

STUDENT HANDBOOK

This handbook is your guide to a fruitful experience at SMBI.



MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD

Sharon Mennonite Bible Institute extends a welcome to you to participate in a systematic study of the Bible and subjects relevant to Christian service. Our desire is to see believers like yourself come to a practical and meaningful understanding of Scriptures for the work God has called them to do in our present world. The Institute can provide the atmosphere a person needs for concentration on the study of God's Word and for the fulfillment of the command to "*Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth*" (II Tim. 2:15).

The Institute strives to help its students use the Bible as a filter for every aspect of life. We make every decision on the basis of either the standards of the world or the standards of the God of the Universe. Unless we view the issues of life the way God views them, we will not be able to accomplish all that He would have us accomplish for the heavenly kingdom. Christian parents, missionaries, teachers, pastors, and Christian workers have a great responsibility to be a clear light in a dark world of sin. Unless we use the filter of God's Word, there will be personal consequences and a muddling of our Christian testimony.

Come for a time of spiritual refreshment and enhancement. If money is a hindrance, remember that money gained and spent for our own physical comfort means nothing in comparison with Biblical principles and wisdom gained and used for the salvation of souls. May our desire be to continue growing in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

STATEMENT OF DOCTRINE

Inspiration of Scripture

We believe that the entire Bible is inspired by the Holy Spirit; that it is inerrant in the original writings, authentic in its matter, authoritative in its counsels; that it is the final authority for faith and practice for all men of all ages and is the standard by which all men shall be judged.

God—His Existence and Nature

We believe in one God, who is omnipresent, omniscient, omnipotent, infinitely perfect and eternally existent in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Creation

We believe in God as Creator and Sustainer of all things; we accept the Genesis account of creation as authentic.

Fall of Man

We believe that man was created in the likeness and image of God and by disobedience brought depravity and death upon humanity; thus, he is under the power of Satan and unable to save himself.

Jesus Christ and Redemption

We believe in Jesus Christ as the eternal Son of God, born of a Virgin: that He is the perfect Lamb of God, who died and shed His blood to make atonement for the sins of man and arose for our justification, that through repentance and faith we might be saved.

The Person and Work of the Holy Spirit

We believe in the deity and personality of the Holy Spirit; that He convicts of sin, effects the new birth, gives guidance in life, empowers for service, and enables perseverance in faith and holiness.

The Institution of the Church

We believe that the Church is the body of Christ, a brotherhood of the redeemed, a disciplined people, obedient to the Word of God; that Christ commissioned her to go into all the world to make disciples of all men and minister to human need.

Satan-His Person and Work

We believe that Satan is the personal enemy of God, that he appears as an angel of light to deceive men, and that he is the unseen force at work in men, promoting evil and creating perilous times as the age draws to a close.

New Testament Ordinances

We believe that the New Testament ordinances are for the Christian; that baptism be administered upon confession of faith; that communion be observed as a memorial of Christ's death; that feet washing be observed literally by the saints; that the holy kiss be practiced as an expression of Christian love; that the Christian woman be veiled; that anointing of oil be administered to the sick for healing to those who call for it in faith; and that marriage be the union of one man and one woman for life with Christians marrying "only in the Lord".

The Christian's Relation to Society

We believe that the state is ordained of God to maintain order in society; that it is the Christian's duty to honor and pray for those in authority; that Christ's disciples are to refrain from carnal force and violence in human relations and that Christians are to show love to all men.

Return of Christ

We believe in the literal return of Christ to receive the righteous unto Himself and that He will judge the world in righteousness and bring to fulfillment the restitution of all things unto God.

The Final Consummation

We believe in a place of eternal punishment for the devil, his angels and the unrighteous, and that God has prepared a place for the righteous in His presence to enjoy His fullness and glory eternally.

PURPOSE

The purpose of Sharon Mennonite Bible Institute is to glorify God and expand His kingdom through teaching God's truth.

Our ministry is to:

- Build a loyal relationship with God through the integrating of theology and doctrine into personal life.
- Offer systematic study of the truth of God's Word and related subject matter as a supplement to the teaching of God's Word in the local church.
- Equip students for productive Christian life and leadership at home, in the local church and abroad.

The controlling vision of the institute is:

- Consistently exemplify and teach holiness for individuals and the church as a body.
- Faithfully promote a love for God, the lordship of Christ, and loving our neighbor as ourselves.
- Continue the biblical heritage of the New Testament faith as Anabaptists.

The goal of the institute is that each member of the organization:

- Walk in a living relationship with the Master Teacher.
- Live in brotherhood oriented relationships.
- Relate to staff, students, churches and critics with respect.
- Exercise ministry to the whole man in spirit, soul and body.
- Use gifts in openness and humility and allow others to do the same.
- Offer encouragement and support to all.



ETHICS POLICY SUMMARY

Note: The full ethics policy is included in the SMBI staff manual and is available at the SMBI office for review at any time.

SMBI is committed to upholding the highest standards of ethical, moral, and legal conduct. Consistent with this commitment, the SMBI ethics policy provides direction designed to promote and protect the moral integrity of all associated with the institute. It also provides policy direction and procedures when there is a breakdown of moral integrity, whether it occurs inside or outside of the organization, or is a student or member of staff.

Included in the policy is a summary of PA law related to the mandatory reporting of child sexual abuse. This is a serious issue and of significant concern to the Association of SMBI. Although the programs of the institute seldom involve children, we still desire to promote awareness, and we still desire to follow applicable laws.

To assist in maintaining and promoting the integrity of all associated with the institute, SMBI has an established ethics committee to which any ethical concerns may be reported for investigation and review. Any individual may submit an Ethics Concern Report to the ethics committee. These reports may address concerns involving staff or students and should report, but is not limited to, sexual abuse, physical abuse, emotional abuse, verbal abuse, self-abuse (such as cutting, anorexia, bulimia, substance abuse, or other damaging addictions), internet usage, or other concerns about faculty or staff that would compromise their ability to fulfill their assigned responsibilities.

SMBI and the ethics committee will endeavor to communicate concerns with church leaders and parents when an ethics report has been filed. The organization will pursue all means possible for personal growth, repentance, and healing as is appropriate to the concern.

SMBI is not only concerned about dealing with ethical issues after the fact. The ethics policies of the institute also implement procedures to help prevent moral failure before it happens. To that end, the policy includes directives for cross-gender relationships and counseling. There is a Child Protection Awareness Statement to address the occasions when there are children on campus. Finally, there is a section providing guidelines for internet access on campus.

Ultimately, the Association of SMBI recognizes that no ethics policy is sufficient to create actual integrity. True integrity is a matter of the heart and is a personal responsibility of every staff member, student, church leader, and parent. It is a work of the Holy Spirit which these policies are in no way intended to minimize or replace. May all work together for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.

STUDENT SERVICES

Medical

If possible, a nurse will be available for medical needs. Persons in need of medical services should contact the nurse or appropriate dean. Anyone requiring special medication or diet restriction should notify the school before arrival. Discuss these medical needs or diet restrictions with the office personnel upon arrival of the student.

Telephones

Students may place calls at appropriate time using personal phones or the assigned dorm lines. 717-485-4536 and 717-485-3245 are the dorm lines to be used for student calls. 717-485-4341 is reserved for Institute business use only. Deans will be responsible to answer the incoming calls on the dorm lines. Fees will apply to International calls (other than Canada).

Mail

Mail is delivered to the school and distributed at a given time. Outgoing mail may be deposited in a box thus designated. Stamps and envelopes may be purchased at the school office. The school address is Sharon Mennonite Bible Institute, 7304 Lincoln Highway, Harrisonville, PA, 17228.

Library

A library of reference books and reading material is provided for students and faculty. All books leaving the library must be checked out with the librarian. Returned books shall be deposited at the librarian's desk and not on the shelves. The period of time books may be checked out and other information is posted in the library. Reference books are not to be removed from the library.

Students checking out a book shall be responsible in the event the book is lost or damaged. All such incidents shall be reported promptly to the librarian. The library will serve as a place for study and research. Students shall cooperate in maintaining a quiet atmosphere in the library.

Computers, cell phones & other devices

Personal listening devices shall be used only for choir practice music & music approved for use in the dormitory libraries. Ear bud use should be minimal. Cell phones shall be used respectfully and at appropriate times. Internet is not to be accessed on campus except as specified below. Laptops are permitted.

Our internet policies are designed to carve out a quiet space amid the noise of the digital age. Several computers are available for student use. Internet services are available using library computers or campus wi-fi which provides limited and filtered access. Therefore, to minimize distractions, data usage should be through the provided access points when possible rather than using personal data. In any case, the intent of the data policies is for research, personal communication, and "essential" services such as banking. Specifically excluded are all social media platforms such as Instagram, Snapchat, Twitter, and Facebook. Use of any and all apps should be consistent with the intended quiet zone. Above all, no policy, filter, or limitation is sufficient to create actual integrity. Personal responsibility in content, time management, and other aspects of data use is essential.

Bookstore

Text books, Bibles, reference books, CDs, cards, and good reading books are available for student needs. Bookstore hours are from 3:30 - 4:30 p.m. each Monday, Wednesday, and Friday.

Dining Room and Kitchen

Dining facilities are provided for faculty and students. All persons shall cooperate in maintaining a pleasant atmosphere during mealtime. Meals will be served in the dining room on a regular schedule. All persons shall be prompt and courteous. No food or utensils may be taken from the kitchen or dining room except by permission. Please bring your own personal mug for hot beverages. Students will be assigned to assist in the kitchen and dining room. Visitors are welcome to eat in the dining room with students. The expense of visitors' meals is posted in the dining room. Cooks should be informed of visitors who will be coming.



ACTIVITIES

CHAPEL Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday consist of meditations and singing. Student Chapel each Friday provides an opportunity for student participation.

PRAYER GROUPS meet on Wednesday mornings and become a unit of prayer and fellowship throughout the term.

DORM MEETINGS are held Tuesday evenings at 8:30 and give opportunity for prayer, Bible study, and sharing with the students.

MISSION INVOLVEMENT WEEKEND is a closed weekend for students in which they travel in numerous groups to various cities to assist missions in special evangelization projects.

SHARON SINGERS is a mixed chorus in which everyone is invited to participate. In the case of limited space on the bus, choir members will be chosen as per enrollment sequence.

THE ROSE is the annual yearbook designed by a core of students to capture memories of the year. Academic credit is available for a limited number who assist in this project.

STUDENT COUNCIL is a student-selected group who represent the student voice to faculty and staff. They also prepare the student chapel for each Friday and the final banquet of each term. The student council exists to provide the faculty with knowledge of student concerns and problems. Students should express their concerns to members of the student council, deans, or faculty.

SATURDAY EVENING COMMITTEE is responsible to plan for suitable recreation for students and visitors each Friday or Saturday evening of the term.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Fire Regulations

In case of fire, sound the alarm and notify the fire department. The number is posted on each phone. When alarm sounds, close windows and evacuate immediately. Leave the building at nearest exit away from fire. Dormitory supervisors shall be responsible to check all rooms to be sure they are vacated. Students should be aware of the location and how to use fire extinguishers. Anyone who deliberately turns in a false alarm or tampers with emergency equipment shall be subject to immediate dismissal.

Lost and Found Items

Label all personal belongings. Give unclaimed articles to the Dormitory Supervisor.

SPIRITUAL LIFE

Personal Devotions

Each student should maintain a personal devotional life. The Christian receives direction and strength for daily living through fellowship with the Lord. A daily quiet time of meditation and prayer is essential for Christian growth.

Chapel Services

Chapel services are held Monday through Friday. Faculty members and guest speakers will share in these services. Students also participate. Daily attendance is a requirement for students.

Christian Service Activities

Service activities such as literature distribution, institutional services, and cottage meetings will be arranged. There will also be opportunity to participate in Gospel teams, giving programs in various churches.

Sunday Services

Students shall regularly attend morning services at the SMBI chapel or area churches according to the term schedule. There will be opportunity for student participation. The Lord's Day shall be observed in a restful and relaxed manner avoiding strenuous recreation.

SOCIAL LIFE

Social life is considered one of the valuable aspects of an experience at SMBI.

The goal of SMBI is to promote spiritual growth and a commitment to the Lordship of Jesus Christ. This includes the internalization of the principles of Scripture to develop self-discipline and proper perspectives in the area of social life.

The emotional bonds that form during courtship can prevent wholesome group interaction from developing and also have the tendency of hindering concentrated Bible study. This bonding should be directed by the counsel of the fathers of the couple. Therefore, we ask that no dating (pursuing an interest in a person of the opposite gender by words, looks, talks, or events) commence while attending SMBI and that diligent effort be put into participating in group activities. If a couple has been courting previous to attending SMBI, they will be permitted one date per week upon the written consent of both fathers.

If a couple is engaged before they attend SMBI, several dates per week will be permitted.

The time and frequency of these dates shall not interfere with classroom activities, study time, or worship. Therefore, couple relationships are not permitted during school hours. The approval of the dormitory dean is to be secured before dating privileges are permitted.

DORMITORY LIFE

Dormitory Regulations

Housing facilities are provided and all students are encouraged to room in the dormitory. If it should be necessary for any student to live off campus, that student is expected to respect the school standards while on campus. Room and board expenses are listed in the Institute Course Catalog.

Much time while attending SMBI is spent meditating, studying, fellowshiping, and resting in the dormitory. For this reason students need to be respectful and considerate of the wishes, needs, and welfare of fellow students. The following regulations are given to provide the atmosphere necessary for this goal to be attained.

Students are expected to be in the dormitory by 9:30 p.m. Monday through Thursday, 10:30 p.m. Friday, 10:00 p.m. Saturday, and 9:30 p.m. on Sunday. Quiet time shall be from 10:00 p.m. to 10:30 p.m. Monday through Thursday. Students are expected to use this time for Bible study, prayer and meditation.

Lights shall be out by 10:30 p.m. Monday through Thursday, 11:30 p.m. Friday, 11:00 p.m. Saturday, and 10:30 p.m. Sunday. Dormitories shall be kept quiet from the beginning of quiet time until 6:30 a.m.

Rooms are to be kept neat and orderly. Students are responsible for any additional work assigned by the Dormitory Supervisor.

Musical instruments shall be used at the discretion of the Dormitory Supervisors. Electrical amplification of musical instruments shall not be permitted on campus.

Students are expected to attend the weekly dormitory meetings planned by the Dormitory Supervisors.

Before a student may leave campus he must sign the "out-in" register upon leaving and returning.

Any deviations from the above regulations must have the approval of the Dormitory Deans.

Personal Items

Students shall bring sheets, blankets, pillows, towels, wash cloths, clocks, etc. In addition to the above, students may wish to bring a mug, hand soap, small lamp, laundry detergent and softener. Each student will have a personal bulletin board and shelf to use.

GENERAL CONDUCT

All students are subject to SMBI standards upon arrival on campus. They shall be loyal to these standards during their time as students, both on and off campus.

Our bodies are the temples of the Holy Spirit (I Cor. 6:19); therefore, indulgence in tobacco, liquor, and drugs is forbidden. The student's speech shall be such as is profitable and edifying, avoiding all profanity or sensual joking. Attendance at commercial theaters, dances, and poolrooms is forbidden. Since the Institute provides recreation we request that students refrain from attending professional sports events, roller skating, bowling alleys, and the like.

Students shall respect school property. Any damage accidental or otherwise shall be promptly reported to the Administrator, and persons causing damage shall be responsible for the expenses involved. Firearms, ammunition, and explosives are not permitted on campus.

Students owning or operating automobiles shall exercise Christian courtesy and observe traffic laws. When automobiles are used for school functions, the owner will be responsible in the event of an accident. We suggest that students desiring transportation in another person's automobile should share in costs for mileage.

RECREATION

Because the Scriptures imply that one ought to maintain the body as the temple of the Holy Spirit and since physical fitness and well-being are conducive to mental concentration and comprehension, recreation is to be creative rather than competitive. For this reason all students will be encouraged to participate in a supervised recreational program.

The emphasis will be on personal development rather than competition. Our goal is to provide the students with good exercise so that they will experience relaxation rather than tension. The Institute will provide other recreational activities and equipment that may be used during "free time".

PERSONAL APPEARANCE

Outward appearance tells much about a person. Attire and conduct reveal one's character. Therefore, a student's appearance and attire shall be neat, clean, modest, simple, and appropriate.

In response to the commands of the Bible to be free from conformity to an ungodly world and its fleeting value system, we believe the wearing of the plain coat and cape dress is a practical approach to the problem of constantly changing and sensual patterns of personal appearance.

Students are expected to keep the standards of their home congregation as well as the standards of the Institute.

Sheer garments, loud colors, tight and form-fitting clothes, and jewelry shall not be worn. Sleeves shall cover at least three-fourths of the upper arm.

Brethren

Brethren are to keep their hair neat and well-trimmed, avoiding fads of the world. The hair shall not fall over the shirt collar or ears. Sideburns shall not extend below mid ear. Beards shall be consistent with home church standards. Further, mustaches may not be worn alone, and beards shall be worn as full beards.

For the sake of modesty, we require brethren to wear buttoned down dress shirts in all public life. Buttoned pull-over shirts with a collar may be worn for evening and weekend recreation time. All dress shirts shall be tucked into the trousers. All kinds of neckties are prohibited. The wearing of sweatpants is not allowed in public life.

Sisters

Christian women are not to cut their hair. The hair shall be put up and neatly arranged under a white, unadorned veiling (without lace) of adequate size to give expression to the Scriptural principle of headship. The Women's Dean will have available a selection of veilings which are of suitable size to meet this standard. The drawings below demonstrate our interpretation of "adequate size." If you are accustomed to wearing a veiling of less than the minimal size, we would greatly appreciate if you would purchase an acceptable one before you arrive on campus.

Veiling Picture

Dresses for all activities are to be of one-piece type with sleeves, modestly tailored (without slits) and of sufficient length to cover the knees, both standing and sitting. They shall be designed to avoid emphasizing bodily form. We will be using the cape dress pattern for choral presentations.

Hosiery or socks shall be worn for all public occasions except evening and weekend recreation time. Short socks can be worn over hosiery for additional warmth and comfort.

Make-up such as lipstick, finger nail polish, eye shadow, etc., is not allowed.

There are additional requirements for the choir uniform. Please contact the office to order fabric and obtain the uniform requirements.

VISITORS

Visitors are welcome at the Institute both to visit relatives and friends and to observe the work of the Institute.

Visitors shall be mindful and considerate of the student's time so as not to affect their attendance in class and time required for study. They are expected to conform to the rules of social life and conduct while visiting at SMBI.

Visitors will be assigned rooms by the Lodging Coordinator. They are welcome to eat in the dining room. A nominal fee will be charged for lodging and meals.