



Mount Dora Christian Academy: Educating for Life and Eternity

Preschool

**Student
Handbook**

**2019-2020
Academic Year**



Table of Contents

Contact Information	1	Technology	10
Mission Statement	2	Parent Expectations	11
Statement of Faith	2	Conflict Resolution	12
Accreditation	4		
Accidents	5		
Arrival/Departure	5		
Birthdays	5		
Conferences	6		
Confidentiality	6		
Cubbies	6		
Dressing for Success	6		
Discipline Practices	7		
Emergency Plans	8		
Security	8		
Withdraws	8		
Tuition	9		
Health	9		
Immunizations	10		
Physical	10		
Medication	10		



Mount Dora Christian Academy
Established 1945

School Colors: Blue and White

School Mascot: Bulldogs

School Address:
301 W. 13th Ave.
Mount Dora, FL 32757

Preschool Office:
352.735.2100

Administration Office Fax:
352.383.3112

Preschool Director:
Shannon Davis
352.729.9127

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Dana Ross
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The following items of information have been written in an effort to create consistent and helpful guidelines for a successful school year. Throughout the school year situations and circumstances may arise that are not covered in this handbook resulting in changes, additions or deletions. As these occur, they will be communicated to parents and students in a timely manner.

If there is any item that seems unclear, please call the school office for clarification. Please do not consider any question unimportant.

Our Mission

To show Jesus to children and help them grow as He did in wisdom, in stature and in favor with God and man.

Statement of Faith

The Statement of Faith of Mount Dora Christian Academy & Children's Home (MDCA&CH), signed annually by each member of the Board of Trustees, administration, faculty, and staff, provides affirmation of biblical doctrine that is in concert with the message of God as reflected in the Bible and historic Christianity. The statement also defines the perspective that shapes the MDCA&CH experience. This Statement serves to ensure ongoing faithfulness of the entire MDCA&CH community to God's purpose and will.

WE BELIEVE in one sovereign God, eternally existing in three persons: the Everlasting Father, His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, and the Holy Spirit, the giver of life.

WE BELIEVE that God, by His spoken word, created the Heavens and the earth for His own glory.

WE BELIEVE that God has revealed Himself and His truth in the created order, in the Scriptures as reflected in the Bible, and supremely in Jesus Christ.



WE BELIEVE the Old and New Testaments of the Bible are the sole inspired and authoritative word of God, accurate in all their principles, provide for all humankind absolute moral truths, and are “profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness so we may be complete, equipped for every good work” (2 Tim 3:16-17).

WE BELIEVE that God created man and woman in His own image, as free moral agents, distinct from all other living creatures. We believe they sinned by rebelling against God’s revealed will and thereby incurred both physical and spiritual death. Therefore, all humankind carries its own guilt of sin in thought, word, and deed.

WE BELIEVE in the existence of Satan, sin, and evil powers. All these have been defeated by God in the person of Christ on the cross.

WE BELIEVE that Jesus Christ was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of a virgin, was true God and true man, existing in one person and without sin. We believe in the resurrection of the crucified body of our Lord, in His ascension into heaven, and in His presence there for us as Lord of all, High Priest, and Advocate.

WE BELIEVE that the Lord Jesus Christ died for our sins as a sacrifice, triumphing over all evil; those who believe and follow Him are justified by His shed blood and forgiven of all their sins.

WE BELIEVE that salvation is a free gift from God, undeserved and unearned through our good works; we are saved by God’s grace through faith in Jesus Christ. Faith shows itself in obedience to Christ through repentance, confession of faith in Him, baptism, and a life led by the Holy Spirit, manifesting the Spirit’s fruit.

WE BELIEVE that the Holy Spirit dwells within believers, convicts them of sin, guides them in understanding Scripture, empowers them for godly living, and equips them for service and witness.

WE BELIEVE that the church is the body of Christ and is composed of the communities of Christ’s people. The task of Christ’s people in this world is to be God’s redeemed communities that embody His love by worshipping God with confession, prayer, and praise in spirit and in truth; by proclaiming the gospel of God’s redemptive love through our Lord Jesus Christ to the ends of the earth by word and deed; by submitting to the authority of the Bible, and the guidance of the Holy Spirit, rather than the dictates of man or



ecclesiastical order; by caring for all of God's creation; and actively seeking the good of everyone, especially the poor and needy.

WE BELIEVE that Jesus Christ will personally, visibly, and unexpectedly return in power and great glory. He will gather His people, raise the dead, judge the nations, and bring His Kingdom to fulfillment.

WE BELIEVE in the bodily resurrection of the just and unjust, to face a just and merciful God in final judgment.

WE BELIEVE in the inherent value of all humankind as God's beloved creation, and equality in honor, justice, and mercy for every person.

WE BELIEVE that beliefs are far more than intellectual affirmations. Our faith must impact our actions. Therefore, these faith statements will be guiding principles for decision making for both institutional direction and for each individual entrusted with responsibility within Mount Dora Christian Academy & Children's Home (James 2:14-17).

Accreditation

MDCA is accredited through AdvancED, the parent organization governing the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) and the National Christian School Association (NCSA). Accreditation ensures that an institution meets prescribed minimum standards and that the institution demonstrates a commitment to providing quality educational programs with an emphasis on continuous improvement.

AdvancED accredits both private and public colleges and schools in 30 states and 65 countries. NCSA includes over 100 schools in 21 states. All of the schools have a strong relationship with the churches of Christ and are committed to academic excellence taught from the Christian worldview. The NCSA is a member of the National Council for Private School Accreditation and recognized by the Office of Non-Public Education in the U.S. Department of Education, the National Center for Educational Statistics and the U.S. Census Bureau.



GENERAL GUIDELINES

ACCIDENTS

Any accidents and/or unusual incidents that are brought to the staff's attention will be documented on an accident/incident report form. Parents are asked to please read these reports and sign them. The original report is kept by the preschool and the carbon copy is issued to the parent. In the event of an accident outside of school that leaves a visible mark, parents are asked to please document the incident that resulted in the mark on an accident/incident report form for the child's file.

School insurance coverage begins on the first day of school and covers any accident occurring on campus during school hours. This insurance carries a \$25.00 deductible and all claims must be filed with the primary insurer first.

ARRIVAL / DEPARTURE

1. The school opens at 7:30 a.m. and instruction begins promptly at 8:00. Please help your child develop good school habits by arriving before instruction begins.
2. If your child will be late or absent, please call the preschool office to let the teacher know that your child is safe. If the school has not been notified by the parent by 8:30 a.m., the parent will be contacted to ensure the child's safety. If the parent cannot be reached then the school will call other contacts listed in your child's file.
3. Parking in the preschool parking lot is reserved for parents who are dropping off or picking up. If you are planning to be in the building for an extended time, or elsewhere on campus, please use an adjacent lot.
4. Children (including siblings) may not be left in the parking lot in a car that is parked or standing.
5. Do not leave your car running when you are dropping off/picking up your child.
6. Please hold your child by the hand when exiting the building, he or she may not be visible to cars entering the breezeway.
7. Only adults may open doors in the preschool building.

BIRTHDAYS / SPECIAL OCCASIONS

We love celebrating birthdays! If you would like to send a special snack for your child's special day, please coordinate with your child's teacher. We are a peanut/nut free facility so nuts and peanut butter are not permitted but other healthy snacks are welcomed. If you are planning a party and want to invite your child's school friends, a class list may be obtained at the front desk. Invitations may only be distributed at school if the entire class is invited.



CONFERENCES AND CONVERSATIONS

Keeping parents informed of happenings in the classroom and of their child's progress is something we take very seriously. Parents are encouraged to call or email any time that a question or concern arises; no concern is too small. Drop off and pick up times are usually inconvenient for a lengthy conversation as your child's teacher will want to give you her undivided attention, however, scheduled conferences in person or on the phone are always welcomed.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Professionalism and confidentiality are very important to the integrity of our program. In the best interest of the school and of your child, teachers, assistants and administrators will not discuss your child with any other person, nor will we discuss another child with you. In order to give information about your child to grandparents, aunts, uncles, or babysitters we must have written permission from you. A release of information form may be obtained at the front desk.

CUBBIES / PERSONAL BELONGINGS

1. Please mark all of your child's belongings with his or her name.
2. Pillows, small blankets and rest pets must fit inside the cubby and should be laundered weekly. Please note, the cubbies have limited space so less is more.
3. Check your child's cubby daily for notes, artwork, and soiled clothes. The parent board in the classroom will contain announcements of upcoming activities, as well as the lesson plans your child's teacher will be following.
4. Keep a complete change of clothes at school (short sleeve and long sleeve shirts, shorts, long pants, socks, and underwear) in a large Ziploc bag.

DRESSING FOR SUCCESS

Preschool is a messy, fun, active place. It is an environment that encourages and develops a child's independence. Part of that independence includes being able to manage one's own toileting needs. To help your child develop this feeling of being capable of such a private matter, it is important that we equip them with the clothing necessary for success. Children are embarrassed when they have accidents because he/she could not deal with their clothing fast enough.

When choosing your child's clothing please keep in mind, in addition to independent toileting, that he or she will be running, jumping and climbing at school. Please avoid sandals, boots, or other shoes that make running difficult. Flip flops are prohibited.



DISCIPLINE PRACTICES

At Mount Dora Christian Academy we believe that discipline is a critical component to Christian education. Through the use of appropriate disciplinary strategies students develop the skills needed to make life choices based on Christian values and principles. We recognize that all children exhibit inappropriate behaviors from time to time and view them as an opportunity to help children learn to self-regulate in order to become well-adjusted, productive students and school community members.

The following policies are observed in every classroom:

1. Safety First! A student who is exhibiting a behavior that endangers him/her or others must immediately be stopped
2. Discipline is never associated with food, rest time or toileting
3. Physical punishment is prohibited
4. Active play may not be denied as a consequence of misbehavior
5. Student behavior is never addressed in a way that denies the child's dignity or through fear

The following strategies are employed in every classroom:

1. Stimulating, balanced and age-appropriate learning environments to provide opportunities for exploration and problem solving
2. An atmosphere of mutual respect and care is modeled by teachers
3. Age appropriate expectations and boundaries are set and consistently reinforced

Occasionally a student may repeat the same behavior over time despite the best efforts of the teacher to coach and model the expected behavior. In this instance one or more of the following strategies may be employed:

1. Removal from the group to another area of the classroom or playground to give the student time to regain composure before returning
2. Parent communication or conference
3. A written behavior plan to help teachers and parents partner in the disciplinary process. Occasionally counseling or therapy may be a requisite of the plan and must be provided at the parent's expense.
4. Temporary or Permanent removal from the school

We look forward to the opportunity to work in partnership with parents and other caregivers to provide effective models of conduct and multiple opportunities to practice healthy social



EMERGENCY PLANS

1. Mount Dora Christian Academy had developed an extensive Crisis Management Plan in cooperation with local law enforcement. Fire drills and other emergency preparedness drills are conducted monthly.
2. Listen to local radio and TV for emergency announcements. If the Lake County School District closes due to weather, Mount Dora Christian Academy will also be closed. After the initial closing, reopening will be communicated through Parent Alert and the school website.
3. All of our staff members are First Aid and CPR certified.
4. If you move, change jobs, change phone numbers or have any other change that affects the way we can contact you, please visit the front desk for assistance in changing the information in your child's file.

SECURITY

Safety is our first priority. Visitors to any area on campus must sign in and receive a visitor's badge. Our staff members are trained to be vigilant and stop anyone not in possession of a badge. In the preschool building, no visitors may access the classroom area without first presenting identification at the front desk.

Surveillance cameras are in use campus-wide and our security team patrols the campus throughout the day. We are very grateful for all of the resources we have been given to help keep our campus and its occupants safe.

WITHDRAWS

Tuition will be charged until the student's withdrawal is completed through the office. In the event the student withdraws during the school year, tuition will be prorated according to the number of weeks enrolled and the amount paid. Two weeks withdrawal notice is required.



TUITION

Tuition is due at the beginning of each week. The late payment fee each week is \$5.00. Payments for the month may be made in advance. Always write your child's name on the memo line of your check. There will be a \$20.00 NSF fee for a check or an electronic funds transfer that does not clear.

Any additional days or hours must be approved in advance by the principal. This may not be available depending on staff coverage. If the child is not picked up by the scheduled time, the charge is \$1.00 per five minutes. After 6:00 p.m., the charge is \$1.00 per minute.

HEALTH

If your child exhibits any of the following, it will be necessary for him/her to be picked up from school:

- Open skin lesions or unexplained rashes
- Temperature above normal
- Signs of possible illness, including unusual lethargy, irritability, persistent crying, difficult breathing, uncontrolled cough or stiff neck
- Diarrhea, more than one abnormally loose stool within a 24 hour period
- Vomiting
- Persistent redness or discharge from the eyes
- Head lice or nits

Please keep your child at home when he/she is sick. A child must be free of fever (without fever-reducing medication), vomiting, diarrhea, and any of the above references symptoms for 24 hours before returning to school. In the event of head lice, the child's head must be free of all nits and live lice in order to return to school.

If an illness requires a doctor's visit, please submit a note from him/her indicating the date to return to school.

Source: American Academy of Pediatrics, & American Public Health Association. (1992). Caring for our children-National health and safety performance standards: Guidelines for out-of-home child care programs.



IMMUNIZATION, PHYSICAL & INFLUENZA

All students are required to submit a school entrance physical documented on form DH 3040, 6/20. The form must be maintained in the student file and must be renewed every two years. Students without a current physical exam form on file may not attend school.

All students must also submit a Florida Certificate of Immunization (form DH 680, 1/2007) completed by a healthcare provider. It is the parent's responsibility to ensure that immunizations are kept current and to provide the school with updated copies of the above-referenced form. Students with expired certificates may not attend school. There may be some students that are enrolled in our school that have religious exemption from immunizations.

In compliance with childcare regulation, all parents must sign the acknowledgment of the receipt of the brochure "The Flu, A Guide for Parents." This receipt must be maintained in the child's file.

MEDICATION

1. In the event that medication must be administered at school, a medication authorization must be signed by the parent or guardian. This form is available at the front desk. Medication must be in the original packaging and accompanied by the prescription label showing the child's name and all instructions. Non-prescription medication must be accompanied by a note from a medical professional.
2. Please apply sunscreen and/or insect repellent at home in the morning.

ACCEPTABLE USE OF TECHNOLOGY

In our society, the use of technology has become a part of our daily routine. We take the responsibility for technology usage seriously and want to teach children how to use it responsibly. Preschoolers may use the computer or iPad though the day as part of a center, for an assessment or part of their direct instruction. Students may not use any electronic device without the permission and supervision of a teacher. Students may not enter any website without first being signed in by a teacher.



PARENT EXPECTATIONS

Fulfilling the mission of Mount Dora Christian Academy involves working closely with parents in the overall Christian education of students. MDCA regards the school-parent relationship as a partnership rather than one of a client and provider. As a result, parents enrolling their children (and in order to remain enrolled) agree to support and cooperate with MDCA in the education of their child(ren) and to support the educational philosophy of the school, including instruction delivered with a Biblical worldview.

Any parent demonstrating a lack of support for this philosophy or the partnership between the school and the home, must understand that the school administration has the right, at their sole discretion, to discontinue the enrollment of the student. If any parent files a lawsuit against the school or threatens to do so, the student will be withdrawn from the school until the matter is settled.

In order to maintain a positive campus culture, it must be rooted in mutual trust stemming from clear expectations. Should any parent, step-parent, family member or an individual in a significant relationship with either parent, disrupt the positive culture by failing to act in a way that supports the culture of the school, they may jeopardize the continued enrollment of their child. Some examples of unacceptable parent behavior include treating school personnel with disrespect, treating other parents or students with disrespect, failing to support school disciplinary measures, spreading negativity or gossip within the greater school community, inhibiting the work of educators by being unduly involved in the daily operations of the school or classroom and failing to follow processes for conflict resolution.

It is the desire of MDCA administration, faculty, and students to reach the level of spiritual maturity where conduct and attitudes are directed by sensitivity to God's word. Typically, if a student's desire is to do what is right at all times, he will seldom find a rule offensive or hard to keep. By enrolling at MDCA, each student is pledging himself/herself to live according to the purposes and regulations of MDCA.

The policies contained herein are the official policies for students at MDCA. Factors of influence, which have brought them to be, are principles of Christianity, purposes of the school, traditions of the school, and the judgment of those having input. The rules of MDCA are designed for the welfare of the entire group and for the purpose of creating an environment in which Christian character and academic success are encouraged. All students are under MDCA's rules from the time they leave home for school or school-sponsored activities until they return home.

If, after learning what is expected of students and families at MDCA, you find that you are not in harmony with the principles and purposes and cannot wholeheartedly support them, you are urged to go to some member of the staff who will give a sympathetic hearing to your difficulties. If you find you are still out of harmony with these purposes and cannot cooperate in the support of them, you are urged to seek another school wherein you can be happy.



CONFLICT RESOLUTION

During the course of a school year, misunderstandings or conflicts may arise. This is often a result of a lack of communication between those involved. The following process should be followed to help all parties achieve a mutually satisfying resolution:

- ◆ All questions, concerns and complaints should be brought directly to the teacher or coach before anyone else is involved.
- ◆ If the situation cannot be resolved between the parent and the coach/teacher, both parties should request a second meeting that includes the principal, an assistant principal, department head or athletic director depending upon the situation.
- ◆ If the first two steps have been followed and no resolution reached, the problem may then be brought to the Head of School who will seek to bring the parties together to reach a mutual consensus.
- ◆ Only after following the aforementioned steps, if the problem has not been resolved, the problem may be presented to the President of Mount Dora Christian Academy and Children's Home.

The system is in place to ensure that all parties are treated fairly and that the good reputations of all parties are protected. All school administrators and senior staff are committed to this procedure, therefore, when approached by an individual with a concern, they will first seek to ensure that the initial steps have been followed in order to protect the integrity of the process.

Parents are asked to be mindful of the setting in which concerns are expressed. School activities, athletic events, the student pick-up area, etc. are not appropriate venues for expressing questions, concerns or complaints.

All of the policies outlined in this book are designed to create the optimum experience for your child and his or her classmates. We are thrilled that you have chosen our school and look forward to your family being a part of ours.

Welcome to Mount Dora Christian Academy!