

SovereignGraceAcademy

a ministry of Millbrook Presbyterian Church

Guidelines and Policies

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Sovereign Grace Academy

Guidelines and Policies

Mission

Sovereign Grace Academy (SGA) is an Alabama church school as defined in Alabama legal code 16-28-1. In a manner that honors Jesus Christ, we seek to provide legal covering, support, and encouragement for homeschooling families in the most efficient and convenient manner. Sovereign Grace Academy operates as a ministry of Millbrook Presbyterian Church. As a hands-off church school, we refrain from interfering in your homeschooling and require only minimal reporting. As a result, you have complete freedom to educate your child the way you see fit.

Enrollment Process

To enroll your family in SGA, complete all pages of the **Admission Form** and **Church School Enrollment Form** (one per student) and mail them to the SGA Administrator. (Forms can be downloaded from MillbrookPCA.com/sga.html).

If your children are currently enrolled in a school, you will need to withdraw them from that school and request their records. Contact your school office for instructions on how to do so.

Once we have received your enrollment paperwork, we will counter-sign the Church School Enrollment Form(s) and mail the originals to the local superintendent. We will return a copy to you (for your records) with your SGA membership card. The forms will be sent certified mail and we will notify you when we have received delivery confirmation.

Important: Do not delay church school enrollment after withdrawing your child from public or private school. To avoid truancy issues, SGA recommends that parents file the Church School Enrollment Form with us at the same time that they withdraw their children from public or private school.

Neither Sovereign Grace Academy nor Millbrook Presbyterian Church is legally liable for the education of the children of families enrolled in the church school. Submission of forms for admission is acknowledgment and acceptance of this fact. Materials, schedules, reports, and files are all up to the discretion of the parents.

Parent Responsibilities

Parents maintain the sole responsibility to:

- Select the appropriate education materials and/or curriculum
- Provide primary instruction to their child(ren)
- Evaluate school work and assign grades, if desired
- Maintain attendance and submit annual attendance reports to SGA;
- Request and keep a copy of transcripts and records from previous schools;

- Prepare and submit transcripts and records to future schools (if returning to public or private school) or to institutions of higher learning;
- Submit all necessary forms with correct information to SGA by all deadlines;
- Keep SGA immediately informed of any changes to residency status, enrollment decisions, address, telephone or email contact information;
- Inform SGA if contact is made with the School Board, Department of Human Resources or other state or county officials interested in your homeschooling.

Failure to comply with these requirements may result in dismissal from Sovereign Grace Academy and notification of dismissal to the Superintendent of the Board of Education.

Sovereign Grace Academy recommends the following general guidelines:

- Schooling for approximately 180 days per year
- Teaching reading, spelling, writing, arithmetic, oral and written English, geography, history of the United States and Alabama, science, health education, and physical education
- Including religious instruction
- Keeping personal records such as daily work journals, work samples, and lists of field trips, books and activities
- Participating in a local home school support group
- Membership in Home School Legal Defense Association (HSLDA) or Homeschool Legal Advantage (HLA) is not required for SGA members, but we strongly recommend that each family prayerfully consider joining either organization. They provide professional legal representation and assistance with any social service contacts and investigations related to homeschooling for their members. SGA does not have the resources to provide legal aid if needed. **SGA is an HSLDA discount group!** Contact the administrator for that discount code and to learn more about the benefits of membership.

Services & Fees

Sovereign Grace Academy meets all state regulations by notifying the local superintendents of student enrollment and keeping records of attendance provided by member families. SGA is not a support group, but there are several in the local area who provide numerous opportunities for fellowship and support.

Operated as a ministry of Millbrook Presbyterian Church for homeschool families, SGA asks for a \$20/family annual enrollment fee (payable to MPC).

Re-enrollment

Each year you will need to re-enroll your family with SGA. You will receive an email with instructions to submit a new *Admission Form* and *Enrollment Form(s)* for any children who you might be adding to the family enrollment.

Compulsory Attendance Age

The compulsory age in Alabama is 6–17. If your child has turned or will turn 6 years old this school year, you must officially enroll your child in a church school this summer to remain in compliance with state homeschooling regulations.

The Alabama legislature inserted a provision that states that a parent of a 6-year-old may opt out of enrolling the child in school until age 7. To do so, the parent must notify the local school board in writing that the child will not be enrolled until age 7.

Change of Address

If you move, even if it is just across town or down the street, you must notify Sovereign Grace Academy and your local superintendent to remain in compliance with Alabama law.

Attendance Reports

In order to remain in compliance with state homeschooling regulations, annual Attendance Reports are due June 1 of each year. For your convenience, simply email the total number of days and your child's name to the SGA Administrator (day.family@yahoo.com). Your email will be saved electronically, so keep a copy for yourself.

State regulations require that parent teachers maintain attendance records, but the regulations do not mandate a minimum number of school days per year. As a result, SGA does not require a certain number of school days. However, the state requires 175 days for public schools and 140 days for homeschoolers using the tutoring option. This gives you a guideline in which to decide for your own family. Traditional academic calendars or year-round schedules (i.e., “365 days”) are equally acceptable.

Grades, Transcripts, Report Cards and Tests

Grades, transcripts, report cards, student evaluations and tests are not required by the state of Alabama; therefore, they are not required by SGA. Parents are solely responsible for grades, transcripts, report cards, student evaluations and tests. Their use is at the discretion of each family.

That being said, you may want to keep your own personal records, such as daily work journals, work samples, and/or lists of field trips, books and activities. To ensure a complete set of school records, you should request all transcripts and records from previous schools. This is particularly important for high school students who plan for college or students who may return to the public school system.

Some children want to receive a report card, and some organizations or clubs may require a transcript from your child. Should you need or want a report card or

transcript, you can find forms for report cards and transcripts for purchase or to print on the internet. Contact the SGA Administrator if you'd like suggestions for these resources.

Standardized testing is not required in Alabama, so we do not provide this service. However, many homeschool support groups do. Keep in mind that since the tests are administered in the spring, arrangements for the tests are generally made in January.

Driver's Permit

Teenagers in Alabama may test for their driver's permit as soon as they turn 15 years old. The Alabama Department of Public Safety issues the driver's licenses for all first-time drivers. You may obtain a copy of the Driver Handbook from the DPS.

To apply for a driver's permit in Alabama, your student will need his birth certificate, social security card, and a School Enrollment/Exclusion Form (DL-1/93) filled out by the parent and signed by the Church School Administrator. This form verifies that your student is enrolled in a church school.

To obtain the signed form:

1. Go to dps.alabama.gov and download Enrollment/Exclusion (DL-1/93).
2. Fill out Section I.
3. Mail form to SGA Administrator with a self-addressed stamped envelope (SASE) enclosed. We will fill out Section II, sign and return the form in the envelope you provide.