

## PERTINENT POLICIES

# Welcome to Beyond Academics!

We specialize in writing, reading comprehension, and study skills, with a special focus on teaching students to think for themselves. Branching beyond book boundaries, students engage in activities that build their confidence to explore new possibilities. To us, this is not just a business—it is a method of outreach to our community. In working to support confident and thoughtful self-expression, we hope to touch lives and do our part to cultivate a generation of socially responsible and creative individuals. Beyond Academics provides students direction and instruction that encourages and facilitates independent thought. Our goal is for students to become self-motivated and determined to express a distinct voice.

### SAFETY

Your child's safety is of utmost importance to us. Therefore, please know the following: A parking lot is available behind the school; parents must leave their vehicles and personally escort their children to and from the school. Please do not ask your children to cross the street to your vehicle; please do not ask your children to enter a vehicle that is not fully parked. Traffic on Mission Boulevard is often heavy, and it is not safe for children to be entering the street or walking through a parking lot without guidance. Children are told not to approach a moving vehicle or a vehicle that is not stopped within the parking boundary lines. Children are not permitted to walk into the back parking lot by themselves. Please work with us to create a safe environment for all of our students.

### REGISTRATION

Parents must fill out a registration form each year their child attends Beyond Academics. Summer school requires a separate registration form. We cannot guarantee placement or hold openings; in the interest of fairness, we do stagger registration so that returning students may register first, followed by those on the waiting list, and finally the general public.

### ATTENDANCE

- One excused absence and one make-up class are allowed per trimester for online classes (the three-month periods of Sep.–Nov., Dec.–Feb., and Mar.–May).
- One excused absence and two make-up classes are allowed per trimester for in-person classes (the three-month periods of Sep.–Nov., Dec.–Feb., and Mar.–May).
- An excused absence is one for which we are given prior notice—by at least 2:00 p.m. on the day that your child is unable to attend class. Make-up classes must be taken the week of the absence or the following week.
- Note that tuition cannot be refunded for unexcused absences; class credit is granted only for excused absences and only once per trimester.
- Failure to show for a scheduled make-up is considered an unexcused absence; parents are charged for the class whether or not the student shows. To avoid this fee, as with an excused absence, parents must notify the office by 2:00 p.m. the day of the make-up.
- Each trimester's make-up will incur a \$10 processing fee.
- If a make-up class is scheduled late (after 2:00 p.m. the day of the absence), there will be a \$20 charge for the make-up.
- Any additional make-ups will incur a \$20 processing fee. Any further absences or make-up requests will be taken into individual consideration; however, such requests do make your child susceptible to dismissal. We take our goals and your child's progress seriously. Frequent absences and/or make-ups hinder our ability to meet these goals. The surest way for your child to get the most out of the curriculum at Beyond Academics is to attend every class session with her/his assigned class. Frequent absences and make-ups jeopardize the benefits gained from steady work in a consistent environment.
- Similarly, early pick-ups interrupt the entire class, and thus we ask that early pick-ups take place only in cases of emergency or great need. Whenever possible, please let us know in advance if your child will need to be released early from class.
- Please Note: Children who are waiting for their rides are supervised for ten minutes after class is dismissed. After this, they are escorted into the lobby where they must continue to wait until their parents/guardians arrive. The children are not supervised while waiting in the lobby. Please be on time.

### PAYMENT POLICIES

The cost for each 90-minute session is \$50. Payments are made on a monthly basis, which generally includes four classes, give or take a session due to a holiday or extra day in the month. Each parent has the responsibility to submit payment within the first two sessions of the month. Payments made on the third session or after will include a \$7 late fee per child. Siblings receive a 10% discount. Discounts are not applied to fall or summer deposits. Notice of termination of enrollment must be given at least one week before the student's last class. There will be a \$50 fee for cancellation with less than a seven-day notice.

### HOMEWORK • CONTESTS • REWARDS

Homework is distributed each week with the exception of the week prior to a holiday. However, extra credit may

be offered for the holiday season when school is not in session. Throughout the year, we also offer school-wide challenges and contests as opportunities for students to synthesize the skills they are learning here at Beyond Academics. If you'd like your child to get more practice, encourage participation in our contests! For more information on our reward system, see "Promotion Pages" on our website ([www.beyondacademicsinc.com](http://www.beyondacademicsinc.com)).

## PROGRESS

To promote your child's intellectual development, take a couple of minutes to speak with the teacher after class. Teachers are happy to discuss your child's progress and show you ways in which you can help your child apply Beyond Academics' techniques to regular schoolwork. Please remember that our teachers are required to take a short break between classes and that they must also prepare for the next class. If needed, a more in-depth meeting can be scheduled. We also communicate with parents through our comments on student work, test results, and progress reports.

## TEACHER QUALIFICATIONS

Beyond Academics' teachers are qualified to teach in the public and/or private school sectors. Our teachers may have been English majors, published authors, and/or experienced school teachers. When applying for a position at Beyond Academics, hopeful teachers are given an extensive grammar and writing exam. Periodic in-service training sessions are held. We also all adhere to a strict accountability system: both teacher and student work are analyzed by administration throughout the year.

## CURRICULUM

Our curriculum is designed entirely by Beyond Academics and meets the qualifications of the Unified School District and the Common Core standards. We teach a journalistic style of writing that is semi-formal and is required at school and in college applications. Thinking takes time and contemplation. Your child may come home from class having written only ten new sentences, but those sentences were composed after time spent drilling, analyzing, and revising in order to reveal the strongest work.

Progress is regularly assessed through quizzes and tests as well as one major exam each year. Progress reports are given twice a year. We do not use letter grades here; instead, a child's standing is communicated via comments on student work. Narrative feedback helps us convey the principle that learning flourishes when discussed rather than just measured and judged. By doing away with a subjective letter grade, we foster communication about outcomes and expectations, working to strengthen your child's writing ability.

Some of the skills we work to sharpen are:

- Vocabulary that grows in sophistication and is applied in every lesson, drill, homework assignment, and essay
- Progressively refined sentence structures
- Different types of compositions
- Research skills to avoid plagiarism (including note-taking, paraphrasing, quoting, and citing properly)
- Academic motivation, which we reinforce through "games" that engage students in writing activities wherein students apply the skills taught in class—our games are designed to be assessment tools

## EXPECTATIONS

Since our dominant concern is the academic advancement of our students, we are unable to spend valuable class time addressing behavioral concerns. If a student's behavior is actively and consistently disruptive to the class, we will need to consider alternatives to their placement at Beyond Academics. We hope that both parents and students understand that just as it is our honor to instruct so many children, it is a privilege to attend our school. We reserve the right to discontinue a family's enrollment for the safety and growth of our students.

Because we are a school and not a tutoring center, we are better able to motivate student engagement as we work with students on the foundation of their writing and reading skills. A student may claim that s/he "already knows" something, but this usually does not translate to mastery. This is why we have chosen to repeat some of the same techniques every year—but always at a more sophisticated level and applied to more sophisticated issues. We work hard to encourage academic growth but understand that learning to write, just like learning to play the piano, is a highly individual process. Some students are naturals, while others may have to apply themselves for years in order to gain fluency. Thus, we always encourage students to apply the skills learned here at their regular schools, and this is also why we urge students, teachers, and parents to work together. Students show the most growth when they can see that everyone around them is invested in their progress.

It is an honor to work with your child!

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