



MOUNT SALEM
CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

PARENT & STUDENT HANDBOOK

Revised 2024

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School Mission

Mount Salem Christian School's (MSCS) mission is to provide a high level of Bible-based academic instruction, and to partner with parents as we educate 'the whole child'; equipping and training the student for a life of obedience to his calling in this world as an image-bearer of Jesus Christ.

Provide - a high level of Bible-based academic instruction

Partner - with parents as we educate 'the whole child'

Prepare - students for a life of obedience to his calling in this world as an image-bearer of Jesus Christ

Core Values

Faith: believing something to be true and relying / living like it is true.

Hebrews 11:1, "Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen."

Hebrews 11:6, "And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him."

Integrity : the quality of being honest and having strong moral principles; moral uprightness.

1 Peter 3:16, "keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander."

2 Corinthians 8:21, "For we are taking pains to do what is right, not only in the eyes of the Lord but also in the eyes of man."

Creativity: the ability to produce original and unusual ideas, or to make something new or imaginative. Approaching a need, a task, or an idea from a new perspective.

Exodus 35:31-32, "And he has filled him with the Spirit of God, with skill, with intelligence, with knowledge, and with all craftsmanship, to devise artistic designs, to work in gold and silver and bronze,"

Community: doing life together with others in a way that reflects the love of God. Helping, encouraging and having fun with others.

Galatians 6:2, "Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ."

Hebrews 10:24-25, "And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near."

School Governance

School Board

MSCS school board is made up of elected members (parents who currently have students enrolled within the school) that serve for a three year term. They can serve six consecutive years. After six years they will be considered ineligible for re-election for a one-year period, except under special circumstances, upon approval from the membership, could this ineligibility be suspended for an agreed upon time-frame.

The School Board can also appoint voting members that are not current parents if they are considered valuable to the organization, as long as at least two-thirds of the Board is made up of current parents. These appointments will last for one year, ending at the close of each school year.

The board functions to represent the membership and to provide spiritual and educational leadership, ensuring MSCS upholds Christian values while delivering high-quality academic programs. The board meets monthly with the principals.

Membership Meetings

The Board will hold at least two membership meetings each year: one before December and one near the end of the school year. Additional meetings may be scheduled by the School Board and the Principal/Administrator. The School Board will set the time, place, and agenda for each meeting, and members will be notified in writing at least 10 days in advance.

The fall meeting will include reports on the school's activities and progress.

The spring meeting will include reports on activities and progress, along with the annual election of board members.

Board Created Committees

The board can create committees to handle specific tasks. These committees support the board in carrying out its responsibilities. Committees are not decision making groups but task and research focused. The board will define, appoint members to, and dissolve committees as needed. Some of the current committees are: finance committee and fundraising committee.

Parent Council

The Parent Council is a group of parents that oversee meal days, the Aylmer Christmas parade school float, various fundraisers, and other activities that help support the staff and the school. The parent council is made up of parents that commit to serve on the council for a one year term (there are no limits in the amount of years a member can serve).

School Policies & Practices

Governing Principles

MSCS holds that the Bible is the infallible Word of God and all that it does flows from this belief. It also believes that salvation by grace through faith is the initial step into a relationship with God the Christian life and growth in our Christian life continues throughout life. It is the goal therefore of the Board of Directors, Administration, and Staff to provide an environment that is conducive to learning and spiritual growth and development, while keeping peer pressure stresses to a minimum. It is our desire to work together with the parents of our students to guide them into making good decisions that will lead them into a productive and fulfilling adulthood. The policies in this handbook are set forth with the purpose of providing such an environment.

The school is here to serve all within the Christian community and restrictive policies are there to ensure all are served, never to condemn someone who, in his/her personal life, exercises more freedom. The school is governed by the Constitution of Mount Salem Christian School and what follows is a summary of the policies from which the school functions, setting forth the admission policy, classroom expectations, code of conduct, and a dress code.

Core Family Values

All members of the board, administration, and staff of MSCS believe that the Bible is the Word of God and without error in all its teachings. Because of our understanding of the Old and New Testaments, our school teaches these Core Family Values:

- That it is unacceptable for Christians to teach hatred against any group or individual.
- That human life begins at conception and that an unborn child at any stage of development is fully human and should be treated as such.
- That extramarital sexual intimacy, heterosexual or homosexual, is morally wrong.
- That marriage is an exclusively heterosexual institution involving one man and one woman.

Gender Statement

MSCS was founded and continues to operate upon Biblical values, and the desire and commitment for parents to enroll their children in an intentionally, bible believing environment. MSCS stands firmly upon Biblical truth and moral foundations of Christianity. This includes the Biblical definition of marriage, the attendant boundaries of sexuality and moral conduct, and the clear Biblical teaching that gender is both sacred and established by God's design.

We believe that God wonderfully foreordained and immutably created each person as either male or female. These two distinct yet complementary genders together reflect the image and nature of God (Genesis 1:26-27). It is God who assigns our fundamental human identity and gender, and we believe that all humans, male and female, reflect the image of God. A person's gender is sacred and has a divine purpose.

We believe that regardless of one's anatomical parts or feelings about them, all humans have the same responsibility for stewarding physical attributes and abilities. Our bodies are God's dwelling place. 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 reads "Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own, you were bought at a price. Therefore, honor God with your bodies."

We also affirm that God loves all people, including those who struggle with their gender assignment, identity and expression. Therefore, we are to love all people, regardless of their struggles.

By enrolling their children in MSCS, parents or legal guardians are agreeing to support these, and other basic Biblical values. Parents understand and agree that MSCS will uphold the biblical view of gender and will adhere to its position on gender, marriage, and sexuality issues in its teaching, curriculum, and treatment of students.

In addition, the Board urges parents to recognize their scriptural responsibility (validated by Deuteronomy 6:1-9, Psalm 78:5-6 and Proverbs 22:6) to provide their children with a Christian education and to understand that the primary responsibility for this task rests with the parents. (Ephesians 6:4)

Student Physical Privacy Policy

Purpose: In recognition of student physical privacy rights and the need to ensure student safety and maintain school discipline, this Policy is enacted to advise school site staff and administration regarding their duties in relation to student use of restrooms, locker rooms, showers, and other school facilities where students may be in a state of undress in the presence of other students.

Definitions: "Biological sex" means the biological condition of being male or female as determined at birth based on physical differences, or, when necessary, at the chromosomal level.

Policy:

- Use of School Facilities
 - Notwithstanding any other Board Policy, student restrooms, locker rooms, and showers that are designated for one biological sex shall only be used by members of that biological sex.
 - In any other school facilities or settings where a student may be in a state of undress in the presence of other students (i.e., changing costumes during school theatrical productions, etc.), school personnel shall provide separate, private areas designated for use by students based on their biological sex.
- Accommodation of Biological Sex Non-Conforming Students
 - Students that exclusively and consistently assert at school that their gender is different from their biological sex shall be provided with the best available accommodation that meets their needs, but in no event shall that be access to the school restroom, locker room, or shower of the opposite biological sex. Such accommodations may include, but are not limited to: access to a single-stall restroom; access to a unisex restroom; or controlled use of a faculty restroom, locker room, or shower.

Admission / Withdraw Policy

Parents seeking entrance for their child/children to MSCS will be required to fill out an application form, statement of co-operation form and provide a copy of his/her latest report card. These forms must be submitted in person, to the School Administrator. The Administrator will conduct a brief interview with them at the time of the application. If the child/children have attended a school other than MSCS he may be required to write an entrance exam to determine his academic placement. Following the exam, the School Administration will review the application and rule on its approval. The Administration reserves the right to recommend placement of the student in keeping with the results of the entrance exam. Parents are expected to read the Constitution as well as the Policy handbook and agree to cooperate fully with the school.

If a student needs to be withdrawn from the school there is a \$500 per student fee.

Communication

At MSCS we use three ways to communicate all school events and activities. We use Google Calendar, Remind, and our School Newsletter. Please reach out to the office if you need help accessing those forms of communication. When it comes to individual student needs, teachers and office staff will use Remind and email to communicate with the parent. We ask that if you have any questions or concerns relating to your child that you talk directly to the teacher - please do not complain to other parents or gossip about staff.

Attendance and Absence Policy

- Learning happens from the moment the student enters the classroom. To avoid having interruptions and distractions take place, we expect our students to be on time, present in mind and body. Due to the importance of punctuality, three lates in one month will equal an unexcused absence. If a student will be late due to an appointment or an emergency, the parent should call the school, and the student will then not be considered late.
- When a student is sick, the parent should send a note or call the school. In the absence of a note, or phone call, it will be counted as an unexcused absence.
- For approved unexcused absences (absence of one school week or greater), a Student Absence Form must be filled out. If all school work is completed, each missed day will count as 1/2 excused and 1/2 unexcused.
- After 15 days of unexcused absence, a student may be ineligible to be reregistered for the following school year. An unexcused absence is staying out of school to go visiting, shopping, on vacation, etc. Excused absences would be sickness, doctor's appointments, death in the family, etc.

Drop off & Pick Up Procedures

- There will be teachers on yard duty from 8:15—8:30 AM every morning. After school, there will also be teachers on duty from 3:30 –3:45 PM. If for some reason parents are going to be late picking up their student(s), they should call the school to let the office know. The school will not be held responsible for students on the school yard before 8:15 AM or after 3:45 PM, unless arrangements have been made by the parents.
- Upon being dropped off students are to line up at the front of the school and wait with their classmates. (JK & SK students will enter the building at arrival) When the morning bell rings, students are to follow their teacher and enter the school quietly.
- At drop off students will line up at the front of the school and will be released to their vehicle by their teacher.

Student Behavior General Principles

The Bible gives principles which can be learned by the Spirit-filled Christian and applied to any situation or culture. It is the parents' responsibility to help their children learn these principles and how to apply them with discernment. It is the church's responsibility to teach these principles and provide a context in which all can grow in their understanding of appropriate application of them. It is the school's responsibility to partner with parents and church as we disciple, equip, and train students for a life of obedience to his calling in this world as an image bearer of Jesus Christ.

Student Code of Conduct

At MSCS, we seek to disciple students to be followers of Christ. It is our goal to provide an environment that is conducive to academic learning, spiritual growth, and physical development. Our Code of Conduct and other student life policies seek to nurture a positive, respectful and caring Christian character within our students.

As a Christian community, we want student behaviour and conduct to reflect the command to love God and love our neighbour. This includes:

- Our relationship with God (Love)
 - Speak of God in respectful ways.
 - Encourage a close relationship with God in others as well as ourselves through activities such as Bible reading, prayer and worship.
- Our relationship with those in authority (Honour)
 - Be respectful in our speech and conduct.
 - Be obedient to those in authority over us.
 - Encourage others to be respectful of authority.
- Our relationship with others (Respect)
 - Be respectful of others.
 - Address each other properly and do not resort to name-calling, swearing or inappropriate language toward each other.
 - Give of ourselves to others and encourage everyone to feel included.
 - Remember that there is no touching except for helping.
 - Learn to apologize when we fail and to seek God's forgiveness as we strive to live in fellowship with one another.
 - Respect each other's property and use it only with permission.
- Our relationship with God's earth and the environment (Care)
 - Be careful in our use of school property, which includes books, furniture, equipment, and buildings.
 - Treat the playgrounds and landscape respectfully.
 - Report any damage done and pay for damages when we are responsible.

Student Behaviour & Expectations

- Students are expected to follow our Student Code of Conduct (outlined above) and uphold classroom rules and expectations.
- MSCS has a 'helping hands only' policy. Students are to keep their hands to themselves. If a student physically attacks another student, a half-day in-school suspension will be given.
- No gum is permitted at the school.
- Students are expected to be outside, at recess time even in cold weather. Outdoor recess will be shortened or moved entirely inside if it is -15° C or colder with windchill.
- In an effort to keep the school clean, eating of snacks / lunches must take place at the set times by the school. No food is to be eaten within the hallways or outside.
- If a student needs to take medication at school, an Authorization for Administering of Prescription Medicine Form must be filled out. The required medication should then be handed in to the office with directions from the parent for administering it.
- Electronic devices are not allowed at school or at school functions, unless previously arranged at the teacher's discretion. If a student brings an electronic device to school other than a time when a teacher may have granted permission, it will be confiscated by the teacher and returned at the end of the day. Recurring incidents may have more severe consequences. No electronic devices are permitted on class trips except by express permission granted by the teacher in consultation with the administration (for further information see the MSCS Technology Use Policy below).
- Homework is given to reinforce what is taught in the classroom and therefore needs to be completed. Incomplete homework will be dealt with at the teacher's discretion.
- "Honesty is the best policy." Students at MSCS are expected to complete their work with integrity and honesty. Students who choose to complete their assignments and tests dishonestly (copying answers or assignments, having someone else do the work, using a test or answer key to study for tests/quizzes, etc.) will receive a mark of 0 for that test, quiz, or assignment.
- Any recreational use of marijuana or other hallucinogenic drugs by students may result in suspension, expulsion, or dismissal from MSCS.

Disciplinary Procedures

Students who choose not to follow our Student Code of Conduct, and/or classroom rules and expectations, will be dealt with in the following 6 steps:

- **Step 1: Set Clear Expectations & Acceptable Behaviour**
 - Students must know and understand what is expected of them. They also need to know that they will be held accountable to what is expected of them and that they will experience consequences for their actions. The classroom teacher must go over classroom expectations and make it clear what is expected as acceptable behaviour within that classroom.
- **Step 2: Repeat Expectations and Give a Verbal Warning**
 - Teachers will repeat and redirect students towards the expectation and behaviour that has been set for them along with warning them that if the behaviour continues they will face consequences for their actions.
- **Step 3: Recess Consequence and/or Principal Conversation**
 - After repeated verbal warnings and redirecting the student needs to be held accountable for their actions by facing one of two consequences: (a) an in class detention or (b) a conversation with a principal. (often times it is both)
 - For an in class detention a student is kept in for part or all of a scheduled recess. While the student is in detention they will need to complete a Detention Worksheet (DW). The DW will help the student think through their actions and the impact of their behaviour. The DW will also be sent home to be signed and returned.
- **Step 4: In School Suspension**
 - After repeated in class detentions or if the behaviour demands a greater consequence an in school suspension will be assigned to the student.
 - For an in school suspension the student will be given work to complete independently working in a room by themselves with the oversight of a principal and/or an EA.
 - Parents will be contacted and an in school suspension form will be sent home.
- **Step 5: Out of School Suspension**
 - An out of school suspension can last one (1) to five (5) days depending on the severity of behaviour / action of the student.
 - The student will not be sent home with school work and all assignments missed will receive a zero or incomplete mark.
- **Step 6: Expelled**
 - In extreme circumstances when a student is unwilling or unable to submit themselves to the expectations of the school and/or classroom and when all other disciplinary actions have taken place a student will be expelled from the school. In this situation a student will be removed from the school and not able to return for the remainder of that school year.

Principles for Dress

At MSCS, we believe that student appearance and attire must reflect that they study in a Christian learning environment. In keeping with Biblical teaching, their appearance should be characterized by modesty and cleanliness. We support parental responsibility in the area of student dress and appearance. The school provides requirements for student dress appearance, and the parents shall ensure that their students are dressed accordingly. Even though there are differences in application of the principles, the leadership at MSCS feel that the following requirements would meet the appropriate standards for a Christian academic institution.

- Classroom Attire
 - Student clothes should be neat, clean, and in good repair. Pajama clothing may not be worn. Rips below mid-thigh for pants are acceptable.
 - Student clothes may not have slogans or advertisements that are not in keeping with the school's mission and vision.
 - Appropriate attire includes:
 - Shirts and tops are to be long enough to cover the top of the pants, skirts or shorts. Straps of tops must have a shoulder width of 4 fingers.
 - Necklines should have suitable coverage. No tops cut low in the front, back, or side are allowed.
 - Mid-thigh length dresses and skirts are acceptable when leggings are worn underneath.
 - Pants are acceptable bottoms. Shorts that are mid-thigh length or longer are acceptable. Leggings worn with a top that is mid-thigh or longer are also acceptable.
 - Undergarments should not be visible through clothing.
 - Hats and visors may be worn outdoors only.
 - Outdoor shoes must be closed-toed for safety purposes and for participation in athletic activities.
- Class trips
 - Student dress on class trips will be decided by the teachers, in consultation with the Principal, based on the nature of the trip.
- Physical Education Class
 - If special requirements are needed regarding physical education attire, the teacher will communicate this to the students and parents.
- Dress Code Violations
 - Students who choose to disregard these guidelines will be given a verbal reminder and possibly a clean alternative piece of clothing to wear. Written communication will also be sent to parents. Should the situation continue, the parents will be called to bring school-appropriate clothing to school or pick up their child.

Technology Use Policy

MSCS will make computers and/or computer Internet access available to students, to permit students to perform research and to allow students to learn how to use computer technology. Use of computers will be for educational and/or instructional purposes only.

Internet and Computer Use

- Users will be accountable by using a username and password.
- Internet filters to limit access to certain types of content will be installed on the school network.
- A designated screened individual will periodically review the browser history as well as the documents downloaded onto the computers.
- No student will be granted Internet access until and unless a Technology-Use Agreement is signed by both the student and the parent or legal guardian.
- Students who misuse school-owned computers or Internet access in any way, including using computers except as directed or assigned by staff or teachers, using computers to violate any other policy or contrary to the computer use agreement, attempting to defeat or bypass Internet filtering software, or using the computers to access or create sexually explicit or pornographic text or graphics, will face disciplinary action.
- Students are advised that they enjoy no expectation of privacy in any aspect of their computer use, including email, and that monitoring of student computer use is continuous.

When using **SCHOOL** technology, students are accountable for:

- Always have permission before using school technology
 - Students using devices without permission may lose other privileges.
 - Multiple infractions will result in loss of privileges/disciplinary action.
 - Treating all of the school technology with respect.
 - Misuse of Chromebooks, computers or other technology can result in damage. Replacement or repair of technology is expensive. Please be careful.
 - Students found defacing or damaging Chromebooks or other technology purposefully will lose the use of that technology.
 - Students will carry Chromebooks with TWO hands, with the device closed during transport.
 - Only visiting Internet websites as directed by the teacher.
 - This is for both safety and to ensure the information being accessed is grade level appropriate.
 - A student may not access "chat lines" unless authorized by the instructor for a class activity directly supervised by a staff member.

- Being respectful when writing messages to anyone while using technology.
 - We expect students to act with integrity and responsibility online.
 - Teachers and staff reserve the right to review any and all messages made on school devices.
 - A student may never use abusive or profane language in private messages on the system; or using the system to harass, insult, or verbally attack other;
 - Theft or vandalism of data and data of another user, equipment, or intellectual property is not tolerated.
- Telling a teacher right away if something is wrong with the computer.
 - Accidents and mistakes happen. It is the technology users responsibility to let staff know of any issues.
- Telling a teacher right away if something they see on the computer screen makes them uncomfortable.
 - The internet is a big place. Even with the best filters, preparation and screening there may be images or text that make you uncomfortable. If this happens, let the teacher know and they will help you navigate away and plan for avoiding it in the future.
- Sharing the technology fairly if they are working with a partner.
 - Students are responsible for their technology and will share when directed by the teacher, or in appropriate group setting.
- Only using their own login
 - A student should never share their passwords with anyone other than their teacher or parents/guardians
 - Students are accountable by using their user name and password. If they share their password, they may be liable for what is done under their user.
 - A student may never use another student's login. If a student is found to have done this, their own access to school technology may be terminated and disciplinary action may also take place.

Personal Technology at School

- We realize that good quality education is a priority for the parents who choose to send their children to MSCS and we do our best to make sure that each classroom is set up for students' ultimate success. We know that technology is an important part of the world around us and we desire to teach students how to use them correctly in a controlled environment. This is why we have provided laptops for our upper elementary classes. However, studies have shown that even being in the proximity to personal electronic devices negatively affects students' ability to concentrate and retain information. For this reason, **students at MSCS are not permitted to bring personal cell phones, smart watches connected to a**

personal device or wifi, or laptops to school or school events such as field trips. If a student has need of it before or after school, they can bring the device to the office to be held for them until after school. Should a student be found out to have one in their possession at school, it will be kept in the office until a parent comes in to retrieve it. A second infraction will result in parents being called to come pick up their student. If further infractions follow, it may result in an out-of-school suspension.

- Exceptions can be made for students who need their cellphones for medical reasons but all alerts other than for the medical device need to be turned off.

No Guarantees

- Mt. Salem Christian School will make every effort to protect children from improper or harmful content which may be on the Internet. At the same time, in signing this agreement, the parent and student recognize that the school makes no guarantees about preventing improper access to such materials on the part of the student.

Agreement with MSCS Technology Use Policy

- Parents and students will be required to yearly sign and agree to the above policy to be able to access technology at MSCS.

School Chapels

MSCS values gathering together in song and teaching from the Word of God. Every student gets to do this twice a month in chapels. Chapels are held on Friday mornings and parents & family members are invited to attend.

Athletics / Extracurricular Activities

CAASO

MSCS participates in sports tournaments with other Christian schools in Southwestern Ontario who are part of Christian Athletic Association of Schools Ontario (CAASO). Most teams are made up of grade 6-8 students, except for Cross Country and Track and Field which include students from Grade 3. MSCS students have the opportunity to train and participate in many sports including: soccer, cross country, volleyball, basketball, softball, floor hockey, and track and field.

Intramurals

All Students in grades 6-9 are able to also participate in different intramurals throughout the school year during a lunch recess.

Clubs / Extracurricular

Throughout the year teachers will host various extracurricular activities for the students to participate based upon teacher availability and student interest. Past activities have included; student council, worship team, drama, math, chess, art and more. It is our goal to have various activities that our students can participate in. This provides the students an opportunity to learn a new skill, interact with other students and to remain active.

Parents can volunteer to run a club or an extracurricular activity. If this is something you would like to be part of please reach out to the office.

Volunteering

Parents are encouraged to be active participants within the school through various volunteering opportunities. All volunteers must have a police and vulnerable sector check in order to volunteer. Those who wish to volunteer as drivers must provide the school with a drivers abstract (\$12 online) and a copy of their driver's license. This would serve as a protection to the school in case of an accident. Please reach out to the office if you would like to know more about volunteering at MSCS.