



***Lancaster  
Mennonite  
Middle School***

**Student Handbook**

**2017-2018**

*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/Caregiver Handbook*

**Welcome to Lancaster Mennonite Middle School! We are excited you are here. Within our walls, we want you to experience being known and loved by God and your team of teachers. This place is special! Here you will spread your wings, grow your minds, and nurture your spirits. As teachers, we pledge to encourage and support you, pray for you, advocate for you and believe in your success every day.**

Integral to a positive life together is respect for one another and our space. This includes students, faculty, staff, property, and the educational process. At LMMS, we desire to maintain a community that models the life of Jesus and is welcoming and inclusive of all students. In this place, we want all individuals to experience being accepted, valued, and loved. As we interact with one another, our goal is to treat others as we 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 expectations and policies, but rather a general summary for your convenience. Not all situations are addressed. In addition to school-wide, teachers will establish specific standards in their classroom.

## *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 stop at their hooks and then report directly to their designated homeroom/crew.
- Students must report to homeroom/crew upon arrival and may not remain in the hallway.
- Devotions/gathering activities will begin at 8:05 a.m.

### **Dismissal Procedures**

- Dismissal is at 3:05. Students leaving school by bus will exit through the middle school doors directly to their waiting buses.
- Students riding with a high school carpool will go directly to the location agreed upon by the students' parents/caregivers and the driver.
- Students being picked up at the traffic circle will go directly to the traffic circle at dismissal. Middle school students must be picked up no later than 3:30 p.m., unless they are staying for an approved after school event (this includes athletic practices).
- **All middle school students must be off campus by 3:30 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 must wait in the campus office.
- Students may not leave campus for any reason without first signing out in the campus office.

## *Visitors*

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

## *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. Attendance information and materials are available via our website.

**Attendance Line.** Parents/Caregivers should call the attendance line (299-0436, ext. 550) by 8:30 am whenever their student will be late to or absent from school. If the attendance office does not receive an 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.

**Legal or Excused Absences.** Excusable absences include illness, death in the 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 is a must for the trip to be considered excused. This applies to church activities and trips with parents/caregivers (overnight and educational). To maintain academic excellence, one week is normally the maximum excused educational family trip.

**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 unexcused absences to the public school district in which the student lives. After three days of unexcused absences, the district may take legal action against students or parents/caregivers. 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).

**Early Dismissal.** An early dismissal requires a note from a parent stating the reason for the dismissal and the time of dismissal and return. Notes must be presented to 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 be negatively impacted 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 11:00 a.m.

**Faith Formation, 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, reflection, and Christian community. Devotional time, sharing, and other faith

formative activities occur regularly throughout the school day at LMMS.

**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 with teacher permission and/or for a planned class activity.

### ***Academics***

**Textbooks/School Equipment.** 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 with adult supervision. LMS has also established a responsible and acceptable appropriate-use policy requiring student and parent/caregiver signatures. Security filters are used to help guide students in appropriate and responsible 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.** Students need opportunity for physical activity during the school day. Students are not permitted in the gym before or after school or 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 and are used to monitor growth and inform instruction. Achievement testing dates are noted on the online school calendar.

**Reporting Student Progress.** All student progress is reported electronically via **onCampus**.

Parents/Caregivers and students can access **onCampus** via the Lancaster Mennonite homepage using their username and password. New students receive username and password details at the start of the school year.

**Parent/Caregiver-Teacher Conferences.** Conferences are helpful avenues through which parents/caregivers and teachers can discover ways the home and school can best work together for the benefit of the student. Parents/Caregivers 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. Middle school students will participate in student-led conferences with their parents. Spring conferences are student-led and are required.

**School Counseling.** Lancaster Mennonite provides both academic and non-academic counseling to all students. The school counseling offices are located both in the middle school and in the campus office. Parents/Caregivers are welcome to communicate any concerns with the middle school counselors.

### *Co-curricular Activities*

**Service Opportunities.** 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 or early spring. At times there may also be openings for middle school students in high school drama productions.

**Other Middle School Activities.** LMMS has a Quiz Bowl team, Design Club, Student Council, Blog, Yearbook, and various other activities in which students are invited to participate.

### *Expected Conduct and Understandings of Discipline*

**Restorative Discipline, Suspension and Expulsion.** As an Anabaptist-Christian community, LMMS is committed to fostering and nurturing a culture of peace, safety, respect, mutual accountability, and trust. When students engage 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, verbal, non-verbal, 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.

Our goal is to build a positive learning community with conduct that enhances the educational process. LMS expects students to develop self-regulation and build positive relationships with others. Teachers respond

appropriately when school standards and expectations are violated. Restorative practices are central to our handling of disciplinary matters.

The goal of discipline is not punishment, but rather changed behavior. It is expected that students and families will respect and work with teachers so that few discipline cases are referred to the administrator. In cases where the unacceptable conduct does not change, referrals will be made to the LMMS principal. 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, vapor products, 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.

The school's response to disciplinary matters may include a community service assignment, restorative 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 poor/unacceptable choices. In all cases, the goal is maintaining a positive school climate and enabling individual growth. Being a student at LMMS 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 or ethnic origin. All students have access to all the rights, privileges, programs and activities made available to the students at the school. Similarly, the school does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national 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 for any reason is unacceptable. Allegations 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/caregivers should report such conduct immediately to a teacher and/or the campus 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.

### ***Other 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 have hall passes with them at all times 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, cell 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). LMMS students turn-in electronic devices to their crew/homeroom teacher upon arriving to school. If you need to contact your child immediately, please phone the school office at 717-299-0436.

**Appearance and Dress Code Expectations.** Lancaster Mennonite desires that students come to school in neat, clean, and modest clothing that is appropriate to create a positive educational atmosphere. 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 straps at least 2.5 inches wide. Spaghetti straps, tube tops, and or strapless tops are not permitted.
- Dresses, skirts and shorts must be at least mid-thigh in length.
- Tattered, threadbare clothing may not be worn.
- Pictures, messages, and symbols on clothing, jewelry, on person 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 or generally negative connotations.
- Hats, bandannas, and distinctive military or camouflage clothing is not permitted.
- Distracting/disruptive piercings, tattoos, jewelry, hairstyles (including color), and clothing are not permitted.
- Appropriate footwear must be worn at all times.
- Form-fitting clothing and clothing that exposes the midriff or undergarments are not permitted.
- Leggings, jeggings, and tight athletic apparel is discouraged.

A first-time dress code violation will result in an opportunity to change in to suitable clothing and/or an office visit and parent phone call. If the student does not have or choose (from our collection of clean options) 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.

### *Safety and Security*

For the safety of our students, our school and personal property we ask that students and parents/caregivers 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/caregiver 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.**

**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.

### *Communication Between School and Home*

Parents/Caregivers 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.

**Outside-of-class work, Assignments, Events.** Teachers post class assignments and information on onCampus, accessed through the Lancaster Mennonite 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.

**7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade student attendance is required at LMMSConnect! Exhibition Evenings (occur at the end of each quarter).**

**Emergency School Closings.** Parents/Caregivers 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).