access to tools and equipment, possible grade deductions on the assignment, and potential disciplinary action.

By signing below, I acknowledge that I have read, understand, and agree to abide by the terms outlined in this waiver.

Student Name (Printed): _____

Student Signature: _____ Date: _____

Parent/Guardian Name (Printed): _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ Date: _____

Prom Form

Dorchester Academy • 234 Academy Road, St. George, SC 29477 • (843) 563-9511 •
www.dorchesteracademy.org

This form must be completed in pen and returned to the office two weeks before prom.

To be completed by the Dorchester Academy student:

Student's Name: _____ Grade: _____

Student's Cell: _____ Parent's Cell: _____

I, _____, agree to obey all rules and regulations set forth by Dorchester Academy concerning student attendance at extracurricular events.

Student's Signature: _____ Date: _____

To be completed by the Dorchester Academy prom guest:

Name: _____ DOB: _____ Age: _____

Address: _____

Guest's Cell: _____ Parent's Cell: _____

Current School: _____ Grade/Year of Graduation: _____

School Phone Number: _____

I, _____, agree to obey all rules and regulations set forth by Dorchester Academy concerning student attendance at extracurricular events. I further state that I am a current student, or a graduate, in good standing at the school noted above. I am attaching a copy of my driver's license and promise to have it in my possession at the prom.

Guest's Signature: _____ Date: _____