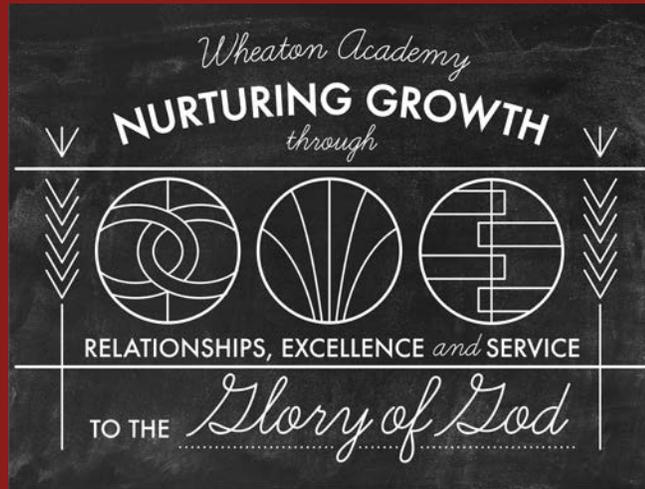


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*The mission of Wheaton Academy is to nurture growth in students through relationships, excellence and service to the glory of God.*

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### **Matthew 5:13-16**

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*“You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot. “You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.”*

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Each month our administrative team wants to give you information relevant to your child’s experience at Wheaton Academy as well as to talk about key issues that we face as we seek to partner in helping students know Jesus better, develop a biblical worldview, discover their gifts and prepare for God’s call on their life. This month we want to talk about three topics:

- Equipping students to be salt and light—the importance of our words
- Academic Behavior Reports
- Student, Parent, Teacher Conferences – October 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup>

We are truly thankful for a great beginning of the year and the opportunity to work with you and your child in the year ahead.

## **Equipping Students to be Salt and Light**

What does equipping our students to be salt and light in the culture we are experiencing in 2017 look like? A week ago, we spent time talking with our students in chapel about the importance of their words and about our culture’s tendency to use humor inappropriately to mock issues that are close to the heart of God. In fact, as we look on social media, in the news, and even in our conversations, we see people belittling or mocking others and quickly adding, “Oh I didn’t mean it; I was just kidding.” This tendency reflects the reality that we live in a society that is often driven by fear—especially the fear of things and people who are different from us. We presented a vision to our students that Wheaton Academy would be a community that honors the fact that we have each been created in the image of God (Genesis 1:23) and that our words would reflect our commitment to honor each member of our community.

Everyone knows what happens when you say the word “bomb” on an airplane: no question nor consideration is given to the motivation behind it. We want our students to know that certain behaviors will not be tolerated at Wheaton Academy—no matter what—because they are a violation of honoring the fact that we are each made in the image of God. We communicated that whether they happen in person or on-line (social media, text, snap chat, etc.), certain mistakes are automatically a big deal to us because we take our culture and community seriously.

What are those behaviors? Our Human Dignity policy lays them out in the Student Handbook (pages 22-23), but we want to share with you what we shared with students:

- Anything that makes someone feel threatened—this could be a physical action, but it also could be words that make someone feel as if they are being threatened or unsafe.
- Anything that belittles, demeans, makes fun of or can be construed as a slur against someone’s race, ethnicity or country of origin.
- Anything that mocks or devalues someone of the opposite gender or includes inappropriate sexual advances or language.

This conversation was hard, but it was important because if we can get these attitudes and behaviors right, which I believe our students can, we will have the opportunity to be a light for the world. We will shine as a place that looks different—a place that is characterized by honor, respect, empathy and most importantly love. Our prayer as a leadership team is that we would be able to partner with you as parents to help our students live differently and distinctly from the culture that they see and truly be salt and light in the way we have fun and interact with one another.

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*“What matters most in a child’s development, they say, is not how much information we can stuff into her brain in the first few years. What matters, instead, is whether we are able to help her develop a very different set of qualities, a list that includes persistence, self-control, curiosity, conscientiousness, grit and self-confidence.”*

*— Paul Tough, [How Children Succeed: Grit, Curiosity, and the Hidden Power of Character](#)*

## Academic Behavior Reports

Wheaton Academy’s learning philosophy is rooted in the desire to prepare students for their studies in college or at a university not only with their academic skills and content understanding, but also with the habits and skills necessary for success. Many of these skills and traits are delineated in our College Readiness Initiative. We seek to challenge students to develop in these areas and share with students and parents their progress through our Academic Behavior Reports.

Teachers will take time to help students self-assess in three areas: Student Timeliness, Student Engagement and Student Academic Habits, which will be followed by teacher responses that provide students feedback in each of these areas. The feedback is on a four-point scale: 1—unsatisfactory, 2—needing improvement, 3—proficient (indicating that a student is performing at the doing a good job at the level of expectation), and 4—outstanding (indicating that a student is leading and influencing others well above the level of expectation). Wheaton Academy will report on these behaviors four times a year: in October and March (for informational purposes and opportunities for growth) and then on report cards at the end of each semester in December and June. You can find the detailed Academic Behavior report in the Student Handbook (page 9), and we look forward to conversations that can enrich your student as we seek to ensure they possess the habits and traits that will equip them for success in college and beyond.

## Student, Parent, Teacher Conferences – October 25 and 26

Each year at Wheaton Academy, our time for conferences provides an opportunity for students and parents to meet with teachers to discuss progress, strengths and areas for growth. You may question the reason for including students in these conferences. The student is the most important person in the learning process, so their attendance at these conferences is crucial. The partnership among parents, students and teachers in the learning process is enhanced as students have an opportunity to lead the conference and speak about their progress. Over the last few years, 90-95% of our conferences include our students, eliciting valuable conversations to extend their learning.

Conferences will take place Wednesday and Thursday, October 25 and 26, from 11 a.m. to 8 p.m. Parents may sign up for conferences on-line through PTC wizard, which will be made available during the week of October 17. If a teacher is requesting a conference, we will notify students and parents in advance to ensure that you can schedule a meeting with the teacher. If you are unable to schedule a conference time with a teacher, you can make alternative arrangements for a meeting. This important communication time can help students reach their potential and achieve their learning goals, so we look forward to seeing you there.

Finally, because our students brought school supplies for Replanted—a ministry for foster care children—during Homecoming week, we will not have an off-campus learning day. Students had a goal of bringing 1000 bags in order to get the day “off-school” during conferences, and they not only achieved their goal but exceeded it. They filled 1002 bags of school supplies!