

WEAVERTOWN MENNONITE SCHOOL

Parent and Student Handbook

Revised Edition 2013

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I. THE PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES OF THE SCHOOL

The purpose of the Christian school is to provide a Biblically sound academic program of education in the spiritual, emotional, mental, and physical development of the child. The school is dedicated to presenting facts and knowledge about God's world from a God-centered, rather than man-centered, viewpoint.

We believe it is the Lord's intention that we live our lives in the perspective of eternal values; furthermore, we have the responsibility of implanting these values in our children. Therefore, we set the following as our goals:

- Develop the student's relationship with God.
- Develop the student's relationship with himself.
- Develop the student's relationship with others.
- Assist the student in attaining academic excellence.
- Assist the student in assimilating knowledge that will be relevant and useful.

We want to ensure that the student comes to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ, achieves a higher level of Christian maturity, attains a deeper commitment, and becomes a more effective witness for the Lord. We believe in the uniqueness and value of each person, and want to assist each student in developing his individual God-given talents and abilities. We want to promote self-discipline by helping each student to be responsible, consistent, and thorough in character, attitudes, and actions.

A. ADMISSIONS PROCEDURE

Parents who desire to enroll their child at Weavertown Mennonite School must complete and return the following forms:

- Application for Admission (one per child)
- Parent and Family Information (one per family)
- Parent Statement
- Pequea Valley School District Health History form (Include immunization records.)

Following application, the school board and/or principal will interview the parents. Following the interview, the parents will be notified as to the acceptance of the child.

Placement of incoming students in the proper grade will be determined based on previously transferred records and/or the administration of standardized tests. We reserve the right to examine previous records and/or administer our own tests before grade placement is determined. Children entering first grade should be six years old by September 1 of the year they enroll.

B. KINDERGARTEN/FIRST GRADE ADMISSION POLICY

Because each student needs to be given the best possible chance for success, it is important that the child is in the proper grade level according to his/her developmental level when he/she begins school. Students who are properly placed function better in school, can handle adjustments and changes more easily, and tend to be more disciplined. Weavertown Mennonite School requires all incoming kindergarten students to take a developmental evaluation test. First grade students are required to take two evaluative tests regardless if the student was enrolled at Weavertown for kindergarten. The first test, administered in February or March before they are enrolled, is a developmental test that shows their emotional readiness for school. The second test is given on Pre-First Days in April or May and is an academic test that shows the level of academic knowledge that they possess.

All prospective first grade students who have not completed kindergarten will need to complete the Readiness books that are provided by Weavertown and bring the completed books to school to be examined by the tester

when the developmental test is given. The tester may need to keep the books until the decision on admission is made. Kindergarten records will take the place of the school readiness books in the case of a student who has completed kindergarten. The administrator will carefully consider the recommendation of the Kindergarten teacher before making a decision on admission. After the developmental testing of all the students is completed, the tester will meet with the first grade teacher and administrator to discuss the results.

All students who are borderline in development will be denied admission until the results of the academic test (given on pre-first days) can be considered. Students with summer birthdays will especially be held to a high academic standard if they test borderline for development.

When the results of both tests are available, the Administrator will take into consideration 1) the age of the child, 2) results of the developmental test and 3) results of the academic test. The Administrator will then make a recommendation concerning borderline students to the school board, which could include any of the following:

Admission with the probability of repeating first grade
Another evaluation test at another school
Summer preparation school in school readiness
Admission denied

The school board will make a decision based on the administrator's recommendation and notify parents of admission or denial.

II. THE STUDENT AND THE SCHOOL

A. ATTENDANCE

School will be in session from 8:30 A.M. until 3:00 P.M. One school year consists of 180 days.

Since Christians should uphold the laws of the state, unless such should violate Biblical principle, it is essential that the Christian school uphold and practice regulations regarding school attendance.

The following constitute legal absences:

1. Religious holidays
2. Illness of the student (Parents should not send their children to school when it would endanger their health or the health of others.) If three or more days are missed in succession for illness, state law requires a doctor's certificate to be submitted upon return to school.
3. Bereavement in the immediate family
4. Dental, medical, or optical appointments (The teacher should be told about these in advance, to arrange for the assignments missed.) Doctor appointments should be made after school hours whenever possible.
5. Educational trips, subject to the Administrator's approval (Approval shall be based on the student's work, and whether special activities have been scheduled, i.e. achievement tests, field trips, etc. The teacher should know about the plans for an educational trip at least two weeks in advance. An Educational Trip Request Form must be handed in at least one week prior to the trip. The administrator will then decide whether the trip constitutes an educational absence.)

All other absences are unlawful. Although the state does not penalize the parent or the child until after the third day of unexcused absence, the law considers any unexcused absence a violation of the compulsory school law. We ask our patrons to set a Godly example by avoiding illegal absences such as "workdays," extended family vacations, or short notice trips.

If a student has more than three unexcused absences in one school year, no credit will be given for missed homework or tests. All grades will be considered 0% and will be used to compute the student's quarter and term grades.

If a student has more than five unexcused absences in one school year, the student will be reported to the district magistrate for prosecution by the state.

Excuse cards are to be completed and signed by a parent for all absences. Students are responsible to complete any assignments missed during any absence, at teacher's discretion.

Students arriving at school up to 1 1/2 hours late will be counted tardy. An excuse card marked "tardy" should be brought to school with parent's signature. Students arriving after 10:00 A.M. will be marked 1/2 day absent. Students leaving school before 1:30 P.M. will be marked 1/2 day absent. All 1/2 day absences require an excuse card.

In the case of inclement weather, the administrator will consult local school districts and the bus committee to determine whether school should be delayed or cancelled. Parents will be notified of any delays or cancellations by means of an automated phone message system and the radio (WDAC).

Early dismissals can be a problem if a parent cannot be reached during the day. Please try to be available during potentially dangerous weather or call the school to check for a change in schedule.

B. CONDUCT AND DISCIPLINE

There is a close relationship between discipline in a school and the quality of education offered by that school. Education suffers where students are undisciplined. The Christian church, home and school must work and pray together in development of disciplined children and teenagers. Students who do not learn to be submissive and obedient to those in authority over them have great difficulty in learning to obey God and His Word.

In the Christian school, the Golden Rule should be the basis for all student conduct, as well as the thought of "what Christ would do." It is impossible to name every way in which this general rule can be violated in school. The following ways are common temptations and students at Weavertown can expect disciplinary action for them, in addition to other similar, unlisted offenses. This list is not intended to be comprehensive.

1. Continued and deliberate disobedience to classroom rules
2. Disrespect for authority
3. A rebellious spirit and continuous negative attitude
4. Gum chewing
5. Any type of classroom interruption
6. Excessive noises and running in the school building
7. Throwing objects indoors
8. Writing and passing notes
9. Being unprepared for class or work
10. Talking without permission or while teacher is talking
11. Defacing or misusing personal or school property
12. Forwardness in boy-girl interests
13. Unwholesome discussions of church issues
14. Loitering in lavatories
15. Unclean, mocking, or taunting speech
16. Leaving school grounds without teacher's permission
17. Persistent tardiness following recess or change of classes
18. Harassment of others

Disciplinary action can be expected in the case of violation of any classroom or school rules. Following are the steps that will be taken when disciplinary action is needed:

1. The teacher will deal with the offense, using means of discipline according to the seriousness of the offense. Discipline may include warning, communication with the parents, recess detention, withholding of privileges, etc.
2. If the student does not respond to the teacher's discipline, the principal will be notified, and a student, teacher, principal conference will be held, along with contact with the student's parents. Parents may be asked to administer corporal punishment, or give permission to the principal to do so.
3. If the problem persists, a teacher, principal, parent, student conference will be held and the child will be put on probation for a period agreed upon by the participants of the conference. During the probation period, the child will be interviewed by the teacher every week to keep the student informed of his/her progress. The parents will also be notified on a similar regular basis to keep them informed.
4. If the student is still a problem after the probation period, the case will be reviewed by the school board. The board may request suspension or expulsion of the student.

These steps are intended as a guide and may not be followed exactly if the situation warrants otherwise. Any student may immediately be dismissed from school for serious offenses such as, but not limited to, violence, immorality or extreme rebellion or disobedience.

C. ACADEMIC STANDARDS

Every nine weeks a report card is issued. The report card should be signed promptly by one of the parents and returned to school. We encourage parents to arrange for a conference if there are any questions. Parents are given a personal log in to the school's website so they can view their student's current grades at any time.

Various factors are considered when a student's passing or failing is being considered. Of major importance is maintaining passing grades in all major subjects. Failing grades in reading (or literature), mathematics, social studies, English, or poor standing on achievement tests are indication of need to repeat a grade. Teachers will notify parents when a student shows signs of failure.

Our grading system is as follows:

- **A** 93-100% (Excellent)
- **B** 85-92% (Good)
- **C** 77-84% (Average)
- **D** 70-76% (Poor, Unsatisfactory)
- **F** Below 70% (Failure)

D. HEALTH POLICY

All students, prior to admission to school are required to fill out a health form (provided by the school) listing diseases and immunizations he/she has had, as well as allergies and health complications such as diabetes, hearing or eyesight problems which the teacher should know.

All students must have had, or be in the process of having, all the state required immunizations before being admitted to school. Any time a student receives further immunizations, has a contagious disease, eye or hearing tests, the school should be notified so that proper notification can be made on the student's records. When a child has a contagious disease, parents are expected to keep the child at home until the disease has run its course.

If there is any medical reason why your child should not be fully immunized, please bring a certificate from your doctor stating the reason. If you object to immunizations for religious reasons, an exemption form is available upon request.

Children will be excluded from school for lice, scabies, impetigo, chicken pox, and strep throat.

E. DRESS CODE

Students, under direction of the parents, are expected to abide by their own church standards. In cases where the church standard is more conservative than the school code, the church standard shall apply. Fathers will be asked to address any modesty issues that may arise.

Students are expected to be clean and neat.

In addition:

- Boys' hair should not be longer than the natural hairline. The hair in front is to be kept above the eyebrows.
- Shirts with collars and buttons are required for boys in grades five through eight.
- Girls' skirt length is to be below the knees when standing or sitting. Sleeveless or low-cut dresses are unacceptable.
- Excessive lettering on shirts and sweaters is to be avoided.
- Shoes are to be worn at all times. Flip flops are not to be worn at school.
- Jewelry and make-up is not to be worn.
- Skorts are not allowed at any school activities.

This dress code shall also apply to parents who are attending school activities such as track & field, class field trips, etc.

F. PERSONAL AND SCHOOL PROPERTY

Parents should help students acquire a sense of responsibility for personal possessions--such as lunch boxes, coats, hats, boots, etc.—by making sure things are not left at school. Respect and care for school property is also important. Books, desks, walls, etc. shall not be mutilated or defaced. Unintentional damage shall be paid for at the discretion of the principal. Intentional damage shall be paid for at face value, with a minimum fine of \$1.00. We expect a student to report immediately any damage for which he/she is responsible and then pay for it. Failure to report will result in obligation to pay double the value.

Students should practice good stewardship in using school supplies such as tablets, pencils, paper towels, etc.

G. TRANSPORTATION

As much as possible, students shall be included in the bus route. Students outside the limits of the bus route may be brought to school in private cars. Details of bus transportation are to be discussed with the bus committee. Cost of transportation is separate from, and in addition to, school tuition.

While on the bus, students must obey the driver, just as they must obey the teacher in the classroom. They must be prompt in meeting the bus and observe the following safety rules:

1. Be seated until you get to your bus stop.
2. Gum chewing is not permitted on the bus.
3. Avoid unnecessary noises and distractions to the driver.
4. Be courteous to each other in language and deed.
5. Do not litter on the bus.

6. Do not mar or damage bus property.
7. Do not put any part of body outside of windows.

Since the name of the school is plainly printed on the bus, actions from within will add to or detract from that name. Calling to persons outside, throwing litter onto roadways, etc. are not in accord with a Christian testimony.

The driver may find it necessary to give additional instructions as he/she feels the need.

Parents transporting students in cars should not arrive to school before 8:15 A.M. and should pick up students promptly after school.

III. SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

A. PARENT-TEACHER FELLOWSHIP

A Parent-Teacher Fellowship (PTF) meeting is held on the third Monday evening of September, January, and April. All three meetings begin at 7:00 PM at school. Various announcements and reports are given and a guest speaker is invited to speak on topics relating to Christian education. In April, the annual business meeting is held to elect new committee and board members for the following year.

All patrons are strongly urged to make PTF meetings a priority. These meetings are an excellent opportunity to meet and fellowship with the school family, meet the teachers, and to become active in the organizational work of the school.

B. AUCTION AND BAKE SALE

Weavertown School holds an annual Auction and Bake Sale on the Saturday of Columbus Day weekend in October. This is the school's major fundraiser, and is organized and coordinated by a patron committee elected at PTF in April. All patrons work together in donating food items, crafts, etc. for the auction, or money to offset expenses.

C. PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES

Parent-Teacher Conferences (PTC) are held at the end of first quarter, and are mandatory for all patrons. One of the, or preferably both, parents meet with the teacher of each of their students for a fifteen-minute conference to discuss the students' report card, progress in class, academic/social needs, etc. PTC should be scheduled by the parents by making an appointment at the September PTF or by calling the school secretary.

D. CHRISTMAS AND EASTER PROGRAMS

The students of Weavertown School present a two-hour Christmas or Easter Program on alternating years at the Weavertown Church. The program begins at 7:00 P.M., and parents are asked to have their children at the church promptly at 6:30 P.M. to organize and do pre-program warm-ups and practice.

E. PARENT VISITING WEEK

To encourage parents to visit school, a week in the winter is designated as Parent Visiting Week. This does not imply that visiting by parents should be limited to this week. See Parent Visitation, Section VI. Teachers plan activities and classes with the parents in mind, and students enjoy having Mom and Dad at school for a day.

F. SCHOOL PICNIC

As a finale to the year, the entire school family gathers for a picnic on school grounds on the Wednesday evening closest to the close of school. Lunch is a carry-in, with each family contributing food. The evening is fun, fellowship, and softball for the men and boys.

IV. SCHOOL COMMITTEES

The following are school committees and their functions, including the number of members and the terms. These committee members are chosen from the patron body at the annual business meeting (the third PTF) held in April.

A. BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The school board is a five-member committee that oversees the day-to-day operations of the school, is responsible for the school's finances, hires teachers, and makes all policy decisions. All decisions are made in consultation with the pastors of the Weavertown Amish Mennonite Church. Board members serve a three-year term and may serve three terms. The school board organizes itself each year into five positions: chairman, vice-chairman, secretary, treasurer and fifth member, as well as serving as representatives on various other committees.

B. PARENT TEACHER FELLOWSHIP PLANNING COMMITTEE

The PTF committee is a four-member committee that consists of two members elected from the patron body, one board representative and a staff representative. The PTF committee is responsible to plan the three PTF meetings throughout the year, choose topics and guest speakers, appoint song leaders, devotional leaders, moderators, etc. PTF members serve a two-year term.

C. MAINTENANCE COMMITTEE

This three-member committee is responsible for all building and maintenance needs on campus. Two members are elected from the patron body. The third is a board representative. Maintenance members serve a two-year term.

D. BUSING COMMITTEE

The bus committee consists of three members elected from the patron body, and is responsible for the purchase and maintenance of the school buses. They also plan the bus routes and issue bills to all those using bus services. Bus committee members serve a three-year term.

E. AUCTION AND BAKE SALE COMMITTEE

The Bake Sale committee is made up of three members (couples) that plan and organize our annual Auction and Bake Sale in October. They are elected from the patron body, and the board treasurer is a board representative on the committee. Committee members serve a six-year term.

F. AUDITORS

This two-member committee is elected from the patron body, and is responsible to examine and audit the treasurer's books. Auditors serve a two-year term.

V. PARENTS AND THE SCHOOL

A. PARENT-SCHOOL RELATIONSHIP

Parents have a vital part in the function of the school. Parents are expected to promote proper attitudes and respect for the school and its staff. The child's teacher and the total school program needs the prayers of each parent. The parent's relationship with the school and its teachers is an important factor in the educational development of the child. The ideal environment for the child is one in which he senses that his parents and his teacher are in harmony in teaching and discipline. Serious problems can arise in the school and the development of the child if unity of purpose and practice are not sought for and maintained.

The home environment is naturally reflected in the school. If the school is to achieve its purpose as outlined on page 1 of this handbook, our homes must adhere to Biblical principles as well. For this reason, use of tobacco or strong drink, television, or divorce and remarriage will disqualify a student application.

Parents shall also be discreet and selective in the use of modern technology in the home. Careful and accountable selection and use of the internet, visual and audio recordings, magazines, books, and other such material, is expected.

In all organizations where people work closely together problems, misunderstandings and conflicts are inevitable. Parents are urged to use the Biblical procedure given in Matthew 18 to resolve differences. Parents should not discuss school problems with other parents if they have not confronted the teacher or administrator involved. Likewise, the Administrator should not be called into a teacher problem if the parent has not discussed the problem personally with the teacher.

B. VISITATION/SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

Parents are encouraged to visit the school and are urged to keep in frequent contact with the teacher concerning the child's progress. Request for conferences are welcome, in addition to the regularly scheduled Parent-Teacher Conferences (usually in November). Preschool children who are not accompanied by parents should not visit school. Preschool children visiting with their parents should stay with their parents at all times, and not be with brothers, sisters, or other students unless the teacher has made special provision to that effect.

C. TUITION

Tuition may be paid in full at any time or in three equal payments in August, December, and March upon notification from the school board secretary. Other payment arrangements may be made with the school board. Tuition is to be paid in full by the last day of school. Report cards may be withheld at the end of the school year if required payments are not made. If tuition has not been received by July 15, reapplication and down payment for the following year or automatic deposit will be required. No family can enroll students unless tuition from the former term is paid in full.

Tuition does not cover all operating expenses. The school depends on other support in gifts from patrons, fund-raising projects, and offerings.

D. STUDENT ASSEMBLIES

The entire school student body will meet in the school basement on a weekly basis for a joint devotional/chapel time to begin the day. Patron fathers are contacted by the pastoral board to be the speakers for these weekly assemblies, which consists of approximately 15 minutes of devotions and prayer. Other speakers are local pastors, evangelists, missionaries, etc.

E. SCHOOL HOUSE CLEANING

Each patron family is expected to participate in the weekly cleaning of the building, which includes cleaning the entries, basements, hallways, restrooms, etc. A cleaning schedule is issued at the beginning of each year with two patron families responsible for cleaning each week. If possible, the cleaning should be done on Friday afternoon of each week.

F. INSURANCE

Weavertown School does not offer any student insurance that would cover the expenses of theft or injury while at school. Parents are responsible for the expense of any accident that may happen on the playground, in Phys. Ed., or anywhere on school property. Parents should urge students to be responsible to make sure belongings are not left outside overnight.

G. STUDENT HOMEWORK

Students at Weavertown School in Grades 3 – 8 can expect to bring some assigned work home. This will vary a great deal with students, time of year, and even teachers. Parents are expected to be responsible to make sure student homework is completed on time. This is best accomplished by communication between parent and student, a scheduled time to work on homework and a place at home where students can work efficiently without distraction. Some students will need help with homework. This may be a result of not paying attention to directions being given, disorganization of notes and papers, or not understanding ideas and concepts. Parents are urged to evaluate the problems their child is having with homework and help them to find the resources to help, whether that be calling a teacher for help in understanding a problem, organizing a notebook to prevent lost papers or enforcing a scheduled study time and place at home.

Some homework activities such as Bible Memory can cause a special problem for students who have trouble memorizing. Parents are urged to be involved in the memorization assignments of their students by incorporating Bible Memory into their family devotions, by helping students to learn and review daily instead of procrastinating, etc.

All students are expected to finish homework assignments on time. If students do not have homework finished by the assigned period, the homework will be considered incomplete. A teacher may dock the grade of an incomplete paper or use whatever means necessary to motivate a student to finish assignments on time. In addition, the father (or mother if no father is present in the home) will be asked to do an hour of work at school with the student if he/she has multiple incomplete assignments in one calendar month. Students in Grades 3 & 4 will receive an after school detention with their father if they have more than 5 incomplete assignments in one month, students in Grades 5 & 6, if they have more than 4 in one month, and students in Grades 7 & 8 if they have more than 3 in one month. This policy is designed to make fathers responsible for teaching and enforcing discipline, time management, and responsibility.

VI. STUDENT ACTIVITIES

A. FUNDRAISING

The Weavertown School staff maintains a bank account separate from the school board which is funded by an annual student fund raiser (Grades 6-8 only), and is used to pay for day to day expenses involving the students such as: phys. ed./recess equipment, library books, student awards, periodicals for classrooms, field trips, playground equipment, etc. This annual fundraiser (Trash-a-thon) is held in September.

B. FIELD TRIPS

Each class takes an educational field trip for a day usually in April or May. Each class has a designated standard destination including Philadelphia, Baltimore, Gettysburg, Hershey, etc. The eighth grade class, which attends a 3-day, 2-night Outdoor School at Spruce Lake Retreat as their field trip, is the only trip that is overnight. Most field trip expenses such as transportation and admissions are paid by the staff fund (see fund raising Section VII A). Parents should be prepared to provide money for meals, souvenirs if you choose, or similar expenses. Since some field trips will need to leave school before 8:30 and/or return after 3:00, parents should be prepared to provide transportation to and from school on field trip day.

C. STUDENT PROJECTS

Students in Grades 4-8 will be asked to do a major project in connection with a major subject area such as History or Science. Each year Grades 4-6 hold a History Fair in which each student researches a person, state or country (4th Grade people, 5th Grade states and 6th Grade countries) and prepares a display showing interesting facts about the subject studied. Every other year the 7th and 8th Grade students hold a Science Fair in which each student conducts a scientific experiment or a research project, and prepares a display to explain the project. Both of these Fairs are on display for several days and are open for parents, family, friends, other school groups, etc. to attend. Both of these Fairs are required and students' work will be graded.

D. BIBLE QUIZ TEAM

Students in Grades 6-8 may participate in a Bible Quiz Team that competes against other schools as part of Mid-Atlantic Christian Schools Association (MACSA) Bible Quiz program. Students on Quiz Team are expected to memorize the Bible passages designated by MACSA for that year. The Quiz Team practices three times a week beginning immediately after Christmas and attends several daylong tournaments, as well as a 3-day retreat in March.

E. INTERSCHOLASTIC ATHLETIC GAMES

Grades 7 & 8 participate in a limited number of games with other local junior high schools in several different sports including soccer, football (guys only), volleyball (girls only), and softball. These games are scheduled in advance and are open for parents to attend. All games are held during the school day.

F. MISSIONS WEEK

In order to highlight different mission fields and opportunities, one week usually in winter or early spring is designated as Missions Week. Various mission speakers have devotions for the entire school each morning of Missions Week and each classroom uses various activities to focus on the needs of missions and their workers.

G. GRADUATION

The 8th grade graduation service is held on an evening of the last week of school and is open for any friends or relatives of the students to attend.