PARENT-STUDENT HANDBOOK

2023-2024

"Let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven."
~ Matthew 5:16

Pursuing academic excellence • Developing Christ-like character
Serving in love

Mother Lode Christian School

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www.motherlodechristian.com

Member of the
Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI)

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Mother Lode Christian School

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Core Vision & Values

Verse

"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven." - Matthew 5:16 NKJV

Vision

We exist to inspire our students to love Jesus Christ with all that they are, excel in academics, find joy in learning, and shine as light in the world.

Motto

Let His light shine!

Our Mission

Our mission in Christian education is twofold: First, that each student grows in the love and knowledge of Jesus Christ. And second, that each student advances in academic skills in order to think clearly, reason well, address problems with creative solutions, and communicate effectively.

Who our students become is more important than *what* they become. Once they find a sincere love for Jesus Christ *and* an unselfish love for others, they will shine brightly for a lifetime. Public schools focus on instruction and subject matter *without* God. True *Chrisitan* education explores how all subject matter reveals the beauty and wisdom *of* God. At MLCS our mission is much bigger than books, diplomas, and degrees, as important as these are. Our mission is to accomplish our vision together.

Core Values

1. *Knowing and Loving Jesus* - To keep Jesus Christ and the Bible as the epicenter of all learning and truth.

At Mother Lode Christian School, students are inspired to grow in faith, knowledge, and purpose through their relationship with Jesus Christ. Why? Because *In Him are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge* and *in Him all things* - both academic instruction & biblical revelation - *hold together ~ Colossians 1:17; 2:3.* The Word of God, the Bible, provides the assurance of absolute and eternal truth. It defines moral boundaries and establishes what is good and what is evil. It provides the catalyst for a transformed mind and motivation for a renewed life. The study of Scripture is not just to gain knowledge, but for its content to come alive in learning, in prayer, and in everyday campus life. Our prayer is that when students leave our campus, they love Jesus with all that they are, they are academically prepared, and they shine as light in the world.

- ***Valuing*** the Integrity of Scripture - 2 Timothy 3:16-17
- ***Living*** with Christ in us, the Hope of Glory - Colossians 1:27
- ***Practicing*** everyday Discipleship - Matthew 4:19
- ***Growing*** in Prayer and Devotion - Acts 2:42

2. *Teaching that Transforms* - To welcome Holy Spirit-inspired teaching and learning that changes the nature and character of our students from the inside out.

At MLCS teachers and students learn to integrate and apply God's Word with the best of instructional strategies and curriculum. We recognize that all areas of study - and of life - provide opportunity to discern and emulate truth, beauty, and goodness. What students learn is what they become. In science, students discover the marvelous complexities of God's handiwork; in mathematics they recognize the genius of God's order and design; in great literature students connect how the Greatest Story is the inspiration for all great stories. The Christian school classroom must champion education *and* the renewal of the mind so that the soul is transformed for the cause of Christ. This is our mission and our prayer.

- ***Implementing*** classically-inspired Christian education influences, especially in the arts
- ***Inspiring*** life-long, skilled and expressive readers
- ***Equipping*** young minds with mathematical and scientific tools to understand God's creation
- ***Training*** in effective written & oral communication
- ***Emphasizing*** the value and reward of hard work
- ***Filling*** young hearts with the knowledge of the Scriptures and blessings of obedience

3. Partnering with Parents & Churches - To train up our children in the way they should go.

MLCS teachers and staff believe it is an honor to partner with parents and churches in this great work of God. Working together towards a common vision and mission, our goal is to teach our students why we love Jesus Christ, love His word, and love others. MLCS considers its call to Christian education a joy and privilege. We like to think of our parent//school/church partnership as one big family working together to spiritually and academically *train up our children in the way they should go. ~ Proverbs 22:6*

- ***Education begins at home***
- ***Parent/School/Church partnership***
- ***Christ-honoring friendships***
- ***Local church support***

4. *Serving in Love Together* - To demonstrate the love of Jesus on and off campus through the service of others.

Practicing consistent, selfless Christian service on and off campus is part of our MLCS course of study. Mentoring younger students and voluntary service activities are core to our curriculum. Whether on campus or in our surrounding communities, we provide practical opportunities for students to *"let their light so shine before men, that they may see their good works and glorify their Father in heaven. ~ Matthew 5:16*

*****Without Discrimination:*** *Mother Lode Christian School admits students of any race, color, nationality and/or ethnic origin to all rights, privileges, programs and activities made available to students at school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, nationality and/or ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, athletic and other school-administered programs.*

Statement of Faith

All families must understand and agree to support their children being educated according to a Biblical worldview as expressed in the following Statement of Faith.

1. We believe the Bible (Old & New Testament) to be the inspired, infallible, authoritative, inerrant Word of God. (2 Timothy 3:15, Proverbs 30:5, John 17:17, 2 Peter 1:21)

2. We believe there is one God, eternally existent in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. (Genesis 1:1, Matthew 28:19, John 10:30)

3. We believe in the deity of Jesus Christ (John 10:33); His virgin birth (Isaiah 7:14, Matthew 1:23, Luke 1:35); His substitutionary atonement (1 Corinthians 15:3, Ephesians 1:7, Hebrews 2:9), His resurrection (John 11:25, 1 Corinthians 15:4), His ascension to the right hand of the Father (Mark 16:19), and in His personal return in power and glory (Acts 1:11, Revelation 19:11).

4. We believe in the absolute necessity of regeneration by the Holy Spirit for salvation because of the exceeding sinfulness of human nature, that people are justified on the single ground of faith in the shed blood of Christ, and that only by God's grace and through faith alone are we saved. (John 3:16-19, 5:24; Romans 3:23, 5:8-9; Ephesians 2:8-10; Titus 3:5)

5. We believe in the resurrection of both the saved and the lost - they that are saved unto the resurrection of life, and they that are lost unto the resurrection of damnation. (John 5:28-29).

6. We believe in the spiritual unity of believers in our Lord Jesus Christ. (Romans 8:9, 1 Corinthians 12:12-13, Galatians 3:26-28)

7. We believe in the present ministry of the Holy Spirit, who indwells and empowers the Christian as a helper, teacher, and guide. The supreme evidence of the Spirit-filled life is the fruit of the Spirit which is love. (John 6:13, 14:16-17, 16:8-11; Romans 8:26, 8:13-14; 1 Corinthians 3:16, 6:19-20; Ephesians 4:30, 5:18)

8. We believe God's plan for human sexuality is to be expressed only within the context of marriage, and that God created man and woman as unique biological persons made to complete each other. God instituted monogamous marriage between male and female as the foundation of the family and the basic structure of human society. For this reason, we believe that marriage is exclusively the union of one genetic male and one genetic female. (Genesis 2:24; Matthew 19:5-6; Mark 10:6-9; Romans 1:26-27; 1 Corinthians 6:9)

9. We believe that human life is sacred from conception to its natural end, and that we must have concern for the physical and spirit needs of our fellow man (Psalm 139:13, Isaiah 49:1, Jeremiah 1:5, Matthew 22:37-39, Romans 12:20-21, Galatians 6:10).

Code of Character

All children are expected to adhere to a code of conduct that is in alignment with Christian character. We ask families to review the full document each year and sign in it, indicating their intentions to support such conduct.

Jesus & His Word: We acknowledge that Jesus is the Author and Finisher of our faith, and that His Word is The Authority for wisdom and knowledge. It is our aim to develop ourselves according to His Word, realizing that as we seek first His kingdom and righteousness, He will minister to us through His Word. (Hebrews 12:1-2, James 1:5-6, 1 Peter 1:24, 1 John 2:5-6, 5:3-5)

Discipleship: We will endeavor to follow the will of God for our lives as we seek to model Christ-like character through personal prayer and the study of the word of God, through faithful fellowship both at school and church. This is possible as we yield to the ministry of The Holy Spirit. We will seek to love and honor God with all of our "hearts". (Luke 10:27, Matthew 7:7-11, James 1:22, 1 Peter 1:13-16, 2 Peter 1:10-11, **Galatians 4:7**)

Academic Excellence: We are committed to following through with the academic requirements at MLCS. We seek to honor God by loving Him with all of our "minds". (Luke 2:52, Philippians 2:5, 1 Corinthians 1:5)

Health: We will practice good health habits and regularly participate in wholesome physical activities. We seek to honor God with all of our "strength". (Luke 10:27, Colossians 3:23, 1 Corinthians 3:16-17, Romans 12:1)

Uniqueness: We recognize that there is a unique call of God on our individual lives, and seek to develop the gifts and abilities that God has given us. We believe that our gifts complement The Body of Christ. (1 John 2:20, 1 Corinthians 12:18-31, Ephesians 4:11-12)

Our Witness: We will seek to share the love of Christ through personal witness, servant leadership, on a practical level wherever and however we might be involved in our community. We recognize that when we are in the community that we reflect and represent all that Mother Lode Christian School stands for. (Matthew 5:16, 10:8, 28:19-20; John 15:17; 1 Corinthians 9:22, 15:58)

MLCS Leadership: We will submit ourselves to the leadership of Mother Lode Christian School. We realize that our enrollment at MLCS is a privilege and not a right. We are determined to give our best to support MLCS in both its educational and ministry philosophies, which provides a quality education that doesn't compromise the Word of God.

Technology Integrity: We acknowledge that we are being tempted to involve ourselves in inappropriate content that is available through social media and other outlets. We recognize that what we view can affect what we do. We will commit ourselves to digital integrity both publicly and privately, at school and at home. (1 Corinthians 10:13, 1 Thessalonians 4:3). All families and students must sign and adhere to the "Computer Lab Etiquette" established by MLCS. Failures to follow the guidelines will result in disciplinary action and loss of computer privileges.

Thank you for partnering with MLCS to give students every opportunity to learn and grow in their love for Jesus, their love for others, and their love for learning!

Campus Operations & School Procedures

School starts at 8:05 AM ~ School ends at 3:00 PM

Drop-Off Procedures

- Parking gates open at 7:30 AM Monday-Friday.
- Supervision is provided in the cafeteria for early birds from 7:30-7:45. Playground opens at 7:45 am.
- Drivers pull into the drive-thru loop in front of the main building to drop off children. This is a safe place with adult supervision.
- Students dropped off between 7:30-7:45 must enter the main building to be supervised in the cafeteria until playground release at 7:45.
- Students arriving between 7:45-8:05 must head directly to the supervised play areas until the bell rings.
- If your student arrives after 8:10 AM, an adult must accompany them to the office for a late pass.

Pick-Up Procedures

- All Kindergarten students *and their siblings* are picked up at the back gate of the school.
- Students with a last name that begins with A-L are picked-up in front of main building:
- Students with a last name that begins with M-Z are picked-up in front of the gym.
- Please display your family's name card (provided to you by the school) so we can identify your family's car quickly as you come closer to the pick-up position.
- Please DO NOT PARK and leave your vehicle at any time in the pass-through lane.
- Student(s) will only be released to their parents or authorized adults.
- Students must remain on the steps until pickup. They may not play on the playground or other area.
- Pick-up time officially closes at 3:20 PM. Remaining students go to the office to call home.
- A charge of $5.00 per ten minutes will be charged for late pick-ups unless the students are participating in the after school "Top It Off" academic support program. Students participating in that program will be dismissed to be picked up at the main building steps at 3:30. The $5.00 charge will be instituted for those students if not picked up by 3:45.
- Parking gates usually close and lock at 5:30 PM (Exceptions: sports & special evening/weekend events)

School Closures or Late Starts

In the case of severe weather, school may be canceled or delayed. Parents are encouraged to listen to KVML or check mymotherlode.com for information about closures or delays. MLCS will also send out a text and/or email message to parents. (See Communication p.12)

Campus Visitors

We welcome all visitors to our MLCS campus (except pets). Please remember:

- All visitors, including parents, check in at the office for a visitor's pass (incl. Chapel visits)
- Prearrange with the teacher if you would like to visit a classroom.
- Prearrange with staff for tours or private conferences.
- When your visit is over, please check out and leave office pass before leaving campus.

School Attendance

We ask parents/guardians to make every effort possible to arrive on time for school. The beginning of the school day is eternally important. Each classroom begins the day with devotion and prayer. For your child to reap the spiritual benefits of your financial investment into their young lives, it is critical that each child arrives in class on time. If they arrive after 8:10 AM, they will be required to go to the office and receive a tardy slip to take to their teacher. If the tardy is excused (doctor/dentist appointment, bereavement, emergency, etc.), this will be indicated on the report card. When tardies become excessive, parents will receive a call from the principal.

Absences

For the health of our students and staff, please keep children home if there is any sign of illness.

Please call the office as soon as possible when you know your child will be absent. If a student is absent for more than two days, we ask that the parent/guardian make arrangements for picking up missed assignments. The student has the same number of days absent to make up missing work.

Absences are a hardship for the student and the teacher. *Please make every effort to take vacations during scheduled holidays or summer*. Some reading and written work can be sent home, other learning opportunities such as classroom instruction, group discussions, peer editing, and team projects cannot be replicated or made up.

If a family plans to be absent for two or more consecutive days :

- A parent must fill out an absence request form in the front office.
- The form must be completed and signed by the teacher *two weeks or more* prior to the absence. This gives the teacher time to make special arrangements for missed work.
- The teacher will give the student a work packet to be completed during their absence.
- All missed work will be due the day of the student returns and graded for completion and accuracy.

Special exceptions can and will be made for circumstances beyond a student's control such as prolonged illness or injury. Thank you for your understanding and cooperation.

Truancy

By mandate of the State of California, all children of school age must attend school. A student is considered truant if he/she is:

- Absent without a valid excuse three or more days in a given school year.
- Tardy or absent for more than any 30 minute period during a school day without a valid excuse on three occasions during the school year.
- Repeated truancies are grounds for expulsion. (See Discipline p.18)
- Students exceeding 30 absences in a school year will be a risk of grade retention.

Dress Code

Our MLCS dress code provides an opportunity for our students to learn modesty and discretion, neatness and cleanliness. The scriptures exhort us to be *in the world but not of it.* The desire to become like Jesus in character, attitude, and appearance must be greater than the desire to act or be like the world, talk like the world, and/or dress like the world. Our MLCS Dress Code provides common on-campus clothing guidelines across the grade levels. It is our expectation that students and parents will respect and support the following requirements:

- Boys and girls are to remove hats inside all buildings; knit caps are okay.
- Flip-flops, high heel shoes, and Crocs are unsafe, and therefore, not allowed.
- Sandals must have a heel strap.
- Clothing, including jeans, must be without holes, frays or rips.
- Shorts and dresses/skirts must be longer than the fingertip length of the child's extended arm. This applies to 8th grade graduation dresses as well.
- Shorts or leggings must be worn under all skirts or dresses, unless the dresses are full length.
- All tops, jumpers, and dresses must have shoulder straps that are a minimum 1 ½ - inch wide, including graduation dresses.
- Halter tops and racerback tanks are not permitted. No clothing should not expose abdomen or back when standing, sitting, or raising arms.
- Undergarments should not be visible because of see-through clothing, including bra straps.
- No clothing with offensive language or logos.
- No tight fitting legwear (yoga pants, leggings, jeggings, etc.) unless worn underneath shorts, skirts, or dresses *that are the appropriate length.*
- No sagging pants that expose undergarments.

- No cotton sweatpants, unless being used during PE class only; no pajama bottoms. Athletic gear that meets dress code requirements is okay.
- No student tattoos or body piercings. A maximum of two ear piercings per ear are permitted.
- Use of makeup is reserved for middle school girls (7th & 8th grade) only.

Please note the following:

- When a student has been found to be out of compliance with MLCS dress codes, he or she will be sent to the administration. Parents will be contacted and a review of appropriate MLCS attire will be discussed. If appropriate attire can be found in the thrift store, the student may change into it at school. If no replacement clothing can be found, parents will be expected to bring appropriate clothing to school so that the student may change.
- Repeated dress code violations will result in disciplinary action.

Student Phone Use

Mother Lode Christian School is a cell phone free campus. Students are not permitted to have or use cell phones on campus during the school day. That includes wrist watches with cell phone capabilities. Students are encouraged to leave their cell phones and other electronic devices at home. If it is necessary for them to bring a phone or digital device to school, it *must be checked into the office before school begins and can be checked out once school ends*. Phone calls can be made from the school office during recesses, breaks, and lunch time. If a student is found to have a phone in his/her possession, it will be placed in the office for the parents to retrieve and the student will receive a lunchtime detention.

Similarly, students on field trips must give cell phones to teachers who will designate appropriate times for their use. It is required that all browsers are silenced. During overnight trips, all cell phones will be collected by the teacher prior to students being sent to rooms.

Gum, Litter, and Graffiti

Students are not permitted to chew gum on campus. Students are expected to clean up after themselves and help keep all areas of the campus (playground, cafeteria, lockers, outdoor eating area, classrooms, hallways, etc.) neat and trash-free and to not draw on or scrape furnishings or walls. Parents will be held responsible for damage done to furniture, floors, or buildings due to such actions.

Student Meals

A great school day starts with a healthy breakfast at home. MLCS does not provide breakfast at school. The cafeteria offers a variety of hot meals for purchase. Healthy snacks are for sale every day. To pre-pay for cafeteria items, please open an account in the main office. Charges are discouraged and only allowed in cases of emergency. All charges incurred must be paid off by the end of each trimester.

Because a child's diet directly affects his/her ability to focus and learn, MLCS staff models and encourages healthy eating practices as an educational part of our school environment. Please help your student (and teachers) by sending snacks and lunches low in sugar and sodium. No sodas, energy drinks, or candy are allowed at snack or lunch time. (Due to staining issues, *drinks with red dye are not permitted*.) Please remember kids need proper nutrients to grow and think well.

Lost and Found

Students lose items on campus every day! Please make a habit of checking the lost and found table located downstairs next to the cafeteria. Please label coats, sweaters, lunch boxes, sports equipment, notebooks, and other supplies. Unclaimed items are donated to the school thrift store every two months.

Care of School Property

All students are responsible for the resources they use during their time at MLCS. Books, lab equipment, iPads, desktop computers, as well as all campus property, must be treated with care and respect. Failure to do so may result in fines or other means of compensation.

Health & Safety

Thank you for helping us keep MLCS a safe and healthy place for kids to learn!

On-Campus Accidents and Injuries

Accidents happen, and the MLCS staff is committed to caring for your student in case of any mishap. In minor incidents, students are instructed to go to the office for personal care. An office staff member will wash, treat, and bandage small scrapes and bruises. An incident report will be made and, as long as the child can comfortably participate in regular activities, the parent will be notified by the end of the day. In the case of more significant injuries (sprains, breaks, major lacerations, etc.), parents will immediately receive a phone call, and plans for the student's care will be made between the parent and office staff member. In the case of a life or limb-threatening emergency, 911 will be called.

Excused from Participation

A student may be excused from any activity that may aggravate or prevent healing of an injury. If the student needs to be excused from physical activity, including P.E. class, for more than 2 days, written parental permission is needed. If a student will be unable to participate for more than one week, a doctor's note of explanation is required. Thank you for your understanding. (Please see the Participation Agreement for details.)

Medication

If a student needs medication during the school day, please bring it to the office and fill out the medication form with clear instructions. Please do not send any medication to school in your child's lunch box or backpack. This includes over the counter medications such as cough drops or Tylenol. Bring it to the office or give it to the teacher and it will be made available to your child as needed.

Student Illness

To reduce the spread of communicable illnesses and aid a student's recovery, please keep your child home if he/she has a fever, cough, intermittent sneezing, or vomiting. An excessively runny nose, goopy eyes, and rash are also signs that your child's illness is contagious. If a child comes to school sick, or develops symptoms during the school day, a parent will be called to arrange an immediate pickup. Students need to be without a fever for 24-hours before they may return to school. Every effort is made during a school day to teach the children to wash their hands frequently and cover their mouths with their arm or a tissue when they sneeze or cough. Thank you!

Lice

Should lice be detected on any student, he/she will need to be picked up immediately by a parent or guardian. Parents must take the proper medical steps necessary to thoroughly eliminate the lice. The student will not be allowed back to class until the treatment is complete, the symptoms are gone, and no more lice or nits are detected. The school will notify all parents if lice have been reported on campus.

Emergency Evacuation Procedures

Mother Lode Christian School has taken the necessary steps to prepare for natural and man-made emergencies. Staff receive annual training for fire and earthquake evacuation procedures, and specialized ALICE training for what to do in case of a campus intruder. Emergency procedures are drilled each trimester for all students - preschool through 8th grade. We pray, of course, that such training would never have to be used.

IN CASE OF EMERGENCY, DO NOT COME DIRECTLY TO CAMPUS!
Doing so may put everyone, including children, in danger.

As soon as it is possible, MLCS will contact parents using the all-school email and/or Gradelink voice /text system. If necessary, instructions will be given about off-campus meeting locations and how to proceed in reuniting with your child. Prayerfully consider your response to emergencies. MLCS takes all precautions necessary *even if the danger is minimal*. More times than not, concerning situations are rectified within a short amount of time and with few problems. It is our hope to de-escalate a tense situation and restore peace and normalcy as quickly as possible. Thank you for your cooperation.

Reporting Child Abuse

Mother Lode Christian School personnel are designated as mandatory reporters on and off campus. If known or suspected instances of child abuse come to their attention, staff must contact law enforcement immediately. No MLCS employee responsible for the care of children who reports a known or suspected instance of child abuse shall be civilly or criminally liable for any report required by law, unless it is proven that a false report was purposefully made. Staff members are guilty of a misdemeanor if they fail to report any known instances of child abuse. Staff will notify administration if law enforcement appears on campus. Administration will cooperate and not interfere with law enforcement during an investigation. Sexual and Physical Abuse training is provided yearly during staff in-services.

School Communication & Public Relations

Thank you for helping students succeed by staying connected to MLCS!

Main Office Hours: 7:45 AM 3:45 PM Monday-Friday (summer hours subject to change.)

MLCS desires to maintain ongoing communication with parents regarding all school events, programs, and campus happenings. The MLCS office staff is available to answer your questions or put you in touch with someone who can.

Website: www.motherlodechristian.com

The Mother Lode Christian School website contains updated information helpful to our families and students. Visit the site to view the calendar of events, the monthly cafeteria menu, sports opportunities, academic pursuits, technology policy, and much more. Point friends to the website to learn about the heart of Mother Lode Christian, as well as admission and tuition information.

Parent Communication

Monday Folders - In order to establish a consistent, hard copy system of parent communication, MLCS uses "Monday Folder" as means to send home classroom newsletters, graded homework, permission slips, and miscellaneous bulletins.

Gradelink

Gradelink provides two means of parent communication.

1. It provides parent access to their student's assignments and grades
2. It provides a log of all school-to-parent email communications. When possible, Our goal is to have all group school and classroom communication go out on Monday mornings through Gradelink.
3. Staff/teacher Gradelink emails that address specific parent communication will be sent as needed.

Emails

For parents to communicate with MLCS staff, the following email address is used. All staff emails are made up of the teachers first initial, last name @ motherlodechristian.com - e.g., bjones@motherlodechristian.com

Parents are encouraged to check Gradelink and their email inbox for messages from administration, teachers, and/or staff. Please reply when necessary. MLCS makes every effort to protect your email address from virus or spam. Please inform the school office if you must have another means of communication.

Group Me

We recently began incorporating the "GroupMe" app to send classroom text messages when whole class reminders are needed. This is set up and run by our administrative staff. Please respect the use of such apps for critical messages pertaining to all families in the class such as reminders of classroom events, keeping the messages brief, inviting, and positive at all times.

Social Media

MLCS uses *Instagram* and *Facebook* for publicity. Children's photos are never posted without prior written consent of parent/guardian. Parents, please remember to not post any school-related pictures of MLCS students, other than your own, on social pages. Thank you!

Avoid Texting Teachers

Please refrain from using text messaging to communicate with your child's teacher except in cases of emergency or during a field trip. Email is the appropriate mode of communication.

Complaint Protocol

If, for whatever reason, there is a need to communicate a complaint or concern, the following protocol is expected:

1. Take time to pray over the matter. Consider what the Lord would have you do according to Scripture.
2. Schedule an in-person meeting at an appropriate time with the staff member to share your concerns.
3. If the issue is not resolved with the staff member, schedule an in-person meet with the Administrator who will then guide the resolution process.
4. If needed, the Administrator will bring the matter to the School Board.

Campus Signage

Information is often shared through signs and banners posted on the gate, office bulletin board, doors, and marquee at the drive-up loop. If parents wish to post something, please get approval through the main office.

Important Parent Meetings

Thank you for supporting MLCS teachers to create a cooperative and creative learning environment!

Back-to-School Night

Welcome back moms, dads, students, and staff! Come celebrate with returning and new families as we rejoice in the mission of Mother Lode Christian School, meet the staff and Board, and hear the grade-level academic, spiritual, and social goals for your children. In order to accommodate families with children in multiple grades, we host this event twice - once for grades K-3 and a week later for grades 4-8. PLEASE do your best to attend this event to get oriented to the new year and be strengthened in "Team Jesus" at MLCS.

Parent/Teacher Conferences

Parent/Teacher conferences are a wonderful opportunity for parents and teachers to connect one-on-one about our favorite part of school: the kids! MLCS operates on a *Trimester* grading period, with progress reports sent home mid-trimester and official report cards sent at the end of the trimester. Conferences are scheduled for all K-8 students six weeks into the school year when the first progress reports are given. At that time, each child's strengths as well his/her personal goals for the year are discussed. Three minimum days are designated at the end of the September calendar to make time for these conferences to take place. In the Spring, a single full day is set aside for teachers to meet with the families of any students who may need additional support to meet academic or social goals before the end of the school year.

Open House

Open House is a time for parents and staff to gather on the MLCS campus to celebrate the accomplishments of the children over the course of the year. This time is often integrated with performing arts such as displays of work from our art program, showcasing our school band, and classroom theater or recitations.

Parent Partnership

Thank you for the time, effort, and love you give. MLCS loves you!

Moms in Prayer
Consistent, corporate prayer is foundational to the success of any ministry. MLCS Moms in Prayer meet once a week to pray together for our students, our staff, and our school. Contact the office for this year's schedule.

Parent Teacher Fellowship (PTF)
PTF is made up of parents committed to supporting MLCS teachers and administration. Parents meet once a month to discuss projects and activities that would bless the school. Past activities include breakfast/lunches for teachers, flowers in the breakroom, and planning of school activities and fundraisers. Funds raised in the past few years have allowed MLCS to remodel the band room, provide new heating/cooling to classrooms, upgrade the playground, and provide scholarships for children to participate in field trips, sports, and summer academic support programs. In addition, a designated portion of funds raised goes directly to teachers for classroom use. PTF is a vital part of "Team Jesus" at MLCS. Included in the various fundraising events and school activities that PTF sponsors are:

- Family Campus Work Day
- Monthly Staff Meals
- February Balloon-a-Grams
- Fall Jogathon
- Thanksgiving Luncheon Support
- End of Year "Field Day"
- Spring Teacher/Staff Appreciation Week

See the Cougar Calendar for meeting dates, and subscribe to the PTF email list through the school website (motherlodechristian.com).

Volunteer Service
MLCS has a rich history of volunteerism. Indeed, the school would not exist without the selfless people who over the years have contributed their time, resources, and skills. Tuition costs for MLCS are among the lowest in California in part because of the efforts of our generous volunteers. Won't you consider where you can help?

To help mitigate the costs of operating MLCS, *all parents are asked to put in volunteer hours every year*. All MLCS families are required to work the largest fundraiser of the year, the Winter Jubilee in February. Visit the website for a list of current volunteer opportunities. Please understand how much you are needed and appreciated!

AREAS OF SERVICE & WHO TO CONTACT

Moms in Prayer	Liana Sarkisian
Campus maintenance, clean up, etc.	Donnie Wright, Ryan Detrick, and Steve Johnson
Theater (stage sets, costumes, props, etc.	Natalie Gray
Classroom Parent	Classroom Teacher
Playground supervision, chaperones, etc.	Donnie Wright
Thrift Stores	Kerry Semsen
Women's Service Fellowship	Kerry Semsen

Special Class Activities

Birthday Celebrations

Mother Lode Christian School loves to honor our students on their birthdays! If a parents wishes to host a birthday celebration in their child's class, the following guidelines are required:

- Notify your child's teacher of your plans no later than 2 days prior to the part.
- Please be mindful of dietary needs of all classmates.
- Celebrations should be outside during lunch or recess, weather permitting.
- Please keep sweets to a minimum. Sodas are not permitted on campus.
- If a personal birthday party is planned off campus, please do not distribute birthday party invitations at school unless the entire class is invited.

Chapel

Chapel service is a special and cherished part of the MLCS school week. Chapel begins with worship and is followed by a biblical message given by staff and/or guest speakers. K-3 Chapel is usually on Wednesday mornings, with 4-8 Chapel on Thursdays. Family members are encouraged to join staff and students for Chapel provided that they first register with the office.

Class Parent & Campus Volunteers

A critical position in every classroom is that of Class Parent. This parent serves as a liaison from the class & teacher to the parents. The job may entail coordinating special events, helping organize parent jobs for Jubilee, communicating classroom needs, sharing special happenings, or reminding parents of things going on. This person is very loved and appreciated by the teacher and class students. Thank you in advance for volunteering to be a Class Parent. All campus volunteers must first register as a volunteer with the office, which does include a background check.

Holiday Celebrations

Although MLCS is sensitive to the personal choices and varying practices of individual families within our school, we err on the side of caution with regards to the various holidays, teaching only the Biblical foundation of Christmas and Easter. Please refrain from bringing, displaying, or sending your child with clothing or treats that depict such things as witches, ghosts, monsters, skulls, jack-o-lanterns, Santa Claus, four-leaf clover, and the Easter bunny, which might offend others or distract from a Christ-centered celebration. Thank you!

Morning Routine

Every day begins with the pledge to the U.S. Flag, the Christian Flag, the Bible, a devotion, prayer, and review of a scripture memory verse.

Field Trips

How we love our parent drivers and chaperones! We cannot have field trips without them. Field trips allow us to enrich the students' studies by seeing history, science, and our working community in person. However, we must be careful to remember that while they are meant to be fun, they are also designed to be educational, so maintaining a learning environment and adhering to MLCS dress codes and cell phone policies still apply. In addition, we must adhere to the following guidelines:

All parent drivers must:

- Be 21 years of age or older
- Submit documentation of their current CA driver's license
- Sign the MLCS Declaration form
- Provide a copy of their insurance declaration page
- Be clear of any reckless driving or DUI convictions for at least ten years
- NOT make unapproved stops (coffee, food, errands, etc.)

All chaperones must:

- Take responsibility to watch over *all* students assigned to them and not just their child
- Aid the teacher, docent, or guide by keeping students on task
- Allow the teacher to handle all field trip details and plans
- Allow the teacher to settle disputes or issues that might arise during the trip
- If there is a need to respond to phone call, assign another parent to your group
- Be a godly role model. Avoid talking to other chaperones during learning time. Engage with the students.
- Keep younger siblings from distracting the learning at hand

MLCS values and respects the families in our community and shall make every effort to include chaperones with siblings whenever possible, designating each trip as "students only" or "siblings allowed."

For safety purposes and school spirit, students are required to wear their blue cougar T-shirt on all outings. The cost of T-shirts is included in school registration fees.

Overnight Class Trips

7/8th grade Washington DC Trip
5th/6th Grade Science Camp
4th grade 49er Camp

Picture Policy

For the safety and privacy of everyone, parents who attend school-sponsored events (field trips, class parties, sports games, school events, etc.) are prohibited from posting pictures of MLCS students or staff on social media websites. Any pictures posted on the official MLCS Facebook page or website must be approved by the office. However, parent photographs of all school events that include parent-approved students are readily accepted by our Cougar Yearbook Coordinator!!!

Homework & Grades

Homework Policy

It is our desire to support family life by keeping homework to a minimum. Teachers are committed to only sending work home that is truly necessary for the students to master key curricular skills, and students who manage class time minimize their homework. We are in agreement with national standards of ten minutes per grade level, beginning in the first grade (i.e. 1st grade = 10 minutes; 2nd grade = 20 minutes,...).

Parents are encouraged to be available to assist their children, but should never do the work for him/her. *Please minimize electronic and other distractions during homework time, and notify the teacher if the amount or level of homework is not attainable for your child.* Late homework will be handled as follows:

- K-3rd Grade: All K-3rd grade homework must be completed within 24 hours of it being issued, unless a child is absent. This is critical to the students' mastery of key reading and math concepts. Students will need to meet with the teacher or aide to complete missed work, including utilizing portions of recess and lunch, if necessary. Habitual incomplete homework will be noted on report cards.
- 4th - 6th Grade- One letter grade deduction *per day* up to 3 days. On the 4th day, zero credit is given. The teacher may choose to utilize up to half of the student recess to complete owed homework.
- 7th- 8th Grade- Two letter grade deduction *per day* up to 2 days. On the 3rd day, zero credit is given. The teacher may choose to utilize up to half of the student recess to complete owed homework.

Students in grades 3 - 8 who struggle to return homework may be excellent candidates for the "Top It Off" afterschool program. This support program provides tutoring for children who need extra help or extra time to complete class or homework assignments.

Progress Reports & Grading

Progress and end of trimester reports are sent home according to the annual calendar.

Kindergarten - 3rd grade reports reflect personal effort, academic abilities, and classroom behavior. Mastery of letters, sounds, spelling, reading fluency, reading comprehension, grammar, and mathematical skills is assessed on a regular basis with levels of mastery indicated on report cards. A child's overall life skills such as speech, social behavior, staying on desk, and demonstrating physical fitness is also noted.

4th- 8th grade student performance is recorded and tracked through the on-line Gradelink management system using standard letter grades. Parents and students are given access to their online grade information at the first parent-teacher conference. Most curricular grades are calculated using the following rubric and grading scales:

- In-class work/Participation 35% (of total grade)
- Exams 25%
- Homework 20%
- Quizzes/Evaluations 20%

K-3rd Grading Scale

4 = Above Grade Level Requirements
3 = Meets Grade Level Requirements
2 = Approaching Grade Level Requirements
1 = Below Grade Level Requirements

4th-8th Grading Scale

A+ = 98-100	A = 93-97	A- = 90 - 92
B+ = 88-89	B = 83-87	B- = 80-82
C+ = 78-79	C = 73-77	C- = 70-72
D+ = 68-69	D = 63-67	D- = 60-62
	F = 59 and below	

Student's Cumulative Records File

Parents, in consultation with MLCS personnel, are authorized by law to access their child's cumulative school records. If at any time a parent wishes to inspect his/her child's file, please give the school office a 24 hour advance notice. If, after review, a parent feels that any information in the file is inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise inappropriate as defined by federal and state law, the parent may file a written request for the removal or correction of the information.

Physical Education & After School Sports

Physical Education (P.E.)

The MLCS physical education curriculum was developed to equip students with knowledge, skills, and confidence to enjoy a healthy life that models Christ-like character. Our P.E. goals are divided into the following subcategories:

- Motor Skills - Demonstrates competency in a variety of motor skills and movement patterns.
- Performance Application - Applies knowledge of strategies and tactics involving movement and performance.
- Physical Fitness - Demonstrates skills needed to obtain a healthy level of fitness and physical activity.
- Responsible Behavior - Exhibits Christ-like character with self-respect and respect towards others.
- Values Health - Understands the value of physical activity for health, self-expression, and social interaction

Class Expectations

Students are expected to put forth their best effort while encouraging others to do the same. Students working together with positive reinforcement and the accepting of individual differences ensures every student has a positive P.E. experience. Except for medical reasons, all students are expected to participate in the annual MLCS Jogathon.

All K- 8th grade students are expected to wear appropriate athletic clothing on P.E. days.

- Lace up or velcro shoes are required, i.e. *no sandals, heels, hard soled shoes or boots.*
- Lack of being properly dressed and ready for class will result in a 0% for their class preparation grade.

General Grading System
10 points per day

40% - Individual Effort/Engagement/Attitude
40% - Skill Evaluations
20% - Preparedness for Class (appropriate clothing & shoes)

Excused Participation

If a student brings a parent/guardian note to excuse them from P.E., it must include the date, the reason for the excuse, and include what the student CAN do. On the 3rd excuse from P.E. during a Trimester, students will receive a written assignment related to P.E. at the beginning of the class. The assignment needs to be turned in *at the end of class*. Students who forget a note have one additional class period to turn in a note or otherwise receive a 0% for the day.

Students who miss multiple days of P.E. due to an injury or illness must present a doctor's note that specifies the length of time needed to heal as well as what they CAN do (such as walking). Any student who is unable to participate in P.E. will be ineligible for participation in any after school athletic activities. If you have any questions, please call Coach Donnie Wright at 928-4126.

7th & 8th Grade Only

The first 10 minutes are devoted to changing, attendance, warm-ups, stretches, and jogging. The remainder of the time will consist of instruction and participation of sports-related activities and cool down. All students will participate in the Annual Jog-a-thon in October.

- Injuries must be reported to the teacher immediately.
- Locker Rooms are for changing only.
- Students will be allowed to change into appropriate PE attire at the beginning of class.

6-8th Grade After-School Sports Program

Mother Lode Christian School students may participate in Tuolumne County public school boys' or girls' sports program. MLCS boys' teams compete against other county schools in cross-country/track and basketball. Our girls' teams compete in cross country/track, basketball, and volleyball. Most team practices are held after school from 3:30-5:30 PM. Students also have the opportunity to participate in pre- & post-season tournaments. Students must maintain a minimum 2.5 GPA with no F's per grading period (including progress reports) to be eligible to participate in any MLCS athletic event.

Mother Lode Christian School students must be present for all periods of the school day to be eligible to participate in an athletic competition. Students must participate in PE the day of an athletic event to be eligible to compete in school athletics.

School Discipline Policy

Train Up a Child

The highest Biblical command is to love God, and the second highest is to *love one another.* We know that our students, like all people, are in the process of transformation. There are times when children do not love God or His commands, nor do they *treat others the way you want to be treated.* When a student's words or actions are unbiblical - e.g., unkind, harmful, or inappropriate in the classroom, on the playground, or at sporting events, they are held accountable for their choices and for understanding Scriptural passages that speak to the issue at hand. Every moment is a teachable opportunity to learn to *shine as His light in the world*, including misbehavior.

Discipline, rightly administered, is an act of love meant to train godly character, and ultimately it blesses the recipient. Scripture states, *"For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it."* (Hebrews 12:11) Of course, as children grow, we would like to see them develop *self*-discipline. To that end, loving, consistent discipline is needed at home and school.

MLCS desires to help students make right choices by sharing expectations and teaching appropriate behavior. With prayer, guidance, and discipline when necessary, we believe that students can take personal responsibility for their actions. Incidents that require discipline also provide opportunities for students to learn the value of the cross and the meaning of such foundational biblical truths as confession, repentance, forgiveness, and mercy.

EXAMPLES OF MINOR INFRACTIONS	**EXAMPLES OF MAJOR INFRACTIONS**
Unkindness, teasing, name calling, gossip	Profanity, Lord's name taken in vain
Breaking dress code	Possession of tobacco, drugs, or weapons
Poor sportsmanship	Physical Aggression
Minor threats	Excessive teasing; bullying
Not following directions	Back-talking a teacher; defiance
Misuse or minor damage of property	Vandalism, destruction of property
Inappropriate behavior/classroom disruption	Tantrums, throwing objects
Academic infraction	Stealing, cheating, lying
Excessive tardies	Multiple truancies

Minor infractions often result in a warning, time-out, "clip downs" (in the younger grades), and natural consequences (dress code violation requires changing of clothes; throwing litter on the ground requires picking up garbage on campus; etc.). Person-to-person offenses often include a verbal or written apology, and/or restriction from participating in a special activity. Minor infractions may or may not be reported in the Gradelink system by the teacher. Any minor infraction that is on-going should be discussed with the child's parents and may be declared a major infraction if the student is unwilling to follow the rules. After three minor infractions, a student will be given a lunchtime detention and the parents will be notified.

Major infractions will result in the student reporting to administration. Disciplinary action includes, but is not limited to, discussions, apologies, detentions, suspensions, or expulsion. Students will do what is necessary to make amends, including paying for damages, writing apologies, or providing service for the wrong done. If class time is missed because of an infraction or subsequent consequences, the student is responsible to make-up all class work that may be missed.

Detention Policy: Offending students will serve detention at lunch time. After two lunchtime detentions, the offending students will serve a one hour after-school detention, which is served on Wednesdays 3:15 PM - 4:15 PM. Multiple after-school detentions could lead to a full day in-school suspension. Detentions are recorded by the teacher or an administrator in Gradelink, and the child's parents are notified. A meeting with a parent/guardian will be scheduled if offenses escalate to an in-school or after-school detention. MLCS reserves the right to dismiss a student who is unable or unwilling to work in harmony with the school's vision and core values, or whose behavior threatens the well-being of other students. The desired end result of discipline is repentance, forgiveness, and restoration for all involved.

MLCS Special Events

Every year, MLCS shares special days and events with families and the community. See the Cougar Calendar for this year's days and times, and look for new events to pop up, too! Thank you for joining MLCS special events and celebrations!

Fall Family Workday

Although there is work involved, the Fall Family Workday is a fun gathering from 8:00-noon to have a campus clean-up together! There are always plenty of small projects to address together and as the wise ones in our lives once said: *Many hands make light work.* Projects are wrapped up with family picnics and/or BBQ.

Fall Jog-A Thon

This is a fun run in the sun for all students from Preschool to 8th grade to enjoy. The Jog-A-Thon takes place during a school day in the fall. Kids ask for pledges and earn money for the laps they run. Past earnings have gone to purchase document cameras, laptops, Computer Lab upgrade, classroom equipment, and a laminating machine. Larger projects recently completed include the Band Room remodel and playground upgrade. A designated portion of the funds raised is also allotted to each teacher for classroom needs. This year, we plan to remodel several children's bathrooms with money raised in the Jog-a-thon. The children wear special school shirts while they run to honor business sponsorships. Go, cougars, go!

Christmas Musical

A special community night featuring the Cougar Band and the Preschool-8th grade cast of kids. The performances are always wonderful, always Christ-centered. Families and community members are welcome at no cost. Refreshments and fellowship follow the performance.

WINTER JUBILEE!

This annual event is MLCS's largest fundraiser. It is vital to our school. Antiques, books, furniture, and countless other treasures are collected throughout the year and sold at this event. The Jubilee features a live auction, silent auction, and giant book sale as well as food and a children's game room. There is a preview and fundraiser dinner the night before. This is a community event and takes community effort. *All MLCS families are required to help in some way* whether in preparation for, help during, or for clean-up after the event. If you are able to oversee any part of the event, please contact Walt Semsen. Thank you for blessing MLCS by being a part of this annual tradition.

Grandparents Day

A day to celebrate grandparents and the love they pour into their grandkids. Students prepare special projects and give tours of their classes. Grandparents are treated to a brunch served by our middle school kids and a special performance by our students.

Open House

In the spring, the school opens the campus for MLCS families and prospective students to tour. Student projects are displayed throughout classrooms and the MLCS staff is available to answer questions about the school.

Graduation & Promotion Ceremonies

MLCS holds a special year-end celebration for Preschool, Kindergarten, and 8th grade students. Each of these groups are honored in a special ceremony that recognizes their milestone achievements.

Our traditional 8th grade graduation is held in Rex Heath Gym on the afternoon or evening of the last day of school. 7th grade parents are asked to participate by helping with gym and reception setup, decorating, serving, and cleanup. This allows for 8th grade families to enjoy the afternoon/evening with their graduates. 8th grade staff along with the administration are in charge of planning the ceremony. MLCS Dress Code is to be in effect the entire evening.

MLCS Fundraising Opportunities

Thank you for supporting the programs and events that help finance your child's education!

Fall Jog-A-Thon - see page 20

Scrip Fundraising Go, cougar families, go! We revamped our use of Scrip back in March and many families are using it to bless MLCS. Here are fast, easy ways to use it:

1. Go to **raiseright.com**. Enter "Mother Lode Christian School" as the designated organization and the enrollment code: 4147C9A151555. Once you have finished setting up your account, you are ready to go. You can either purchase ecards or physical cards (usually reloadable) to use at your favorite restaurants, stores, businesses, and entertainment destinations. (CVS, Starbucks, Walmart, Lowe's, Disney, …)
2. Download the RaiseRight App on your phone to set up your account for convenient access.
3. Several local grocery stores offer 3%-5% return donation to MLCS:
   a) Simply show your Grocery Outlet MLCS card or tell them our name when you shop there for great donations back to MLCS. (New cards will be sent out at the beginning of the year.)
   b) Tell the cashier at PriceCo our name or the last four digits of our phone number (4126).
   c) Buy Scrip cards from MLCS in $10 or $20 increments to Tuolumne Market.

Winter Jubilee - This is our biggest fundraiser of the year. We need all hands on board from staff to parents to older students. See MLCS Special Events, page 20.

Amazon Smile
If you are an Amazon shopper, shop through *Amazon Smile* and .5% of eligible purchases come back to MLCS. Same prices, same choices, same Amazon…but MLCS benefits! Even Amazon Prime members can shop through "Smile." Go to www.smile.amazon.com, type in Mother Lode Christian School, and choose us. Then shop Amazon as usual. Thanks for the kickback!

eBay Giving MLCS is registered as a certified charitable organization for eBay sellers. Anyone selling items on eBay is encouraged to sign up to give a portion of their sales back to the school. Thank you!

Thrift Stores
MLCS operates two thrift stores: Mother Lode Thrift Store located on Pine St. at the school and Mother Lode Thrift Store Too located on Mono Way in East Sonora. All proceeds from the sales at these stores go directly to the general fund and are vital in the effort to keep tuition costs affordable for the parents. The stores are staffed by volunteers, parents, and paid employees. There is an ongoing need for volunteers to work in this ministry. Contact manager, Kerry Semsen for more information about how you can help. (209-352-1537)

Women's Service Fellowship
WSF was founded in 1985 to help in fundraising efforts at our school. It consists primarily of alumni parents and grandparents who help with the Winter Jubilee, thrift stores, the Washington DC trip funding, and other areas of service. For more info contact Kerry Semsen (209-352-1537) or Carole Sarkisian (209-586-2027).

Please watch for special fundraising opportunities throughout the year. Past efforts include:

See's candy	Operation Christmas Child	Canned Food Drive
Pancake Breakfasts	Thanksgiving Pies	Shaved Iced Cones
Valentine's Day Balloons		Scholastic Book Fair

Funds raised for class fundraisers remain in that grade level account.

THANK YOU FOR ALL THAT YOU DO to support MLCS financially, prayerfully, and by volunteering!

May the Lord bless your family as you partner with us here at

Mother Lode Christian School.

And whatever you do,
whether in word or deed,
do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus,
giving thanks to God the Father
through Him.

~Colossians 3:17~