

# *Messiah Lutheran School Parent Handbook*

## **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Messiah Lutheran School offers a Christ-centered grade school education for students in pre-kindergarten through eighth grade. Messiah Lutheran Church established Messiah Lutheran School in 1963. Messiah Lutheran Church and School are members of the Church of the Lutheran Confession (CLC), which is a Bible-based confessional Lutheran synod.

## **OUR PURPOSE AND GOAL**

Messiah Lutheran Church established a school for the purpose of assisting the parents in teaching their school-aged children the gracious will of our Heavenly Father in Christ Jesus and the Way to eternal life. Our chief goal in education is to share God's inspired Word by which the faith of the children is strengthened, their knowledge of God is increased, and they are enabled to strive, out of love for the Savior, to live according to God's will. For this reason, the teaching of the Word of God is all-important; it makes us wise for salvation.

**“and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.” 2 Tim. 3:15**

The education at Messiah School differs from the education offered at the public school, because it focuses on the needs of the body and soul and educates for life, both here and in eternity. By God's grace, the education at Messiah School differs from the education offered at other religious schools, because the Word of God is offered in its truth and purity. We thank and praise God for blessing our school with a unique, Christ-centered education.

The curriculum includes daily lessons in Bible History, Catechism, or Hymnology in which God's wonderful plan of salvation is studied. In Bible History, the children learn to know their loving God and how He exerts His influence on their hearts and lives. Catechism is taught to furnish the pupil with a ready summary of the chief truths of God's Word. Hymns, Bible passages, and parts of the Catechism are memorized to provide a source of comfort, joy, hope, and strength in times of tribulation and a weapon against temptation throughout life.

All secular subjects are taught in the same spirit, namely, to show how God in Heaven has created mankind and has used mankind to serve His purpose. The students are taught to use the gifts that God has given them to the best of their ability in order to serve both God and their fellow man in a God-pleasing manner. In our school, the secular academic subjects are subservient to the Word of God, **“that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.” 1 Pet. 2:9**. They are used to show our students the wonderful works of God and above all to make them realize the blessing bestowed upon the world by the overwhelming grace of God in Christ Jesus. This knowledge fills them more and more with one great desire, in all humbleness to thank and praise, to serve and obey their God. This is our sincere goal, and with the help of God, we strive to realize this goal.

## **ENROLLMENT**

### **Non-Member Enrollment:**

The majority of our students are members of Messiah Lutheran Church. However, we do welcome inquiries about enrollment from the entire community. Children who are not members of Messiah Lutheran Church may be enrolled in Messiah School under the terms of the Non-member Student Enrollment Policy.

Please reference the Non-member Student Enrollment Policies near the end of this handbook for a more detailed explanation of non-member enrollment requirements.

### **Member Enrollment:**

We encourage member families to consider the benefits of the Christian education offered at Messiah and enroll their children in Messiah School. It is our hope and prayer that all of our children may be blessed through the use of our school as we strive to carry out the Savior's command: **“Feed my Lambs.”**

So that the Messiah faculty can be best prepared to feed our lambs the following documents from parents of new students are needed prior to student enrollment:

1. Enrollment Application/Handbook Signature
2. Student Information Sheet
3. Student Records Request

Timely completion of these items will help ensure a smooth transition into Messiah School.

Messiah School has no formal enrollment procedure for students returning for subsequent school years. We consider all children attending Messiah School at the end of the one school year (with the exception of eighth grade) to be enrolled for the following school year.

If your child will be transferring out, please inform the principal at the earliest time possible.

### **Student Special Needs:**

We recognize that each child is a special creation of God. In His own wisdom and according to His own design and plan, God gives various gifts and abilities to each child. At the same time, certain learning, medical, or behavioral needs can present challenges when it comes to maintaining a proper educational environment.

The Board of Education and Faculty have a process in place for helping students with special needs.

Regretfully, it may happen that these special challenges in educating a child may be too great. If it becomes apparent to the Board that the attempts of the Board, Faculty, and parents to include a student are not working out in the best interest of the child, teachers, and other students, the Board of Education reserves the right to ask the parents to seek alternative schooling.

We hope and pray that every child of Messiah can attend Messiah School. When this is not possible, we as a school stand ready to assist as we are able; so that as much as it is possible, the Bible and its message of Jesus the one Savior is available to guide the hearts and minds of all our children.

### **Fee System**

The purpose of our school is to assist the parents of the congregation in teaching their school-aged children the will of the True God and the way to eternal life. Therefore, the congregation provides dedicated teachers and largely supports the school through member contributions. To help defray this cost, the Board of Education has set the following fee areas.

#### **Book Fee**

This fee will be used for expenses associated with the purchase and replacement of textbooks, workbooks, and any other item used as a text or reference text, excluding hymnals, catechisms, and Bibles.

#### **Computer Fee**

This fee will be used for additions and enhancements to the school's computers and computer programs.

#### **School Parties Fee**

This fee will be used for expenses associated with three (3) annual school parties (Fall Party, Christmas Party, and Valentine's Party).

#### **Milk Fee**

Our school participates in the Federal Milk Program in which the government subsidizes the cost of the milk provided for the children. This fee will be used toward those costs not covered by the Federal Milk Program for the milk each child receives for their snack or noon meal. This fee does not apply to those children who qualify for the Federal Government Free Milk Program. For children receiving milk infrequently, milk can be purchased individually.

#### **Athletic Fee**

This fee will be used for expenses associated with the interscholastic or intramural athletic program. It only applies to students taking part in the program.

#### **PreKindergarten Fee**

This fee will be used for expenses associated with the PreKindergarten program. **This is the ONLY fee that applies to PreKindergarten students.**

A **Fee Worksheet** is provided to families near the beginning of the school year (or upon enrollment during the school year). The worksheet will show current fee costs and give parents the opportunity to check that the fees charged are accurate. Monthly **Fee Activity Statements** are sent out to parents either to act as receipts for payments made or reminders of remaining payments due.

Depending on activity level, fees are usually around \$100 per year per student. Fees are not prorated. Special arrangements can be made if needed in the form of payment plans or even dismissal of fees in hardship situations. The congregation does not want money to stop a child, who desires the Christian Education that we offer, from attending our school.

## SCHOOL INFORMATION

### **School Calendar**

The Messiah School Calendar is drafted by the principal, previewed by the faculty, and approved by the Board of Education. Each school year can present a slightly different schedule but the Board of Education generally agrees that instruction during August is more effective than June, that we should carefully consider the calendar from Immanuel Lutheran High School because many of our families are involved in both schools, five day school weeks are more effective than shortened weeks, and that we should follow the state of Wisconsin's requirements for a school calendar. The Board also recognizes that some scheduling also needs to comply with Student Transit requests.

### **Special School Calendar Events**

At the beginning of the school year, parents (especially those of new students) are invited to school to see classrooms, hear from teachers, and gain other information which is helpful as a school year starts. This meeting is called the School Orientation Night and is held on an evening the week before school starts.

On the first day of school, parents and church members are invited to a special opening service in our sanctuary, in which we thank our Lord for blessing us with another school year. About three weeks into the school year we invite our parents to school to give an opportunity to have questions answered, meet teachers and other parents, and better understand elements of their child's school day. This is our Back to School Night.

School pictures and health screening traditionally takes place early in the school year. During October the students enjoy a party in which they dress up in different costumes. Teachers also attend an annual conference of the Church of the Lutheran Confession Day School Teachers. At this conference teachers hope to share in fellowship and professional development.

Christmas Eve practices start in mid-November and continue on Saturdays until Christmas Eve. Students of Messiah Day School and of Messiah congregation attend these practices and take part in the Children's Christmas Eve Service.

In February, students have a party afternoon where they exchange Valentines and have ice cream sundaes. Students in 5-8<sup>th</sup> grade also participate in a Science, Bible, or History Fair this time of year.

In March, schools from the Church of the Lutheran Confession come together to play in a grade school basketball tournament which involves co-ed teams from 5-8<sup>th</sup> grade. These games take place at the campus of Immanuel Lutheran High School.

April is the month in which we do our standardized testing. All students are tested each year using the Iowa Test of Basic Skills. Results are reported to the parents before the end of the school year.

In late April or early May the 7-8<sup>th</sup> grade students attend Visitor's Day at Immanuel Lutheran High School. This give the students an opportunity to learn about the program offered at Immanuel. The Eighth Grade Meal happens around this time as well. 8<sup>th</sup> grade students learn home economic skills as they prepare and serve a meal to their parents, teachers, and pastors.

In early May, the 5-8<sup>th</sup> grade students travel to the Twin Cities for a track and field day where they compete with other students attending schools of the Church of the Lutheran Confession.

At the end of the school year the student perform for their family and friends in an Entertainment Night at Immanuel Lutheran. Every other year, the entire school spends a day at the Beaver Creek Reserve. The last day of school is held at Mt. Simon Park where students play games, we grill out for lunch, and students receive their report cards. 8<sup>th</sup> grade students have a graduation ceremony during a church service in late May as well as Confirmation Sunday in early June.

Parents can expect an information letter in mid-July that begins preparation for the upcoming school year.

### **School Lunch and Milk Program**

Messiah Lutheran School does not offer a daily hot lunch program; however, microwaves and refrigerators are available for student use. We do provide milk for those families that are interested. Fees for milk are included on the monthly Fee Statements. Students that qualify can receive free milk through this program. An application for the **Free Milk Program** can be obtained from the school office. For the most part students eat lunch in the fellowship hall although on occasion they may eat in their classrooms due to special functions in the fellowship hall. Lunchtime is often supervised by parents or helpers taking part in our **Volunteer Program**.

## **Athletic Program**

The Messiah Interscholastic Athletic Program has been directed by the Board of Education since the early 1990s. The purpose of the sports program is not to create teams of high competitive skills, but to use athletics as another tool to teach Christian ethics for team work, dedication, cooperation, and emotional maturity.

Currently the program involves 5-8<sup>th</sup> grade boys flag football and 5-8<sup>th</sup> grade girls volleyball in the fall, and basketball in the winter for boys and girls from 5-8<sup>th</sup> grade. There are also opportunities to take part in a Soccer Day, Softball Day, and a Math Bowl in connection with our conference.

The Board appoints an Athletic Director and assists him in finding and approving coaches. The teams are part of the Chippewa Valley Lutheran Conference which includes other private schools in the area of similar enrollments. The program has specific guidelines regarding playing time for all participants, a no cut policy, a limit to the number of possible practices and games in a given week, and the total number of games to be played in a season.

The program makes use of the gyms of both Northstar Middle School and Immanuel Lutheran High School, as well as Immanuel's athletic fields.

The 5-8<sup>th</sup> grade students also have the opportunity to take part in a Field Day competition held in the Twin Cities each year. At this event they compete with other schools in the Church of the Lutheran Confession. This activity is not a part of the CVLC.

This program is open to all members of Messiah Church and is not restricted to students at Messiah Day School

## **Music Program**

Messiah School has a called Music teacher who holds class twice a week with students. The student choir, which includes all students in the school, regularly sings songs of praise during church services.

Students also have the opportunity to take piano lessons and learn to play a band instrument. Private instructors, which are approved by the Board of Education, are allowed to come to Messiah during the school day and make use of our facilities. All lessons are given during non class-time. Piano lessons are weekly and band students receive both lessons and group band each week. Private arrangements are made between the instructors and the parents for band and piano lessons offered at Messiah.

Junior Choir is an elective, after-school choir run by a volunteer director. Students in grades 4-8 are encouraged to participate. The group sings for church services and special events.

## **Volunteer Program**

Messiah Lutheran has traditionally had a very active Volunteer Program. We feel it is healthy for a school to have parent and congregational support and participation. Recently, the principal has appointed a volunteer coordinator to help with the organization of this program. The principal and the school's administration assistant also have active roles in this program. Near the beginning of the school year a **Volunteer Program form** is sent to all school and congregational families. This form identifies opportunities for volunteer participation that would be beneficial to the school and requests that individuals sign up for areas they are interested in. They are then contacted as events take place or needs arise.

Correcting objective school work, supervising lunchtime, assisting with field trips, preparing bulletin boards, helping with school parties, and helping with special events like Entertainment Night or the school picnic, would be examples of some of the volunteer opportunities at Messiah.

Direct classroom student instruction or tutoring by any volunteer must be preapproved by the principal and Board of Education.

This type of activity would likely be part of a different program entitled the **Classroom Aide Program**.

## **Classroom Aide Program**

The Board of Education reviews the state of our Christian Day School at its monthly meetings. Among other things, the board is continually searching for ways to improve our school. In an attempt to do just that the Board of Education started a Classroom Aide Program to increase individual attention for student needs in our classrooms and support the teachers that are striving to provide a high level of instruction to our children.

In general classroom aides have circulated the classroom answering questions, helped with tutoring students that need extra help (as directed and supported by the classroom teacher of course), or helped with other items such as working with flashcards or giving spelling tests. Teachers have selected the most beneficial times for classroom help and the principal and Board of Education then invite qualified individuals to share in this work.

## **Technology**

Messiah has computers available for student instruction. Computers are emphasized more in the upper grade classrooms than lower but are available to both levels for composition, research, keyboarding, supplemental instruction, publishing, presentations, and general computer classes. The faculty are provided with laptops for instructional purposes as well as using our school grading software. Classrooms are also equipped with audio-visual equipment including access to LCD projectors.

## **SCHOOL POLICIES**

### **Dress Code:**

We ask both parents and students to use their common sense and Christian judgment in the matter of school attire. Neatness and modesty should be considered in selecting the clothes worn to school. Following are some specific applications of these general guidelines that will not be considered appropriate attire in our school:

- Halter and tank tops (including spaghetti straps)
- Low cut tops (no lower than the width of the student's hand - four fingers- below the collar bone)
- Crop tops exposing bare midriff
- Short shorts or skirts (they will be considered too short if they do not extend beyond the fingertips when the arm and hand are fully extended vertically down the child's side)
- Ragged jeans
- T-shirts with un-Christian words or pictures, etc.

Certain specific types of clothing listed above could be considered appropriate if layered with other appropriate shirts. Certain specific types of clothing not listed could still be considered inappropriate if too much skin is visible.

Please consider modesty while evaluating the tightness of your child's clothing. Shirts, T-shirts, and jerseys will be tucked inside the pants if they extend beyond the fingertips when the arm and hand are fully extended vertically down the child's side (the intent is to avoid gang related apparel).

All types of pants and shorts will be worn with the waistband or belt above the hips (the intent is to avoid visible undergarments). Shorts can be worn when deemed suitable by the parents, but please be aware that all students will be expected to participate in outdoor recesses and gym classes. We therefore recommend that shorts be worn only in August, September, and May, and that students bring a pair of long pants to school in the event they will be cold outside in shorts. Shoes with shoelaces will be laced and tied. The students should bring a sweater or light jacket to wear in school during the winter months.

We require that students bring a second pair of shoes to be worn inside the school building. Shoes that leave black marks on tile may not be worn inside the building.

Messiah School reserves the authority to require any student to remove physical adornments such as necklaces, earrings, pins, buttons, or other jewelry deemed overtly offensive or potentially offensive to other students, parents, church members, or school visitors.

The Principal makes the final decisions on all issues regarding student compliance with the dress code. We appreciate your cooperation in helping your child/children comply with Messiah's dress code.

## **SAFETY AND COMMUNICATION**

### **Health Care:**

Health services are provided by the City/County Health Department. One of the nurses makes regular call to our school and is also available for consultation with individuals or groups. The Immunization Checkpoint Law in Wisconsin requires minimum immunizations for first time admission in all elementary schools. No child should be admitted into our school without meeting these immunization requirements. The student's health record must be complete and on file in the school office. These records are checked by the county nurse. Parents will be notified of any test or shots scheduled and required during the school year.

### **Emergency Announcements:**

If the Eau Claire Area Public Schools close then Messiah school closes as well. In the rare instance when Messiah has a school day scheduled when the public schools not in session and the need for closing school arises; then the news will be announced on local television stations and our school website.

### **Phone Calls, Letters, and Notes:**

Good communication between home and school is extremely important. Telephone calls from school to home will be used when appropriate. We also encourage parents to call the school (715-834-2865) with any questions or concerns. Messiah School will use the following method when sending notes or letters home:

1. We will use one 6" x 9" brown clasp envelope per family (THE MESSIAH SCHOOL MAIL ENVELOPE). All notes, letters, and other forms of written communication will be sent home in this envelope with the oldest child in each family. This child will be responsible for getting the envelope to the parents.
2. After the information is read, the envelope should be signed by the parent and returned to school with the oldest child. Any information that needs to be returned to the school should be placed inside the Mail Envelope. Confidential information should be sealed inside another envelope before being placed in the Mail Envelope.

### **Lost and Found**

These items are found in the School Storage Closet. The school office can be contacted if you have found something or are looking for something in particular. Lost and Found items are periodically donated to Goodwill. Items are usually set out on a table for people to go through before they are removed from the building.

### **Bus Transportation:**

Bus transportation is provided to students living within the Eau Claire School District through Student Transit (715-839-5116). Prior to each school year Messiah School provides Student Transit with an enrollment list including addresses and phone numbers. Based on this list Student Transit determines who will receive bus transportation and which bus they will ride AM and PM. Student Transit customarily mails this information directly to parents; Messiah School will provide it for you should this mailing not reach you. Please send a note with your child if he/she will not be riding on the afternoon bus, or if he/she will be riding a different bus with a friend.

### **Book Fines:**

Students are expected to take care of their school books. If a textbook, workbook, or library book is lost or damaged, the student will be expected to pay for the replacement or repair cost.

### **School Discipline Policy:**

The following are the *basic behavioral expectations* of all students at Messiah Lutheran School (teachers will have behavioral expectations fitting for their individual classrooms as well):

1. Treat your fellow students, teachers, pastors, and adult volunteers with Christian kindness and respect.
2. Keep your hands, feet, and all objects to yourself at all times.
3. Keep all areas of the school that you use neat and clean.
4. Walk quietly and in an orderly manner in the hallways.
5. Behave in an orderly and Christian manner while on the school premises, on the bus, or while attending any school- sanctioned activity.

The *four-step consequences* for not following these expectations are as follows:

1. Warning and private conference between student and teacher.
2. Loss of privilege/recess and a note or phone call home.
3. Loss of privilege/recess, note or phone call home, and a service to be performed for the school.
4. Loss of privilege/recess, note or phone call home, a service to be performed for the school, and a special child-parent-teacher conference to discuss ways to resolve the behavioral issues.

Each consequence builds on the one preceding it, with the parents becoming informed and involved at an early stage. The success of your child in school, and his/her growth as a young Christian depends to a great extent on communication and cooperation between faculty and parents, and both home and school dealing with each discipline situation out of Christian love and concern. Cases of *severe* misbehavior will be dealt with immediately and appropriately by the principal, who also makes the final decision regarding consequences for severe misbehavior issues. Please call the school with any concerns or questions regarding your child's behavior or the consequences applied.

**Withdrawal of Enrollment**

When a parent makes the decision to withdraw a child from Messiah we ask that you inform the principal as soon as possible. This ensures accurate attendance records. The Board of Education often attempts to interview individuals who have decided to withdraw their children; seeking information that may help us to improve our educational program in the future.

**Special Information:**

This includes the School Calendar, names and phone numbers of the faculty, Board of Education members, Messiah School parent resources, hymn-song-Bible verse memory work list, an alphabetical listing of families with children attending Messiah School, and an alphabetical listing by grade of students attending Messiah School, information on the School Milk Program, Daily Class Schedules for each grade level, school supply list, discipline policies for individual classrooms, and any other information that the principal, teachers, or pastors feel would be valuable for you to have. If you do not receive this information by the time school starts, please inform your child's teacher or the principal.

**If you have any questions regarding the information in this Parent Handbook, please call the school (715-834-2865).**

I have read and understand the policies concerning member children. I agree to enroll my child/children in Messiah Lutheran School under the policies described.

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**Parent's or Legal Guardian's Signature**

**Date**

## **MESSIAH LUTHERAN SCHOOL : Non-member Student Enrollment Policy**

Messiah Lutheran Church and School exists to serve the Lord Jesus and His Holy Christian Church and all who desire to learn of Jesus. It is our Savior's will that the work He accomplished on Calvary for the whole world would be proclaimed to all. Messiah Church and School therefore welcomes the opportunity to share the Word of God with people who are not members.

The Lord Jesus was particularly concerned about children. He atoned for their sins and gave instructions that they should be brought to Him to learn about His love. This love of Jesus is what prompted the Christians at Messiah to establish a school in 1963 and to support it for these many years. It is also the reason that Messiah charges no tuition, to members and non-members alike. It is our prayer and hope that every child can have an education that centers on Jesus, the Lord of Life.

Messiah Lutheran School offers an education that centers on Jesus Christ. It serves as an extension of the Christian home and a bridge between that home and our Christian Church. To enroll your child at Messiah School is to place your loved one under the spiritual care of Messiah Church and School.

### **Spiritual Care at Messiah Church**

We do not require that non-member families join our church before enrollment can take place. Joining a church fellowship is a major decision, one of the most important in life. It needs to be taken carefully and only after a close comparison of church teaching with Bible doctrine. We do, therefore, expect that non-members will examine the teachings of our church and school with one of Messiah's pastors. This will also allow non-members to know what is being taught to the students at Messiah School. If, after this study, non-members want to join Messiah Church, we would welcome you into our fellowship. If along the way, there is an impasse in Bible study, that would bring to an end our ability to offer spiritual care. An impasse is defined as the point when we are no longer able to share the Word of God with a parent of a non-member student. After completing the initial study of Bible teachings with the pastors, a parent may choose another way to continue Bible study (worship services, weekend Bible Class, one of the Home Bible studies, or another option). If Bible study with Messiah comes to an end, then so does our ability to serve the family in our school.

### **Spiritual Care at Messiah School**

Students at Messiah School are expected to take part in all religious training in our school, to attend our church services regularly, and to refrain from promoting any church or teaching that is not in agreement with Messiah Lutheran Church. Students in the seventh and eighth grades have catechism studies with Messiah pastors as part of the regular curriculum. It is our hope that non-member students will find themselves in agreement with the teachings at Messiah and desire to be confirmed in that faith and become communicant members. But beyond that hope is the earnest prayer that each student will be taught the Word of God, grow in grace and in the knowledge of Jesus, and be life-long students of the Word of Life. We trust that parents/legal guardians share that goal and will take sufficient interest in our school so that every effort is made to help children learn and do their very best.

### **Spiritual Care at Home**

We recognize that God teaches that parents/legal guardians are His primary soul-care providers and that therefore the home is the primary source of Christian education. The home environment is very important, for it can serve either to reinforce or undermine the Christian instruction at Messiah Church and School. For example, the kind of language, movies or TV shows, music, literature, or life-style that is found in the home can have either a positive or negative impact on a child. We expect that non-members will strive, along with all of us at Messiah, to provide a home environment that is consistent with Christian teachings. That is, after all, what God has in mind when He lays the foundation for Christian education of these precious souls, an education that involves church, school, and home, all of it centering on Jesus.

When the beggar asked the Apostles John and Peter for help, they told him plainly that they had little to give in terms of money, but that they would share what they had, a priceless treasure, the message of a Savior from sin. It is likewise our desire at Messiah Church and School to share with any and all, and with you and your child, the Good News of Jesus. We hope you will join us as we seek to educate our children for real life, life everlasting in heaven.

If you would like to pursue the enrollment of your child, we ask the following:

1. Sign the form indicating that you have read and agree to this policy.
2. Complete and turn in the standard enrollment forms.

**Enrollment Application/Handbook Signature      Student Information Sheet      Student Records Request**

3. If you are a member of another church, while your child is enrolled at Messiah School and you are taking classes from one of Messiah's pastors, we ask that, for the sake of orderliness, you inform your home congregation of your actions.

Enrollment requests from non-members are reviewed by the Board of Education. The Board reserves the right to turn down any request if we are unable to meet the needs of the student (for example, overcrowding in our classrooms, limitations of our staff to accommodate children with special learning or discipline needs). The Board of Education will also review periodically the enrollment of non-member students and reserves the right, as with all of our students, to dismiss a student if problems and/or concerns are not able to be resolved.

I have read and understand the policies concerning non-member children. I agree to enroll my child/children in Messiah Lutheran School under the policies described.



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**Parent's or Legal Guardian's Signature**

**Date**