

CCS EDUCATIONAL VISION AND PHILOSOPHY



Calgary Christian School

Our Vision

“GOD’S CHILDREN MAKING THE WORLD A BETTER PLACE”

Our Mission

“Calgary Christian School is a community, called and dedicated to integrate faith and learning, reaching for excellence in equipping responsive citizens of God’s Kingdom through Christ-centered educational environment.”

Calgary Christian School

Educational Vision and Philosophy

Calgary Christian School (CCS) is a dynamic learning community for families, teachers, administrators and other stakeholders interested in Christian education, called and dedicated to integrate faith and learning. Founded on a Christian and biblical world-view, CCS seeks to teach students how to live their Christian faith in the context of both the local and global community – that is why the vision for ourselves is:

“God’s children making the world a better place.”

CCS is dedicated to providing students with learning experiences that will produce outstanding outcomes in every discipline we teach. We embrace excellence for our students, but at CCS excellence is about developing the entire child — intellectually, emotionally, physically, socially and artistically. The standard of excellence is determined based on the gifts and abilities that God has given each individual child and on what that term means for each child. The Five Pillars of Excellence are central to CCS’s educational vision and philosophy, and are united by the common Spiritual Foundation that is integrated into each educational discipline.

Spiritual Foundation

At the foundation of all programming at Calgary Christian School is the Bible and the confession that God is central to our humanity. This is reflected in the CSCE Basis and Educational Creed (Appendix 1) which is and shall remain the biblical foundation of Calgary Christian School and the Society. We believe that children are unique image bearers of Christ. Therefore, we are committed to developing the individual gifts and abilities of each student so that they have a strong foundation to function effectively for a life of faithful and joyous service to God and neighbour, to work and to continued learning. The educational philosophy at CCS is for the Christian faith to be integrated into every facet of learning. We believe the purpose of education is to lead children to responsive discipleship.

Christian and Biblical Principles

In addition to the CSCE Basis and Educational Creed, the educational program at CCS will affirm the following principles related to the Christian faith:

Creation: In the beginning God - Father, Son and Spirit - called this world into being out of nothing and gave it shape and order. We believe that God reveals Himself through His creation and that despite the fall into sin, the original goodness of creation still shines through the character, structure and connectedness of things. We believe that all of creation is called to glorify His name.

Sin: People's disobedience to God has broken the relationship between God and us. Looking for life without God, we find only brokenness and death, leaving us blind to our place in the world and to the meaning of life.

Redemption: Jesus Christ, the eternal Word made flesh, conquered sin and death. Being both God and man, Jesus is the only mediator between God and His people. He alone paid the debt of sin; there is no other Saviour. It is through Christ that all areas of life, including education, are redeemed and restored. Therefore, it is only in Christ that we are able to discover the meaning and purpose of life. Jesus is Redeemer of the universe and all that is in it and is the only Savior of humankind. Christ, uses humankind as an instrument to restore everything in the world to His definition of how it should be.

The Holy Spirit: The evidence of Christ's redemptive presence in our life is the work of the Holy Spirit. Our children must be made aware that the presence of God, the Father, and the saving work of Christ through the working of the Holy Spirit remains with them always, also in their educational environment. It inspires and enables us to do God's will and to seek His glory in all things.

Scriptures: The Bible is the sole Word of God. It is the Word of Truth, fully reliable in leading us to know God and have life in Jesus Christ. It infallibly tells of God's mighty acts, reveals His will and His plan of salvation. Apart from studying the Word of God

diligently to know more about God's way of dealing with humankind, we also look to the Bible for guidance in developing a biblical world view.

Our Purpose: Our purpose is to serve our Lord, Jesus Christ. Since the rule of Jesus Christ covers the whole world, to follow the Lord is to serve Him everywhere, including the field of education. We must serve God in every area of our life, in obedience and out of thankfulness. We are, therefore, also required to direct the training of our children accordingly.

Our World: This world God has created belongs to Him and not the evil one. This is not a throw-away world. God will renew it rather than destroy it. This makes all actions to improve life on earth worthwhile. This also means that as a Christian school we will engage culture, not flee from it, and we will do so in the confidence that God is in control.

In the event that there is any interpretative distinction between the principles described in the Educational Vision and Philosophy Statement and the CSCE Basis and Educational Creed, the principles set out in the Basis and Educational Creed shall prevail.

Ensuring the Integrity of the Spiritual Foundation

As an alternative program of the Palliser Regional Schools District ("Palliser") the program at CCS is a partnership with parents, students, the Calgary Society of Christian Education (the "Society") and the Palliser Board and these partners agree that they will uphold all aspects of this Educational Vision and Philosophy Statement, including the CSCE Basis and Educational Creed. This means that all of the partners have a responsibility to ensure that the integrity of the school Spiritual Foundation remains strong. This will be accomplished by ensuring the following:

- That all parties to the partnership, including Palliser, will actively resist both internal and external influences or pressures that may weaken, diminish, dilute or undermine the Spiritual Foundation of CCS over time;
- That all aspects of the school's operation and educational program will support and be consistent with the Spiritual Foundation of CCS;
- That faith-inspired school activities for staff, student and the parent community such as corporate and individual devotions, worship and prayer, as well as Christian service and mission opportunities will remain an essential and mandatory part of the educational program at CCS;
- That the knowledge and understanding of God, the Bible and a Christian worldview will be integrated into the educational program.

The CCS Educational Program

Within a Christian environment, the school seeks to shape its curriculum and methodology using Christian principles. Because we believe children are unique image bearers of Christ, we are committed to developing the gifts of each student. We wish to nurture all children so that they can achieve excellence and be lead to discover, celebrate and proclaim, both individually and communally, the restorative power of God's work in all areas of life. We strive to provide knowledge, insight, and skills to equip them for a life of faithful and joyous service to God and their neighbour.

At CCS we recognize that God's presence in this world and Christ's hopeful message of restoration and redemption is revealed not just in biblical or religious studies, but through all aspects of our curriculum. It is essential to the CCS Education Program that as a school we not compartmentalize a Christian world-view, but to integrate it and reveal it in all aspects of learning.

Five Pillars of Excellence

The goal of CCS's educational program is to motivate each student as they work towards achieving excellence in all they do. At CCS "excellence" means striving for one's own best and fulfilling the potential that God has given each child. It is about challenging preconceived notions of what we are good at and daring to try what might frighten us. It is about developing our gifts and using them to impact the world.

Excellence in education is about developing the whole child — intellectually, emotionally, physically, socially and artistically. These five elements of excellence are central to the CCS Educational Program, but the cornerstone for each of these areas is the school's Spiritual Foundation. Integrated throughout each of these areas is our objective to encourage a child's spiritual formation and strengthen their faith commitment.

Intellectual Excellence:

- Intellectual excellence is about exploring the beauty and mystery of all God created for us and possessing the knowledge, skills and attitudes required for academic success and to be responsive citizens in all aspects of God's Kingdom.
- The educational program at CCS is about ensuring that students have the academic and intellectual tools they require to become active and engaged citizens with an ability to impact the world in a positive fashion.
- All students will be encouraged to develop creative and critical thinking through the proper use of Biblical criteria for evaluation.

Artistic Excellence

- At CCS, artistic excellence is about reaching to explore the world in unique ways — to find the Mozart, DeVinci or Monet in each student for the glory and honour of God.

- At CCS we will encourage children to find God's beauty and Christ's common grace in many diverse forms of artistic expression, not just those that are overtly Christian.
- Artistic expressions, whether through music, drama, woodworking or broadcast journalism, are an integral part of a complete education. They provide students with unique opportunities to develop their gifts and self-confidence.

Emotional Excellence

- Emotional excellence is about working towards an acceptance of who God has made us to be. It's a daily challenge that follows us throughout life. For students, acceptance from peers, body image and pressure to perform are just a few of the emotional barriers that can impact their school experience.
- Students are taught to model Jesus Christ by being responsible for themselves, others and property, and to treat everyone with love and respect.
- Strong emphasis will be placed on each student possessing the character to do what is right, act morally with wisdom and balance individual concerns with the rights and needs of others.
- Staff and students work together to create an environment in which each person feels safe and encouraged. Staff model care and concern for students. Conflict resolution will be demonstrated and taught using an effective Biblical model which encourages open communication, quick settlement and discretion of the parties involved.

Social Excellence

- The development of strong Christian character is important to the CCS Educational program. Students will be encouraged to develop a steadfast Christian character so that they can make informed Christian choices based on Biblical criteria.
- Students will learn a Christian view of life, work, personal relationships, family and marriage.
- Students will be taught to engage modern culture as Christians and not simply to shun, resist or insulate themselves from it.
- Students will be challenged to become leaders at school and their community. They will be involved in various service projects to help them gain an understanding of what it means to be a contributing member of society realizing the dependence we have on one another.

Physical Excellence

- Achieving physical excellence means teaching and encouraging students to adopt healthy lifestyle choices to enjoy the abilities God has given us.
- Physical excellence also means that CCS will encourage students to achieve athletic excellence through its educational program and student development opportunities.
- Physical excellence is also about learning to respect each other and reflecting a Christ-like image. To help foster this environment, CCS has a strict dress code and Code of Conduct in place for its students.

Teachers

At CCS the teaching staff and administration are professional and knowledgeable faith-filled Christian educators. To teach at CCS each teacher must hold the certifications required by the Government of Alberta and must sign a covenant affirming their agreement with to the CCS Educational Vision and Philosophy and the CSCE Basis and Educational Creed, their commitment to uphold the CCS Educational Vision and Philosophy and their own Christian faith commitment. This covenant document is found at Appendix “C” of the Alternative School Agreement between the CSCE and the Palliser Regional School District.

Expectations for CCS Teachers

It is expected that CCS teachers will structure learning environments that challenge students to achieve excellence, encourage creative and critical thinking, and teach a Christian world view that is founded on the Bible.

In addition:

- All teachers are expected to be Christian leaders and role models by emphasizing the development of personal excellence and supporting the vision and philosophy of the school.
- All teachers will be purposeful about discussion of Christian principles beliefs as they integrate these naturally into the learning of different subjects.
- Teachers are expected to demonstrate the integration of faith and learning in their lesson plans.
- Teachers will encourage students in their spiritual formation and character development.
- Teachers will be expected to develop teaching styles and methods that match the learning styles and abilities of their students.

The CCS Community

Since CCS was first started in 1963, the CCS Community has been an essential part of both the past history and current life of the school. This CCS Community consists not only of the students and staff of CCS, but parents, extended families, church communities, other Christian school organizations, as well as the founders and builders of the school. This community is characterized by acceptance, appreciation, respect and dependence upon each other and, most importantly, a shared commitment to Christ and Christian education. The support provided by the CCS Community has, for its long history, included much prayer, hard work, and financial support. No statement of the CCS Educational Vision and Philosophy is complete without a recognition that the CCS Community is and must continue to be, central to the life and health of the school.

The significance of this community however, goes beyond the common bonds. It is a central aspect of the vision and philosophy of the school. Because Christian education plays an important role in the growth of the Kingdom of God, the wider Christian community, not only parents of students, has a responsibility to nurture children and play an active role in their education.

The focus in the school community is on community rather than on individualistic advancement. At CCS this means students are expected to be taught interpersonal skills and a sense of belonging to the Body of Christ. It also means that the entire Christian school community bears responsibility for the Christian nurture of our students, not just the parents.

The CCS Community is a body of Christian believers that support the school, its staff and students. At the same time, the school is intended to complement and extend the spiritual and faith commitment that must originate from a student's home and church. The school is not expected to evangelize children from non-Christian homes, but will encourage families in Christian growth and help them deepen the commitment that originates in the home and church.