

# Christian Schools

## Public Schooling

We recognize the constitutional separation of church and state as it relates to public education as a basic guarantee of freedom in a pluralistic society. As a denomination, we are committed to public schooling and seek to impact positively on it through our teacher education departments in Nazarene colleges. We encourage our membership to support:

1. High academic standards.
2. Equal educational opportunity.
3. The teaching of positive values including the dignity of humankind under God.
4. An environment where the Christian faith may be practiced freely.

We support those who involve themselves in public education whether as students, teachers, administrators, parents, or concerned members of the community.

## Church Weekday School Ministries

Beginning with the 1985 *Manual* of the Church of the Nazarene, local congregations may offer weekday school or child care ministries to their communities. Any church seeking to offer a weekday school or child care ministry must operate in compliance with all *Manual* statements governing the establishment and operation of a school or center (paragraphs 154; 154.1; 208.13; 222.11; 414). It is recommended that such schools/centers be operated as unincorporated, fully-integrated auxiliaries of the local church if they are held on church property. Nazarene schools and centers are to be operated in accordance with all local, state, and federal regulations to which they are subject insofar as they do not require compromising essentials of the faith.

## Early Childhood Education

While we support those mothers who are able to and choose to remain at home to care for their children, we recognize that this is not always possible. Economic, social, and individual circumstances may necessitate placing preschool-age children in child care facilities. The needs of these families for loving, nurturant care is an opportunity for ministry in the church. Programs of early childhood education/child care in the local church must:

1. Provide quality care that meets the needs of the whole child.
2. Develop foundations that will enable the child to become a Christian.
3. Reach families who might otherwise be unaffiliated with a local church.
4. Actively seek to integrate the family into the community of faith.

## Elementary/Secondary Schooling

Historically the church has been involved in education at what is now called the elementary and secondary levels. Parents may send their children to church schools for a variety of reasons, including the need for child care beyond the hours of the normal public school day or an interest in a particular form of discipline. However, the unique mission of the church elementary/secondary school is to teach the entire range of knowledge from a distinctively Christian epistemological perspective. Church schools are ministries of the local church and must:

1. Uphold the highest academic standards. (We recommend our schools seek to verify their academic quality by pursuing school accreditation.)
2. Teach biblical truths as interpreted from a Wesleyan-holiness theological tradition.
3. Reach families who might otherwise be unaffiliated with a local church.
4. Employ teachers and administrators who are Christians as well as professionals in the field of education.

## Homeschooling

Today many families choose to homeschool their children. This decision must be made carefully based on the parents' ability to guide the child's education, the child's needs, and the other means of education available.

Many school districts as well as local homeschool groups can assist parents to get started and maintain homeschooling. Homeschooling parents are encouraged to contact the Nazarene Educators Worldwide for additional information and encouragement. This organization has two representatives to assist homeschooling educators. To find the names of these representatives, go to [www.naznew.org](http://www.naznew.org) and look for the names of the council members. You may also contact the Nazarene Education Office (birth—secondary) in Children's Ministries International at the Global Ministry Center. Contact [bpostlewait@nazarene.org](mailto:bpostlewait@nazarene.org) or call 888-644-4510.

### The General Nazarene Education Office (birth—secondary)

The 1980 General Assembly placed responsibility for Christian schools in Children's Ministries International. The purpose of Christian Schools is to resource and support school and child care ministries offered by

Churches of the Nazarene. This office provides the following services:

1. Publishes *NEW e-Link* newsletter to keep pastors and school personnel apprised of current denominational developments relating to school and child care ministries
2. Serves as a central employment-assistance agency. The Nazarene Education Office (birth—secondary) receives resumes of persons seeking full-time employment in Nazarene child care centers, preschools, and elementary and secondary schools. Prospective employees then are matched with employers who are seeking staff. Information about the job applicant is referred, without recommendation, to schools and centers seeking employees.
3. Acts as a liaison with the Nazarene Educators Worldwide (N.E.W.), the denominationally sponsored organization that promotes, resources, and supports Nazarene Christian Schools and Nazarene educators worldwide.
4. Answers questions regarding general policy toward Nazarene educators for birth through secondary students, Christian schools, and child care ministries and preschools.
5. Addresses issues, as they arise, that affect all Nazarene Christian schools.

The *Manual* authorizes local churches to include child care and day school programs as part of their ministry. It is the District Superintendent's responsibility, along with the District Advisory Board, to approve such ministries (2001-2005 Manual, paragraph 154 and 154.1). This outline describes the approval process. As with the launching of any new ministry, the entire approval process must be guided by prayer.

## What Should You Do Before You Start Your School or Child Care Center?

### Phase 1

Beginning a Christian school, preschool, or child care program is a very important step in the life of a local church. Before starting a new program, all concerned must face some important issues. After the establishment, administrators of Christian schools, preschools, or child care programs must periodically re-evaluate their operations. Standards of excellence must be maintained as well as a "ministry" perspective.

Prayer should be included in all of the steps. It cannot be over emphasized. Every ministry must be based on prayer. Covenant with God that Jesus Christ, and He alone, will be the ultimate Administrator of your school.

- I. Discuss the following issues with your church board. Ask yourself these questions:
  - A. To whom does the school belong?

- B. Why are you starting a school?
- C. Is it a ministry?
- D. Will it reach out to the community with evangelism and growth in mind?
- E. Is your church board in agreement with the 5/7 rule? According to IRS laws, funds cannot be used to support the local church. For example, appropriate uses of school monies are partial (5/7) for each of the following: utilities, building/maintenance, improvements, etc. This amount (5/7) is suggested because the school would use the facility 5 out of 7 days.
- F. Does the church understand the importance of the philosophy of Christian education?
- G. Is the pastor a strong supporter of Christian day school education in the local church?

Learn what God says in His Word about education and develop a conviction in your heart and mind for Christian education.

Deuteronomy 6:6-7  
 Proverbs 22:6  
 Proverbs 19:27

Colossians 2:6-7  
 Romans 16:19

If the answer to any of the above is not positive, do not pursue any further.

II. Contact the District Superintendent and Advisory Board for approval.  
 Contact the Nazarene Education Office at the Global Ministry Center for a copy of the “Criteria for Organizing Nazarene Child Care/Schools” Form. You will need to have the signature of the District Superintendent and a member of the District Advisory Board on this form.

III. Contact your local licensing and registration agencies.

- A. Determine the cost to get the building up to standard for a child care facility.
  - 1. With fire marshall
  - 2. With health department
  - 3. With Social Services
- B. Find out from your state if you need to be licensed or registered.

IV. After successfully completing the above, contact the Nazarene Education Office in Children’s Ministries International at the Global Ministry Center for a “Start-up Package” to assist you with Phases 2 and 3. Complete and return one copy to the district office and one copy to Children’s Ministries International at the Global Ministry Center the “Criteria for Organizing Nazarene Child Care/Schools Form.

Phase 2

- I. Estimate total cost to get building up to standards.
- II. Figure cost of equipment to start a school.
- III. Contact your insurance agent for an estimate for additional insurance needs.
- IV. Set fees for tuition, registration, books and supplies, late fees and discounts.
- V. Set base pay for employees and plan employee benefit package.
- VI. Establish policies and procedures for staff (job descriptions, daily routines, evaluations, employee handbook, etc.).
- VII. Establish policies and procedures for parents and students (mission statement, parent/student handbook, brochures, calendar, etc.).
- VIII. Contact the legal department of your insurance agency to do a legal audit on items VI and VII.
- IX. Choose curriculum (Bible and academic).

Phase 3

- I. Create operational forms.
  - A. Enrollment forms
  - B. Staff/employment forms
  - C. Everyday needs

II. Order equipment for classrooms and playground.

III. Advertise.

- A. Through word of mouth
- B. Sign outside the church
- C. Newspaper