



## FAMILY HANDBOOK – Grades K5-8

*Midland Valley Christian Academy is a Christ-centered school guiding students to DESIRE the kingdom of God and DISCOVER their place in His world.*

*(Revised February 2022)*

*This handbook is subject to change without notice as deemed necessary by MVCA.*

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## ADMINISTRATION & STAFF

Registrar / Admissions	Melissa Ward	<a href="mailto:admissions@mvcaonline.org">admissions@mvcaonline.org</a>
Student Billing / Financial Aid	Jennifer Chipley	<a href="mailto:billing@mvcaonline.org">billing@mvcaonline.org</a>
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Upper School Guidance Counselor	Erin Schar	<a href="mailto:eschar@mvcaonline.org">eschar@mvcaonline.org</a>
Athletics / Phys Ed	Amy O'Hair	<a href="mailto:aohair@mvcaonline.org">aohair@mvcaonline.org</a>
Information Technology	Chris Ward	<a href="mailto:cward@mvcaonline.org">cward@mvcaonline.org</a>
Development Director	John O'Neal	<a href="mailto:joneal@mvcaonline.org">joneal@mvcaonline.org</a>
Head Custodian	Andy Fralix	Contact school office
Head of School	Dr. Bryan Easley	<a href="mailto:beasley@mvcaonline.org">beasley@mvcaonline.org</a>

## IMPORTANT CONTACTS

For assistance regarding ... you should contact

Grading questions, classroom incidents, dress code, homework, academic performance	Classroom teacher
Attendance, class schedules, report cards/progress reports, other academic questions	Mrs. Melissa Ward, Registrar
Issues with other students or faculty, behavior concerns, learning difficulties Elementary (grades K-5) Middle / High School (grades 6-12)	Mrs. Stephanie Napier, Assistant Principal Mrs. Erin Schar, Guidance Counselor
Participation in athletics, physical education	Mrs. Amy O'Hair, Assistant Athletic Director
Billing, payment plans, charges, financial aid, fees	Mrs. Jennifer Chipley, Student Billing
Student devices, internet access, printing, cloud storage, Microsoft accounts, or other technical questions	Chris Ward, IT Director
Other school policy or personnel issues	Dr. Bryan Easley, Head of School

## OFFICE HOURS

M-F, 8 am – 4:30 pm (during school year)

M-Th, 9 am – 3 pm (Summer hours, subject to change based on staffing)

## 1. ABOUT MVCA

Midland Valley Christian Academy exists to provide a Christ-centered education that guides students to desire the kingdom of God and to discover their place in His world.

Midland Valley Christian Academy offers a wide variety of educational experiences that build a strong foundation that prepares students for future learning and success in life. Through an emphasis on academic excellence combined with curiosity, discovery, experience, and growth, each student is lovingly challenged to realize the full potential of his or her abilities.

We believe that all truth is God's Truth and revealed through the Bible as the foundation for properly understanding and living with God and His world. Only by recognizing God as the Creator, Designer, and Organizer of the universe can a proper understanding and mastery of facts and knowledge be possible. We believe God's Word is the highest authority and strive to bring all knowledge into a living relationship with His Truth.

### 1.1. OUR BELIEFS

- We believe in one God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
- We believe that the Bible is God's inspired Word and holds the answer for man's needs.
- We believe that all men have sinned and come short of the glory of God.
- We believe that God offers forgiveness, salvation, and eternal life through faith in Jesus Christ.
- We believe that the believer, through the infilling of the Holy Spirit, can live a holy, radiant, and useful Christian life.
- We believe that the Church exists for the purpose of evangelizing the world and helping the Christian grow in grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.
- We believe that the Lord will return, the dead will be raised, and the final judgment will take place.

### STATEMENT REGARDING GENDER, MARRIAGE, AND SEXUALITY

*We recognize that because of human sinfulness, humanity's brokenness is demonstrated in many various ways that are contrary to God's ways. However, because of the attention given to gender, marriage, and sexuality in today's public discourse, we find it necessary to address these issues in the following.*

- We believe that God wonderfully and immutably created each person as distinctly male or female (Gen. 1:26-31; 2:18-25; 5:1, 2). These two distinct and complementary genders together reflect the image and nature of God. We believe Scripture as well as science affirm that gender and biological sex are one and the same; the idea of "gender identity" as something separate from one's biological, chromosomal sex is a false narrative. Rejecting one's biological gender is a rejection of the image of God within that person and is a sin against God, which ultimately only leads to the destruction of human flourishing. Some believe an individual can find themselves trapped in a body of the opposite gender and may seek to deal with this disconnect in a variety of ways including sex-change operations.
- We believe that God's design in creation is clear and that seeking to change one's gender through surgery or any other means as well as any form of transgender expression is incompatible with Christian faith and practice. Those associated with Midland Valley Christian Academy should not advocate for any form of transgender expression.
- We believe that God has established marriage as a lifelong, exclusive union between one biological man and one biological woman (Gen. 2:24; Matt. 19:4-6) and that all intimate sexual activity

outside the marriage relationship, whether heterosexual, homosexual, or otherwise, is immoral and therefore sin against God (1 Cor. 6:15-7:6; Eph. 5:3-7). Sexual immorality includes, but is not limited to, adultery, homosexual or bisexual behavior, transgender or gender non-conforming relationship, incest, and use of pornography. The belief that members of the same sex can marry is contrary to Scripture.

- We likewise recognize that such practices are also ultimately destructive to human and social flourishing. Accordingly, Midland Valley Christian Academy prohibits any form of homosexual (or non-biblical heterosexual) behavior, as well as any public expression of support for such behavior or same-sex marriage.
- Scripture teaches that we are more than the sum of our inclinations, which can lead us astray and tempt us to embrace things contrary to God's design for human life. We believe that God offers forgiveness, redemption, transformation, and restoration to all who confess and repent from their sin and humbly ask for His forgiveness through Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 6:11). We believe that, by God's grace, we are to be masters over rather than be defined by our sexual appetites and inclinations.
- We believe that all people are to be shown compassion, love, kindness, respect, and dignity (1 Cor. 13, Gal. 5:22-23) regardless of whether they agree with us or behave in ways we see as sinful based on Scripture. We intend as a school to always reflect these qualities and any behavior or attitudes not displaying these qualities should be renounced, as they are not in harmony with scripture or the Spirit of Christ.

## 1.2. PROFILE OF A GRADUATE

Midland Valley Christian Academy is committed to the academic, spiritual, physical, social development and wellbeing of the whole student. Each goal demonstrates outcomes that we want to see students eventually achieve. These goals broadly guide our leadership, curriculum, and instruction to ensure that each student receives a supportive, rigorous, and engaging education in a spiritually rich environment.

Our desire is that by the time a student finishes their time at MVCA, they will be...

*Prepared ACADEMICALLY to*

- Apply critical thinking and problem-solving skills
- Collaborate with the use of multiple technological resources
- Demonstrate agility and adaptability for learning across disciplines
- Establish initiative and entrepreneurship
- Exhibit effective oral and written communication skills
- Access, analyze, and synthesize information
- Develop creativity, curiosity, and imagination
- Exhibit inquiry skills and develop tools for grade appropriate research skills
- Apply soft skills
- Develop a growth mindset as an active learner
- Articulate strengths and areas of need
- Display perseverance
- Develop and enhance computer skills
- Establish metacognitive skills through reflective thinking
- Prove competency in math, language arts, science, history, and Bible
- Progress literacy skills in multiple genres for appropriate grade level

*Prepared SPIRITUALLY to*

- Demonstrate a love for God and others
- Recognize the Bible as the foundation for our faith and practice
- Exhibit ambition to grow in knowledge and faith
- Model obedience of God's Word
- Expand the kingdom of God by sharing their faith
- Respect regular church and chapel attendance
- Express appreciation and respect for parents, teachers, pastors, peers and both education and religious rules
- Believe that all truth is God's Truth, and His Truth is revealed through the Bible, which is infallible and is the standard for living a successful life
- Affirm that God's Word is the highest authority and strive to bring all knowledge into a living relationship with His Truth
- Pursue a Spirit led life of excellence and integrity

*Prepared PHYSICALLY to*

- Demonstrate perseverance
- Express self-confidence
- Respect physical fitness

*Prepared SOCIALLY to*

- Communicate with others confidentially through and about Christ
- Express servitude for the community and others
- Exhibit humility
- Demonstrate determination, respect, courtesy, and moral values
- Retain confidence in oneself daily

### **1.3. GOVERNANCE AND ACCREDITATION**

The school is incorporated as an educational, non-profit organization. The corporation operates under the direction of a Board of Directors. The Board determines policy, ensures that the vision, philosophy, and objectives of the school are maintained, and ensures fiscal stability. The Board is committed to a relationship with home, church, and school in the growth and development of the child.

MVCA is accredited with the South Carolina Association of Christian Schools (SCACS), the American Association of Christian Schools (AACCS), and regionally with Cognia/AdvancEd.

## **2. ADMISSIONS POLICIES**

Admissions at MVCA is a two-step process: application and final enrollment. Applications are submitted online at [mvcaonline.org/apply](http://mvcaonline.org/apply). Interested families first complete the online application packet, request school records be sent to the MVCA office, and pay the application fee. The admissions office will then schedule academic screening and a family interview before making an admissions decision. Once accepted, the parent completes the online enrollment packet, sets up relevant payment plan options, and pays the enrollment fee.

## 2.1. ADMISSIONS PHILOSOPHY

MVCA is a distinctly and unapologetically evangelical Christian school. We have an open admissions policy which means we do not require parents or students to be adherents to the Christian faith or practice. We admit families of other religions. However, we do require that all parents recognize our statement of faith and agree to support MVCA in teaching these beliefs and those of the Christian faith to their child as described in our goals and beliefs above.

## 2.2. NOTICE OF NONDISCRIMINATORY POLICY

Midland Valley Christian Academy admits students of any race, color, sex, national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. It does not discriminate based on race, color, sex, national and ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship program, athletic or other school-administered programs.

## 2.3. RECORDS

Applicants must permit MVCA to request from previous schools attended by the student copies of the student's academic, disciplinary, and other school records. Applicants must also provide any IEP/504 or medical or psychological evaluations as a part of the application process. Documents required for enrollment include the student's birth certificate, up-to-date immunization record *on South Carolina forms*, and any custody-related court orders or TROs.

If there are custody agreements involved with your student, you must provide MVCA with a copy of court papers indicating who has permission to access educational records, make educational decisions, or to pick up the student. MVCA cannot deny a parent access to their child without proper documentation.

Failure to disclose all necessary information may lead to the student's withdrawal.

## 2.4. RETURNING FAMILY REENROLLMENT

Returning families must complete the re-enrollment process through FACTS Application and Enrollment accessed in FACTS Family Portal. No paper reenrollment forms will be accepted. MVCA reserves the right to refuse re-enrollment to any student of families who have demonstrated disharmony regarding the purpose, objectives, standards, policies, or any rules and regulations of the school. In addition, no student may be reenrolled unless all financial obligations for the previous school year have been paid in full.

## 2.5 KINDERGARTEN ADMISSIONS

Children entering 5K must have reached their 5th birthday on or before September 1 of the current school year. Before enrolling in 1st grade, a student must successfully complete the 1<sup>st</sup> grade readiness test.

### EARLY ENTRY

Early entry may be considered for an academically advanced and socially mature child who would not otherwise be allowed to enter kindergarten for another year due to their date of birth. The purpose of early entry is to admit those children whose needs will be best served through advanced placement for the

current year, and throughout their K-12 education. The child's advanced development in the areas of social, emotional, intellectual, and physical functioning will all be considered in the evaluation process.

Children who turn five years old on or before November 1<sup>st</sup> may be considered for early entry upon completion of the parent application, questionnaire, and behavioral checklist. A Pre-School Screening form must be completed by the child's current pre-school teacher followed by evaluation by an MVCA 5K teacher measuring basic skills necessary for success in our kindergarten environment and program. There is a \$40.00 testing fee due at the time the appointment is made. Our desire is that these individual assessments, along with our teachers' professional experience and expertise, will enable us to help parents best determine the needs and most beneficial track for the child's education.

Additionally, parents of any student approved for early entry into MVCA's 5K program must sign a waiver signifying they understand that at the end of 5K the student may not necessarily:

- be ready to enter 1<sup>st</sup> grade either at MVCA or another institution
- be automatically admitted to public schools just because they have been through a 5K program.

In some cases, it may be in the student's best interest to repeat kindergarten and to continue their formal education with their same-age peer group. A conference will be held at the end of the school year to discuss the child's most appropriate placement.

## 2.6. CAMPUS VISITATION

Planned school observations provide an excellent opportunity for you to know your school.

1. Visitors and parents are welcome to make an appointment to visit our school.
2. All visitors to the school must sign in with the school office and obtain a visitor's pass.
3. Observe from the location prepared for you by the teacher. A chair, usually in the back of the room, will be provided for you. Be as inconspicuous as possible. Please remember that the class is in session and that the student's focus should be on their teacher and their studies.
4. Campus visits may include lunch with your student. However, please understand that for reasons of insurance liability and the safety of all children, **only registered students of MVCA** can play on the playground during the hours of operation.

## 2.7. DISMISSALS / RESCINDING ENROLLMENT

The administration of MVCA is responsible for safeguarding the mission, wellbeing, and reputation of the school. Accordingly, the school reserves the right, within its sole and exclusive discretion, to suspend, expel, dismiss, refuse or rescind enrollment and/or remove from campus any student, parent, or family member, or guest if it is in the best interest of MVCA as deemed by the school's administration to take such action.

In the event of dismissal or expulsion from MVCA, all rights are waived to a refund of tuition and fees previously paid. Parents/guardians shall remain obligated by signed contract to pay the enrollment year's school tuition as agreed on during the enrollment process. A student will be dismissed/expelled for the following:

- Violation of school policies as outlined in MVCA Handbook.
- Student conduct, attitude, or lack of academic effort making it mandatory for that child to withdraw from MVCA.
- Tuition is 30 days delinquent.

- Parents/Guardian/Student who are not in harmony with the mission and philosophy of MVCA or who engage in public comments, airing of grievances, or any other written or verbal expressions that are harmful, demeaning, or derogatory towards MVCA staff, students, or families.

### WITHDRAWALS

A written notice of intent to withdraw a student from Midland Valley Christian Academy must be submitted, acknowledged, and settled prior to two (2) weeks before the last day of attendance. All grades and records will be held until all outstanding balances are paid. Withdrawal from MVCA must be signed and processed through the school office. Open accounts will incur additional tuition fees and late fees until withdrawal papers are returned to the administration office.

In the event of withdrawal from MVCA, all rights are waived to a refund of tuition and fees previously paid. Parents/Guardians shall remain obligated by signed contract to pay the remaining school tuition and fees unless the following applies:

- Parent or guardian has moved out of town or a distance away that the school recognizes as unreasonable for transporting the child to and from school.
- Agreement between the parent/guardian and the school that is in the best interest of the student to pursue his/her education with curriculum or a learning environment more suited to the needs of the student.
- Loss of income equal to the amount of tuition in the immediate family of the student.
- Student contracts a serious illness that would prevent him/her from attending school. Documentation from a physician is needed.
- Death of the student.

All grades and records will be held until all outstanding balances are paid. No grades will be released on the same day a student withdraws.

(Late fees will be added to your account according to what due date you have chosen. You may choose the 5th of each month or the 20th of each month.)

**Late Payment Fees:** A late fee of \$10.00 per month will be applied starting the date specified in contract.

**Unresolved Payments:** Any payment unresolved because of failure to pay, returned/declined payment will be turned over to legal and be prosecuted through the local magistrate courts in the county of residence for collection. This will include all court costs and accumulated fees with the unpaid balance. *No returning student may begin the new school year with an outstanding balance from the previous year.*

**Declined/Returned FACTS Payment:** A \$30.00 return check fee will be charged for each returned check. A late fee of \$10.00 per month will be applied if returned/declined payment has not been settled by specified dates in contract.

**Forms of Payment:** All tuition and fee payments will be made through our FACTS service and must be set up on auto-draft.

## 2.8. CUSTODY AND SEPARATION AGREEMENTS

Specific custody arrangements or instructions will only be recognized and administered by the school if the school has been provided with a copy of the appropriate legal agreements. If there are specific custody/separation instructions that apply to your student, please discuss this with your principal and make sure they have the appropriate documents on file. MVCA will release children to parents with

natural, biological rights or other designees, unless legal documents are provided instructing differently. Verbal instructions are insufficient to deny access.

## 2.9. FINANCIAL AID

Financial assistance is available for grades K5 and up based on family financial need. 4K and daycare are not eligible for financial aid. All families are encouraged to apply. MVCA's commitment is to help every family attend regardless of financial resources. MVCA does not provide group-based tuition discounts. However, we recognize that private Christian education is costly and imposes a financial burden on many of our families. To be the best stewards of our resources and mission while committing to help our families, MVCA follows a financial philosophy of "cost-based tuition, need-based aid" using a family financial assistance program.

Financial scholarships will be provided based on determined family financial need and the availability of designated financial scholarship money. Families may apply for aid as a part of the application or re-enrollment process. Financial aid requires a nonrefundable \$35 application fee paid directly to the financial aid processing company.

Applicants must provide family financial information including tax returns, W2s, and other income verification documentation and proof of expenses as a part of this process. MVCA contracts with FACTS Grant & Aid as a neutral party to process aid applications and determine eligibility based on the school's fees and the family's financial situation. FACTS Grant & Aid does not award aid or provide scholarship money of any kind; they only provide the school with verified information and recommendations. MVCA makes financial award decisions utilizing information from FACTS Grant & Aid.

Not every family will qualify but every family is encouraged and welcome to apply. Most applicants receive some aid. Applying for aid is not a guarantee that financial assistance will be awarded, but our goal is to permit every student that needs to be enrolled at MVCA to be able to attend regardless of financial need. Financial aid is awarded for one school year at a time. Families must reapply each school year.

**Family Grant** – eligible families with more than 2 students enrolled at MVCA may receive a Family Grant of \$500 each for third, fourth, and fifth students enrolled in same family. A financial aid application is required for the Family Grant.

## 3. BUSINESS POLICIES

### 3.1. TUITION AND FEES

The tuition for Midland Valley Christian Academy is determined each year by the school board and is payable by options described under payment plans. Tuition and fees for each year are published on the school website. Fees include material/supply fees. For students in grades 3-12, an additional technology fee helps provide individual student devices (iPads/laptops).

Non-refundable enrollment fee is due upon submission of enrollment packet. Material fees will be billed in June or at the time of enrollment, whichever comes later. Tuition payment plans begin in July and run for 10 months.

### 3.2. PAYMENT PLANS

Parents will select one of the following payment plans in FACTS Financial at the time of enrollment:

1. One annual payment – the total annual tuition is due on or by August 20 of the school year. No discount is given for annual payment.
2. Two bi-annual payments – half tuition is due on or by August 20 of the school year with the remaining half of tuition due on or by January 20 of the school year. No discount is given for bi-annual payment.
3. Ten equal payments (Monthly payment plan) – The first payment is due on or by July 20 of the school year or at the time of registration. This is non-refundable. The remaining nine payments are due on the 5<sup>th</sup> or 20<sup>th</sup> each month, August through April.

Materials and technology fees are due by June 20 or at the time of enrollment, whichever comes later.

### 3.3. EXTENDED AFTERSCHOOL

MVCA provides an afterschool program for the convenience of working parents. Afterschool care is included for free up until 4:30 pm. For an additional fee, parents may sign up for extended afterschool care until 6:00 pm. Holiday care is not provided for MVCA students ages 4 and up on days when the school is closed.

### 3.4. ACCOUNT STATUS

The ongoing success of our school hinges on the commitment of families to make Christian education a financial priority. The school relies upon tuition and fee payments to provide an excellent spiritual and educational program operating on a balanced budget. Therefore, when tuition and fee payments become delinquent, it can quickly become a serious matter.

#### PAST DUE ACCOUNTS

It is imperative that student billing accounts remain current throughout the school year. The school understands that unexpected situations can and do arise and the school strives to work with families in those situations. If unforeseen financial circumstances arise, families are responsible for contacting the Student Billing Director and/or the Head of School as soon as possible to review the financial hardship.

#### ***30 days past due***

- When an account becomes 30 days past due under the established tuition schedule, the financially responsible party will receive an email notification, as well as a phone call from Student Billing requesting the tuition be brought current.
- A late fee of \$25.00 will be applied to the account.

#### ***60 days past due***

- When an account becomes 60 days past due under the established tuition schedule, the financially responsible party will receive an email notification, a written notification by mail, and a phone call from Student Billing requesting the tuition payment(s) be brought current. A copy of handbook section §3.4 Account Status will be included in the letter and email. The notice will reiterate the terms of the financial commitment and request immediate attention to the matter.
- A second late fee of \$25.00 will be applied to the account.

### **90 days past due**

- When an account becomes 90 days past due under the terms of the parent's payment plan agreement, the financially responsible party will be notified by certified mail of intent to disenroll the student fourteen (14) days from the date of the letter. The letter will state the amount owed and the date of disenrollment. The letter will again reiterate the terms of the financial commitment and one last request to give immediate attention to the matter.
- This will be the final notice to the financially responsible party on the account.
- A third late fee of \$25.00 will be applied to the account.
- Report cards will not be issued.
- Parental access to student records via Family Portal or the app will be limited.
- Transcripts will not be released to other schools, colleges, or other institutions.
- Tuition assistance may be revoked.
- Student is ineligible to participate in co-curricular activities at school, including trips, athletic teams, and fine arts programs.

**Dismissal.** If the delinquent account has not been resolved, on the date stipulated in the final letter, the student will be disenrolled from the school without any further notice and not permitted to return to campus. A disenrollment letter will be mailed via USPS on that date.

**Reenrollment with a delinquent account.** Student with delinquent billing accounts will not be permitted to reenroll for the following school year until the account is brought current.

### UNRESOLVED ACCOUNTS

Unresolved billing accounts resulting in student dismissal may be turned over to a legal firm and be prosecuted through the local magistrate courts in the county of residence for collection. This will include all court costs and accumulated fees with the unpaid balance.

## **3.5. PAYMENTS**

### DECLINED/RETURNED FACTS PAYMENT

A \$30.00 return check fee will be charged for each returned check. A late fee of \$10.00 per month will be applied if returned/declined payment has not been settled by specified dates in contract.

### FORMS OF PAYMENT

Payments will be made through our FACTS service: FACTS Online (E-Check, Credit/Debit Card & Automatic Withdrawal).

## **3.6. STUDENT ACCIDENT INSURANCE**

Student Accident Insurance is provided by the school for all students. This coverage is for covered injuries which occur while an enrolled student is: (1) Participating in activities sponsored and supervised by MVCA in the United States, and (2) Traveling during such activities as a member of a group in transportation furnished or arranged by MVCA in the United States.

## 4. ACADEMIC POLICIES

### 4.1. CURRICULUM

MVCA primarily uses Bob Jones University Press curriculum for all grades. A variety of other materials and sources help supplement where needed to provide an excellent, engaging learning experience for students. Our curriculum is selected and regularly viewed by a team of teachers and staff. A biblical worldview, kingdom living, and Christian values are blended throughout the curriculum and school activities. MVCA continually strives to achieve higher standards of learning.

### 4.2. FACTS SIS

MVCA uses the FACTS SIS web-based school management system. FACTS Family Portal provides parents and students a convenient way to access student grades, lesson plans, homework assignments, attendance, and behavior reports. The best way for parents to access student and school related information is by downloading the MVCA Family app (android and iOS). Creating an app profile and logging into FACTS from within the app provides families with convenient and comprehensive access to information, calendars, student records, and other important links.

### 4.3. ACADEMIC AND BEHAVIORAL PROBATION

Students on academic or behavioral probation will be evaluated at each nine-week interval. MVCA may place students on probation if grade averages fall below a C or if behavior is consistently unacceptable. At the end of the semester, probation may be lifted or continued with or without recommendation for tutoring, retention or referral to other professionals, or the student may be asked to withdraw from the school.

### 4.4. GRADES

#### PROGRESS REPORTS AND REPORT CARDS

Report cards will be sent electronically via email at the end of every nine-week period. Paper copies of report cards or progress reports are no longer sent home with students. Progress reports, along with grades and attendance records, can be accessed at any time during the school year by logging into the Family Portal. Parents are welcome to contact teachers for conferences to discuss student's grades. Parents will be notified directly from the teacher or school office if a student is struggling in one or more classes and requires intervention or a conference.

#### K5 REPORT CARDS

The only exception to electronic distribution of grade records is for kindergarten. K5 reports for this year will be provided in written form as the information and structure of kindergarten report cards is substantially different than what we use in our system.

#### GRADING SCALE:

- A: 90-100
- B: 80-89

C:	70-79
D:	60-69
F:	59 and below

#### 4.5. PARENT / TEACHER CONFERENCE

1. Conferences should be scheduled in advance, when a convenient time for both teacher and parent can be arranged.
2. If it is necessary to cancel an appointment, please call and notify the teacher or administration in advance.
3. Prepare yourself for the conference. Write down topics you wish to discuss.
4. Have confidence that whatever is discussed during your conferences will be confidential and only used in helping your child.
5. Telephone conferences with your child's teacher cannot be conducted during classroom hours. Teachers will not take calls during their classroom hours but can return calls at the end of the school day.
6. There cannot be unscheduled parent/teacher conferences during classroom hours, and **especially not at the start of the school day**. Conferences are encouraged to be scheduled to fit both the parent and teacher schedule.

#### 4.6. ASSESSMENT AND TESTING

MVCA conducts academic assessment and evaluation through multiple methods and types with the goal to promote academic success in our students. While some uniformity is needed, teachers are encouraged to exercise professional judgment in developing assessment standards in their courses.

MVCA administers the Iowa Test of Basic Skills each spring to students in 1<sup>st</sup> grade and above. This standardized testing is primarily used for institutional evaluation, although in cases where a student is struggling academically, individual results may be consulted to have a more comprehensive picture of the student's needs and challenges. *Standardized test scores are not used as the sole basis for student grade promotion or teacher performance evaluations.*

#### 4.7. MAKE UP WORK

It is the student's responsibility to see that any required work is made up as soon as possible. Teachers set the deadline for making up work. Assignments made before the absence retain the original due date. For example, a spelling quiz is assigned at the beginning of the week for Friday. The student is absent on Thursday. Since he was present when the assignment was given, he will not be exempt from the quiz. He is still responsible for the assignment unless arrangements are made with the classroom teacher.

#### 4.7. ACADEMIC HONESTY

MVCA places a high priority on student honesty and integrity when it comes to schoolwork. Academic dishonesty, cheating, plagiarism – misrepresenting the work of others as your own – are serious breaches of academic integrity and the standards of ethical behavior that MVCA expects from students. Academic dishonesty will result in a Behavior Demerit being given to the student under the Behavior Policy. Additional consequences may include failure on an assignment, requirements to repeat or complete

additional work, academic probation, or other consequences as determined by the teachers or administration. Multiple violations may result in dismissal from school. MVCA expects that the work submitted for grading is entirely that of the student – not of the parent on their behalf -- and completed within classroom and assignment guidelines. Teachers will give guidance on whether and where collaboration or adult input is permissible.

## 5. LEARNING SUPPORT SERVICES

### 5.1. PHILOSOPHY

As a kingdom school, we desire to be a Christ-centered learning community “which fully includes children and young people of all abilities and creates a culture that equips each pupil to actively contribute to the life of the school community”<sup>1</sup> and to fulfill their created life purpose in God’s kingdom. Midland Valley Christian Academy is committed to educating students—to the extent our resources will permit each year—with a variety of special learning or developmental needs by providing these students with an educational experience that honors their unique worth, ability, and dignity as persons created in the image of God.

One size does not fit all when it comes to good education. We recognize that each student is a unique learner and has their own mixture of needs and abilities, so our learning approach and environment must be flexible and adaptable, focused on meeting each student and family where they are. We also believe that all students have gifts and talents in a wide range of activities; good education involves discovering and developing these gifts. Thus, MVCA aims to provide meaningful opportunities which allow students to realize their God-given potential and to live lives that glorify God in all realms of life.

Our approach is collaborative teamwork and partnership. Teachers, support staff, parents, and students work together to create the appropriate, best support environment that helps each student realize his or her full potential and experience.

We are in the earliest stages of developing learning support services at MVCA. This means that the support we can provide significantly depends upon the student and their needs and available staff and program resources. It may not be possible in given cases to provide or continue to provide the learning environment for students needing support.

Due to the highly individualized nature of learning support, limited class sizes, specialization of subject matter, support staff, and resources, *additional fees are associated with some of the Learning Support Services offered by MVCA. These fees and any charges on a student’s account will be disclosed and agreed upon with parents prior to beginning any such services.*

### 5.1. SPECIAL LEARNING NEEDS

**Special Learning Needs** are identified conditions affecting a student’s ability to access and learn effectively in a typical classroom environment or curriculum. ADD/ADHD, sensory processing (such as auditory or visual), mild dyslexia/dysgraphia, or autism spectrum disorder. Certain medical or emotional conditions also affect learning and may qualify as special learning needs.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://clcnetwork.org/media/The-Christ-Centered-Educational-Services-Standard-110617.pdf>

A *diagnosed* special learning need requires identification of the learning need or disability by a qualified professional such as a psychologist, speech-language pathologist, occupational therapist, educational psychometrist, or medical doctor, along with a diagnostic assessment appropriate to the disability. Diagnostic assessments must be current, having been done within the past three years. In cases where supporting diagnostic assessment data is available but more than three (3) years old, MVCA reserves the right to request new assessments as a part of the enrollment or service placement process.

We welcome students with special learning needs or differences for inclusion in our academic program based on the following:

- Student must be able to perform successfully without academic modification unless there is a documented medical or educational diagnosis demonstrating the need for modifications.
- Parents fully disclose any previous or ongoing assessments, diagnoses, or educational interventions, or special learning services.
- Parents regularly keep the school informed of any changes in diagnosis, learning assessment results, treatments, or medications directly affecting the learning environment.
- Availability of support depending on grade level, classroom teachers, student needs, and support staff.
- High school students wishing to request accommodations for college-entrance testing (ACT/SAT) *must have* a DSM-IV or DSM-V identification of a learning disability on record with the school office.

**Learners, not Labels.** Students with learning disabilities, various disorders, or special needs are far more than their diagnoses or labels; these things do not define our students. We wish to embrace all students regardless of their abilities and help them realize their full potential. We believe, given the right environment, every learner is capable of great things. To that end, we use diagnostic and testing tools to help us better understand and be able to individualize support rather than label and limit. Our objective for each student is to help them participate as much as possible in the normal ebb-and-flow of the learning community while maximizing their creative, spiritual, and learning potential and fostering a sense of importance and belonging.

## 5.2. LIMITATIONS

1. We are currently unable to provide alternative or significantly modified instruction such as might be found in a traditional special education or functional life skills program. We will accommodate as much as our resources will allow but the extent of need for support may prohibit admissions or continued enrollment.
2. Because of the highly specialized psychological, counseling, and environmental resources required, we are unable to accommodate students with significant behavioral struggles such as those stemming from trauma or mental health-related issues. In these situations, we are happy to work with these families as best we can to make referrals or recommendations.
3. MVCA is unable to provide embedded occupational, speech, or physical therapies as a part of the everyday classroom environment. Students needing those services as a part of the school environment – such as typically found in many special education programs – are likely better served elsewhere.
4. MVCA is a private faith-based school and receives no state or federal funding for learning support or special needs programs. As such, MVCA is under no obligation to follow federal laws such as required by the Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act (IDEA), thus not legally required to

implement an IEP or 504 Plan created by public school system. However, we appreciate the valuable expertise, context, and information that these plans often provide. Thus, when such plans have been prepared for a student, we use these to help inform our decision-making and in developing our own support plans.

### 5.3. SOCIAL & BEHAVIORAL EXPECTATIONS

While we are committed to a continuously improving, positive, encouraging, and stimulating learning experience for students with special learning needs, all our students are included in the general classroom and school environment. As such, there are minimum expectations for social behavior necessary for the well-being of all members of the community and to help avoid persistent disruptions to the learning environment that interferes with the ability of other students to do their work. Consequently, all students must be able to habitually operate within the following parameters:

1. Remain and function in the classroom without the need of additional staff being constantly present in the room.
2. Regulate anxiety enough to avoid repeated or regular verbal outbursts and emotional meltdowns that disrupt the environment.
3. Perform in-class or assigned work without a teacher regularly prompting each step or task.
4. Refrain from excessive hand-raising and question-asking that stalls the flow of classroom activities or instruction.
5. Demonstrates self-management when moving between classes or going to the bathroom, lunchroom, library, gym, etc.
6. Abide by the policies and procedures described in the MVCA Family Handbook, including having a signed parental statement of commitment.

By “habitually operate,” we mean that the student’s *normal, regular pattern of behavior*, especially after the first six weeks of school, can be maintained within these parameters. We are mindful that there is often a transition period as students begin a new year, move to a new building, start a new grade, or adjust to a new environment. Our focus here is on a student’s habitual patterns after a reasonable period of adjustment. Every student has rough days or moments of frustration, fatigue, or still-developing maturity and thus occasional or episodic occurrences of poor behavior can be understood. But these should be the rare exception, not the norm. Students unable to habitually maintain within these parameters are likely better served in a learning environment able to provide highly individualized support, instruction, and embedded therapeutic learning.

### 5.4. STUDENT SUPPORT PLAN

Students needing support services will have a Student Support Plan (SSP) tailored to a student’s individual needs. This SSP provides a valuable planning and communication tool for parents, teachers, and staff. The SSP describes the student’s strengths and weaknesses, summarizes the assessment data that shows learning needs or difficulties, and outlines the support, accommodations, or interventions the school can provide during that current school year. SSPs are updated yearly (or more often, if needed). The SSP is produced by the school staff in close consultation with parents and teachers. Classroom teachers supported by school administration will oversee the implementation and monitoring of the student’s plan.

## 5.5. ACCOMMODATIONS & MODIFICATIONS

**Accommodations** are changes to *how* a student learns and are meant to give that student a fair opportunity for learning relative to their typical peers. Accommodations involve:

- *Changes in instructional method*, such as printed or digital copies of notes/lectures, use of a screen reader for books, use of a calculator for basic math operations, or, in some cases, reduction in volume (but not difficulty) of homework material.
- *Changes in the environment*, such as preferential/different seating, noise-blocking headphones, foot-fidget devices, or access to quiet spaces.
- *Changes in assessment format*, such as extended time for texts/quizzes, opportunity to take tests in distraction-free environment, or oral presentation of assessment items.

Students receiving accommodations study the same material, complete the same type of assignments, are expected to demonstrate the same competencies or learning outcomes, and are assessed with the same grading scale as the regular classroom.

Accommodations are *not* a guarantee that the student will receive a particular grade, earn a diploma, or achieve any other kind of academic success. Those must be earned based on the student's work.

**Accommodations for a particular student will be based on observation and assessment screenings conducted by school staff. Accommodations are not granted solely based on parent or student request.**

**Modifications** involve a change in *what* a student is learning and the outcome or competency they are expected to demonstrate. Modifications can range from moderate changes to the learning goals, objectives, or learning requirements in a general education classroom to a fully differentiated curriculum, often focused two or more grade levels lower. In-class modifications involve changing the level of difficulty or learning objectives for a particular student due to a learning diagnosis. For instance, a 6th-grade student's evaluation identifies a gap in crucial 4th-grade level concepts, so that student is given specific activities and assignments with learning goals based on those missing concepts.

At this point, a variety of accommodations in our general education classroom are readily available. Modifications or remediation instruction are not presently available as a part of MVCA's learning environment. Students needing this degree of support will be unable to enroll at MVCA.

## 5.6. ENRICHMENT AND RTI

Enrichment is designed to help students who have a knowledge deficit in some area or need *short-term remedial instruction* to be able to perform at grade-level. For math and language, MVCA uses computer-mediated instruction to provide students with individualized intervention or enrichment. Students identified as needing enrichment complete an assessment to determine their present levels of math or language that generates a sequence of activity lessons designed to increase their performance. Most lessons can be completed in just a few minutes using an iPad or similar device.

If a student continues to struggle in math or language after the prescribed period of enrichment, a team meeting including parents will be held to determine possible next steps. For those familiar with the typical RTI model, enrichment services correspond to RTI Tier 2.

## 5.7. TUTORING

In some cases, private tutoring may be helpful for a student's progress. At present, MVCA does not provide tutoring services of any kind beyond what may happen within the general classroom. Families needing tutoring will need to find outside providers.

## 6. HEALTH AND SAFETY

School administration works diligently to maintain a safe and healthy environment for all our students. Parent cooperation with the school health and safety policies are necessary to avoid accidents and to properly care for our students.

### 6.1. MEDICATIONS

Parents must provide record through SIS of permission to treat their student medically, which over-the-counter medications may be given by school staff, and any prescription medications that must be administered at school. All medication information for each student must be maintained up to date in the student's medical section of SIS.

Students may not have medication in their possession at school unless approved by the school. All other medication(s) must be dispensed by designated school staff. It is the parent's responsibility to provide any medication for students. Parents are not to leave medications in a child's book bag.

A medication authorization form must be completed when a physician has ordered a medication (prescription or over the counter) that will require in-school administration for an indefinite period. However, an authorization form is not needed if a medication is to be given for no longer than two weeks. All parent-provided medication must be brought to the school office in an approved container (see below) and accompanied by a parent note indicating the purpose of the medication and the time(s) it should be given to the student.

All medication dispensed at school must be in the original container. Prescription medication must be in a current, completely labeled (date, pharmacy, physician, student, medication, full dosing instructions) prescription container. *Expired medications will not be administered.* Over-the-counter medication must be in clearly labeled original packaging and accompanied by a parent note stating the student's name and the instructions for dispensing the medication. Limited quantities and brands of over-the-counter medications may be available in the office for emergency use.

### 6.2. SPECIAL MEDICAL TREATMENTS

When special medical treatments such as insulin injections or breathing treatments using a nebulizer are necessary, parents must make prior arrangements with office personnel and provide specific written instruction from the child's physician.

### 6.3. ILLNESS GUIDELINES

In the interest of every student's wellbeing, parents are requested to keep their child home when they are sick. Please do not medicate your child and send them to school. If a child develops symptoms during

school, the parent will be called to pick up the student as soon as possible. If we cannot reach the parents, we will notify the next person listed as an emergency contact list in the student's file. In the event we are unable to reach a parent or emergency contact within an hour, administrative staff will contact the appropriate authorities.

The following is a partial DHEC exclusion list of certain illnesses requiring temporary removal of a student from school.

- **Vomiting** – Student may not attend or remain at school if vomiting has occurred **2 or more times during the previous 24 hours** or if vomiting has occurred accompanied by a fever of 101 or higher. *No dismissal is required for a brief, non-repeating episode of vomiting with no other signs of illness.* Student may return with parent note stating vomiting has resolved, student is able to stay hydrated and participate in activities, and no other symptoms have been present. Exceptions requiring prompt medical evaluation (call parents and dismiss student): vomiting that appears green or bloody, vomiting after recent head injury, vomiting and no urine output for 8 hours, or when student appears very ill during vomiting episode.
- **Fever** – Student must not attend or remain at school if fever is **100.4 or higher taken orally (100.0 axillary, 100.9 by ear, 99.9 temporal)**. Student may return when fever-free without medication for 24 hours or *with clearance from pediatrician indicating no health concerns or symptoms of illness or another diagnosis that does not preclude attendance.* Fever in conjunction with other symptoms shall be assessed using guidelines for those other symptoms, e.g., fever + vomiting, fever + pain, etc.
- **Diarrhea** – A student with diarrhea may not attend or remain at school until symptoms are resolved for at least 24 hours, *or medical evaluation (doctor's note required) indicates that student may safely return to the school setting.* **Diarrhea is defined as 3 or more loose or watery stools in a 24-hour period that are not associated with changes in diet.**
- **Head lice** – Head lice is not a disease but is contagious. We maintain a nit free policy. For this reason, any student diagnosed as having lice will be sent home and may only return with a parent note after one treatment with an over the counter or prescription lice elimination product and no active lice is observed crawling in the hair or after removal by combing or heat treatment methods. School administration must inspect the student prior to re-entry. Contact the office to make arrangements.
- **Conjunctivitis (Pink Eye)** – Student may not attend with severe eye pain, purulent drainage, white or yellow eye discharge, or are too sick to participate in routine activities. Students may return when the condition has been resolved.
- **Rash** – Faculty/Administration will notify parent when rash is observed. If rash spreads or is accompanied by another symptom, the student must leave the school. A doctor's note is required if a student returns to school with rash stating that student is not contagious.
- **Respiratory infection** – student must not attend with uncontrolled cough, difficulty breathing or wheezing. May return when symptoms subside.
- **Strep** – may return 48 hours after beginning antibiotic treatment if the student is fever-free.

Please do not bring your student to school with a contagious disease. They must be symptom-free for a full 24-hour period before returning to school.

#### 6.4. COMMUNICABLE DISEASE

Students diagnosed with a communicable disease (meaning an illness which arises because of a specific infectious agent which may be transmitted either by a susceptible host, infected person or animal to

another person) must be kept home until the possibility of the contagious infection has passed. The school administration must be notified immediately of a diagnosis of a communicable disease. A doctor's note is required for re-entrance.

## 6.5. INJURIES

In the event of injuries, a parent will be called to determine further treatment. If a student is injured while at school, a medical event report will be completed in FACTS SIS and logged to the student's record. In certain cases, the reporting staff member will include an automated email notification to the parent. If the situation is of a serious nature or there are questions about a course of treatment, a parent will be contacted immediately.

## 6.6. FOOD AND NUT ALLERGIES

At times, MVCA has children with life-threatening food allergies, such as peanut allergies. We are sensitive to students with these allergies and make every attempt to keep them safe. Always consult with your child's teacher before bringing any food into the classroom. We also ask that you encourage your child *not* to share food brought from home. If you have any concerns, contact the school office.

## 6.7. STUDENT HEALTH AND IMMUNIZATION RECORDS

It is mandatory that the school receive a copy of the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (SC DHEC) Certificate of Immunization for each new student on or before the first day of school. This form is available at a physician office or can be obtained from the health department if other proof of immunization is provided.

# 7. DISCIPLINE AND CONDUCT

## 7.1. EXPECTATIONS

We expect that each student at MVCA shall regularly and habitually:

- Demonstrate positive, respectful, and appropriate attitudes
- Express themselves with acceptable language and behavior
- Take responsibility for their own learning as an active learner
- Act with integrity and be accountable for their own actions
- Support and care for one another
- Treat others (including their property) with dignity, courtesy, and respect
- Represent the school in a positive manner
- Use careful judgment in the exercise of personal freedom
- Follow school rules
- Resolve conflicts and difficulties with others through discussion or by seeking assistance from school staff

## PARENTAL EXPECTATIONS

Parents/guardians are expected to know and adhere to all school policies and to demonstrate a spirit of cooperation with the administration and faculty of the Academy. Any school-related concerns need to be resolved following the biblical principles found in Matthew 18. **When questions or problems arise, parents or students should speak first with the teacher or responsible party.** *Refrain from talking to other parents about a problem; it is divisive and not unifying.* If a problem persists, then make an appointment to meet with the teacher, the Assistant Principal, or Head of School.

Parents/guardians should also be respectful of school staff and students and display Christ-like behavior in speech and actions, including in private and public communications, text or email messaging, and social media postings. *Complaints or derogatory comments about teachers, staff, or the school posted on social media accounts are a violation of the school's behavior policy for students and parents and may result in administrative dismissal of the student from MVCA.*

## 7.2. BEHAVIORAL GUIDELINES

To accomplish these student expectations, certain student behaviors cannot be tolerated and will result in action by the teacher and or the administration. These behaviors include, but are not limited to:

- Repeated violation of classroom rules
- Disruption of the learning or social environment
- Disobedience, disrespect (including towards fellow students), and/or insubordination
- Use of physical force or verbal intimidation
- Uncontrollable behavior (physical-kicking, fighting, hitting; verbal-outbursts)
- Willful damage to or destruction of property of the school or another student (damage caused by the student will be paid for by the student or parent/guardian)
- Lying, cheating, or stealing
- Inappropriate public display of affection toward another student
- Inappropriate, demeaning, coarse, foul, or threatening language (verbal or nonverbal)
- Fighting
- Misuse of school-provided technology including internet/wi-fi access
- Involvement or the impression of involvement in immoral activities or activities that are contrary to the philosophy of MVCA
- Possession or use on campus of any kind of weapon (excluding school-sanctioned events such shooting sports), fireworks, drugs, drug paraphernalia, tobacco (including vaping/electronic cigarettes), alcohol, or or pornography, including content on an electronic device.

## 7.3. PHILOSOPHY OF DISCIPLINE

As Christian parents and educators, we discipline students because we love them and want them to live a Christ-centered life. We discipline to help students learn to choose desirable, right behaviors. When students make wrong choices, we seek to help redirect, guide, heal, and restore. Our goal is that hearts are changed, and better choices are made in the future. We also want students to learn to make wise choices when we are not around, not simply to control them when authority figures are present. Discipline must address attitudes of the heart and lead students toward Christ-like behavior. The following principles shall guide our approach to student discipline:

1. **Individual Student Care** – We recognize that students are at different level of maturity and seek to understand and counsel students individually. We also aim to distinguish between a student who has made first-time mistakes and a repeat offender. In some circumstances, first-time offenses may be of sufficient severity to warrant suspension or expulsion. Although working with students as individuals is important, we recognize that general standards and expectations should be communicated clearly to all students and parents.
2. **Uphold Expectations and Standards** – As a learning community, we take very seriously biblical, community, and school standards that each student pledges to live by when enrolling at MVCA. Students will be reminded of expectations, rules, and limits. Violations of certain standards or the absence of a repentant heart will not be tolerated.
3. **Discipline Leading to Growth** – Mistakes and failures offer tremendous opportunities for growth. We want our students to grow in maturity and wisdom through their mistakes and failures. This does not mean that there will not be consequences for these actions. Instead, we want to allow students to appropriately experience consequences and the growth that can result from them. This also means modeling for our students and helping them practice appropriate ways of handling conflict, mastering their emotions, and learning to get along with other people.
4. **School-Home Partnership** -- Christian home and school should work in partnership and mutually implement discipline in love and humility, not in anger or in haste. Parents are expected to support the school's discipline.
5. **Seeking Grace and Truth** – conflict between students often entails differences in details or perceptions about the incident. We recognize that, as children growing in maturity, students can and do skew their accounts of incidents, intentionally or unintentionally, to shift blame to others or avoid consequences. Therefore, every reasonable step will be taken to examine all sides of a situation with the goal of guiding those involved in a deeper pursuit of truth and grace, emphasizing the need for honesty, accountability, forgiveness, and kindness. Parents need to agree to see school staff and administrators as partners in helping their child to mature rather than as hostile opponents out to mistreat their child.

#### 7.4. DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES

School staff will typically respond to disciplinary situations involving students using the steps below. However, MVCA administration reserves the right, at their sole discretion, to elevate the response to specific situations where behavior is more egregious or serious. Certain offenses (e.g., cell phones, cheating/plagiarism, dress code violations) have separate and specific guidelines outlined elsewhere in this handbook.

**Step 1:** MVCA teachers or staff will address incorrect student behavior when minor offenses occur by talking with student regarding primary expectations, classroom rules, or school policy. Staff will communicate with the parent(s) regarding the incorrect behavior and actions taken in response.

**Step 2:** Continued or a repeat of inappropriate behavior will result in a Behavior Demerit being issued by the office through FACTS SIS. A copy of the report, including the offense, and the resulting demerits and consequence will be emailed to the parent. Teachers may additionally request a parent conference or employ other appropriate consequences at teacher discretion. These consequences may include

- isolated lunch
- loss of free time/recess
- suspension from participation in specific activities for a designated length of time

- additional work projects or duties for a designated length of time

**Step 3:** An accumulation of Behavior Demerits, for any offense, will typically result in the following:

- 3 demerits – 1 Detention period
- 4 demerits – one-half day of In-School Suspension
- 5 demerits – full day of In-School Suspension and behavioral probation

**Step 4:** Repeated offenses in one general category or violations of behavior while on probation constitute serious violations of school policy and indicate a student’s inability or unwillingness to follow MVCA rules and respond to correction. Such repeated offenses are major disciplinary offenses and often result in suspension, behavior contract, withdrawal, and/or other serious consequences.

### BEHAVIORAL PROBATION

Behavioral probation may be applied at the discretion of the Head of School or Assistant Principal. Behavioral probation can be implemented for, but not limited to, the following:

- The student has demonstrated a pattern of disobedience or insubordination.
- The student has demonstrated an unrepentant and/or negative attitude.
- The student has committed a single major offense.

The conditions of such probation would likely include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Weekly meeting with Head of School, Assistant Principal, or designated staff/teacher.
- Suspension from participation in all or specific athletic and/or school activities.
- Required referral for professional counseling.
- Additional conditions as determined at the Head of School’s discretion. The probation period will be for a period designated by the administration.

A student on Behavioral Probation who receives a behavior report will receive at minimum an automatic two days of At-Home Suspension. Depending on the nature and severity of the offense, additional consequences may be imposed including expulsion.

### DETENTION

Students are required to attend Detention when assigned. As a rule, detention is held on Wednesdays from 3-4 PM as needed, although alternative days/times may be used where necessary. Athletics practices are not an excuse to miss detention. If a student fails to appear for detention, an additional detention period will be assigned.

### SUSPENSION

Students assigned In-School Suspension (ISS) will report to the front office at the beginning of the day on which they are to serve the suspension. ISS is served in an assigned location with a supervising teacher or substitute. *Students assigned ISS will be charged a fee of \$30 for half-day or \$50 for full-day to defray the cost of supervision.* This charge will be added to the student’s FACTS account. A student who calls in sick the day of an assigned ISS will still have to make up the assigned suspension period.

Students serving At-Home Suspension will not report to campus for class on those days assigned.

When serving a suspension period, the student is not eligible to participate to any school-related activities (field trips, special events, athletic events, practices) for the day(s) assigned. Any assignment that is due on

the day of a suspension must still be turned in on time. All schoolwork missed during a time of a suspension may be made up for full credit. Students must contact the teacher to reschedule any missed assessments during their suspension.

## 7.5. DISMISSAL

Any student who persistently neglects work, who fails to meet academic or other standards or qualifications, who exercises poor citizenship, who has demonstrated an unwillingness to cooperate with the school through habitual violations of school rules with an unrepentant, negative attitude (or whose parent/guardians fail to cooperate), or through any single major disciplinary event may be dismissed from MVCA at the sole discretion of the administration.

The administration may, at its own prerogative, choose to allow a student to withdraw in lieu of expulsion if circumstances warrant.

A student who has been expelled may apply to return to MVCA after one full semester. Evidence of changed behavior and positive references will be considered in an application for readmission, but there is no guarantee of that readmission being granted.

A student who has been expelled from MVCA may not be in school facilities during school hours or participate in school events any reason except (1) if accompanied by his or her parent(s) or guardian(s) to apply for readmission or (2) if accompanied by opposing coaching staff while competing in an athletic contest as a member of an opposing team. Students who have been expelled from MVCA may not attend MVCA sponsored events or athletic contests on the MVCA campus as spectators. An expelled student may appeal to the administration in writing at least one week in advance for an exception to this policy if the student believes circumstances warrant, but exceptions to this policy are at the sole discretion of MVCA administration.

## 7.6. HARASSMENT/BULLYING

MVCA is committed to providing an environment in which every student is treated as an image bearer of God. Treating each other with dignity and respect is key to a healthy community. Every effort will be made to create a community where dignity for the individual is the expectation. We will promptly address instances when students are treated in a disrespectful manner.

The willful and harmful treatment of students is contrary to Scripture, morally wrong, and illegal. MVCA expressly forbids bullying, sexual harassment (opposite sex or same sex), or any threatening and offensive conduct or expressions with respect to gender, race, color, national origin, disability, or age.

Harassment consists of a pattern of physical or verbal conduct (remarks, gestures, jokes, physical contact, teasing) or communication (including electronic communication) based on sex, race, national origin, or religious or physical differences, or disability that a person finds personally threatening, derogatory, offensive, or unwanted. Sometimes individuals responsible for these actions may not know that they are offensive. *Students feeling harassed should tell the person harassing that he/she is being offensive as well as notify a teacher or administrator.*

Bullying is behavior that is **aggressive, unwanted behavior that is habitually targeted towards others** with the intent to control or wield power over them. Bullying includes actions such as making threats, spreading rumors, verbal or physical attacks, setting up of humiliating experiences, excluding someone from a group on purpose, actions that a reasonable person would consider inappropriate. (Definition and information

from [www.stopbullying.gov](http://www.stopbullying.gov).) The victim(s) will have reasonable fear of harm to his or her person and/or damage to his or her property.

MVCA does not condone harassment or bullying, whether engaged in by students, employees, or family members. If a student finds the environment hostile or offensive, if a student believes he/she has been harassed or bullied by another student or individual, or if a student knows another person who has been harassed or bullied, the student should promptly tell a teacher or administrator. Reports made weeks after an alleged incident severely limit the ability of school administration to fairly investigate and address concerns.

All reports will be promptly reviewed and investigated in as confidential a manner as circumstances permit, and appropriate action will be taken. If a student is dissatisfied with the investigation or action taken, the student should bring the matter directly to the administration.

Parent/guardians are encouraged to take what their children say seriously and to report bullying concerns to the teacher first. Parent/guardians should understand that the whole story may be quite complex and trust the school to resolve bullying issues. Parent/guardians not satisfied with the action may refer to administrators if the need arises.

It is important for parents/guardians and students to recognize that not all instances of teasing or name-calling constitute bullying. Not all behaviors should be considered bullying or willful violation of this policy. Typically, bullying behavior occurs across social peer groups while students within the same peer group will often tease or joke with one another. Behaviors will be assessed by the teacher and/or administrator and addressed according to the following procedures.

### PROCEDURES

1. All parties – including the victim, alleged perpetrator, and sufficient bystanders – will be interviewed to establish the facts of the situation and to determine accountability for their actions/inaction.
2. All incidences are to be documented and written reports will be kept on the behavior by those staff members to whom the incident was reported.
3. Pertinent staff will be informed about and have access to the information recorded on all incidents so that they may be aware of any issues between students.
4. Investigations into bullying allegations must be undertaken in a timely manner and should be carried out in such a way as to minimize the risk of escalation.
5. All incidents of bullying will be followed up by those staff members originally informed to parent/guardians of at least the victim(s) and suspected bully.

### CONSEQUENCES

Students who violate these principles will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal. Students found to have filed false or frivolous accusations of harassment will also be subject to disciplinary action. We seek to implement a clear framework for dealing with bullying incidents to protect the students and help the bully to learn how to relate in a way that is in line with the biblical standard of relationships: “My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you.” John 15:12

Bullying behavior, as determined by the school’s administration, will result in the following:

- **First Incident** - Immediate removal from the situation, loss of privilege as determined by the administration, and parent notification. The student will be expected to apologize either in writing or in person.
- **Second Incident** - Immediate removal from the situation and one day of At-Home Suspension. In addition, the student may be assigned a service/restitution project.
- **Third Incident** - Immediate removal from the situation and school, multi-day At-Home Suspension, and expulsion review.

## 7.7. DRUG, ALCOHOL, TOBACCO, SUBSTANCE ABUSE

Possession and/or use of drugs, tobacco, and alcoholic beverages are strictly forbidden. This is grounds for immediate dismissal of the student.

## 7.8. REPORTING AND INVESTIGATING SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE

South Carolina law requires that certain professionals report suspected cases of child abuse or neglect, because they have unique opportunities to observe and interact with children. However, the law encourages all persons to report. The following professionals are mandated reporters of child abuse or neglect (includes but not limited to):

- Healthcare professionals: physicians, nurses, dentists, optometrists, medical examiners or coroners or their employees, emergency medical services, mental health or allied health professionals
- Educational professionals: teachers, counselors, principals, school attendance officers
- Social or public assistance professionals: substance abuse treatment staff, childcare workers, foster parents
- Computer technicians
- Clergy (subject to laws governing privileged communication)

Per the SC Department of Social Services (<https://dss.sc.gov/child-well-being/mandated-reporters/>):

*Mandated reporters must report abuse or neglect when, in their professional capacity, they receive information giving them reason to believe that a child's physical or mental health has been, or may be, adversely affected by abuse or neglect. A decision to report must be based upon a reasonable belief that a child has been, or may be, abused or neglected. Thus, mandatory reporters need not have conclusive proof that a child has been abused or neglected prior to reporting abuse or neglect to the proper authorities.*

*A person who is required to report and fails to do so is guilty of a misdemeanor. Upon conviction, he or she may be fined up to \$500 or imprisoned up to six months, or both.*

Midland Valley Christian School is committed to providing a safe, secure environment for children and their families. Any report of inappropriate behaviors or suspicions of abuse will be taken seriously and will be reported, in accordance with this policy and state law, to the MVCA Administration, Department of Social Services, or other appropriate agency.

MVCA supports and encourages a culture of communication related to abuse or suspected abuse of children. If you see or suspect inappropriate interaction with or between children, it is your responsibility to report the inappropriate interaction to a supervisor or a member of the MVCA staff or administration. This includes partial or inconclusive information concerning behavior, which may or may not be blameless.

Because sexual abusers often “groom” children for abuse, it is possible a staff member or volunteer may witness behavior intended to groom a child for sexual abuse. Staff members and volunteers are asked to report grooming behavior, any policy violations, or any suspicious behaviors to a supervisor or a member of the MVCA staff or administration.

## 8. ATTENDANCE

One of the most important factors in achieving academic excellence is attendance. Students are expected to be in school during the designated hours unless they have a verified and excused absence. Students who are excessively absent or tardy have difficulty maintaining their grades and may lose credit. Each student and parent should realize the necessity of regular attendance and recognize that absences for causes other than illness or a family emergency are detrimental to a student’s educational experience. Excessive absences or tardiness is grounds for dismissal. To receive credit for the school year, students must attend 170 of the 180 school days per year. Since MVCA does not have a program for homebound instruction, students who are absent 20 or more days in a year may be retained in the current grade.

### 8.1. DEFINITION OF ABSENCES

#### EXCUSED ABSENCES

1. Student illness where attendance in school would endanger his/her health or the health of others (more than three consecutive days must have a doctor’s note)
2. Death or illness in student’s family
3. Medical or dental appointments (with a doctor’s note)
4. Other required situations beyond the family’s control to schedule such as court proceedings, religious observations, family emergencies. In these situations, parents should communicate with the teacher ahead of time to plan for making up work.

Excusing an absence does not mean it is erased. Excusing the absence means there is a legal/valid reason for the absence, but the absence remains on the student’s record.

In the event of two or more consecutive unplanned absences due to illness, parents are strongly advised to contact teachers to pick up assignments and classwork. It is the student and/or parent’s responsibility to check with his/her teacher as soon as he/she returns to school to determine what assignments he/she missed. The student will have one day, including weekends and holidays, for each day of his/her unplanned absence in which to turn in those completed assignments. Arrangements must be made with the teacher if more time is needed to complete assignments.

#### VACATIONS

Family vacations in the middle of the school year when school is in session *do not count as excused absences*. Please plan these trips around vacation days as published on the school calendar.

#### SCHOOL-RELATED ABSENCES

Missing school due to participation in school activities such as field trips or athletic events are not considered absences and will be marked as School Events in the SIS attendance record. This indicates that

the student was not present at school but was involved with an approved school function. See the Academic Policies section for guidelines on missed work due to school functions.

### UNEXCUSED ABSENCES

All other absences, including suspension (tardy or behavior) are considered unexcused. Students who accumulate three (3) *consecutive* unexcused absences or 5 *total* unexcused absences in a semester will be considered truant according to South Carolina attendance policies. Students who are found truant will be reported to the Truant Office of Aiken County.

### EXCESSIVE ABSENTEEISM

A student is considered to have excessive absences when there are **more than 10 unexcused absences in a semester or 17 absences in a year for any reason, excused or otherwise**. In the event of excessive absenteeism and at the sole discretion of MVCA, a student may not receive academic credit, and, in some cases, the student may not be promoted to the next grade level. NOTE: BY SOUTH CAROLINA LAW, MORE THAN TEN UNLAWFUL ABSENCES MAY RESULT IN AUTOMATIC RETENTION.

An exception to this policy may be made in a situation beyond the control of the family that prevents a student from attending school altogether, such as an extended illness or injury requiring hospitalization. In that rare instance, a written request should be submitted to the office as soon as the circumstance warrants and include written explanation and verification. In the case of approval, a written plan for recovery and maintaining schoolwork will be developed with teachers and parents and recorded in the student's file.

### TRUANCY

A student who fails to appear and attend for a school day *without parent consent or school approval* is considered *truant*. The consequence for a first offense is a one-day suspension from school and a required parent conference before being reinstated to school. Work missed due to truancy or the resulting suspension will be graded down as late work. Further truancies may result in an expulsion from school.

## **8.2. PROCEDURES, EXPECTATIONS & CONSEQUENCES**

1. **Medical/Personal Appointments.** MVCA requests that parents make every effort to schedule doctor, dental, and other personal appointments outside of school hours or on one of the new Flex Friday dates. These dates are available on the school calendar. If an appointment has to be made during school hours, please schedule it for early or late in the day to limit the amount of classroom instruction missed and minimize the need for make-up work.
2. **Notification.** A parent needs to call the office by 8:00 am each day of an absence to be sure the student does not receive an unexcused absence. In most cases, parental excuses are accepted. However, the Administration reserves the right to decide whether the reason is acceptable and if the absence should be excused.
3. **Explanation.** Following the student's return to school from any absence, a written note of explanation from the parent, guardian, physician or health provider must be submitted on that first day back. Absences will be considered unexcused until this note is received from the parents or absences are excused by the administration. A note does not excuse an absence; rather, classification (excused or unexcused) is determined by the nature of the absence. A parental note is not an automatic guarantee of an excused absence or tardy. **Oversleeping Is not an Excused**

**Absence or Tardy!** Failure to provide such written documentation within 10 days will result in an unexcused absence and will not be changed later.

4. **Early dismissal** must be done through the main office. For a student to leave during school hours, parents must provide a written note to the school office prior to dismissal. Parents must sign their child out in the school office and office personnel will contact the classroom teachers. If a student returns to school the same day, the parent must sign him/her in at the office upon return to school. Early dismissals will not be permitted after 2:30 PM.
5. **Appeals for absenteeism** must be made to the MVCA office in writing before the end of the school year. Appeals made in situations where there has been a failure to provide documentation about absences in a timely manner will not be considered.
6. **Unexcused Absences Leading to Suspension.** A student who accumulates a total of 4 unexcused absences in a semester will be assigned one day of In-School Suspension (ISS). ISS is served in an assigned location with a supervising teacher or substitute.
  - a. *Students assigned ISS will be charged a fee of \$50 to defray the cost of supervision. This charge will be added to the student's FACTS account.*
  - b. A student who calls in sick the day of an assigned ISS will still have to make up the assigned suspension period.
  - c. When serving a suspension period, the student is not eligible to participate to any school-related activities (field trips, special events, athletic events, practices) for the day(s) assigned. Any assignment that is due on the day of a suspension must still be turned in on time. All schoolwork missed during a time of a suspension may be made up for full credit. Students must contact the teacher to reschedule any missed assessments during their suspension.

### 8.3. TARDINESS

MVCA regards punctuality as a priority. It is primarily the parent's responsibility to ensure that a child arrives to school on time. Therefore, we ask parents/guardians to model this as a priority for your child(ren) and to teach punctuality as an integral part of life. Parents must set the example by making appropriate adjustments in order to arrive at school at the appropriate time.

Like absenteeism, tardiness is a disruption of the learning process for the student and to other members of the class. While problems may occur in getting to school on time, such as oversleeping, inclement weather or traffic, every effort should be made to be in class before the start of the school day.

#### LATE ARRIVAL

Students should arrive no later than 7:40 AM to ensure that they are in their seats at 7:45 AM. Students will be marked tardy if they are not in their classroom at 7:45 AM. If a student arrives to class after 7:45 AM, they are tardy and must report to the school office to receive a tardy pass before going to the classroom. The carline drop-off doors are locked promptly at 7:45AM so arriving after the doors are locked indicates a late arrival.

Only tardies due to illness or medical appointments, verified by doctor statements, may be excused. Tardies due to traffic (unless an accident), running out of gas, oversleeping, train delays, inclement weather, etc. are not excused.

## CONSEQUENCES

In each semester, when a student accumulates

- **4 unexcused tardies** – parents will be notified by email
- **6 unexcused tardies** – the student will receive 1 unexcused absence
- **10 unexcused tardies:** the students will be one-half day of In-School Suspension (ISS). ISS is served in an assigned location with a supervising teacher or substitute. *Students assigned ISS will be charged a fee of \$50 to defray the cost of supervision.* This charge will be added to the student's FACTS account. For each successive tardy, an additional \$10 fine will be added to the account.
- **12 total tardies** – the student will receive a second unexcused absence; the school will require a parent meeting to discuss occurrences and a plan for rectifying the problem.
- **15 total tardies** – the Head of School will consider the involvement of other agencies to resolve tardy occurrences and/or consider expulsion

### 8.4. INCLEMENT WEATHER / UNSCHEDULED SCHOOL CLOSINGS

Parents will be notified through Parent Alert (call or text) of unscheduled school closing or delays. Announcements may additionally appear on the local news or the school's Facebook page.

1. MVCA does not always follow Aiken County on unscheduled school closings.
2. MVCA may, on occasion, have an unscheduled closing due to providential or safety issues. Whenever possible, the administration will attempt to inform parents in advance of such closings. When advance notice is not possible, parents will be notified by FACT's Parent Alert text/message or local TV stations.
3. There may be occasions where MVCA must close early during operational hours due to providential or safety issues (ex. severe weather or the threat of severe weather). Parents will be notified through FACT's Parent Alert (call or text) with details and time that students need to be picked up. Please know administrative staff will contact appropriate authorities for any student not picked up by designated time.

**PLEASE DO NOT OPT OUT OF THE PARENT ALERT TEXTING SYSTEM.** FACT's Parent Alert system is our PRIMARY means of mass communication with parents. Please know if you opt out of this system of communication, you will MISS OUT on very important information. Those who opt out of receiving these text/messages will still be held accountable for information given in the Parent Alerts.

## 9. CAMPUS LIFE

### 9.1. DRESS CODE

Students are expected to use good judgment in dressing for extracurricular activities in a manner that reflects modesty, neatness, and cleanliness. Although the dress code may not be enforced for extracurricular activities, students' appearance should reflect its spirit. MVCA students are expected to dress modestly as ALL school events and may be asked to change clothes or leave the event if they are not dressed appropriately.

1. Students are to be neat and well-groomed. All attire is to be clean, modest, and not torn or ragged (no holes, patches, or cutoffs).

2. Hair is to be neat, clean, and out of the eyes. Outlandish hairstyles are not allowed.
3. The ONLY visible pierced jewelry allowed is earrings on girls. Boys may not wear earrings at any time, either to school or to any school event.
4. Permanent and/or temporary tattoos (doodling on arms, legs, etc.) must not be visible.
5. **Shirts**
  - a. No strapless tops, shirts with spaghetti straps, halter tops, or tube tops may be worn at any time.
  - b. Sleeveless tops (including sleeveless dresses) are not permitted unless a sleeved shirt is worn underneath, or a sweater is worn on top. A sleeve must *fully* cover the student's entire shoulder coming partially down the upper arm. Holes or openings in the shoulder do not qualify as an appropriate sleeve.
  - c. T-shirts made of dri-fit or similar material typically used as athletic wear are permitted so long as they otherwise meet the criteria above for shirts.
6. **Shorts / Pants / Skirts**
  - a. Jeans, khaki-type slacks, dress pants, and capris are approved.
  - b. Students may wear denim, khaki, or cargo type pants or shorts (solid or print).
  - c. Girls may wear dresses and skirts. Shorts or leggings must be worn under dresses and skirts.
  - d. The hem of any shorts, skirts, dresses must come no more than three (3) inches above the top of the kneecap when standing (or the narrowest width of a 3x5 index card)
  - e. *Spandex, running shorts, biking shorts, yoga pants, and leggings are not to be worn to school (unless covered by shorts or a skirt that meets dress code).*
7. **Fit of Clothing**
  - a. Shirts and pants must be appropriately fitted (not too baggy nor too tight). Determination of whether garments are too tight will be at the discretion and judgment of school administration.
  - b. Students must wear their shirts to prevent the midriff from showing, regardless of the posture of the student.
  - c. Pants must be worn in such a manner that undergarments should not be visible regardless of movement.
8. Shirts or outerwear must be blank with no screen-printing or other artwork. The only exception is MVCA school apparel; school apparel from the Spirit Store or school-sponsored fundraisers are permissible on any day other than chapel days. Items with small (less than 3"x3") printed or embroidered brand logos (e.g., Nike swoosh, UnderArmor logo, Izod crocodile, etc.) on the chest are allowed.
9. No lounge or pajama wear.
10. Athletic attire may be worn *only on casual Fridays*.
11. Hats, sweatshirt hoods, or sunglasses are not to be worn in the school buildings during the academic day.
12. Athletic slides, rubber flip-flops, and pool shoes are not permitted.
13. Students involved with after-school practices and activities are expected to dress adhering to the spirit and design of this code as well. Not wearing a shirt for boys and only wearing sports bras or yoga pants for girls would be considered inappropriate. Yoga pants are not to be worn at athletic practices or in Physical Education class unless shorts are worn over the top.
14. Athletes may wear jerseys on game day as determined by their coach, with pants or shorts that maintain dress code standards.

**Chapel Day Dress** – On chapel days (Wednesdays, at present), students are required to be more dressed up than other days. Boys in all grades are required to wear a collared shirt on chapel day. Girls may wear a collared shirt or a nice dress

**Spirit Days** – There may be special costume days, such as spirit days, when the dress code is modified with teacher/administrator approval.

**School shirt/field trips** – Students will wear a school-issued MVCA t-shirt for field trips. Each student will be provided a shirt at the beginning of the year. Parents/guardians will be able to buy additional shirts. Field trip shirts that are lost will be replaced by the school at parent expense via a charge in FACTS. *Students will not be allowed to attend field trips if they are missing or have forgotten their t-shirt that day.*

## ENFORCEMENT

- If a violation takes place in the first weeks of school, a teacher will give a warning and help correct any misunderstandings.
- After the first week of school, the student needs to change into clothes that meet dress code. If a student does not have clothes that meet dress code, he or she will be sent to the Office. The parents will be called and asked to bring the student appropriate clothing. The student will not return to class until appropriate clothing is obtained. If available, an MVCA shirt may be loaned to the student and returned at the end of the day.
- After the first week, a Discipline Referral will be issued for a student not meeting dress code.
- If non-compliance or disregard for the dress code persists after 3 violations in a semester, subsequent violations the remainder of the year will be treated as a disciplinary issue.
- Students will be counted absent if they miss class due to dress code violations. The student is responsible for getting assignments and making up all class work missed while out of class to obtain suitable clothing. This must be done outside of the regular class time to prevent disruption of a class that is in session. All missed work is due the next day.

Two things to keep in mind when thinking about dress code:

1. School administration reserves the right to determine what is acceptable or unacceptable regarding the dress code.
2. If you think you should not wear something because it may be in violation of the dress code, you are probably correct. You may wish to contact the school office for guidance.

## 9.2. AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAM

MVCA provides an afterschool program for the convenience of working parents. Afterschool care is included for free up until 4:30 pm. The Afterschool program is supervised by teachers and consists of a variety of structured, engaging activities such as free play, makerspace projects, arts & crafts, and homework/reading time. Depending on volunteer or teacher availability, homework help may also be available during this time with our Gen2Gen adult mentoring program. Other club opportunities may be provided from time to time. Club participation is optional. **Students needing a snack or light food fare after 3:00 must bring it from home. MVCA does not provide snacks during afterschool care.**

All school rules and policies apply to the afterschool program just as during the regular school day. This includes all behavior policies as detailed in this handbook.

For an additional fee, parents may sign up for extended afterschool care until 6:00 pm. (*See section 3.3. Extended Afterschool.*)

## 9.2. FOOD SERVICE AND LUNCH

Currently, no food service is provided by MVCA. All students will need to bring their lunch from home. Refrigeration is not available for student lunches. The student's meal must be fully cooked before being sent to school. Students do have limited access to microwaves, so students are permitted to heat precooked lunches.

Students must bring their own dinnerware and utensils. No supplies will be given out to students. Soft drink machines are not to be used by the students in grades 5 and below while school is in session. Parents are to provide beverages for lunch. *However, middle and high school students are permitted to use the soft drink machine in the upper school commons.*

## 9.3. DAILY SCHEDULE

### Regular School Hours

Lower (K5-5)	7:45 am to 2:45 pm
Upper (middle/high)	7:45 am to 2:50 pm

### Half-day Hours

Regular start times. All grades dismiss at 12:00 pm noon.

Morning Care	7:00 – 7:30 am
Aftercare Standard	2:45 – 4:30 pm
Extended Aftercare	4:30 – 6:00 pm

## 9.4. STUDENT DROP-OFF/PICKUP

### MORNING DROP-OFF

Students may be dropped off in the morning beginning at 7:00 am. Drop-off happens through the carline at the gymnasium doors on the west end of the building (for elementary) or at the front of the upper school (for middle and high school students). Upon arrival, students will wait in the designated areas until dismissed by teachers to go to their respective rooms.

Parents are not allowed in the building during morning drop-off.

### LATE ARRIVAL

The building doors for drop-off close promptly at 7:45. After this, students must go to the front office and receive a tardy slip.

### CARLINE TAGS

Parents must register their vehicle for pickup and mount the provided school tag/decal where it can be seen by school staff at the drop-off/pickup station.

### MORNING/AFTERNOON CARLINE

Students are dropped off and picked up in designated carlines depending on the building. All students are picked up through carline beginning at 2:45 until the end of Afterschool at 6:00 pm. Regular dismissal

begins at 2:45 pm. At 3 pm (or when the pickup carline has finished), all remaining students are logged into Afterschool.

From 3:00 until 4:30, parents pick up students from afterschool at the same point (Elementary or Upper lines) and following the same sequence as regular carline.

At 4:30, all Upper school students staying for extended afterschool move down to the elementary gym. At this point, *all* students are in this same area. Parents picking up after 4:30 pm regardless of grade will come to the Elementary gym doors.

### DISMISSAL APP

MVCA uses the PikMYKid school dismissal app. Parents/guardians should download the app and set up an account. Instructions are available in the office and will be provided at Orientation Night at the beginning of school. The PikMyKid system integrates with our FACTS SIS. Parents (or delegated pickup persons) use the app to announce their arrival on campus.

Parents/guardians unable to install the app on their mobile device can still pick up their student as long as they have the school-issued car tag displayed in the front window. School staff monitoring the carline station can manually enter the student's id in the system for announcing.

Parents/guardians may also use their app to assign other trusted individuals (delegates) to use the PMK app to pick up their child from school. Parents can set a schedule, assign certain days, or allow open-ended permission for others to use the app. This provides a safe, convenient, and recorded way for both parents and staff to manage student dismissal.

### AUTHORIZED PICK-UP LIST

Students will not be allowed to enter vehicles in carline that do not display a carline tag, nor will students be allowed to get into vehicles with unauthorized persons. Students will be dismissed only to individuals that are on that student's pickup list in FACTS, have announced via the app, or have in their possession the original PMK tag issued by the school. Photo identification may be required by staff to verify the identity of unknown individuals. Please contact the front office to add or remove persons from your child's authorized pick-up list.

### TRAFFIC FLOW AND PARKING

During school hours, the parking lot between the lower and upper school buildings should be treated as a one-way loop running counterclockwise. The entrance corridor runs alongside the dumpster, in front of the student center (middle school building), makes the 180-degree loop at the west end of the parking lot, returns east in front of the gymnasium, before exiting back out the end closest to the playground.

The drive running immediately between the parking lots immediately in front of the school office entrance are not to be used by vehicle traffic.

For safety reasons, parents are NOT to park in the upper parking lot and walk their students to the gym during carline time.

Elementary and the Upper School each have their own carline locations. Elementary students follow the outside (against the curb) lane through the parking lot and drop off/pick up students outside the Elementary gym doors.

Upper school students follow the inside lane and drop-off/pickup at the designated stop in front of the Upper School main doors before following the marked exit out of the lot.

Parents with students in both buildings should start at the upper school line and then merge safely into the elementary line as the second stop.

## 9.5. ELECTRONICS / DEVICE POLICY

### CELL PHONES/DEVICES

Cell phones are not to be carried or kept in the possession of any student during the school day. Any student found to be carrying a phone will have the phone removed and detained in the office until the end of the school day.

Middle school students should keep their phones in their lockers or, if provided, in a location in the classroom determined by the teachers.

Students are not allowed to have personal electronic devices in their possession during school hours. Students can use their phones for class-related activities *only when permitted to do so by the teacher*.

### SCHOOL-ISSUED DEVICES

Students will be allowed to only use school-issued electronic devices (iPads or Surface tablets) in class. ALL personal electronics are to be turned off and will only be allowed to be used with direct verbal approval from a teacher. Use of school devices and campus internet are detailed in the Student Device Responsible Use Policy and Contract.

### HANDHELD FOCUS-RELATED DEVICES

Under certain situations in agreement with school administration and teachers, students may be permitted to have and make use of handheld focus-related devices such as fidget sticks or other sensory tools, providing that such use does not create distractions for other students. Teachers may also, at their discretion, provide temporary use of such devices or activities in the classroom.

## 9.6. COUNSELING & REFERRAL

MVCA has partnered with the Hope Counseling Center and Braveheart Counseling to give our families access to high-quality, affordable, Christian counseling for adults, adolescents, and families. On occasion, MVCA has referred families to the center where they have found strong support and help.

### SOCIAL SKILLS CLASSES

Michelle Adams, of Braveheart Counseling, supervises regular mini classes to students in grades 3-5. These classes are focused on building socio-emotional, friendship, and coping skills.

## 9.7. LOST AND FOUND

Lost and found items are kept in the school's front office. Students or parents seeking missing items should check there. Lost and found items will be cleared out at the end of each semester. MVCA is not responsible for lost items or items left unclaimed in lost and found at the time of disbursement.

## 9.8. SCHOOL ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS

### BIRTHDAYS

Your child's birthday may be celebrated with his/her classmates. Parents will need to contact the teacher one week in advance to make arrangements. Time of the birthday celebration needs to be communicated to the teacher. Parents may choose during lunch or at the end of the school day. Birthday invitations may not be given out at school unless the invitations include every child in the classroom.

### FIELD TRIPS

1. At various times during the school year, our faculty (assisted by parent volunteers) will take the students to nearby points of interest. Parents will be advised beforehand of any such trips.
2. Consent forms must be signed for each student.
3. Field trips are part of the classroom activities. Students are expected to attend.
4. It is important that all volunteers realize that they are acting as Christian role models for our students. Please be an example by demonstrating maturity in actions, attitudes, and dress. A faculty member will supervise each field trip and will direct the volunteers as to what is expected of them.
5. Chaperones should refrain from purchasing special treats for the children unless all students in the class benefit equally.
6. Only students enrolled in the class may go on the field trip.
7. School shirts must be worn on all field trips.
8. All field trip fees must be paid BEFORE students may attend field trip.

## 9.9. SECURITY

To provide a safe and secure learning environment for your child, we take the following security precautions:

- **Homeland Security** – Our number one priority is the safety for your child. Should situations arise that include Homeland security, we will respond as directed by the community emergency authorities. Children will be kept in a safe and secure area of the facility unless deemed necessary by emergency authorities to evacuate the building. If we evacuate the building, children and staff will relocate to the Youth Center located on our property, or an area designated by emergency authorities.
- **Visitor Access** – All facility doors are kept locked during operation hours. For the safety and well-being of our students, we require everyone entering the building to check in at the school office. Visitors, if permitted to be in the student areas, will be given a visitor's badge. Parent-issued key fobs are no longer being used by MVCA and have been permanently disabled.
- **Intercom/Phone System** – Each classroom is equipped with an intercom or telephone, which allows faculty to communicate with the office.
- **Video Surveillance** – MVCA maintains an active, archived video surveillance system with cameras covering main entryways, hallways, and gymnasium.
- **School Records** - Administrative procedures are in place for documenting and maintaining current academic, medical, disciplinary, and attendance records. These records are kept in a secure location in the academy office. If Midland Valley Christian Academy ceases operation, all student

records will be turned over to SCACS (South Carolina Association of Christian Schools - 615 St Andrews Rd, Columbia, SC 29210).

## 10. SPIRITUAL LIFE

### 10.1. CHRISTIAN TRAINING

Since one of the basic purposes of MVCA is developing Christian character and discipleship in our students, it is only natural that Christian training has an important place in the life of the Academy.

1. Bible – A vital part of the curriculum is Bible memorization and familiarization with Bible stories and events.
2. Chapel – Chapel services are held each week. On occasion, special guest speakers may be invited. Attendance is required. Parents are encouraged to attend chapel services.
3. Programs – Special program are designed to foster self-confidence, showcase talents, and present students' classroom achievements.

### 10.2. BIBLE CLASSES

Every student in every grade takes a Bible class each term beginning in K5. Bible memorization and familiarization with Bible stories and events is a vital part of the lower school curriculum. Developing a broad and robust understanding of the Bible's big story of Creation, Fall, and Redemption is woven throughout all curriculum. Older elementary, middle, and high school students take a carefully planned sequence of Bible classes to give them a deep understanding of the shape, content, and message of Scripture coupled with the challenge to pursue a deep, intimate relationship with God for themselves.

### 10.3. CHAPEL

Chapel for all ages 4K and up is held once each week. Elementary chapel lasts approximately 30 minutes and usually involves worship, singing, and movement along with an object lesson, prayer, and birthday blessings. Middle school chapel is held in the student center chapel, lasts approximately 45 minutes, features a time of worship and discussion-centered teaching appropriate to middle and high school students, often with special guest speakers. Attendance at chapel is mandatory for all students.

### 10.4. MIDDLE SCHOOL RETREAT

Middle school students begin each school year with an overnight retreat to Breezy Hill Camp. This allows middle school students a time of bonding, fellowship, and orientation to middle school life.

### 10.5. SERVICE HOURS

Developing an attitude and habit of service to others is a key value for MVCA. All middle school students will participate in a variety of service activities that are both mandatory and optional.

## 10.6. CHURCH PARTICIPATION

Church participation is not a requirement for enrollment at MVCA because of our admissions policy. However, we strongly encourage all families to find, join, and be active in a local church community committed to biblical faith, life, and practice. MVCA teachers and staff will regularly encourage families to attend and will openly extend invitations to their churches or others in the area.

## 11. ATHLETICS

*Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last; but we do it to get a crown that will last forever. ~ 1 Corinthians 9:25*

*For physical training is of some value, but godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come. ~ 1 Timothy 4:8*

### 11.1. STATEMENT OF PHILOSOPHY

Athletics provides a unique opportunity for students to grow intellectually, emotionally, socially, and spiritually. The MVCA Athletic Department uses physical training and competition to develop Christian character, discipline, and excellence in academics, teamwork, and leadership. As part of our educational process, MVCA Athletics exists to

- Disciple students to love God and others, to exhibit fairness, integrity, consideration, and hard work; and to persevere in the face of adversity and be gracious in victory
- Instruct students in the rules, fundamentals, and skills of various individual and team sports.
- Develop a submissive and respectful spirit for authority.
- Provide physical training and physical outlet for adolescent energy.
- Partner with parents to provide a healthy atmosphere in which student-athletes can apply principles learned in competitive sports to enhance their relationship with God and quality of life.

### 11.2. ATHLETICS CODE OF CONDUCT

All fans, spectators, coaches, and student-athletes are encouraged to enthusiastically support our teams. We recognize that the athletic arena is an extension of the classroom and our behaviors as a community there reflect the character, values, and quality of MVCA. Valuable lessons other than winning and losing are reinforced: character traits such as respect, sportsmanship, loyalty, perseverance, graciousness, effort, grit, determination, and resilience. All participants, coaches, parents, and spectators shall always conduct themselves in a civil, respectful, reasonable, and sportsmanlike manner.

We hold the following expectations of excellence for involved with MVCA Athletics, including parents and volunteers.

- Always be conscious of your words and actions; they reflect you, your family, your school, and God.
- Treat ALL athletes, coaches, officials, and fans with respect.
- Honor the spirit and letter of the rules of the game.
- Accept without quarreling the final decision of any official or authority.

- Honor visiting teams and spectators as your own guests and treat them as such. Likewise, behave as an honored guest when visiting another school.
- Be gracious in victory and defeat.
- Be as cooperative as you are competitive.
- Demonstrate the same level of commitment and dedication outside the arena of sports as you do inside.

A participant, coach or fan will be in violation of the Code of Conduct upon any one or more of the following actions:

- By making any degrading remark about any fan, official, coach, or athlete during or after a game, either on or off the field/floor of play. School officials, coaches, and players shall not criticize other schools, coaches, players, or officials publicly, in the media, or on social media.
- By arguing with an official or going through motions indicating dislike or disdain for a decision.
- By using any foul, abusive, inappropriate, or profane language at any time.
- By entering the playing area or field to protest, question, or object to a call or play.
- By hitting, shoving, grabbing, or striking any official, coach, athlete, or fan at any time (or attempting to do so).
- By being ejected/removed from any contest.
- By detaining an official following the contest to request a ruling or explanation; by following/chasing after the official after a game to express displeasure or opinion with a call or the result of a play or game.
- By the use or display of alcohol, tobacco, or any unauthorized drug.

***Violations of the Code of Conduct could result in a school, player or fan being fined, suspended, or placed on probation.***

#### SPECIFIC GUIDELINES FOR COACHES

- Coaches must remember that athletics is a part of a student's education and overall development - academics is always a priority to athletics.
- Coaches should help each child reach his/her full potential as an athlete and student.
- Coaches should remember that their team will reflect and model the coach's own attitude, manner, temper, conduct and behavior. They must conduct themselves in a way that brings honor to God, their school, their team, and themselves.
- Coaches will treat the student-athletes with proper respect. Instruction and correction should be overwhelmingly positive. Coaches should never intentionally demean, embarrass, or shame a student-athlete.
- Coaches are obligated to hold themselves to the same high standard of sportsmanship, respect, preparation, organization, dedication, hard work, self-discipline, sacrifice, and Godly behavior they expect of their student-athletes.
- Coaches are expected to follow the policies, procedures, and guidelines of the MVCA Employee Handbook

### 11.3. GENERAL POLICIES

#### WARNING OF INHERENT RISK/DANGERS OF ATHLETIC PARTICIPATION

Participation in athletics includes the risk of injury which may range in severity from minor to disabling to even death. Although serious injuries are not common in supervised programs, it is impossible to eliminate the risk. Participants can and do have a responsibility to help reduce the chance of injury. Participants must obey all safety rules, report all physical problems, follow guidelines for safe play and inspect his/her own equipment and report any problems.

We understand that participation in athletics and by attending public events (such as sporting events) includes possible exposure to an illness from infectious diseases including but not limited to MRSA, influenza, and COVID-19.

#### GENDER AND SPORTS

Unless otherwise specifically noted by MVCA in accordance with SCACS or related member association guidelines for a particular sport, all sports at MVCA shall be single-gender and students may play only the team that matches their biological gender. In accordance with school values and beliefs, no MVCA team shall participate in any athletic tournament, event, or conference in which “gender fluidity” or trans-gender policies allow boys to play on girls’ only teams or vice versa unless that sport has been deemed to be co-educational by SCACS or a related association or otherwise by mutual agreement between the schools and that the sport is open to all participants of both genders.

#### PHYSICAL EVALUATIONS

Physical Evaluations are required to be signed by a doctor as well as the student and a parent or guardian, before the first day of the upcoming school year. Students may not practice without the completed Physical Evaluation Form on file in the school office. Please note that practice usually begins on the first day of school.

#### ATTENDANCE

Attendance is crucial. It is imperative that athletes and coaches are present for practices, meetings, and games. A student choosing to participate in MVCA Athletics is making a commitment, and it is important to follow-through on commitments.

Special situations arise where it is a student or coach is unable to be present. Open communication here is key. If a coach needs to be absent, he/she is to communicate with and receive approval from the Athletic Director and/or Head of School. If, for any reason, an athlete must miss a practice or game, he/she must give notice to his/her coach. All athletes must understand that discipline may be given to the athlete by the coach for missing a practice or a game.

#### DISCIPLINE

It is essential for each athlete and coach to remember that represent not only MVCA but also Christ. Both the Athletic policy and Behavior Policy define rules that all athletes are accountable for. Student-athletes may be given additional discipline by athletics staff or coaches for the following: tardy to practice or games, conduct or grades in the classroom, missing practices or games due to ineligibility, lunch detentions in school, lack of effort in practices or games, fighting with another student or athlete, disrespect to an official, coach, or teacher.

Discipline can take place in the following ways: extra running or exercise above and beyond what is required of the team, temporary or permanent probation from game(s), community service, loss of playing time in games, or loss of leadership privileges.

### GAME PARTICIPATION

One of the purposes of our program is to develop fundamental skills. Game competition and practice are major factors in building these skills. The desire alone to be an athlete and to see extensive playing time is not a guarantee that a student will get to play much. An athlete's playing time is exclusively the coach's decision based upon the following factors:

- Grade level – generally, older players get more playing time
- The skill the player possesses.
- The growth and development of skills as the season progresses.
- The level of contribution to the overall functioning and success of the team
- The effort, attitude, and seriousness always devoted to practice sessions and game situations.

### COMMUNICATION

- The Athletic Director and coaches must clearly communicate with parents and teachers about practice and game times.
- Coaches must communicate to a student if they have diminished play time due to poor attitude, attendance, or participation. If a problem persists with a student, the coach will contact the parents to inform them of the problem.
- Students and/or parents must clearly communicate with the coach about any absences or illnesses.
- Parent concerns should be brought to the coach first. If necessary, the Athletic Director may also become involved.

### UNIFORMS

MVCA provides athletic uniforms for each team. New uniforms are a privilege. The standard rule applying to athletic uniforms is that the uniforms are rotation system. This means that each sport team wears their uniform for a designated number of years and then, at the discretion of the Athletic Director, new uniforms may be purchased.

Students will be given a uniform at the beginning of each season. They are expected to take proper care of the uniform and return it at the end of the season with only reasonable "wear and tear." Students who lose their uniforms or whose uniform is damaged in any way (including stains) will be expected to pay for replacements. Student-athletes are to be in proper uniform for every game and practice.

## **11.4. ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS**

For a student to participate in the athletic program of Midland Valley Christian Academy (MVCA), the following requirements must be met:

1. Must be enrolled as a student at MVCA in grades 5-8.
2. Students must reside with his/her parent(s) or legal guardian(s) to be eligible for athletic participation.

3. Students must be in attendance for at least a half day on the day of practice or game to participate in the game or practice. The student must be in class before 11:30 am if arriving to school late. If leaving early, the student must not leave class before 11:30 am. Middle school students with excused absences will be allowed to participate in athletic activities for the day.
4. Student must have received a medical examination by a licensed physician, physician assistant, or family nurse practitioner within the past 365 days. A current athletic physical form must be submitted to the school before the student can participate in any athletic activities.
5. To be eligible to participate in athletic gameplay, a student must
  - a. maintain a 70 average in each class
  - b. not have any disciplinary or behavioral reports on file. Detention or suspension automatically makes the student ineligible for the week(s) in question

#### ACADEMIC ELIGIBILITY

1. Grade checks will be done every two (2) weeks on Friday for the following two (2) weeks beginning on the subsequent Monday.
2. Ineligibility may be appealed to the Athletic Director (or Committee) and the Head of School to allow a student to still participate in the event of extenuating circumstances.
3. Ineligible students
  - a. may not miss class time for an athletic early dismissal
  - b. may practice, but cannot participate in games
  - c. must attend tutoring, if offered and available
  - d. may attend games, sit on the bench, but cannot dress out in uniform
4. At the end of the week, ineligible students may return to game play if their academic grades meet the eligibility threshold. All return to play will be at the discretion of the Athletic Director and Head of School.