

Structured Study Hall Overview

Structured Study Hall (SSH) is designed to equip incoming freshmen with important skills necessary for academic achievement and confidence at the college prep high school level. Students are trained in organization, time management, study habits, active strategies, academic self monitoring, and self discipline. They are encouraged to take increasing personal responsibility for their own learning. A small group setting allows for individual assistance and troubleshooting in every subject. Interested students must complete and submit an SSH Application. Priority enrollment is given to students with greatest academic need. **SSH Class is scheduled in place of the student's regular study hall.** We offer original SSH, as well as SSH with Dyslexia Resources, as space permits. A \$375 fee is assessed per semester. Skills taught in SSH freshman year will equip students for academic success all throughout high school and into college.

How do I enroll my son in SSH?

1. Have your son take the Entrance Exam in February. This gives us a baseline measure of his academic strengths and weaknesses so we can best assist him. Don't study, don't stress, just take the exam!
2. Complete and submit the SSH Application Form found on our website at lrchs.org, or here [SSH APPLICATION](#)
3. Send a copy of any psychoeducational testing reports to the office Attention: Mrs. Hartnedy so we can get a more complete picture of his academic needs. If your son has never had testing done, that will not prevent him from being in the class. If he has, we would like to see the results.
4. Wait patiently. We will not finalize the roster until we have examined the academic needs of every student who has been accepted to Catholic High. We want to be sure we do not miss any struggling student. This process will extend into the summer and will be finalized by late July/early August registration.

Is SSH "extra work"?

The transition from grade school to high school requires skills that most 8th graders do not possess. For those who struggle academically, these skills are even more elusive. Yes, it will take extra work to learn these necessary study habits. But high school cannot be mastered without them, so the best pathway to success is to cooperate with your instructors and be motivated to succeed. No, you do not receive a grade for SSH. Instead, SSH helps you learn the skills to understand the subject matter and improve your grades in all your other classes. Not receiving a grade for SSH takes some pressure off and improves the learning experience. Daily, students will practice small skills consistently that translate to success in learning. "You aspire to great things? Begin with little ones."--Saint Augustine

Does CHS use 504/IEPs/accommodations in the classroom?

While Catholic High does not utilize traditional 504 plans or IEPs, accommodations are provided. *Please be advised that accommodations are not automatic simply because a student enters CHS with an IEP, 504 Plan, evaluation recommendations, or accommodations in place at a previous school.* Instead, we do examine a student's previous 504, IEP, recommendations etc. for information that would help us work with that student. In the Structured Study Hall program (freshman year only), **a student receives much more individualized and direct training in the skills required to be a successful student than is afforded by the traditional plan.** We get to know the student in a small group setting, equip him with the skills he will need in order to be successful at CHS and at the college level, and guide him daily as he practices these skills, giving him the opportunity for feedback and individual assistance. **After a baseline period that sees a student through the transition to CHS in all his classes, if it becomes evident that individualized accommodations are necessary, we consider what would be best for him and help him advocate in the classroom for his academic needs.** We want him to be as academically successful and independent as possible by the time he is ready for college.

Does my son need a Psycho/Educational evaluation?

This is not required for attendance at CHS. However, if the student has had an evaluation in the past (even if it is several years old), the information will be beneficial in a couple ways: 1) helps the staff and faculty understand the student's strengths and weaknesses so as to better teach him, 2) assists the student in attempting to secure accommodations on the ACT when he is an upperclassmen. If your son

has had any academic/psycho-educational testing done that would be helpful for us in teaching him, please provide a copy of the results to the office at your convenience (if you have not done so already). Mark it "Attention: Mrs. Hartnedy". Electronic copies are welcome as well at SHartnedy@lrchs.org if this is your preference.

If you wish to have your son evaluated formally for possible learning disabilities, please contact Mrs. Kim Dodge, KDodge@lrchs.org, for a list of recommended evaluators.

Is there any standardized testing at CHS? What about accommodations?

There are only two occasions for standardized testing: the Entrance Exam, and the PSAT.

- 1) CHS uses the Entrance Exam to obtain a snapshot of the relative strengths and weaknesses of each incoming freshman and to help identify students who may benefit from the assistance of SSH.
- 2) Sophomore and Junior years, students will take the PSAT on campus to practice for college entrance exams and to identify any potential National Merit Scholars. These test results produce data that allows us to track any needs, as well.

No accommodations are extended for the Entrance Exam or the PSAT. The Entrance Exam is a baseline measure/snapshot, and the PSAT is a practice test.

Are there accommodations on the ACT for upperclassmen?

Accommodations are not guaranteed, and depend upon the student meeting the requirements. The paperwork process takes time, so it is recommended that parents start it several months in advance of the date of the ACT test the student wishes to take. Contact Mrs. Kim Dodge at kdodge@lrchs.org for more information or assistance with this process.

How involved should a parent be with a struggling student?

Catholic High's emphasis on students growing in independence and generally discouraging helicopter parenting does not mean that parents should never be involved. If a student struggles more than the typical student, parents need to work with the classroom teachers more closely during an initial "training wheel" phase, before expecting that the student will ride his academic bike independently, much less with "no hands". Here is some guidance for how to support without hovering, and what to do before jumping in:

- 1) Prior to the start of school, supply information that would help teachers know the student's potential areas of academic difficulty (psychoeducational evaluation, if any).
- 2) Email his teachers with a brief paragraph of the student's strengths and weaknesses in the particular subjects you think he may struggle in. **Do this between registration (when you have his schedule, so you know his teacher names) and before the end of the first week of school.** Introduce yourself and include your preferred contact information. Faculty email addresses can be found on the website at lrchs.org.
- 3) **Structure your son at home with any suggested guidelines given by current teachers (at parent teacher night or personal communication) and by what has worked best in the past for your son.**
- 4) On a daily basis, insist that your son SHOW you his Google Classrooms for each subject, daily planner (where he should keep track of homework, tests, etc) and any other information you wish to see. Do not just ask him how it's going and take his word for it when he says "fine".
- 5) Check behind him in his Google Classrooms **for at least the first 9 weeks.** If he is not completing assignments, he will be failing soon. This must be corrected immediately. Homework/classwork completion is the bare minimum for understanding material and passing a class.
- 6) If he is completing homework but failing tests, **examine how and how much he is studying.** If he says he gets everything done at school, this is impossible. He should be studying every subject every day, which will necessitate several hours. Make extra curricular activities and other privileges contingent upon appropriate classroom performance.
- 7) *If he is failing and addressing all of the above has not helped, it is time to contact the teacher.* Explain what you are seeing at home and ask for the teacher's input and suggestions.
- 8) Follow up with your son in *implementing the teacher's suggestions.*
- 9) Continue a high level of *structure and supervision at home and as much contact with the teacher(s) as necessary* until your son begins demonstrating appropriate classroom and home study habits.

- 10) Make sure to attend any parent/teacher conferences, but do not wait until the conference if there is a problem as described above: take the necessary steps!

When to consider tutoring?

It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to secure tutoring services if a student has needs beyond the scope of what can be accomplished in class. **Structured Study Hall instructors do not maintain a list of tutors for recommendation.**

Steps in responsibility for obtaining extra help:

- 1) Student should ask questions in class to improve his understanding.
- 2) Student should ask his teacher(s) about their availability outside of class time to get help. The teacher knows best what the student needs to understand and master.
- 3) If teacher is unavailable when student is, ask other teachers of the same subject.
- 4) If no teacher is available when student is, student should ask his teacher if s/he has any tutor recommendations, whether older students or adult tutors. It is the student/parent's responsibility to contact tutor, arrange schedule/fee.
- 5) If to no avail, student/parent should contact an outside tutor.

Math struggles? What is Mu Alpha Theta?

Mu Alpha Theta is the Math Club's free math tutoring by upperclassmen in the library for any student. Tutors are available before and after school (30min before homeroom, and 30min immediately after school) and during every study hall. If a student wishes to go to math tutoring during his study hall, he simply needs to first check in for attendance at the study hall, and then ask permission to go to the Math Lab in the library. Those students in Structured Study Hall will not leave SSH for math tutoring. They should ask math (or any) questions during SSH. If they need additional help, they should make arrangements to go to a math tutor before or after school.

More math or science tutoring needed?

Please contact the head of the Math Department, Mr. Bryan Jones, at bjones@lrchs.org or the head of the Science Department, Dr. Jennifer Gilley, at jgilley@lrchs.org to connect with upperclassmen who may be willing to tutor privately for a fee, if a student wishes more individualized assistance than the math or science labs can provide.

What if my son has reading problems?

If a student struggles with reading and reading-based subjects, and he has never been evaluated for this before, you may wish to rule out dyslexia or see if this is a possibility. If you would like to have your son take a 45-minute reading screening to investigate this, please contact Mrs. Kim Dodge, at kdodge@lrchs.org to set up an appointment for a free screening. She can then direct you further if necessary.