



PROGRAM HANDBOOK

Dear Onward Scholars and Families:

Education has changed our lives. Both of us benefited from high quality education. We have been so blessed and because we appreciate the opportunities a good education brings, we have decided to invest in your future. Onward Scholars is a great gift- you are receiving 75% of your tuition, you have the opportunity to explore your passions, you have the ability to learn and grow through workshops and events, and are assisted by dedicated program directors. **Because much has been given, much is expected in academics, leadership, community service, and behavior.** Therefore, we expect you to:

- maintain at least a 3.5 grade point average during your high school
- complete at least 1 Accelerated SAT Preparation Course
- be a leader on campus by joining campus ministry, do service, join sports, student government, or other activities of your choosing
- attend all mandatory Onward Scholars events, workshops and Scholar Saturdays
- represent the program at all times with behavior that reflects well on the program, your school, and your community

As you navigate high school, career, and your future, we ask you to do four things. First of all, think big! You have been chosen for a competitive program and you have demonstrated that you are capable of doing great things.

Second, work hard! Only through hard work and planning will you achieve your goals. You may not succeed on your first or second try but getting up and pushing forward are the keys to succeeding in the end.

Third, be nice! Always represent Onward Scholars, your school, and your community with pride and joy. By approaching your peers, teachers, and community members with respect and assuming the best of others you will be successful and you will be a happier person.

Finally, have fun! There is nothing more satisfying than having big dreams, putting in the work to achieve those dreams, and working with friends and colleagues along the way.

Think big, work hard, be nice, and have fun!

Sincerely,
John and Cindy Smet

PROGRAM HANDBOOK CONTENTS

About Our Program	Page 4
Program Mission Statement	
Program Grade Level Focus Areas	
Onward Scholars Support Services	Pages 5 - 6
Scholarship	
Mentoring	
College Access	
Onward Scholars Program Expectations	Pages 6 - 10
Requirements for Renewal	
Academic Integrity	
Student Attendance Policies	
Student Behavioral Expectations	
Dress Code Policies	
Disciplinary Action	
Student Christian Service Hours	
Parent Participation/Service Policies	
Program Excursions	Pages 10 - 11
Transportation to Onward Scholars Events	
Student Supervision	
Program Director Contact Information	Page 12
Acknowledgement Page	Page 13

About Our Program



Onward Scholars are expected to read all information supplied in the student handbook from their respective school site. They must understand and agree to uphold all stated school policies and regulations as well as accept the consequences set forth for violating those policies. **This handbook outlines additional policies specific to the Onward Scholars Program (OSP).**

Mission Statement & Program Grade Level Goals

ONWARD SCHOLARS MISSION STATEMENT & GRADE LEVEL FOCUS AREAS

The Onward Scholars Program promotes academic excellence, fosters an environment conducive to genuine peer support, exposes students to leadership opportunities that instill a love of service, and empowers goal-driven young men and women by providing resources that build skills for their path to higher education and lives of purpose.

We remain committed to our mission through the implementation of the following grade level focus areas:



- 9th**
 - study skills
 - time management & organization
 - communication
 - impactful school involvement
- 10th**
 - SAT/ACT prep
 - college major & career exploration
 - visit colleges in California
- 11th**
 - SAT/ACT prep
 - build college list
 - college essay workshops
 - out-of-state college trip
- 12th**
 - college application process
 - prepare scholarship applications
 - academic & social transition to college
- 9-12**
 - social & emotional learning (SEL)
self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, responsible decision making
 - financial literacy
 - health & wellness
 - leadership skills
 - community service
 - connections to summer programs

Onward Scholars Support Services

Each Onward Scholar receives the support services his/her respective school site provides, and also works closely with the onsite Program Director to receive mentoring, financial support, and access to programs that prepare students for the college application and matriculation process:



Scholarship: In addition to a scholarship for 75% of tuition costs, each Scholar has a \$2,000 stipend. The Onward Scholars Program stipend is not meant to offset the cost of school materials or program fees but rather offset the costs of activities or programs of significant academic and/or professional development value each year. Scholars can use **up to a maximum of \$500** of their stipend for college testing, application, and/or registration fees.

The Program Director has discretion to accept or veto stipend requests. Scholars must complete the online **Stipend Request Form** to use funds. The Onward Scholars Program accepts no responsibility or liability for the programs, activities, and classes that scholars select to engage in with their stipend. Any unused stipend funds will be forfeited upon graduation, as the goal is for Scholars to maximize their experiences while in high school.



Mentoring: The Program Director serves as an onsite resource for each Onward Scholar. They are committed to ensure that each Scholar has a well-rounded high school experience that leads to his/her graduation from college.

Each Scholar will meet with the Program Director on a regular basis to discuss academic and personal goal setting and steps necessary to attain goals. Furthermore, the Director will regularly mentor students about life skills that are aimed at each Scholar establishing him/herself as a successful professional and contributor to society.



College Access: The Program Director will partner with the parents/guardians, school, and Scholar to guide each student including identifying academic, community service, internship, and enrichment experiences for the Scholar to participate in. Each individualized plan is geared towards the Scholar achieving maximum success in high school, college, and life thereafter. The director will also partner with their school's counseling department to provide services to Scholars in the following areas:

- college search and career exploration
- completion of applications for college admission
- preparation for the SAT
- assistance in completion of FAFSA and other financial aid forms
- assistance in researching financial aid resources like scholarships that will help fund Scholars education

Onward Scholars Program Expectations

Once selected as an Onward Scholar, there are program expectations for both the student and the parent(s)/guardian(s) in addition to school requirements that must be followed in order to remain in the program. These OSP **Requirements for Renewal** are outlined below:

In order to remain an active member of the Onward Scholars program each year, a Scholar must:

- maintain a weighted GPA of 3.5 or higher EACH SEMESTER
- complete at least 1 Accelerated SAT Preparation Course within the 10th - 11th grade timeframe.
- demonstrate outstanding citizenship and behavior
- actively participate in at least 1 school program, club, or student organization
- attend all Mandatory Onward Scholars events

- participate in at least one summer activity of significant academic and/or professional development all years in high school in consultation with the Program Director
- serve a role in marketing the Onward Scholars program to potential applicants at partner middle schools and in the community if requested by Program Director
- complete the online **Onward Scholars Program Renewal Reflection Form** and program evaluations.

Failure to meet the program’s GPA 3.5 requirement for renewal will result in the **tiered academic intervention** outlined below:

<p>Level 1</p> <p>Academic Contract</p>	<p>Scholars who do not fulfill the 3.5 semester weighted GPA requirement and/or comply with program attendance policies the first time will be</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● placed on an academic contract for the following semester ● required to attend all academic support options prescribed by the Director and/or school faculty in addition to all mandatory OSP programming including the site’s OSP workshops
<p>Level 2</p> <p>Academic Probation</p>	<p>Scholars who do not fulfill the 3.5 semester weighted GPA requirement and/or comply with program attendance policies a second time during their tenure in the program will</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● be placed on probation for the following semester ● have their scholarship discontinued for one semester ● become ineligible to participate in retreats, field trips, and Scholar Saturday activities during their probationary period <p>Scholars will still be required to attend all academic support options prescribed by the Program Director and/or school faculty in addition to all site-specific OSP weekly workshops.</p>
<p>Level 3</p> <p>Dismissal*</p>	<p>Scholars who do not fulfill the 3.5 semester weighted GPA requirement and/or comply with program attendance policies a third time during their tenure in the program will forfeit all future scholarship funds and program membership.</p>

*The Onward Scholars program reserves the right to expedite scholarship and membership forfeiture if it is deemed that a Scholar’s GPA is the result of consistently poor effort, failure to take advantage of prescribed academic supports, and/or accompanied by behavior contradictory to school and program values.

Academic Integrity

Onward Scholars are expected to maintain the highest level of academic integrity throughout high school. Scholars must make every effort to avoid any form of plagiarism. Failure to do so would make a Scholar eligible for removal from the program. Each Scholar is responsible for knowing and adhering to the academic and behavioral expectations outlined in each course syllabus and in his/her school's student handbook.

Student Attendance Policies

Scholars are expected to **be punctual and attend mandatory Onward Scholars events** (e.g., workshops, Scholar Saturdays) **unless they have an approved absence from their director.**

Students may not leave Onward Scholars events without prior permission from the Director nor will they be released without proper written parental consent. Parents/Guardians must call the Director or email him/her **prior to a scheduled event** to report if a Scholar will be absent. Excused absences include those due to student illness, family emergencies, and **preapproved** school-sponsored activities (e.g., sports, leadership). **Please do not plan appointments or personal events during scheduled program workshops/events.** If a student is absent from school on the day of an event and it was reported to the school, it is not necessary to further inform the Director. Per school policy, **a student may not attend any extra-curricular activity after being absent from school that day.** Exceptions to this are **verified** medical/dental/funeral/court absences. **A Scholar missing more than 2 mandatory program events in a semester without approval will be placed on probation.** Upon return from any absence/tardy, whether excused or unexcused, Scholars must check in with their director to obtain missed content. Excessive absences can qualify a student for program forfeiture.

Student Behavioral Expectations

The Onward Scholars Program strives to maintain a challenging, positive educational environment that is conducive to students achieving success. The enforcement of school rules will promote the development of our Scholars' maturity and self-discipline, which is essential for academic achievement, personal integrity, and responsible citizenship. Respect for others should be a pervasive theme guiding all student interactions. Egregious violations of school policy or repeated negative attitudes and/or behavior will not be tolerated and will result in immediate disciplinary action, including possible removal from the program.

Dress Code Policies

A dress code is a preparation for many facets of life and reflects an awareness of the need for appropriate dress in various settings. The dress code is based on modesty, decency, cleanliness and commonly accepted norms of good taste. Therefore, Scholars are expected to adhere to all school dress code guidelines as outlined in the student handbook. The Program Director will notify Scholars and families regarding dress code options for off-campus activities and events. Scholars are to err on the side of modesty and professionalism in their attire **at all program events, regardless if on or off campus.** The Program Director reserves the right to request a student to change attire. Students inappropriately dressed will be sent home and not allowed to attend the event/activity until in compliance with the dress code.

Disciplinary Action

The Program Director is serving as both a representative of The Smet Foundation and their respective school site and therefore responsible for the enforcement of all policies that apply. **The school administration reserves the right to determine the level of disciplinary action in matters involving Onward Scholars.** Suspension, expulsion, or withdrawal may be required of a Scholar

when a school infraction is considered sufficiently serious. Any activity **on or off campus** that violates federal, state, or local regulations and/or school code of conduct that reflects poorly on the school and/or Onward Scholars will result in disciplinary action as outlined in the student handbook.

Student Christian Service Hours

Christian Service hours are an essential part of each school site's educational experience. The same holds true for Onward Scholars. In line with our mission, Onward Scholars is committed to developing generous, responsible citizens and leaders. Each Onward Scholar will be expected to perform additional hours via the mandatory Onward Scholars group service projects.

Parent Participation/Service Hours

In addition to the school's parent participation requirements,

Onward Scholars requires parents/guardians to participate in hours of service to the Onward Scholars program per year.

These opportunities include, but are not limited to, serving as a program parent ambassador, chaperoning field trips, actively participating in program meetings, and/or donating food or beverages for events. All volunteers must be in compliance with Archdiocesan Virtus and/or fingerprinting requirements in order to chaperone program field trips and complete the **OSP Field Trip Expectations for Parents/Guardians** form. Information about Virtus and/or fingerprinting is available in the parent resources section of the Onward Scholars website.

Program Excursions

Onward Scholars includes mandatory excursions and field trips that are educational in nature and relate to the goals of the program.

OSP provides event supervision, which may include parents/guardians of program participants, and enforces school rules on its trips. Program apparel or a variation of the school uniform must be worn on all field trips unless permission is expressly granted by the Program Director in advance. Prior to each excursion, Program Directors will provide Scholars with a Field Trip Permission Form which **must be completed and submitted in order to participate.**

Transportation to Onward Scholars Events

Transportation to and from Onward Scholars Programming off campus events is typically provided by bus or school-approved vehicle. If transportation is not provided, it is the sole responsibility of the parent/guardian to ensure the Scholar arrives safely and on time. The school and the Onward Scholars Program assume no responsibility for students when parents/guardians allow their child to be driven to activities and events by another parent, student, rideshare company (e.g., Uber/Lyft), or public transportation. **A parent/guardian must notify the Program Director in advance, if a student needs to be released to anyone other than individuals listed on his/her emergency card.**

Student Supervision

The Onward Scholars Program will provide appropriate supervision for all program-sponsored activities. However, the program does not guarantee supervision before and after scheduled event times. Please make arrangements to have students picked up immediately at the conclusion of each event. Repeated failure to do so could result in the student not being allowed to participate in future events.

Onward Scholars Program Contact Information

For information about Onward Scholars, please contact the program director at the desired site.



Michele Rice, Program Director
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Onward Scholar Program Handbook Acknowledgment

I have thoroughly read the Onward Scholar Handbook and I am clear on the expectations for me as an Onward Scholar or a parent/guardian.

I also acknowledge that in order to remain an active member of the Onward Scholars Program each year, I must:

- maintain a weighted GPA of 3.5 or higher EACH SEMESTER
- complete at least 1 Accelerated SAT Preparation Course
- demonstrate outstanding citizenship and behavior
- actively participate in at least 1 school program, club, or student organization per year
- attend all mandatory Onward Scholars events, workshops and Scholar Saturdays
- participate in at least one summer activity of significant academic and/or professional development each summer throughout high school in consultation with your Director
- serve a role in marketing the Onward Scholars program to potential applicants at partner middle schools and in the community as requested by your Director
- complete the **Onward Scholars Program Renewal Reflection Form** and program evaluations provided by your Director

Scholar

I _____ commit to upholding these expectations. If I need help or support, I will ask my peers and/or my program director.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Parent/Guardian

I _____ commit to upholding these expectations.

Signature: _____ Date: _____