



*Lancaster
Mennonite
Middle School*

*Student/Parent
Handbook*

2014-2015

Blazers

*Lancaster Mennonite School offers a Pre-K – 12 comprehensive
education in a nurturing and diverse environment
that prepares students to be lifelong learners*

*Centered in Christ * Transforming Lives * Changing Our World*

Introduction to LMMS Student/Parent Handbook

Integral to a positive life together is respect for one another. This includes students, faculty, staff, property, and the educational process. At LMS, we desire to maintain a community that is welcoming and inclusive, in which individuals continually strive to treat others as they wish to be treated.

School standards and expectations are established to guide our life together. While persons may have different opinions about nearly all of the standards, a common understanding is needed to live and work together as a school. One of the purposes of this handbook is to communicate standards and expectations. This handbook is not a comprehensive listing of school rules and policies, but rather a general summary for your convenience. Not all situations are addressed. In addition to the general school standards, teachers may establish specific standards in their classroom.

* *LMS reserves the right to apply, and modify or adopt, with or without notice, its rules and policies, at its discretion.*

Visitors

Parents and other visitors must report to the campus office for a visitor's pass before going to a middle school classroom.

All registered student visitors are required to stop at the campus office to receive a visitor's pass before going to any part of the school.

Lancaster Campus Attendance

Regular school attendance is crucial for class objectives to be achieved. Pennsylvania law requires school attendance until the age of 17. Students absent from class have the responsibility to make up missed work.

Legal or Excused Absences. Excusable absences include illness, death in the immediate family, and impassable roads. An *Educational Excuse Request Form*, available at the office or on the school's website, is required five days in advance to request educational trips. If a trip is three days or more, the back of the *Educational Excuse Request Form* must be completed, obtaining teachers' signatures before the trip can be considered excused. This applies to church activities and trips with parents (overnight and educational). To maintain academic excellence, one week is normally the maximum excused educational family trip.

Illegal or Unexcused Absences. Phone calls to parents are made regularly so that school and home may work together in promoting good attendance. LMS is required to report three or more illegal absences to the public school district in which the student lives. After three days of illegal absence, the district may take legal action against students or parents. Unexcused absences include those due to oversleeping, missing the bus, personal problems, hunting, fishing, farm shows (unless exhibiting), and trips (unless educational and approved five days in advance).

Attendance Line. Parents should call the attendance line (299-0436, ext. 550) by 8:30 am whenever their student will be

LMMS Expectations

L Love yourself, love others

M Make responsible choices

M Magnify success

S Stay Safe

late to or absent from school. If the attendance office does not receive a lawful excuse in writing or by phone within five days of a student's return to school following an absence, the absence is recorded as unexcused.

Early Dismissal. An early dismissal requires a written request from a parent stating the reason for the request and the time of dismissal and return. This request shall be presented at the office or left on the attendance line no later than 8:15 a.m. (Students must report to the office before leaving and when returning to campus.) If an early dismissal or absence is one half day or more, an *Educational Excuse Request Form* (obtained at the office) should be completed at least five school days before the desired absence.

Tardy to School. Students who arrive to school late (either by bus or car) must obtain a tardy pass from the office to be admitted to school. Tardiness is excusable according to the guidelines used for absences. When a student is frequently tardy to school, a meeting is scheduled with the student and the parents to develop a solution to the problem. A student's performance and grade can also be damaged when missing all or part of a class. A student arriving more than 45 minutes after the school day begins is recorded as absent for one half day. A student is marked absent for the day if missing more than half of the school day. To be eligible to participate in afternoon or evening activities, students must be in school no later than noon.

Change of Status at LMS

Contact Information. Parents are asked to notify Christy Horst at extension 312 with changes in home address, home or work phone number, or emergency contact information.

Transfer or Withdrawal from School. A student wishing to transfer or withdraw from school must bring a signed statement from her/his parents to the principal, have an interview with an administrator, return all school property, and settle her/his account with the business office.

Daily Procedures for LMMS

Arrival to School

- Students arriving by bus should get off and enter the middle school doors to the main academic building. Students arriving by car should enter the north entrance by the traffic circle.
- Upon arriving on campus, students may visit their lockers to gather their books and materials for first and second period classes and then report directly to their designated homeroom.
- Students must report to homeroom upon arrival and may not remain in the hallway.
- Attendance is taken at 8:10. Any student who arrives after 8:10 will be counted tardy for the day.
- Students may not leave campus without first signing out in the campus office.

Dismissal Procedures

- Dismissal is at 3:05. Students leaving school by bus should exit through the middle school doors directly to their waiting buses.
- Students riding with a high school carpool should go directly to the location agreed upon by the students' parents and the driver.
- Students being picked up at the traffic circle should go directly to the traffic circle at dismissal. Students who are not picked up at the traffic circle by 3:20 p.m. must wait for their ride in the campus office.
- After dismissal, middle school students may not be on campus unless under the direct supervision of a parent or

a school staff member. **All students must be off campus by 3:45 p.m. unless participating in a school sanctioned activity.**

- When school is dismissed early, the same procedures will apply. Students not picked up within 20 minutes after dismissal will be escorted to the campus office to wait.

Spiritual Care and Community. LMMS holds chapel every Wednesday. Occasionally, the middle school will join the high school for chapel or other assembly. The purpose of chapel is to provide regular opportunities for worship, spiritual growth and Christian community.

Lunch Time and Campus Food Services. Students may pack their own lunch or they may purchase lunches in the school dining hall. Upon enrollment, each student is given an identification number which is used as the PIN for the student's lunch account. Students purchasing food or beverage should go through the serving area and use their PIN at the cashier.

All food must be eaten in the cafeteria. Students not purchasing food or beverages should go directly to the designated middle school seating area. When students are finished eating, they should dispose of their trash and/or return their trays to the window at the dish room. Tables, chairs, and floor must be clean before students are dismissed from the dining hall. Any middle school student wishing to use the restroom or leave the dining hall for any reason during his/her scheduled lunch period must first ask permission from a supervising teacher or administrator.

Students may carry closed water containers to class at the discretion of their classroom teacher. Open food and drink items from the dining hall are not permitted to be consumed in the hallways or in classrooms unless it is for a planned class activity.

Academics

Student Assignment Books. To encourage responsibility and organization, each student receives an assignment book to record homework and messages to parents. We ask parents to work together with the teachers in teaching students to be prepared for class. ***The assignment book also serves as the student's hall pass. They must have their assignment book with them daily!***

Textbooks. Textbooks and equipment are the property of the school and must be kept in good condition. Textbooks are numbered prior to issuance to students. Lost or damaged books or equipment will be charged to the responsible student.

Internet. The internet has become a standard part of communication and education for LMS students and parents. Students may utilize the internet at school for educational purposes only under adult supervision and guidance. LMS has also established appropriate-use policies and security filters to help guide students in appropriate internet use. Inappropriate usage of the school's internet access may result in a suspension of privileges.

Media Center. Middle school students will have access to the media center as a classroom or individually with a pass from the classroom teacher. The media center is open from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Physical Education Classes. Lancaster Mennonite believes middle school students need opportunity for exercise during the school day. Students are not permitted in the gym when a teacher is not present. The P.E. teachers establish guidelines for use of the gym and locker room. All students will be assigned a locker in the locker room to store belongings. Students need to bring gym shorts and sneakers for class.

Middle School Students Enrolled in High School Classes. With administrative and parent approval, middle school

students are occasionally permitted to take high school classes when such an arrangement appears to be in the best interest of the student. Middle school students who successfully complete high school courses do not receive credit on their high school transcripts, but they may take the next level of a course sequence when they enter high school.

Achievement Tests. The middle school administers achievement tests to all students. The tests measure student achievement in cognitive areas related to reading and mathematics. The dates are identified on the school calendar.

Reporting Student Progress. All student progress is reported electronically via **NetClassroom**. Parents and students can access **NetClassroom** on the Lancaster Mennonite homepage using their username and password. New students receive username and password details at the start of the school year.

Parent-Teacher Conferences. Conferences are helpful avenues through which parents and teachers can discover ways the home and school can best work together for the benefit of the student. Parents will be invited to schedule Fall and Spring conferences with their child's teachers. (Dates are on the calendar). Additional conferences may be scheduled by teachers or parents as needed throughout the year. Seventh and eighth grade students will participate in student-led conferences with their parents.

Promotion/Retention. Students failing multiple subjects will be recommended for review by the faculty and the administration. In all cases, the best interest of the individual student is critical when considering retention.

Guidance Services. Lancaster Mennonite provides both academic and non-academic counseling to all students. The guidance offices are located in the campus office. Parents and guardians are welcome to communicate any concerns with the middle school counselors.

Co-curricular Activities

Peer Leadership. High school students can serve as peer leaders for our middle school students. At LMMS, the *PALS* program connects mature high school students with small groups of middle schoolers once a week for a selected number of weeks. Goals include positive peer role models, an avenue for dialogue and, for 8th graders, orientation to high school.

Service Days. An important aspect of education at LMS is that of service. Students are encouraged to think of ways they can give back to their school and community as well as show Christ-like love to others. There are various opportunities throughout the year when students will participate in service opportunities or projects both on or off-campus.

Sports. LMMS sponsors junior high teams for interscholastic competition in selected sports. These teams are for students in grades 7 through 9 and may be made up of students from several LMS campuses. The MSO offers programs for students through grade 6. Please contact the campus office for more information.

Middle School Drama. Middle School students may audition for the middle school drama usually performed in late winter. At times there may also be openings for middle school students in high school drama productions.

Middle School Clubs. Clubs meet one period per week and change each quarter. There are a wide variety of choices. Field trips and service projects are interwoven throughout the year.

Other Middle School Activities. LMMS has a Quiz Bowl team, Student Council, student newspaper and yearbook.

Expected Conduct and Understandings of Discipline

Our goal is to build a positive learning community with conduct that enhances the educational process. LMS expects students to develop self-discipline and build positive relationships with others. Teachers respond appropriately when school standards and expectations are violated.

The goal of discipline is not punishment, but rather changed behavior. It is expected that students will respect and work with teachers so that few discipline cases are referred to an administrator. In cases where the unacceptable conduct does not change, the discipline response will depend on both the incident and the student's cumulative conduct record.

The school's response may include a community service assignment, conference, detention, development of a plan to change behavior, fine, suspension, writing thinking papers, etc. Restorative conferences may be used to repair harm caused by unacceptable behavior. In all cases, the goal is maintaining a positive school and enabling individual growth. Being a student at LMS is a privilege that is based upon meeting expectations.

The school will respond to out-of-school behavior when it affects in-school behavior, has a negative effect on other students, interferes with the school's operations, or violates the standards of conduct the school expects of its students. If a student experiences an arrest or conviction, the school will conduct a review of the situation, including the student's enrollment status and conditions of enrollment.

Discrimination, Harassment and Bullying. Lancaster Mennonite School admits students of any race, color, national origin or ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs and activities made available to the students at the school. The school also does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin or ethnic origin in administration of its educational, admissions, scholarship, loan, athletic and other school-administered programs and policies. Any discrimination or harassment of a student is strictly forbidden and will not be tolerated. Allegation of harassment or discrimination will be promptly investigated.

If a student suffers any such harassment or discrimination by another student, a staff member or faculty member or knows of such harassment or discrimination, the student or the student's parents should report such conduct immediately to a teacher, the campus assistant principal or principal. All such reports will be investigated promptly by the school. If the school determines that bullying, harassment or discrimination has occurred, the offending student, staff member or faculty member will be subject to disciplinary action as determined by the school.

Miscellaneous Campus Expectations

- Displays of affection are not permitted on campus.
- Soliciting or literature distribution is not permitted on campus without administrative approval.
- Fundraising on or off campus is not permitted without administrative approval.
- Skateboards are not permitted on campus.
- Students are required to carry their assignment book (hall pass) when in the hallways.
- Students may not cross the Mill Stream at any time unless they are attending an athletic competition or are under the direct supervision of school staff.

Electronic Devices. Radios, iPods, MP3 players, mobile phones, and other electronic devices are not permitted to be used or visible during the school day (from the time the student arrives on campus until dismissal). If there is an urgent need to use a mobile phone, the student should first secure permission from a teacher. Teachers may take electronic devices if they are seen in class. If you need to contact your child immediately, please phone the school office at 717-299-0436.

Appearance and Dress Code. LMS desires that students come to school in neat, clean, and modest clothing that is appropriate to create a positive educational atmosphere. For all students shirts with sleeves and pants, jeans or shorts, along with skirts or dresses for girls, meet the school standards. The following expectations are in effect upon entering the buildings in the mornings until exiting the campus at the end of the day.

- Shirts must have sleeves (no sleeveless shirts or tank tops permitted).
 - Dresses, skirts and shorts must be at least mid-thigh in length.
 - Cut-offs, or clothing with frayed hems or holes may not be worn.
 - Pictures, messages, and symbols on clothing and jewelry shall be in keeping with the mission and values of the school. Examples that do not meet standards include those related to tobacco products, alcohol, drugs, any music group/singer, or pictures/messages/symbols with sexual or racist connotations
 - Hats, bandannas, and distinctive military or camouflage clothing is not permitted.
 - Body piercings (other than ears), jewelry, and clothing and accessories determined to be disruptive to the educational process are not allowed during the school day.
 - Appropriate footwear must be worn at all times.
 - Dyed hair must reflect natural hair colors.
 - Form-fitting/tight clothing, including leggings and jeggings, and clothing that exposes the midriff, is not permitted.
- **Leggings/Jeggings may be worn under appropriate length skirts/dresses, but are not permitted to be worn independently.**

A first-time dress code violation will result in an office visit and parent phone call. If the student does not have an alternate change of clothing and/or has had more than one dress code violation, he or she will remain in the office for the day.

Restorative Discipline, Suspension and Expulsion. As a Christian community, LMS is committed to fostering and nurturing a culture of peace, safety, respect, mutual accountability, and trust. When any one of us engages in behavior that damages or threatens to harm our community, our first response must be to ensure the safety of our students and staff. Violence, whether physical or verbal, is not tolerated. We understand violence to include any behaviors that cause another person to feel threatened or unsafe. Those who engage in violent behavior are separated from the school community while the situation is processed by the administration.

Restorative conferences may be used to repair harm caused by unacceptable behavior. Student mediation and negotiation strategies are also encouraged as methods for solving problems. In all cases, it is important to respect the dignity of the individual through due process.

A school administrator may suspend a student for any behavior that damages or threatens to harm our school community, or when suspension is otherwise determined to be in the best interests of the student/s and school community. Examples of such behaviors include, but are not limited to:

- Violence (physical and verbal, including bullying).
- Actions involving injury to persons or destruction or misuse of property.
- Violation of local, state, or federal laws.
- Use or possession of weapons.
- Use, possession, or being under the influence of tobacco, alcohol, or illegal drugs or substance on campus and

at off-campus school functions.

- Abuse of legal drugs.
- Truancy from school or classes.
- Accumulation and continuation of minor offenses.
- Other conduct that is disrespectful to persons or disruptive of the educational process.

Safety and Security

For the safety of our students, our school and personal property we ask that students and parents note the following points:

Health Concerns. If a student becomes ill during school hours, he or she should request a pass from the classroom teacher to report to the nurse's office (in the campus office area). If necessary, a parent will be called to pick up the student. **Students requiring medications during school hours must keep the medicine in the campus office and report to the office at the specified time to take the medication.**

Lockers. Each student is assigned an individual locker for school use. Students are responsible for their locker and should use only the locker assigned to them. Lockers must be kept neat and clean. Lockers are the property of the school and can be searched.

We strongly discourage students from bringing valuable items to school. Students are responsible for the security of anything of value that is brought to school. Students may not use personal locks on their lockers, but combination locks can be obtained at the campus office for a deposit of \$10. The deposit fee is refunded when locks are returned.

Communication Between School and Home

Parents are encouraged to attend middle school events to meet the teachers, visit classrooms and talk directly with school administrators. Check the school calendar/website for dates and times.

Homework and Projects. The middle school teachers ask students to keep their assignment books up-to-date. This allows students to keep track of assignments and enables parents to partner with them and the school to support academic success. Teachers also post class, project and homework information on NetClassroom and/or wikis, accessed through the LMS website. In our efforts to care for our earth, LMS is trying to limit the amount of paper the school uses. Parents are encouraged to reference the LMS website for school information

Emergency School Closings. Parents can learn about weather-related emergency school closings by checking the website or by tuning in to these stations: WJTL (90.3), WIOV (105), WITF (89.5), BOB (94.9), WHP (580), KISS (99.3), WRVV (97.3), WLAN (97), WGAL (Channel 8), WHP-CBS (Channel 21, Channel 15).