

# Parent Handbook 2025-2026



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# History

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Harambee Christian School began as a program of Urban Concern. The work of Urban Concern began in the South Linden community in 1991 as a ministry of Dwell Community Church. Prior to the opening of the school, Urban Concern provided several services and programs, but the need for a quality educational opportunity continually surfaced.

In response to this great need, Harambee Christian School opened in the fall of 1998 in a leased laundromat space at 1474 Cleveland Avenue with fourteen kindergarten students and a teacher / principal, Alex Steinman, M.Ed. As the school grew by one grade each year up through fifth grade, the logistics became more challenging. Classrooms and office space were located in residential homes, some of which were several blocks away from the laundromat.

In 2007, Dwell Community Church and many other generous foundations and individual donors helped to raise support for the newly constructed Harambee Community Center at 1000 Bonham Avenue.

In 2024, Harambee launched as an independent organization.

Today, Harambee Christian School serves approximately 160 students in preschool, elementary and middle school.

The term *Harambee* is Swahili, an East African language. The word means **“come together and move it forward”** and is the official motto of Kenya. The word is featured on the Kenyan coat of arms (pictured). John Perkins, a Christian leader and African-American social activist, adopted the term for his work in Southern California. Harambee Christian School, in turn, borrowed the term from Dr. Perkins.





# Mission

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The mission of Harambee Christian School is:

## **To help inner city youth overcome challenges and thrive in the body of Christ**

Education plays a key role in equipping young people to overcome the challenges in their lives. Harambee Christian School provides a program of academic excellence and biblical truth and values in a loving environment.

Our vision is that Harambee graduates will graduate from high school and pursue college and careers that provide for their own needs and the needs of their future families. Even more importantly, our vision is that the students that graduate from Harambee will enjoy a lifelong relationship with Jesus Christ in the context of his church, the body of Christ.



# The Harambee Declaration

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## **WE CAN...**

WE CAN grow in love for God and others.

WE CAN learn, especially from our mistakes.

WE CAN accomplish great things that will make a difference forever.

## **BECAUSE WE ARE...**

WE ARE made in God's image, in an amazing and wonderful way.

WE ARE God's children, totally loved by him.

WE ARE God's masterpiece, and he has a special plan for our lives.

## **SO WE WILL.**

WE WILL dream & hope.

WE WILL courageously do what is right, unafraid of Satan or people or mistakes.

WE WILL be compassionate servant-leaders, following the example of Jesus.

"Harambee" is an African word. It means "come together and move it forward," which is what we are trying to do in our community.

**HARAMBEE! HARAMBEE! HARAMBEE!**



# Character Essentials

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## 1. Humility

- shows respect for others, especially authority
- follows directions
- allows accomplishments to speak for themselves, but celebrates the successes of others
- acknowledges and takes responsibility for mistakes and imperfections

## 2. Grit

- controls impulses
- resists distraction and remains focused on the discussion or task at hand
- refuses to quit in the face of discouragement
- finishes what he or she has started

## 3. Faith

- prays individually and corporately
- takes scary or uncomfortable steps of faith in response to God's truth
- takes an active interest in spiritual topics

## 4. Integrity

- tells the truth
- choices are guided by principles rather than by what is easy or popular
- trustworthy in friendships and with responsibilities

## 5. Zest

- contributes positive to class and school culture
- curious and eager to explore new things
- actively participates with energy and enthusiasm
- exercises a sense of humor

## 6. Hope

- thinks about and plans for the future
- sets and works toward goals
- demonstrates belief that hard work is important to long-term success
- gets over frustrations and setbacks quickly

## 7. Love

- able to place the needs of others first
- a peacemaker that helps restore relationships
- forgives and forbears with those who offend
- shows kindness and generosity
- treats all people with dignity and worth

## 8. Gratitude

- expresses thankfulness, rather than entitlement, for what he or she is given
- appreciates the blessings of God and others



# Statement of Faith

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While Harambee enrolls students from families who may not have belief in the Christian faith, the school does explicitly teach biblical truth. We consider a number of biblical doctrines to be central to our faith and vital to the integrity of all aspects of our ministry. We affirm significant historic creeds of the church, such as the Apostles Creed and the Nicene Creed.

## **The Bible**

The Bible is the inspired word of God. The 66 books which constitute the Bible are entirely reliable and truthful, and the Bible stands as the central authority over our lives, our faith and the direction of our church. We are committed to standard formulations of biblical inspiration such as the “Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy.” (2 Timothy 3:16; Matthew 5:18)

## **The Trinity**

Three persons eternally share the Divine Nature. The Bible refers to these persons as the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. God is both self-existent and personal. (John 14:10, 26; 15:26)

## **Jesus Christ**

Jesus Christ, the Son, is fully God and fully human. He lived a sinless life, died for the sins of humankind, was resurrected bodily on the third day, ascended into heaven and is coming again as King and Judge. Jesus Christ is the only provision that God has given for people to be reconciled to Him. Jesus’ life on earth also serves as the model for the Christian life. (John 14:6; Acts 4:12)

## **Holy Spirit**

The Holy Spirit is God. He indwells us at the moment we place our faith in Christ. He empowers us to live an effective Christian life by affirming our salvation, encouraging us and giving us the strength to live a life that is pleasing to God and personally fulfilling. The Holy Spirit also endows each believer with a unique spiritual ability to serve the church and the world. (John 14:16; Ephesians 1: 19-20; 1 Corinthians 12)

## **Salvation**

Salvation is reconciliation with God through the atoning work of Jesus Christ. God offers us salvation by His grace alone and we receive it as a gift through personal faith in the finished Work of Jesus Christ. This right standing before God must be received and cannot be earned. God freely offers salvation to all people, and our salvation is secure. (Ephesians 2:8,9; Romans 8:38,39; Ephesians 1: 13; 2:4)

## **Humanity**

Human beings are created in the image of God. As such, we are unique among all of God's creation. Through the abuse of our God-given free will, we have turned against God and this has resulted in spiritual death for all humankind. Humanity lives in a state of alienation and profound need which can only be satisfied by reconciliation with God through Christ. Without this reconciliation, all people stand under God's righteous judgment. Humanity, although fallen, maintains the image of God and is, therefore, still dignified and unique. God continues to love us and reach out to us, even though we are hostile to Him. Believers in Jesus Christ receive a new nature that becomes the foundation for a process of transformation. (John 3:16; 2 Corinthians 5:17)

## **The Church**

The church is composed of all those throughout history who place saving faith in Jesus Christ. The church is not an institution, but a people. God wants all Christians to live out their spiritual lives in a corporate context. This context of Christian love relationships is a crucial feature of our witness for Christ as it reflects God's character to the world. The church is God's chosen instrument through which the message of salvation is spread to all people. This mission is the central purpose for the church. We are to carry the good news locally and worldwide and demonstrate the gospel by relevant social action. (John 13:34, 35; 1 Corinthians 12:12-26; Matthew 28:19)

## **Satan**

Satan is the personal, spiritual adversary of God and God's followers. Satan actively opposes the work of the church and the spiritual vitality of Christians. We therefore take seriously, but in a balanced way, the reality of personal, spiritual opposition. Satan is doomed to final defeat and judgment when Christ returns. (Ephesians 6:12; Revelation 20)

## **Second Coming**

This age will conclude with the personal, bodily return of Christ. At that time, He will complete God's plan to re-establish His just and righteous rule over all humanity. (Matthew 24:29-31; Revelation 20)

## **The Afterlife**

At the final judgment, God will assign all people their eternal destinies-either life or judgment. Those who have responded to Jesus Christ with saving faith will receive the eternal life they have already been promised (John 5:24), while others will live under eternal judgment. Therefore, because eternal issues are at stake, there is an urgency to communicate the gospel. (Matthew 25:46; 2 Thessalonians 1:5-10)





# Daily Schedule

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## **Doors Open - 8:30 AM**

Parents are responsible for making sure children enter the building safely. The school will not be responsible for supervising or ensuring the safety of students dropped off before 8:30 AM or those who have not entered the building by 8:30 AM.

## **Breakfast - 8:30 - 8:45 AM**

Breakfast is served in classrooms for Grades K-3 and in the gymnasium for Grades 4-8. Students planning to eat breakfast must arrive by 8:40 AM to ensure service. Students not eating breakfast should arrive between 8:45 and 9:00 AM.

## **School Day Begins - 9:00 AM**

Students who arrive between 9:00 AM and 10:00 AM are considered Tardy. Students arriving after 10:00 AM will be marked as absent for half the day.

## **Lunch Periods**

11:30 - 12:15 : Grades K-4  
12:15 - 1:00 : Grades 5-8

## **End of School Day**

The school day ends at 3:30 PM. Students who are not in the After School Program must be picked up by 3:45 PM or incur a Late Pick Up Fee.

## **After School Program - 3:30 - 5:30 PM**

The After School Program is for students in grades K-5 who have been accepted into the program. Refer to the ASP Parent Handbook for the current policies and procedures regarding student pick-up.

## **Extracurricular Activities**

Various extracurricular activities are scheduled at various times throughout the school year. Parents must pick up their students at the scheduled end time of these activities.



# Breakfast & Lunch

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All Harambee students have access to free breakfast, lunch and after-school snack through the National School Lunch Program. All meals are nutritious according to federal standards and are catered by Arlene's Cuisine.

Students may also choose to bring a nutritious lunch. Students do not have access to a microwave for heating food. Additionally, red and blue dyed drinks are not allowed in the lunchroom because they stain the tables and floors. Students are not permitted to share food.

## **NSLP Non-Discrimination Statement**

In accordance with federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex (including gender identity and sexual orientation), disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity.

Program information may be made available in languages other than English. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication to obtain program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotope, American Sign Language), should contact the responsible state or local agency that administers the program or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339.

To file a program discrimination complaint, a Complainant should complete a Form AD-3027, USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form which can be obtained online at: <https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/ad-3027.pdf>, from any USDA office, by calling (866) 632-9992, or by writing a letter addressed to USDA. The letter must contain the complainant's name, address, telephone number, and a written description of the alleged discriminatory action in sufficient detail to inform the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (ASCR) about the nature and date of an alleged civil rights violation. The completed AD-3027 form or letter must be submitted to USDA by:

1. **mail:**  
U.S. Department of Agriculture  
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights  
1400 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; or
2. **fax:**  
(833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442; or
3. **email:**  
[program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov)

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.



# Attendance Policies

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There is a direct correlation between school attendance and academic success. Parents are requested to minimize absences and tardiness for reasons other than illness.

Please review the following attendance policies.

- An **excused** *absence or tardy* is due to personal illness, death of a relative, or family emergency.
- An **unexcused** *absence or tardy* is for a reason not acceptable to the school, such as oversleeping.
- Students who have more than six unexcused absences or who have missed more than 10% of school days in a school year are considered **excessively truant**.
- Students who have more than ten unexcused tardies or who have been tardy more than 10% of school days in a school year are considered **excessively tardy**.
- **EdChoice students that have 20 or more unexcused absences per school year will forfeit their scholarships, according to Ohio law.**
- **A student absent more than 20 days of school (excused or unexcused) per school year will be a candidate for retention and/or withdrawal.**
- **Students that are chronically absent or tardy from July through January will lose their priority status for re-enrollment the following school year. These students will apply during the open enrollment period.**
- Phone calls, emails, and voicemails are acceptable means to notify the office of an absence or tardy. However, the State of Ohio requires a written note (by hand or email) for all EdChoice students who are absent.
- Students who ride the bus will not be considered tardy if they are late to school on account of the bus.
- A written doctor's excuse is required for absences exceeding three consecutive days, five per quarter or ten per school year.
- For written excuses by email, please send to Mrs. Samantha Saunders at [saunderss@harambeechristian.org](mailto:saunderss@harambeechristian.org).
- The school office needs an excuse for **every day** a child is absent.
- Students who arrive late to school are considered unexcused tardy unless the parent contacts the school by phone or in writing with a legitimate excuse.
- Students may not receive credit for work missed during an unexcused absence.
- Students that arrive between 9:00 AM and 10:00 AM are considered Tardy.
- Students that arrive after 10:00 AM or who leave school before 2:30 PM are considered Absent for one half day.
- **The school administration may contact Franklin County authorities to report parents whose children are excessively absent or tardy.**

**Make Up Work:** It is the student's responsibility to make up missed homework and class work after an excused absence. Students are expected to take the initiative to seek out each teacher to determine missed assignments and due dates. If an absence is unexcused, the student may not receive academic credit for work missed.

**Anticipated Extended Absences:** Parents must notify the school principal prior to taking a child out of school for a family vacation or other planned absence. A ten (10) day notification is desired in order that parents, teachers, and student can plan together to ensure the student will not fall behind in his work. Although teachers will assist the student who misses school because of a planned absence, it remains the student's responsibility to obtain assignments and class notes, complete homework, and make up any tests or quizzes. A vacation during school may have an adverse impact on a student's academic achievement. We strongly recommend family vacations be taken during regular school breaks. We encourage parents to arrange planned absences only when alternative options are unavailable. **For the purpose of the EdChoice scholarship, the Ohio Department of Education does not consider vacation an excused absence.**

**Student Illness:** A student will not be admitted to school unless his/her body temperature is below 100 degrees, without medication, for twenty four hours. Students with communicable diseases will be allowed to return to school only after complying with regulations issued by the *State Department of Health*.



# Events

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Harambee benefits from a relatively small enrollment of students and families, which allows for a close-knit community. The goal of the events listed below is to build community and improve communication between home and school.

## **Open House August**

This event is recommended for all parents. It provides an opportunity for parents to learn more about Harambee, meet their child's teacher, and understand classroom routines. Childcare is available for children aged five and older for parents who need it.

## **Parent Conferences Fall & Spring**

Parent communication should occur regularly throughout the school year. Parent conferences provide an opportunity for parents and teachers to review your child's progress in detail. Additionally, parents and teachers should feel free to schedule conferences outside of the designated times as needed.

## **Family Christmas Party December**

The Family Christmas Party is an annual celebration of Jesus Christ's birth. Students perform, and the entire Harambee community, including parents, students, and staff, celebrates the Christmas holiday.

## **Teacher & Staff Appreciation May**

Harambee Teachers work extremely hard, and they persevere in love throughout the school year. Toward the end of the year, parents at Harambee organize Teacher Appreciation Day to acknowledge the love and diligence of the teaching staff. Students also make cards and show their appreciation.

## **End of Year Celebration Last Day of School**

On the last day of school, students enjoy a picnic and fun games & activities to celebrate a year of academic, character, and spiritual growth.

**Student Birthdays**

Parents are invited to bring a treat to celebrate their children's birthdays. Treats should be served at 3:00 PM. Please notify your child's teacher in advance.



# Curriculum

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HCS aims to build a solid academic foundation for every student, focusing on language arts and mathematics, as well as science, history, Bible, art, music, physical education, and technology. The goals of our curriculum include:

- alignment with state and national standards
- differentiated instruction to meet the individual needs of students, whether remedial or enrichment
- engaging students and inspiring a love for learning

Below is a list of curricula that the school currently utilizes to help students reach their academic potential.

**Language Arts:** 95 Percent, Great Minds Wit & Wisdom & Amplify ELA

**Mathematics:** Eureka Math<sup>2</sup>

**History:** Core Knowledge History & Geography

**Science:** Amplify Science

**Bible:** The Harambee Bible curriculum takes a holistic approach to help students understand who God is and his plans for their lives through the Bible. Students learn to love and praise God and share his love with others.

**Visual Art**

**Physical Education**

**General Music (Grades K-5) / Choir (Grades 6-8)**



# Academic Assessment

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## **Academic Honesty**

One of the Harambee Character Essentials is Integrity. A school community must value academic honesty and expect its students to uphold that value. All work submitted by students should be their own and genuinely reflect their ability. Teachers report all suspected cases of cheating, plagiarism, or dishonesty to the school principal. Students should expect to redo the work and receive a lower grade or a zero.

## **Grades**

Assessment provides valuable feedback to students, teachers, and parents about whether and how a student is making academic progress. Each curriculum includes regular assessments to ensure students are meeting the learning objectives.

Students receive academic and conduct grades each quarter. Student grades summarize the work the student has done and achieved during the academic period.

## **Honor Roll**

Students in Grades 5-8 with a Grade Point Average of 3.3 or higher will be recognized on the Honor Roll each quarter. Students who make the Honor Roll are invited to join a pizza lunch.

## **STAR & Acadience Assessments**

All students at Harambee take the STAR Reading and Math Assessments, as well as the Acadience Reading Assessment, three times each school year: August, December, and May. These assessments measure student performance and growth in reading and math.

## **Ohio's State Tests**

Harambee students also take the proficiency tests provided by the state of Ohio.

Third graders take the Ohio reading assessment in late spring. Students who score below the required score on the reading assessment by law must be retained in third grade, according to the [Third Grade Guarantee](#).





# Special Needs

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As a private school with limited resources, Harambee is unable to offer a special education program at this time. Therefore, for students who experience significant difficulties due to learning disabilities or behavioral/emotional challenges, the school may ask or require parents to seek evaluation through the Special Education Department at Columbus City Schools.

If a guidance professional diagnoses an enrolled student with a specific learning disability or emotional/behavioral challenges that the school cannot address, the student may no longer qualify for admission, and the building principal may require parents to withdraw the student.

If a health professional diagnoses an enrolled student with severe physical needs that the school cannot accommodate, the student might no longer meet admission requirements, and the building principal may ask the parents to withdraw the student.

Any student showing significant weakness in a core subject the year after retention will be considered to have academic needs that require more support than Harambee can provide. The building principal may then request the parents to withdraw the student.



# Retention

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Sometimes, a student's teacher and administrator may recommend or require that a student repeat his or her grade level. We consider several factors when deciding if retention is in the best interest of the student, including academic skills and achievement, the student's age and size, the student's skill level and motivation, and other social factors. Academic factors may include the following:

- Any student demonstrating significant weakness in Reading and/or Math may be considered a candidate for retention.
- Any student scoring below the 30th percentile on the MAP tests may be considered for retention.
- Any student consistently achieving 1's or 2's (in Grades K-2) or D's and F's (in Grades 3-8) in core academic subjects may be considered for retention.
- Students in Grade 3 who score below the state standard for the Ohio Reading Assessment will be required by law to be retained in Third Grade.

A decision about retention will involve a consultation process among the parent(s), teacher, and administrator, but the principal has the final say on whether to promote or retain a student.

In some cases, the administrator may decide that it is in the best interest of the student and the school for the student to attend a different school, including when there is no space available due to a full incoming class.



# Homework & After School Program

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## **Homework**

The decision of whether and how much homework students are assigned rests with classroom teachers. The time required for each homework assignment will differ depending on the student. Please inform your child's teacher if he or she spends more than one hour per night on homework on average.

## **The After School Program**

Harambee Christian School provides an After School Program (ASP) for students in Grades K-5. The hours of the ASP are 3:30-5:30 (Monday - Friday). Parents may apply for enrollment in the ASP at the school office. Enrollment is limited.

The ASP mainly helps students with homework. Students in the ASP also get chances for academic enrichment and other extracurricular activities.

Students must commit to maintaining a quiet work environment and being diligent to benefit from the help offered in order to participate in the ASP. A child's enrollment may be revoked due to ongoing behavioral issues. We will notify parents of disruptive behavior before taking action to remove a child from the program.

Students must be picked up no later than 5:30, or they will be charged a late pick-up fee.



# Transportation

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## Transportation Application

According to law, students who live more than two miles from Harambee Christian School and within the Columbus City School district qualify for either bus transportation or financial reimbursement.

Parents can apply for transportation to and from school through Columbus City Schools during the spring application period before the next school year begins. Please review the forms from Columbus City Schools carefully for important deadlines. Missing the deadlines could mean losing bus transportation or reimbursement.

## Bus Rules

**Students must follow the safety guidelines on all buses. See [“Riding the School Bus Safely”](#).**

Bus drivers are authorized by Columbus City Schools to submit official bus safety reports. Sometimes, Columbus City Schools Transportation may assign consequences to students who do not meet expectations for conduct and safety.

The Harambee administration also reserves the right to discipline students for conduct on the school bus.

The first report will lead to a letter home and possible consequences at school.

A second report will lead to parent contact and a possible suspension of 1 to 3 days from riding the bus.

A third report and subsequent reports will result in contacting parents and may lead to a suspension of riding privileges for a period ranging from 10 days to the entire school year.

Ultimately, Harambee administration can revoke bus privileges immediately if behavior is considered excessively inappropriate.

## Bus Procedures

If your child rides the bus and you don't want him or her to take it on a specific day, please call the school before 3:00 PM. The school office must be notified by a parent, not the student.

The driver will only pick up or drop off students at their regular bus stop at home or school. If you need to use different pickup or drop-off locations, please complete the Special Transportation Request form, which must be approved by the Transportation Director at Columbus City Schools.

Columbus Schools will remove the bus stop for any student who fails to ride the bus for 10 consecutive days.

**If your child rides the bus and does not arrive at their bus stop, immediately contact the school and Columbus Schools Transportation Services at (614) 365-5074.**



# Student Code of Conduct

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The Harambee staff aims to create a healthy, safe environment that maximizes learning and hard work, where students develop positive relationships with staff and peers. We strive to build a school culture rooted in both joy and rigor.

Parents indicate their acceptance of the school's code of conduct by enrolling their children at Harambee. Student discipline is the joint responsibility of teachers, school administrators and parents. Parents who choose not to cooperate with the school's Code of Conduct and its policies jeopardize their child's enrollment at Harambee.

## **School-Wide Rules**

The Harambee school-wide rules were created through a collaborative process involving students and are posted throughout the building. The expectations for students and staff in our community are based on the following principles of conduct.

1. Take care of yourself.
2. Take care of others.
3. Take care of our school.

## **The Goal of Discipline**

The Harambee staff adheres to a biblical perspective on student discipline. The Bible stresses that parents and other authorities should build healthy relationships with children. This involvement must include correction that is motivated by love. The Bible also clearly states that it is possible to misuse authority or be ineffective in training a child through overly strict rules and consequences that damage the relationship between child and adult and cause more harm than good to the child.

The goal of discipline at Harambee is twofold: to develop each student's character so they are prepared for life, and to ensure the physical and emotional safety of the school, making classrooms conducive to teaching and learning.

## **Discipline Strategies**

The staff at Harambee employs the following strategies in training students and maintaining a healthy school environment.

- 1. Build trusting relationship with students.*

Trusting relationships are the basis for the character growth and development that take place in the lives of Harambee students. To go beyond compliance toward an internalized value system, students must grow to trust the authority figures in their lives. The staff at Harambee is committed to doing our part to establish strong bonds of trust with students. We seek to interact with students in ways that meet their basic needs for inclusion, control, affection and competency. We find every opportunity to communicate in word and deed that our students are loved and accepted, regardless of their choices. When a student needs correction, we strive to administer consequences with empathy, rather than with anger, disgust or lecturing. We seek to avoid unnecessary power struggles.

## *2. Empower students to solve their problems.*

Another way to ensure students internalize character values is by making sure they own and solve their own problems. A key understanding is that the problem belongs to the student, and they are responsible for resolving or fixing it. The adult's role is to support the child in addressing whatever issues they have caused. We often ask questions like "What do you plan to do about that? How do you intend to solve that problem?"

Empowering students is especially important when they experience conflicts with one another. Staff have a duty to ensure students are safe. We want students to report physical or verbal bullying that occurs. However, sometimes students think that adults should solve all their problems for them. This is known as 'tattling'. Our goal is to teach students to resolve conflicts healthily among themselves before seeking help from adults.

## *3. Involve parents through communication and cooperation.*

The staff at Harambee understands that God has designated the parent's voice as the most important in the child's life. Our aim is to collaborate with parents for the child's benefit. Therefore, we strive to communicate regularly and build a trusting, cooperative relationship with parents. Teachers and administrators aim to contact parents to share positive choices the student makes and to ask for help when the child isn't responding to disciplinary measures at school. Parents should be responsive to communication from the school.

## *4. Celebrate positive choices.*

To foster a joyful culture and motivate students to make positive choices, we celebrate their growth in character and healthy behaviors. Each classroom teacher has their own methods for recognizing and encouraging good behavior. There are also a few school-wide strategies in place, including a morning video announcement.

## *5. Implement negative consequences for poor choices.*

Consequences are meant to be corrective and should match the nature of the infraction. It's impossible to list every behavior and consequence.

There are three categories of [consequences](#):

1. Break it. Fix it.
2. Loss of Privileges
3. Positive Time Out

Other behaviors are more severe or persistent and require more significant consequences, such as out-of-school suspension or a specific ongoing intervention to develop the necessary skills for success.

## **Behaviors**

Here are some examples of negative behaviors:

### Level 1 - Minor

- . Temper Tantrum
- . Unwilling to Cooperate
- . Lying
- . Misuse or Destruction of Property
- . Minor Physical Harm
- . Minor Verbal Harm
- . Playing in the Bathroom or Hallway

### Level 2 - Major

- . Cheating
- . Play Fighting
- . Disrespectful Words or Actions
- . Extended Temper Tantrum
- . Leaving Designated Area
- . Major Destruction of Property
- . Major Verbal Harm
- . Overt or Repeated Defiance
- . Inappropriate Language or Gestures

### Level 3 - Severe

- . Fighting, Instigating or Major Physical Harm
- . Theft
- . Inappropriate Touch or Behavior
- . Bullying & Harassment



- Leaving School Property
- Vandalism

The list below describes additional severe behaviors that may result in more serious consequences.

- Possession or use of illegal substances, weapons, or materials
- Gross disrespect or insubordination toward staff, including mocking, blatant refusal to comply or follow directions, walking away, etc.
- Acts of violence, fighting or unwanted physical contact with intent to harm
- Sexually inappropriate behavior, including language, gestures, sexting, touching, or the violation of bathroom privacy
- Abusive or profane language, including making a verbal or physical threat
- Inappropriate internet use
- Any form of bullying or harassment, including cyber-bullying, verbal or physical intimidation, including threats to harm
- Disregard for school policies and procedures

**NOTE:** The Student Code of Conduct applies to any act that damages the quality of the educational environment, whether the act occurs on or off campus, including online.

### **Common Consequences**

- Referral to Administrator
- Parent Contact
- Recess Detention
- Behavior Reflection
- Positive Time Out (Classroom, Hallway or Office)
- Middle School Lunch Detention
- Out-of-School Suspension
- Suspended Privileges:
  - Assigned Lunch Seat
  - Assigned Behavior Reflection
  - Ineligibility for Sports & Extracurriculars
  - Class Events & Field Trips
  - Specials Class Suspension

### **Chronic Behavior**

For chronic behavioral issues, students may be placed on an intervention plan and may also be required to sign a behavior contract. Parents will meet with school administrators to discuss the behavior, the intervention plan, and the contract.

- **Behavior Probation:** Behavior contracts place the student on probation. Behavior contracts may require mandatory counseling or evaluation. If a student violates the terms of the agreement, they may be permanently dismissed from Harambee Christian School.
- **Reduced School Hours:** Students who have difficulty demonstrating positive behavior consistently throughout the school day may be temporarily required to spend less time in school. For example, a student may be required to attend half days or be picked up early from school.
- **Emergency Removal:** If a student's presence at school poses a danger to persons or property or causes ongoing disruption to the academic process, then school administrators may decide to remove the student from the classroom and school premises. Parents or guardians will be notified, and the administration will assign a suspension period or may recommend permanent dismissal.
- **Permanent Dismissal:** In certain cases, due to the serious nature of the infraction and to ensure a safe and quality learning environment, the administration may recommend a student to the school board for permanent dismissal from Harambee. The decision to permanently dismiss a student is made by the school board.

While the above is an effort to delineate the disciplinary process, the administration reserves the right to exercise discretion in its application. When considering disciplinary action, circumstances, a student's best interests, and the well-being of the entire student body must be balanced. Effective disciplinary measures require the school to have some flexibility in how they respond to student behavior.

### **The Right of Appeal of Student Dismissal**

The parent or guardian may appeal the school board's decision to dismiss their student from Harambee by submitting a written notice of appeal to the school board (or its designee) within 10 days of receiving the school's formal written notice of dismissal. The appeal notice should include a request to meet with the board and the parent's reasons for why the dismissal should be overturned. Failure to follow the appeal process as described waives the right to appeal the dismissal. Only the child's parent or guardian is allowed to attend the appeal meeting. The school board's decision after the appeal hearing is final.

### **Statement on Human Dignity and Identity**

Harambee Christian School places a high value on the dignity of all human beings, as does God. We agree with the teaching of the Bible in Genesis 1:27: "God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them." With this in mind, we expect all students and staff to respect the

dignity of others and refrain from acts of harassment, intimidation, and bullying. We expect students and staff to recognize and honor the distinctive value, ethnicity, and biological sex God has created in each person from birth.

## **Bullying**

Harambee understands that all students have the right to a safe, secure academic environment. Everyone in the school community has the right to be free from harassment, intimidation, or bullying threats. Students should also feel safe reporting incidents of bullying to staff without fear of retaliation. School staff take seriously any words or actions that meet the definition of bullying as described in the [Bullying Prevention Resource Manual](#).

To ensure a safe and secure learning and work environment, members of the school community must follow the Bullying Prevention Resource Manual.

## **School Property**

The appearance of classrooms, school grounds, and hallways reflects on the entire school, especially students. All waste paper should be put in trash cans or recycling bins. Marking or damaging doors, walls, floors, lockers, desks, or any other school property is not allowed. Students caught vandalizing school property will face disciplinary action, and parents will be held responsible.

Students must reimburse the school for school-owned property (such as lockers, textbooks, or library books) that they have damaged or failed to return by the end of the school year.



# Computers & Electronic Devices

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## **Phone-Free School**

Harambee Christian School is a [phone-free](#) school.

We believe that the overwhelming evidence now available indicates that students' pervasive use of cell phones and screen technology, both within and outside of school, has had devastating consequences. Both wisdom and research prove that phone and screen usage have radically affected our students' minds, hearts, and spirits.

Electronic devices, such as cell phones, headphones, smart watches and electronic games, can serve to distract from the purpose of learning. They are not allowed for student use during school hours without explicit permission from a classroom teacher.

From when students arrive until they are dismissed, electronic devices must be stored in students' lockers or a designated storage location provided by a teacher.

Electronic devices may not be used to access inappropriate content on school grounds, including during after-school hours.

Devices outside of lockers during the day without permission will be confiscated and returned only to a student's parent or guardian at the discretion of the school administrator.

Students are also not allowed to take photos or videos at school without staff permission.

Students are not permitted to access the school Wi-Fi on their personal devices.

The school is not responsible for the loss of any such devices.

## **Acceptable Use Policy for School Computer Resources**

Harambee provides students with desktop computers, Chromebooks, and iPads for their use.

All students must agree to follow the *Acceptable Use Policy for Computer Resources*.

Any student who misuses a computer or violates the terms of the *Acceptable Use* agreement may lose access to school computers and face a monetary charge.

Harambee has made a substantial investment in our computer and network resources. To be good stewards of these resources, we have adopted the following guidelines.

Students have access to the computer and the Internet for the following:

- School-related assignments and assessments
- Using software and programs assigned by the teacher to supplement classroom materials
- Internet research
- School-related PowerPoint assignments

#### Guidelines

- All computer use must be for specific educational purposes assigned by a teacher.
- Internet searches must be for specific projects assigned by a teacher.
- Accessing gambling, pornography or non-school activity-related sites is prohibited.
- Changing computer settings and downloading software is prohibited.
- Students/parents must pay for damages or labor resulting from the improper use of computer resources.
- Failure to observe the above guidelines may result in temporary or permanent loss of computer privileges.
- The school network has a filter in place to block and monitor access to inappropriate sites. All attempts to access these sites are logged by the Information Services Department and reported to the building principal.



# School Counseling Program

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Harambee offers a Comprehensive School Counseling Program for all students and grade levels at no cost to families. The program is structured to follow the ASCA National Model as outlined by the American School Counselor Association (ACSA).

A comprehensive school counseling program addresses three domains of student development:

- Academic
- College/Career
- Social/Emotional

At Harambee, student development in these areas is viewed through the lens of their overarching spiritual development.

## **Direct Student Services**

The three main avenues by which the school counselor supports student growth is through classroom lessons, small group counseling, and individual counseling.

### Classroom lessons

All students receive counseling program curriculum via classroom lessons. The school counselor visits every classroom regularly to teach lessons that promote social-emotional, academic, and college/career development. Topics include understanding and managing emotions, self-control, growth mindset, building and maintaining friendships, conflict resolution, study skills, and career exploration, among others.

### Small Group Counseling

The school counselor provides small group counseling as needed to support identified students who share similar needs. Topics may include: new student transition, friendship, emotion regulation, family changes, grief, and leadership development. Groups will become available according to need and counselor availability.

### Individual Counseling

School counselors can provide short-term counseling that focuses on supporting immediate concerns, emotional needs, and skill building. Students, teachers, and

caregivers may request individual meetings for check-ins or short-term counseling. The duration of short-term counseling is typically between three and eight sessions. If a student requires additional support, the school counselor will provide referrals for outside counseling. The school counselor seeks to connect and collaborate with outside mental health providers and continues to be accessible to students for check-in meetings.

## **Indirect Student Services**

Counselors collaborate with and provide consultation for other school staff, teachers, parents/guardians, outside mental health providers, and community partners to support student growth.

## **Confidentiality and Limits to Confidentiality**

*Adapted from ASCA, 2016*

“The counseling relationship between students and their school counselor requires an atmosphere of trust and confidence. Students must trust the school counselor to be able to enter into a meaningful and honest dialogue with the school counselor (Iyer & Baxter-MacGregor, 2010). However, students should be informed that exceptions to confidentiality exist in which school counselors must inform others of information they obtained in the counseling relationship to prevent serious and foreseeable harm to students themselves or others and if it is legally required.

School counselors recognize their primary obligation regarding confidentiality is to the student but balance that obligation with an understanding of the family or guardians’ legal and inherent rights to be the guiding voice in their children’s lives (ASCA, 2016).”

School counselors work within the context of community, and seek to engage all stakeholders including families, school staff, and other significant relationships to support students. The utmost care is taken to protect sensitive information while also ensuring students receive the support they need across environments. Counselors discuss limits to confidentiality with students as a part of their role in protecting their safety and wellbeing.

## **References**

- American School Counselor Association. (2016). Ethical standards for school counselors. Retrieved from <https://www.schoolcounselor.org/asca/media/asca/Ethics/EthicalStandards2016.pdf>
- Iyer, N. N., & Baxter-MacGregor, J. (2010). Ethical dilemmas for the school counselor: Balancing student confidentiality and parents’ right to know. NERA Conference Proceedings 2010. Paper 15. Retrieved from [https://opencommons.uconn.edu/nera\\_2010/15/?utm\\_source=digitalcommons.uconn.edu%2Fnera\\_2010%2F15&utm](https://opencommons.uconn.edu/nera_2010/15/?utm_source=digitalcommons.uconn.edu%2Fnera_2010%2F15&utm)
- The School Counselor and Confidentiality. (n.d.). Retrieved July 14, 2021, from <https://www.schoolcounselor.org/Standards-Positions/Position-Statements/ASCA-Position-Statements/The-School-Counselor-and-Confidentiality>



# Parent Involvement

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For students to excel to their full potential academically, socially and spiritually requires the involvement and support of parents.

## **The Role of the Staff**

The staff at Harambee is committed to building trusting relationships with parents through frequent, professional and caring communication. Communication can take place through notes, phone calls, text messages, emails or meetings. Parent Teacher Conferences are scheduled twice per year, but we hope to maintain regular contact throughout the school year.

Duane Gray is the Student & Family Affairs Coordinator. He is available to provide or reference resources and programs for parents.

## **The Role of the Parent**

Below are a few ways that parents can stay involved in the education of their children at Harambee:

- **CHECK YOUR CHILD'S BACKPACK DAILY:** Typically, students bring home a variety of papers each night - homework, graded assignments, and memos from the school or teacher.
- **VOLUNTEER:** We encourage you to volunteer your time at the school. A list of current volunteer needs is available at <https://harambeechristian.org/volunteer>.
- **SCHOOL - HOME COMMUNICATION:**
  - Communication is vital to maintaining a healthy school community. Harambee encourages communication among parents, teachers, and students. For general school questions, please contact the office. For questions or concerns in a particular class, please contact the teacher. If a matter involves issues beyond the classroom, please contact the Student & Family Engagement Coordinator or the Building Principal.
  - It is imperative that the school has current and accurate contact information for parents and emergency contacts. Please inform the school if your phone number, address, or email address changes.
  - The school office is open before and after school from 8:30 AM until 5:00 PM. Calls after normal work hours will be picked up by our answering



system. If it becomes necessary to reach your child during the day, please contact the office first and the receptionist will assist you.

- The school office periodically calls or emails pertinent school information via FACTS Parent Alert. If you are not already receiving these messages, please contact the school office.
- Parent-teacher conferences are scheduled twice during the school year (see calendar for dates). Please take advantage of these times to meet with your child's teachers to discuss progress and/or concerns.
- Parents or teachers may request after school meetings as necessary. Report cards are sent home quarterly. Parents also have access to FACTS SIS for tracking their student's academic progress throughout the quarter. For instructions on how to setup a parent account to access your child's grades, please contact the school office.
- We understand that concerns may arise. If you do have a concern of any nature, please know that we want to hear your concerns. We do ask that you address your concerns to the appropriate person or people.



# Tuition & Financial Aid

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Harambee Christian School is a private, nonpublic school licensed by the state of Ohio. Many private schools primarily rely on tuition paid by parents. The annual tuition at Harambee is \$9500, which is a significant amount for parents who may not have the resources to afford a private school education.

Most Harambee students live in the South Linden community or other low-income areas where educational opportunities are often limited. Our aim is to ensure that financial resources do not prevent any family from accessing a high-quality, private education for their child.

## **The Ohio EdChoice Scholarship Program**

Harambee participates in the Ohio Educational Choice (EdChoice) Scholarship Program. The scholarship provides state funding for students to attend a participating private school.

Please visit the Ohio Department of Education and Workforce website for more information about the EdChoice Program.

<https://education.ohio.gov/Topics/Other-Resources/Scholarships/EdChoice-Scholarship>

Please note that parents will not be able to renew their child's scholarship if:

- a. Their child fails to take each state achievement test required for their grade level,
- b. Their child has more than nineteen unexcused absences during the school year, or
- c. They fail to complete the renewal process by the deadline

## **The Harambee Scholarship Program**

Since the tuition cost is \$9,500, the EdChoice Scholarship only covers a fraction of the expenses associated with attending Harambee.

Thanks to the contributions of many individuals, churches, and organizations, the Harambee Scholarship Program helps subsidize tuition costs, allowing students to attend at no cost to their families.



# Health & Safety

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## **Medication**

Any medication, food supplement, modified diet, or fluoride supplement that is to be administered at the school must have written instructions from a licensed physician (or dentist) for each item. Forms for authorization and instructions are available in the school office. All medication, food supplement, modified diet, or fluoride supplement must be stored in a secure place and administered only by the office staff or school nurse. Each time such items are administered, a written record or log is created and maintained for one year.

School administration may decide that a student diagnosed with ADHD or other conditions affecting the child's ability to learn must take prescribed medication before coming to school. In such cases, the school will inform the parent that the child is not allowed to attend if he or she has not taken their medication beforehand. Repeatedly failing to give the medication and sending the child to school could result in the child's removal from Harambee, especially when the child cannot learn or causes problems for others without medication (see the Special Needs Policy).

School policy is to administer over-the-counter medications only in rare cases and with parental consent, as indicated on the student registration form and/or by phone.

## **School Closings**

In case of severe weather, Harambee will close. We will notify parents via FACTS Parent Alert when there are emergency closings. Local TV stations will also announce school closures for weather-related or other emergencies.

## **School Security**

The main entrance is locked, and visitors are buzzed in during low-traffic periods—mainly between 9:00 AM and 3:00 PM. The school is also equipped with electronic door locks that can secure every classroom at once, in case of an emergency.

Harambee has an Emergency Operations Plan approved by the Department of Education and Homeland Security, located in the school office, with specific instructions on responding to various emergency situations.

## **Signing In and Out of School**

Students and parents must follow the procedure for signing in or out during school hours. If a student arrives after 9:00 AM or leaves before 3:30 PM, a parent or guardian must sign them in or out in the office. If a student needs to leave class during the day for an appointment, they should give the teacher a note from a parent at the start of class. The teacher will dismiss the student at the scheduled time to meet the parent in the school office.

## **Visitors**

For security reasons, all visitors must report to the main office, sign in, and receive an ID badge before entering. **Parents wanting to observe a class should schedule with the teacher and/or Building Principal in advance.** Student visitors, including friends of current students, need permission from the administration to visit during school hours.



# Student Uniform Dress Code

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## **Rationale**

Harambee students are required to comply with the school uniform dress code.

There are several reasons for having a uniform dress code.

- Uniforms are often less expensive for families than street clothes.
- Uniforms promote a sense of solidarity and belonging, rather than competitiveness and comparison.
- Uniforms help set a tone for learning and working hard, rather than merely playing.
- Harambee parents strongly support having a uniform policy.

## **Uniform Dress Code**

### **POLOS, SWEATERS & SWEATSHIRTS**

- Students may wear short-sleeved or long-sleeved polos in navy, white, or light blue. Students may wear generic polos without a logo or polos with the Harambee logo purchased at School Closet. No other logos are permitted.
- Students may wear white, short-sleeved undershirts under their polos. Other undergarments are not allowed.
- Students may wear navy or gray knit sweaters over their polos. Students may wear sweaters without a logo or sweaters with the Harambee logo purchased at School Closet. Students are not permitted to wear coats or other outerwear during class.
- Alternatively, students may wear Harambee Gear bought either at the School Closet or at the school, including T-shirts and sweatshirts.
- Students are not allowed to wear t-shirts or polos over sweatshirts.

### **PANTS & SHORTS**

- Bottoms are available at School Closet but can be purchased elsewhere.
- All pants and shorts must be plain khaki or navy, in traditional uniform style. Shorts must be Bermuda length.
- Cargo pockets, designer details, or scrunch bottoms/waistbands are not allowed.
- All pants and shorts must be worn with a plain, solid brown or black belt.

### **SKIRTS & JUMPERS**

- Girls may wear khaki or navy jumpers and skirts / skorts.
- All skirts and dresses must be worn with shorts underneath, solid color leggings, or tights. Patterned leggings, tights, and jeans are not allowed. Skorts do not require shorts or leggings.
- All skirts, dresses, and jumpers must be fingertip length.

## **FOOTWEAR**

- Closed-toe shoes are required. Open-toe shoes and sandals are not allowed. Traditional Crocs shoes are permitted if they are closed-toe.
- Students must wear tennis shoes on their designated gym day. Only middle school students are allowed to change into athletic clothing before class.
- Students are allowed to wear winter boots in bad weather.

## **OTHER**

- No logos are allowed on clothing except for the Harambee logo.
- Students may not wear hats or bandanas. Headbands and cultural or religious head coverings are allowed. Any type of bandana is not permitted.
- Students are not allowed to wear dangling or hoop earrings, choker necklaces, or makeup, including colored lip gloss.
- Students are required to stay in uniform during recess.
- Girls are allowed to carry a small purse.
- Non-uniform clothing items must be kept in lockers.

## **No Uniform Days**

Birthdays: Students can choose not to wear a uniform on their birthday. If a student's birthday falls on a weekend or during summer break, they can coordinate with their classroom teacher to establish a "No Uniform" day for celebration.

Field Trips: It is at the teacher's discretion whether students will wear uniforms on any given field trip.

The dress code for No Uniform Days includes the following:

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| • No hats  | • No spaghetti straps - must be at least two fingers wide |
| • No open-toed shoes                                   | • No sagging  |
| • No low-cut shirts                                    | • No dangling earrings or makeup                          |
| • No short skirts or shorts - must be fingertip length | • Leggings may not be worn as pants.                      |
| • No ripped jeans                                      |   |

## **Where to Purchase Uniforms**

Affordable uniform bottoms are available at the following stores:

revised April 06, 2023

- Target
- Old Navy
- Walmart
- Marshall's
- TJ Maxx
- Roses
- Shopper's World
- Thrift Stores

Charity Newsies provides vouchers for school uniforms that can be used to purchase uniform tops & bottoms from School Closet.

### **Non-Compliance Policy**

Students who do not come to school wearing proper attire will be asked to call a parent to bring the necessary uniform items.

Other consequences, such as lunch detention, in-school suspension, and out-of-school suspension, will be considered and discussed for students who repeatedly come to school without the proper attire.

### **Lost and Found**

Students who lose items should check the school lost-and-found box and ask the school office to find out where it is. Small items like jewelry or watches are kept in the school office.



# Non-Discriminatory Policy

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The governing board of Harambee Christian School located at 1000 Bonham Avenue in Columbus, OH 43211, has adopted the following racial nondiscriminatory policies.

The Harambee Christian School recruits and admits students of any race, color or ethnic origin to all its rights, privileges, programs and activities. In addition, the school will not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national and ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, employment, scholarship and loan programs, and athletic and other school administered programs.

The Harambee Christian School will not discriminate on the basis of race, color, or ethnic origin in the hiring of its certified or non-certified personnel.