

St. Matthew's Evangelical Lutheran School Parents' Handbook

(2024-25)

Mission Statement of St. Matthew's Lutheran School

"St. Matthew's Lutheran School assists parents in preparing children spiritually and academically for time and eternity"

Preface

Conscious of the sacred responsibility to train children physically, mentally, socially, emotionally and spiritually as the Lord has instructed us, we maintain a Lutheran Elementary School, grades Pre-K-8, in which qualified Christian educators teach God's Word and a secular course of study leading to entrance into high school. The main purpose of this handbook is to provide parents with a handy source of information on matters pertaining to the overall program of St. Matthew's Lutheran School. Parents having children enrolled in the school are urged to familiarize themselves with the contents of this handbook and to keep it near at hand throughout the school year.

Purpose

The words of our Savior-"Feed My Lambs"- express, in a brief manner, the primary purpose of Christian education in a Lutheran Elementary School, namely, that the children of the congregation (the "lambs" of Jesus) are to be fed the Word of God, the spiritual food, and the community is to be reached with the Gospel of Christ.

This is done not only in the religion classes, but in every subject and activity. Parents are commanded by God to train, discipline, and educate their children, the "lambs" of Jesus. Recognizing that this is a difficult task for parents to undertake by themselves, our Lutheran Elementary School can serve as an aid to the home in accomplishing this blessed task. Christian parents use the Lutheran Elementary School because they are conscious of God's divine command: "Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it." Proverbs 22:6

ST. MATTHEW'S LUTHERAN SCHOOL INFORMATION SOURCES

Website:

The website is updated regularly and will include the most current information possible. School handbooks, school year/athletic calendars, pictures and many more items are posted on our website. Please go to the St. Matthew's Lutheran School tab at www.stmatthewswinona.org.

Mass Texting

Please indicate your desire to be on the list by contacting our school office (smoffice@stmatthewswinona.org).

Other Resources for the Christian Home:

The websites of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod have a wealth of information to aid the Christian home. *Parents Crosslink, WELS Daily Devotions, Family Devotions, Questions and Answers on Spiritual Issues, and many other links to ministry activity throughout the WELS are available through WELS websites.*

✠ WELS (Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod) Sites:

○ www.wels.net and www.whataboutjesus.com

✠ Bible study material, devotional books and other resources for the Christian home may be checked out of the St. Matthew's Church library located in the church basement.

✠ Devotional books and resources for the Christian home may also be found through Northwestern Publishing House and Kremer Publications. ○ www.nph.net: Northwestern Publishing House ○ www.kremerpublications.com Kremer Publications

<p>Media Release: Over the course of the school year, we will have an opportunity to share with our community events that occur at our school. If you would choose not to have your child's name or picture printed in any form of media including the church website, we need you to contact smoffice@stmatthewswinona.org. Thank you for your help in honoring your wishes.</p>

Administration and Control

St. Matthew's Lutheran School is owned and operated by the members of St. Matthew's Congregation. Final authority for all decision of policy and property is vested in the congregation's voters' assembly. The affairs of the school are under the direction of the Board of Christian Education.

Teacher Accreditation

Since the Word of God is a precious teaching tool, our congregation calls teachers who have a thorough knowledge of its content. Generally, this training has taken place at Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minnesota. Graduates of this teacher training program receive Bachelor of Science in Education degrees and are certified to teach in our school by the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod.

Many of our teachers continue their education by taking summer or evening classes. To help maintain the highest educational standards possible, the principal is responsible for visiting each classroom on a regular basis. The congregation also has the option of requesting a school counselor, who is appointed by the District Parish School's Coordinator of the Wisconsin Synod.

Educational Objectives

Our Lutheran Elementary School has been established...

1. To assist parents with the Christian training and education of their children as commanded in Deuteronomy 6:6-7
2. To prepare and encourage children to share the Gospel message with the world as commanded in Matthew 28:18-20.
3. To encourage children to grow in knowledge and trust in Jesus Christ as their Lord and personal Savior
4. To teach children to know the Triune God through the power of His Word and Spirit, thus enabling them to develop Christian character and live in Christian fellowship.
5. To encourage children to be a wise steward of the many gifts God has given them and use those gifts to God's glory.
6. To assist children in developing a proper respect for all in authority as well as love and respect for their fellow man.
7. To prepare children for Christian citizenship based on God's Word.
8. To prepare children for life on earth, as well as eternity, through a study of all subjects from a Christ-centered point of view.
9. To encourage the graduates toward Christian growth and active participation in worship, thus strengthening the congregation and the church-at-large.
10. To prepare children for any future educational endeavors, keeping Christ as their guide.

Social Media Policy

The use of social media, such as Facebook, Twitter, chat rooms, etc., by teachers, staff and students during school hours is strictly prohibited. In addition:

1. St. Matthew's teachers and staff are prohibited to connect with or "befriend" students enrolled at St. Matthew's Lutheran School (*other than immediate family members*) through social media.
2. Comments made by faculty/staff concerning students of St. Matthew's Lutheran School via social media (Twitter, Facebook, chat rooms, etc.) are not permitted. Comments made by faculty/staff concerning St. Matthew's Lutheran church/school or colleagues/coworkers at St. Matthew's via social media (Twitter, Facebook, chat rooms, etc.) are not advised. If comments are posted, they must be positive, professional, and Christian.
3. Should any faculty or staff of St. Matthew's Lutheran School have a personal social media site, he/she is not allowed to include any **individual** pictures of students of St. Matthew's Lutheran School (*other than immediate family members*). Faculty and Staff are allowed to post a **group** picture of students. If pictures of school parents and/or colleagues are posted, "tagging" (identifying names) is not allowed.

Parents are to be encouraged to closely monitor their child's social media sites (Facebook, Twitter, chat rooms, etc.). St. Matthew's student's use of social media is to be appropriate, respectful, and Christian. Should a student post derogatory comments about St. Matthew's Lutheran School, its activities, or its faculty/staff; school disciplinary action will be taken.

Should a student post derogatory comments about another St. Matthew's Lutheran School student, parents will be directed to discuss the situation with their child and the victim's family. In addition, school disciplinary action may be taken.

Course of Study

The spirit of the Lutheran Elementary School is one of walking closely with the Savior. Each day begins with formal studies of Bible lessons, Catechetical instruction, and hymn study or school worship services. Children and teachers conduct devotions and pray together at various times during the day. The pastors begin confirmation instruction in the 7th grade. All other religious instruction is done by the classroom teachers.

Besides helping social adjustment of young children to school life, the Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten programs provide readiness activities in the areas of reading, math and other basic subjects.

The academic curriculum of grades K-8 gives strong emphasis to the basics: reading, language skills and math. The program also includes literature, health, science, social studies, handwriting, music, art, and physical education. All secular subjects and extracurricular activities are taught in the light of God's Word

Admission Policies/Entrance Policy

According to Minnesota state guidelines, children desiring to enter Kindergarten should be five years old on or before September 1st of the year of enrollment. Those entering first grade must be six years old by the same date.

A physical examination is required of all pupils prior to entrance into kindergarten and seventh grade. Forms for this are available at the school office.

Minnesota Law 123.70 requires that all children enrolled in a Minnesota public, private, parochial elementary or secondary school be immunized against diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis, polio, measles, mumps, rubella, hepatitis B, and varicella (chicken pox). Schools may accept either a doctor's statement verifying completed immunization or a copy of a parental record of completed immunizations. Forms for this are available in the school office. If parents are opposed to their children receiving these immunizations, a statement of conscientious objection must be placed in a child's health folder signed by the parents.

Enrollment Policy

Students desiring admission to St. Matthew's Lutheran School are required to apply for registered status through the School Office. All past due registration fees and tuition balances must be paid, or arrangements to pay the balances must be made, before any application for registration in St. Matthew's School will be considered. Midyear transfers are subject to approval by the principal and Board of Christian Education. It is necessary for parents of children with special needs to meet with the principal prior to enrollment to ensure the school can meet the student's needs, and parents may be asked to appear before the Board to discuss their child's enrollment.

St. Matthew's Lutheran School has been primarily established for the training of children of the operating congregations' members, and maximum class size per room is established by action of the Board of Christian Education; therefore, enrollment requests will be considered in this order:

1. Members of St. Matthew's Lutheran Church

Members of St. Matthew's Lutheran Church may enroll their children provided that they are members in good standing.

2. Members of Other WELS/ ELS Congregations

Members of other WELS or ELS congregations may enroll their children with a letter from their pastor stating that they are members in good standing.

3. Those Not Members of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod

Parents who are not members of a WELS or ELS congregation but wish to enroll their child in our school will complete an enrollment application prior to acceptance. The information will be reviewed by the St. Matthew's Lutheran Board of Christian Education at its regular monthly meeting or at a special meeting called by the Board in special circumstances. This information will assist the Board in making its decision regarding entrance of the child into St. Matthew's Lutheran School. All information on this form is considered confidential. Upon acceptance, non-members will have one of two options:

- ☉ **Option 1**— Attend and complete a Bible Information Course with a St. Matthew's pastor or with a pastor from a congregation in our fellowship, while paying the tuition that a St. Matthew's Lutheran Church member would pay. Upon successful completion of the course, the parents could request communicant membership into St. Matthew's Lutheran Church or another congregation in our fellowship. The parents would then follow the tuition practice of their new home congregation.
- ☉ **Option 2**— Attend and complete a Bible Information Course with a St. Matthew's pastor while paying full tuition. If after taking the course the parents choose to remain non-members at this time, they would continue to pay a graduated tuition rate over the next three years.

If after taking the course the parents choose not to join St. Matthew's Lutheran Church or a congregation in our fellowship, the parents would follow the guidelines of Category #4 in this section.

4. Those Who are Not Members of WELS/ ELS Congregations and Have No Plans to Join

Parents who are not member of WELS/ ELS congregation and have no plans to join a WELS or ELS congregation will complete an enrollment application prior to acceptance. The information will be reviewed by the St. Matthew's Lutheran Board of Christian Education at its regular monthly meeting or at a special meeting called by the Board of Christian Education in special circumstances. This information will assist the Board in making its decision regarding entrance of the child into St. Matthew's Lutheran School.

All information on this form is considered confidential. Upon acceptance, the BOCE in its review will assess each family on an individual basis to set tuition for one year to be reviewed each school year. They may also be asked to take a Bible Information Course so they understand what their student is being taught. They will agree that their student will complete all curricular requirements of the school even it does not agree with their own beliefs. These parents may also realize that a cap of a classroom enrollment size could restrict attendance of their student.

Information regarding current fees and tuition for St. Matthew's Lutheran Church members, sister WELS and ELS congregation members, and non-members is available on the "St. Matthew's Lutheran School Fees and Information Sheet" for the current school year. A copy of this sheet can be picked up at the school office.

Registration Fee

A non-refundable registration fee (Special situations – i.e. family move - would come before the Board of Christian Education to consider a prorated refund) has been established by the Board of Christian Education to help cover a portion of the costs of textbooks, materials, cost to the congregation for building maintenance supplies and activities provided for the students. Each student is responsible for the proper care of books which have been loaned to them and must have each school-owned book covered. Fines are assessed for books which have been damaged as a result of misuse.

Payment of the registration fee and all other fees must be made before the start of school, unless special arrangements are made with the Board of Christian Education. Failure to comply may prevent distribution or transfer of student records. The current registration fee is listed on the School Information Sheet. A copy can be obtained through the school office.

Non-discrimination Policy

St. Matthew's Lutheran School admits students of any race, color, national, and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. St. Matthew's Lutheran School does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national and ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, scholarship, and loan programs, and athletic or other school administered programs.

Government Aid Programs

The State of Minnesota offers several programs for students in private and parochial schools. Programs include aid for instructional materials, health services, guidance and counseling, bus transportation, special education programs, and hot lunch. Special government forms require parent signatures should families choose to participate any of the programs.

1. **Instructional Materials** - Our school receives an annual monetary allotment from the state for each child whose parents sign the participation form to take part in the correlated government program.
2. **Guidance and Counseling** - These services are available upon request or at the teachers' discretion with parent approval, for students in grades seven and eight.

3. **Health Services** - See the introductory paragraph of the “Health and Safety” section of this handbook for an explanation.
4. **Special Education** - Children with suspected special learning challenges may be evaluated by the local public school specialist upon the request of the parent or the teacher. If the child qualifies, she/he may spend the time needed to receive individualized instruction through District #861. This instruction is geared to the child’s special needs.

Safety

School doors are locked during the school day. Please enter the facility via the High Street entrance by pressing a button to allow entrance.

School Volunteers Background Checks

St. Matthew’s Lutheran School has been blessed with many faithful volunteers. For good order and for the safety of the children all volunteers are asked to fill out a volunteer form that includes a background check. Each volunteers needs to complete the form prior to the service offered (chaperones on field trips, adult drivers, classroom aides, coaches, volunteer tutors and other volunteering services). If there are any questions please speak to our principal.

Fire Drills and Other Emergency Preparations

Practice fire, tornado drills and lock down procedures are conducted throughout the school year. Children are instructed in proper behavior for an emergency so that, in case of fire, the building can be evacuated in a rapid, safe manner. In the event of a tornado or severe storm warning, the children will be taken to a place of maximum safety. The teachers will also work with students in preparation for other emergency situations that may arise keeping in mind the age of student served.

Health

Health services are provided for St. Matthew's students through the local school district. State laws make such services available to parochial schools. They conduct vision, hearing, and scoliosis screening annually for specified grades. When necessary, parents will be advised of corrective measures that may need to be taken as a result of these screenings. In order for your child to participate in any of these programs, the Health Services Form must be checked "yes" and signed by the parent. This form is completed at registration.

The following policies and procedures are in place for these health/ safety issues:

1. **Training in First Aid & CPR** – Selected members of our ministry team have been trained in basic First Aid, CPR and the use of an AED. Ongoing training and awareness for our ministry team is a goal of the Board of Christian Education.
2. **First Aid** - Treatment for minor accidents and injuries will be administered according to standard first aid procedures. Emergency cases will be handled according to instructions on the Emergency Contact Card completed for each child at registration time.
3. **AED** – There are two AED's located on our campus. One is located outside the gym and the other in church narthex (back of church). Signs are also posted around our facility regarding the AED location in the event of an emergency.
4. **Illness** - If a child becomes ill at school and is unable to complete the day, the parents will be contacted to make arrangements for transportation home. If parents cannot be contacted, the designated emergency contact person on the Emergency Contact Card will be called.
5. **Medication** - Medication may be administered at school by the classroom teacher or office staff under very strict conditions.

a. Administering Medications in School

It is not the responsibility of the school or its employees to prescribe drugs, medications, or home remedies. Medications should be administered at home under the supervision of the parent/guardian when possible. However, some students require administration of medications or medical procedures to be performed during the regular school day. In those situations, the following procedures will be followed.

Students who need medication during the school day must have a “written order of a licensed physician and written authorization of a parent/guardian.” Medication must be brought to school in a container labeled by the pharmacy or physician. Students who need over the counter medication during the school day must have “written authorizations of a parent/guardian.” Also for you and your child’s protection, the medication must be brought to school by a parent or an adult.

b. Prescription Medications

Prescription medications must be provided in an original pharmacy container with a current label. Prescription medications brought to school in any other container will not be administered. Questions regarding dosage and administration of the medications will be directed to the prescribing physician or the parent/guardian, at the discretion of the staff.

c. Physician Order for Medication and Parent/Guardian Authorization

Before any medications will be dispensed by staff, a Physician Order for Medication and Parent/Guardian Authorization form signed by the parent/guardian of the student must be on file with the school health secretary. These forms are available from the health secretary.

d. Unused Medications

When use of a medication has ceased, or is no longer needed by the student, it is the parent/guardian’s responsibility to retrieve unused medications from the school. Any unused medication will be disposed of by the school at the end of the school year.

Please note: Specific release forms for this are available in the nurse’s office, but a note including the above-mentioned liability release, child’s name, date, medication, reason, time, and physician’s order is also acceptable.

Daily Schedule

Children are encouraged not to arrive at school before 7:15 a.m., unless their bus schedule dictates otherwise or special arrangements are made. The staff conducts meetings immediately before and after school and the playground is not supervised. Children who arrive before 7:15 a.m. should wait quietly in the entrances to the school. They should report to their classrooms at 7:15 a.m. Those children arriving after 7:15 a.m. should report immediately to their classrooms. Any child who wants to leave the school grounds between the time of morning arrival and afternoon departure will be required to provide written parental permission or personal parental contact with the school.

Our Kindergarten through Eighth grade school day begins at 7:45 a.m. and concludes at 2:15 p.m. Pre-K runs from 9:00 - 11:30 a.m. Students who walk to school are expected to walk home immediately upon dismissal and students who ride the buses are to await their bus under staff supervision. Children must leave the school grounds upon dismissal unless a supervised activity in which they participate is scheduled or other arrangements have been made with the teacher.

Attendance

Regular and punctual school attendance is essential for success in school. The Compulsory Attendance Law (MN Statute 102.105) requires that every child be in school until age 18 with the only exception being in the case of illness.

When a child is absent, parents are to call before 7:45 a.m. and leave a message for the child's teacher or please send a note with a sibling. Any make-up work due to an absence is the responsibility of the student and parents. Work must be turned in within a reasonable amount of time for credit.

For a normal class day, a half-day absence is marked if a student arrives between 8:00 am and 11:00 am and is present for the remainder of the school day. A half-day absence will also be marked if a student misses class for at least one-half hour due to an appointment during the day.

Cases of excessive absences will be brought to the attention of the administration and the Board of Christian Education for evaluation. In the case of excessive absences due to illness, a written doctor's excuse will be brought to the proper authorities for review. **MN Statute 260.015 labels a student a habitual truant if he/she misses school seven or more days without lawful excuse.**

Parents are urged to make appointments with doctors and dentists during non-school times. If this cannot be avoided, we ask that you please avoid scheduling appointments during the first hour of classes as this is our time for the instruction of God's Word. If a child is to leave during the day, please send a signed excuse with the child explaining the reason for leaving school grounds. If a child will be taken out of school for several days, please consult with the child's teacher for assignments that will be missed.

The full explanation of absences and tardiness is contained in the St. Matthew's Lutheran School Student Attendance Policy.

Tardiness

The school day begins at 7:45 a.m. Late arrivals can disrupt the classroom routine. A tardy is marked if a student arrives within 15 minutes of the beginning of school. Students who are not in the classroom by the bell marking the beginning of school may be marked tardy. These tardies will be noted and will appear on the student's report card. Students will not be marked tardy if their bus is late, or if their transportation is late due to weather or road conditions.

Bus Transportation

The Winona Public School District provides bus transportation for all elementary students who live one mile or more from the school. Routes appear in the local newspaper shortly before school begins each fall. Parents are to call the District #861 Transportation Office (494-0810) to receive a transportation application form and/ or for answers to any questions regarding bus transportation. If any special arrangements are made with the bus company, the school must be notified so that the teacher on duty knows the arrangements.

Children who ride the bus are expected to demonstrate Christian conduct at all times. Failure to do so may result in suspension of riding privileges. For further information, please refer to the Winona Area Public Schools Transportation Handbook or contact the WAPS Transportation Office.

Bicycle Riders

Children may use bicycles as their means of transportation to and from school. A bicycle, like a car, must be in good working condition to be a safe vehicle. Children who ride bicycles must know and obey traffic rules. Children are not permitted to ride bicycles on the school playground, sidewalks, or on the parking lot. They should be walked to the racks and locked upon arrival and should be unlocked and walked to the street upon dismissal. Bike locks are suggested for the protection of the owner. Bicycle riders should not arrive before 7:15 a.m.

Emergency Closing

In the event of inclement weather, classes will not be held whenever School District #861 announces that it is closing, even if no specific mention of St. Matthew's Lutheran School is made. Such announcements are made on Winona radio affiliates, www.winonaradio.com & the WAPS (Winona Area Public Schools) website - www.winona.k12.mn.us - usually by 7:00 a.m. Parents who choose to be on the "text alert" system established by St. Matthew's Lutheran School will be notified directly.

Church Attendance

In keeping with the program of religious training in the school, all pupils are expected to attend worship services with their parents. It is hoped that the example of the parents will support the teachings of God's Word regarding devotion to the preaching and teaching of God's Word, and to regularly hearing and learning it. Also, it is desirable that your child participates in the Sunday School or Bible Class program offered by the church. It supplements and strengthens your child's Christian training.

Singing for Church Services

There are times when our school children are provided the opportunity to sing during worship services. Parents will be notified when the children sing by special notices announced in the School Newsletter. If your child will not be able to sing, written notification informing the teacher of your child's absence is appreciated. (Children of other congregations are invited and very much welcome to sing with their class but are not required to participate).

Chapel Services

Chapel services are conducted on a weekly basis throughout the school year on Wednesday mornings for students and visitors in church. We encourage and invite everyone to join us in this worship.

Mission Collections

Students have an opportunity to share their love of Christ through mission collections gathered at school. The Mission projects are adopted at the beginning of the school year.

Money Collection

It is requested that parents make payment of bills on Monday or the first day of the school week. Please send separate checks for separate payments. (e.g. hot lunch, sports fees, field trip payments, and gift collections). Please do not combine a number of different payments in one check. Separate payments simplify the handling and bookkeeping of funds and allow us to make deposits in a more timely and fashion.

Hot Lunch Program

Our school offers meals on a daily basis through the National Hot Lunch Program. The price for such lunches is announced at the start of the school year. Extra milk for the noon meal may be purchased for an additional fee. Milk or orange juice may be purchased for the morning break for an additional cost as well. Payment of the menu is preferred by the first week of each menu. The student may be selective as to the days she/he wishes to eat, hot lunch; however, she/he is encouraged to finish the entire meal purchased. As Christian stewards we want to encourage proper use of God's gifts to us and not permit them to be wasted.

Appearance

St. Matthew's Lutheran School's teachers and the parents of the students train children to live as Christians in the world, but not of the world. The Lord wants each of us to give a positive witness to the world in the way that we dress and groom ourselves. For the sake of uniformity, certain types of clothing will be unacceptable for students at school or in school-sponsored events.

Student Dress

Although most matters of appearance are allowed according to Christian freedom, we need to use that freedom wisely so as not to give offense or appear to be “of the world.” A St. Matthew’s Lutheran School student should wear clothing consistent with Christian values and appropriate for the school activity. Your manner of dress and grooming should not be a distraction within the learning environment. I Corinthians 10:23-31 – “Everything is permissible, but not everything is beneficial. Everything is permissible, but not everything is constructive. Nobody should seek his own good, but the good of others...So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.”

1. All clothing should be in good repair, clean, and free of holes or tears. Undergarments should not be visible.
2. **Pants**: Docker or cargo style pants, jeans, and athletic/sport pants may be worn. In addition, female students may wear Capri style pants with a length between the knees and ankles. Jeggings, leggings or yoga pants may be worn. For students in 5th through 8th grade, the top garment must cover to the top of the inseam of the jeggings, leggings and yoga pants when hands are raised straight above the head. No pajama or flannel pants are allowed, except on special school day events.
3. **Shirts**: All shirts must have sleeves and cover the back and midriff when seated or standing, and when the student bends over or lift up their arms. The necklines of all styles of shirts should come no lower than two inches below the clavicle (collar bone). Shirts with questionable slogans or pictures promoting music groups, TV shows, movies, alcohol, drugs, bars, tobacco products, satanic symbols, or anything that is suggestive or offensive should not be worn.
4. **Shorts, Skirts, and Dresses**: These should cover half the distance from the top of the inseam to the knee. For those students in 5th through 8th grade, the top garment must cover to the top of the inseam of tight fitting shorts. Shorts may be worn in August, September, and May, and other times as announced.
5. **Footwear**: Dress shoes, athletic shoes, and sandals which securely fasten/tie to the foot may be worn. Footwear such as flip flops, crocs, slide sandals, and Heelys are not allowed. Athletic/Gym shoes should be separate from street shoes. Gym shoes must be non-marking. Students should have a pair of boots when there is snow on the ground. If they do not wear boots, they should have a second pair of shoes to wear in the classroom after being outside.
6. **Ornamentation**: Piercing in the ear(s) only. Excessive makeup is inappropriate.

7. **Hair**: Hair should be clean, well groomed, and at appropriate length and natural appearing color is encouraged. No hats worn in the school building during the school day. (Exceptions for special school day events)

If, in the opinion of two teachers, inappropriate clothing/shoes are worn, the child is to be warned about it and the teacher will send a note home to his/her parents/guardians. The note will need to be signed by the parents/guardians and returned the next school day. If the dress is disruptive to the learning environment, a parent will be called to bring alternate clothing.

Physical Education

Physical Education is a class and will be taken by all students. Weather appropriate clothing for use during outdoor class time is also the responsibility of the student.

Food/Drinks/Gum are not allowed in the gymnasium or locker rooms for physical education. Any jewelry, watches, bracelets, rings, etc. that may pose a potentially unsafe situation must be removed. We ask that students do not bring valuables into the locker rooms or gymnasiums.

Acceptable excused absences from PE class are the following: a note from a parent, doctor or school nurse. If a situation occurs during school hours, participation will be at the principal's discretion.

Extracurricular Activities

Eligibility – Eligibility guidelines are established so that circumstances may be dealt with in a consistent manner by the faculty and board. Students are to remember that they are students first and to use their God-given abilities to the best that they are able. The faculty will take into consideration unique situations.

1. Student's grades will be reviewed before the start of a season. To be eligible for athletic activities, a student must have at least a cumulative "C+ or 2.4 GPA" average and not be failing any classes. If he/she is below a cumulative "C+ or 2.4 GPA" average or is failing a class, that student may not be permitted to practice until the grade average has improved.
2. During a sport season, if a student's cumulative grade average falls below a "C+ or 2.4 GPA" or the student is failing in a class, that student will be suspended from games for two weeks. The student may also be suspended from practices during that time period. After two weeks, if the student shows that he/she is working to his/her ability to get the work done, he/she will be allowed to participate again. If a student is suspended a second time during the season and after two weeks he/she has not shown satisfactory progress, he/she will not be allowed to participate in extracurricular activities for nine weeks.
3. A student may be suspended from participation in extracurricular activities other than sports for incomplete or unsatisfactory work at the discretion of the faculty and in consultation with the parents.

Athletics – Children in grades 5-8 (grade 4, if necessary) have the opportunity to participate in extracurricular sports and cheerleading. Adequate insurance coverage is required for all students who participate in the athletic program, as the school's coverage is limited. By participating in these activities, the students and parents are placing their trust and support in the qualified coaches, and student-parent support is expected. Each team will also have its own rules concerning things like dress codes, etc. Students who participate will abide by the rules of their particular team.

Band – Individual band lessons, sectional rehearsals and ensemble work are available in a school-sponsored program in grades 5-8. Details are announced at the beginning of the school year.

Field Trips

Field trips are valuable learning experiences and a pleasant diversion from regular classroom work. Trips to points of educational interest will be taken whenever possible. Parents will be informed ahead of time about any field trips. The Travel Consent Form covers written consent from the parent.

Memory Work, School Work and Assignments

A reasonable amount of memory work will be assigned regularly during the Word of God period. The memorization of hymns, Bible passages and the chief parts of the Catechism not only prepares children for their day of confirmation, but also provides a ready source of spiritual comfort in times of need. We ask that parents take special time to work with their children in this area of Christian education especially in the lower grades.

Our faculty is in agreement with educators who feel that homework can be beneficial to both students and parents. It is beneficial to the students if it reinforces and extends the work of the classroom. It may also serve as an aid to the students in developing self-discipline. It has benefits for the parents in helping them to better understand the activities of their children during their hours away from home.

A great amount of homework ordinarily should not be necessary unless the child has been absent, willfully neglects his work while at school, or is not working up to his grade level for other reasons. The students are given time to work at school. Please be sure to contact the teacher if it should appear that your child is being burdened with homework. If excessive "lates" become a problem for a student, the child's teacher will be in contact with the parent about an educational plan to satisfactorily complete schoolwork.

Optional Homework Assistance

Teachers are available for additional assistance after school. Their after school schedules will be provided on a weekly basis. This information can be found in your child's classroom newsletter. Please encourage your child to make arrangements with their teacher if assistance is needed.

Parent and Teacher Cooperation

As Christians, we all know that everyone battles sin and Satan. The devil uses every method at his disposal to bring disharmony into the family of God. Since a Lutheran Elementary School is not exempt from the onslaughts of Satan, there may be occasions when parents and teachers need to sit down as Christians and discuss a problem that has arisen.

When questions or differences arise, it is imperative that proper Biblical guidelines are followed so that the problem may be brought to a satisfactory and God-pleasing solution. The following reminders will be helpful in handling a problem.

1. Please communicate with both your child and the teacher, so that a complete understanding of the problem is gained.
2. Please do not contact teachers, parents, or friends who are not involved. Don't make the matter a point of sinful gossip. Please maintain a positive attitude about the school and teachers in the presence of your child.
3. Open and honest communication between parents and teachers is necessary for the educational growth of your child in the Christian environment. Never consider your question to be insignificant; we don't.

Always remember Matthew 18:15 "If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you," and as Jesus taught us to pray, "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us."

The principal's office is always open for constructive criticism or discussion of matters involving the school. We are all working together for the purpose of nurturing the lambs of the Savior. That task is worth our best efforts.

Christian Counseling

Our Lutheran Elementary School is happy to make available to our families the services of a trained professional Christian counselor. Early discussion and understanding, together with clarifying some of the issues, can help everyone in our school family to resolve problems within the family and at school.

Families or individuals wishing to meet with a Christian counselor should contact the pastor or principal for more information.

Conduct and Discipline

OUR RESPONSE TO HIS LOVE

Grace, God's undeserved love, is the message of the Bible, "*For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life*" (John 3:16). What have we done to deserve a gift like that? Nothing.

In response to His love for us, we strive to love others as Christ loves us. Love is an *action verb*. 1 Corinthians defines love as *being patient, kind, and persevering*. As we interact with one another, we must strive to follow this model of God's grace.

DISCIPLINE PHILOSOPHY

"All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness" (1 Timothy 3:16). Teachers make every effort to treat all children fairly according to God's Word. On the other hand, all must realize that students owe implicit obedience to their teachers under the Fourth Commandment (*Honor your father and mother, that it may go with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth...We should fear and love God that we do not dishonor or anger our parents and others in authority, but honor, serve, and obey them, and give them love and respect*). Students are expected to show respect to their teachers and all members of the staff at all times and in all situations.

All children attending St. Matthew's must submit to wholesome discipline from the Word of God, *"Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right"* (Ephesians 6:1). Students must also submit to reasonable consequences by the teacher.

Our children will be taught always to be thankful that God has chosen them to be His own and to show their love for their Savior through proper Christian conduct. *"This is love for God: to obey His commands"* (1 John 5:3).

DISCIPLINE OBJECTIVES

St. Matthew's strives to provide an environment where...

- students are taught to live their faith.
- teaching can take place.
- students have the opportunity to learn.
- no student feels threatened physically or emotionally.
- students feel they are loved and important.
- positive behavior is encouraged, praised, and rewarded. At other times it becomes our duty to point out, admonish, and correct errors with Christian love and concern for the individual.

CHRISTIAN DISCIPLINE

To ensure that we offer every student the opportunity to enjoy the privilege of learning, St. Matthew's has developed a policy about what is acceptable conduct and what is not. We have established and identified several discipline violations as major offenses. They include, but are not limited to, the use of inappropriate language, fighting,

insubordination, harassment, and vandalism. A violation in these areas will be treated as a major offense.

A major offense shall be handled as follows:*

1. The first offense will be documented and will result in a **detention**. A **discipline plan** will be written and signed by all included parties.
2. The second offense will be documented and will result in a **suspension** and a **mandatory meeting with the parents at school**.
3. The third offense will be documented and will result in a **longer suspension** and a **mandatory meeting with the parents at school**.
4. The fourth offense **will result in permanent expulsion** from the school, without appeal.
5. Any lifestyle or behavior that is deemed dangerous, disruptive, or destructive may result in expulsion.

Suspension means no participation in school sponsored extracurricular activities for that period of time. The dean of students/principal in consultation with the teacher, and if necessary the Board of Education, will handle each child on an individual basis.

All are urged to remember the obligation laid on them by God in the Eighth Commandment that makes it an offense to speak in a derogatory way about any other Christian-teachers, administrators, pastors, and board members. (*You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor...We should fear and love God that we do not tell lies about our neighbor, betray him, or give him a bad name, but defend him, speak well of him, and take his words and actions in the kindest possible way.*)

**The dean of students/principal reserves the right to be flexible with the acceleration of steps on a case-by-case basis depending on the circumstances.*

TERMINATION OF ENROLLMENT

The Board of Education reserves the right to terminate the enrollment of a student, at any time it deems necessary, for the welfare of the school. The primary purpose of St. Matthew's is clearly reflected in the school philosophy that is found in this handbook. Sometimes it may become apparent that a student or parent refuses to live in harmony with those around him/her and refuses to follow the principles of good

Christian citizenship. It may then be in the best interest of the student and the school that he/she discontinue his/her studies at St. Matthew's.

As a Christian school and non-profit institution, St. Matthew's reserves the right to refuse enrollment or to disenroll students whose personal or family's moral beliefs and practices conflict with St. Matthew's understanding of the Word of God.

St. Matthew's is affiliated with the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS). The WELS website, www.wels.net, is a helpful resource to better understand our Scriptural beliefs. Located on that website, under "About WELS," is a web page entitled "What We Believe." You are encouraged to explore our doctrinal statements about social issues and worship practices.

No student shall at any time contest or undermine the stated purpose of the school or doctrines of the WELS as revealed in Scripture, in or outside the classroom. Any student actively promoting or living a lifestyle contrary to scripture may result in disenrollment.

DEFINITION AND EXPLANATION OF TERMS

Detention—Behavioral detentions are given by the teacher or dean of students/principal for student infractions of school or classroom rules. Detentions are up to 60-minute periods and will typically be served after the school day from 2:30-3:30 p.m. Parents will be notified of the reason for the detention along with the date and time when the detention will be served.

Suspension—A suspension is the removal of the student from the classroom for a period of one to five days for disciplinary purposes. The dean of students/principal ordinarily implements suspensions. The dean of students/principal will decide whether the suspension will be an in-school or out-of-school suspension.

Expulsion—Expulsion is defined as the removal of the student from the school's enrollment. If the dean of students/principal feels that an expulsion is necessary, an indefinite out-of-school suspension will be issued until the Board of Education can discuss the issue. The student's parent(s) will be invited to attend the first portion of the meeting to discuss the issue with the Board of Education. At the end of the meeting, after the Board has had a chance to discuss the matter privately, the parent(s) will be informed of the outcome.

Probation—A probation period is time during the school year dedicated to special positive attention for students who need help achieving the academic or behavioral standards expected at St. Matthew's. The probation process is a team effort, led by a teacher and supported by parents. Other than "New Student

Probation", other forms of probation may include academic probation and behavioral probation.

New Student Probation—During the first grading period, the student is monitored and evaluated by the faculty to help them understand and achieve the academic and behavioral standards required. Meetings among student, parents, and teachers may be held as needed to encourage progress.

<u>Reasons for Detention</u> <u>May Include:</u>	<u>Reasons for Suspension</u> <u>May Include:</u>	<u>Reasons for Expulsion</u> <u>May Include:</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chronic late work • Cheating • Persistent behavioral problems • Inappropriate language/gestures • Bullying • Destruction of property • Repeated violations of dress code • Infraction in which the referring teacher and dean of students/principal deem a detention is appropriate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fighting or assault • Stealing • Three detentions during one semester of the school year • Pulling of the fire alarm • Serious infraction in which the referring teacher and dean of students/principal deem a suspension appropriate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fighting or assault • Possession of a firearm, explosive, or other weapon deemed dangerous by the dean of students/principal • The intent to seriously harm a student or teacher • Chronic misbehavior • Possession of tobacco or vaping products, illegal drugs, or alcohol • Persistent lack of cooperation as indicated by an unwilling spirit or unacceptable attitude

APPEALING PROCEDURES FOR A SUSPENSION OR EXPULSION

Appeals from parents will be dealt with only outside of the regular school day within a reasonable time of the suspension or expulsion. The matter is to be taken up with the dean of students/principal. A final step would be a written appeal to the Board of Education, the ultimate decision-making power for St. Matthew's.

CLASSROOM BEHAVIOR

Each teacher will explain his/her guidelines and expectations for their classroom. The students are expected to give complete obedience and respect to their teacher. To maintain a good learning atmosphere is the desire of each teacher and the aim of all classroom guidelines and procedures. Students need to respect the needs of others in their room and do their part to help maintain the kind of atmosphere conducive to learning.

HALLWAY BEHAVIOR

When the students pass through the halls, they should respect other classes in session and other people in the halls. All students are to walk quietly and orderly through the halls. Students are to stay out of other students' lockers.

PLAYGROUND BEHAVIOR

The playground exists for student enjoyment. However, for the safety and consideration of everyone, certain rules must be observed.

- Students must use playground equipment in the manner for which it was built.
- Baseballs, golf balls, and other hard balls are not permitted.
- Fighting or "play fighting" on school property will not be tolerated.
- Students are to line up immediately when signaled to do so.

Harassment, Bullying, Threats and Matters of Respect

St. Matthew's expects that students will treat others with respect and courtesy. The school will not tolerate harassment or bullying based on race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, or status with regard to public assistance or disability. St. Matthew's will take action to ensure that all school practices and activities are free of unlawful discrimination or harassment.

Statements on harassing behavior

St. Paul tells us, *“Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another above yourselves”* (Romans 12:10). Bullying has no place in the sanctified life. Bullying is intentional, continued harmful behavior initiated by one or more students directed toward another student and will not be tolerated. Not all conflict constitutes bullying. Any person who observes what he or she feels is bullying is to notify a teacher or direct adult supervisor immediately. The teacher will then contact the dean of students/principal if any further action is needed.

All complaints of harassment will be dealt with as a serious matter. All complaints of harassment are to be brought to the attention of the teacher or adult in charge at the time.

Any behavior, whether physical, verbal, written, or non-verbal, that hinders the learning/teaching environment or that can be interpreted as threatening to others is not acceptable. St. Matthew’s is committed to maintaining a learning environment that is safe where students and staff can work and study productively. St. Matthew’s prohibits any form of harassment or violence.

Examples of prohibited, un-welcomed, or unsolicited behaviors include, but are not limited to:

- Physical—intentional, un-welcomed touch against another’s body, assault, or blocking free movement at school. St. Matthew’s does not tolerate physical harassment. As in all areas of conduct, it is expected that students would conduct themselves in a God-pleasing manner. If a student uses poor judgment in the areas of physical harassment, these actions will be dealt with immediately.
- Verbal—suggestive or obscene comments, threats, jokes, as well as comments about a student’s body which are negative or embarrassing.
- Written—displaying or sharing suggestive pictures and/or cartoons, messages through social media, etc., text messaging, instant messaging, mobile phone generated messages and images, internet postings, obscene letters, notes, etc.
- Non-Verbal—suggestive or obscene looks, leering, or gestures.

Response to Harassment

St. Matthew's is committed to the equitable and swift resolution of harassment issues. Any student or employee experiencing harassment should notify the classroom teacher. The teacher may consult with the dean of students/principal as needed. If deemed necessary, the dean of students/principal will investigate and handle the matter in a swift and equitable manner and communicate a decision to all parties involved.

Retaliation Prohibited

We will not tolerate retaliation against a student or parent who brings a good faith report of discrimination or harassment. If you believe retaliation has occurred, you should promptly notify the dean of students/principal. If you feel that the matter has not been resolved after speaking with the dean of students/principal, your concern should be brought to the Board of Education. All students and parents are expected to be cooperative and forthright in responding to any report of discrimination or harassment.

Repentance and Forgiveness

When the child shows signs of repentance, our Christian discipline must never end in the Law, but must be followed with the sweet proclamation of the Gospel. The Gospel is the motivator of the child's Christian living. We can then offer positive guidance to the child on the basis of Holy Scripture.

Gum, Pop, Etc.

There are currently no vending machines located on school premises. No gum/pop is to be consumed by students in the school building during the school day unless special permission is granted. It is understood that as good Christian stewards, students will avoid littering and will assist in keeping their school's premises neat and clean.

Classroom Visitation

Parents are always welcome to visit classes. These class visits should be used for observation only. They furnish an excellent basis for parent-teacher conferences which may be arranged for a later time.

Parents are asked to make an appointment with the teacher and principal before visiting. This will make it possible to avoid coming when the regular teacher is absent or when tests are being administered. It is best that younger children not accompany their parents on these visits; that way the full time and attention of the parent can be given to observing the classroom, and the class can give their full attention to their teacher.

It is preferred that class visits not be made during the first and last months of the school year.

All conferences should be made by appointment and should never be held during class time or at events that are social in nature. Conferences should be planned so that the teacher and parent are free to devote the time and attention necessary to properly discuss the matter of concern.

Parent - Teacher Organization

All parents of children enrolled in St. Matthew's Lutheran School are encouraged to become active members of the Parent-Teacher Organization. Please look for further announcements as the year unfolds. All parents of registered students Pre-Kindergarten through Eighth Grade are members.

Testing Program

Each year a schedule of standardized testing will take place in grades 3-8. The testing is done to determine the child's individual progress and to aid the faculty in curriculum evaluation. This testing is ordinarily done during the months of September and October. A healthy breakfast and a well-rested body allow the brain to function well on regular school days as well as test days. Testing results will be sent home to parents & guardians. Individual parent meetings with teachers to discuss the results will also be offered.

Report Cards

Report cards are issued every ten weeks. Opportunity is set aside after the first and third grading period for a formally scheduled parent/teacher conference to discuss student progress. However, a parent or teacher may call for a conference at any time.

School Pictures

An arrangement with a photographer is made each year for having individual pictures taken. Pictures are scheduled to be taken in the fall and spring.

Cell Phones and Electronic Devices

Students may bring cell phones to school in order to make arrangements with parents. Cell phones are to be turned in to the teacher designated area before the school day and collected at the end of the day. Cell phones are not to be carried or used by the student during the school day unless the teacher, in an emergency situation, has granted permission.

Students may wear smart watches unless they become a distraction during school hours. Best to set a school mode during school hours.

- First offense the device will be taken for the day and returned to student following school.
- Second offense will result in the parents picking up the device following school.
- Third offense will result in it not being allowed back into school.

No other hand-held electronic devices such as MP3 players, iPods, and hand-held games may be used during school hours. Any confiscated cell phone or electronic device due to the abuse of these privileges will have to be picked up by the parent from the principal or classroom teacher. St. Matthew's Lutheran School is not responsible for lost, stolen or damaged electronic devices.

Library

St. Matthew's has a variety of books in its library. The classroom teachers will assist with the sign-out and return of books borrowed from the school's library. Our library

does not take the place of the public library. It serves as a resource that complements both the classroom and public libraries. Students who misuse, lose, or fail to return books on time are responsible for the replacement cost or repair of books not returned or damaged while in their charge.

Lost and Found

A considerable amount of lost and unclaimed clothing is collected during the school year. Misplaced articles are more easily returned when properly labeled. If you would sew or write your child's full name on the inside label or hem of all coats, caps, sweaters, boots, etc., it will help in returning the lost article to the owner. The lost and found box is located in the Booster Club Room (across from the Main Office). Unclaimed articles are donated to charity at the end of the school year.

Family & School Partnership

Proverbs 22:6 *“Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it.”*

1 Corinthians: 23-24,31 *“Everything is permissible but not everything is beneficial. Everything is permissible, but not everything is constructive. Nobody should seek his own good, but the good of others. So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all to the glory of God.”*

What an honor it is to raise a child! In today’s world it can be an awesome, but sometimes scary responsibility. The passages above remind us that the Lord gave this privilege first to parents long before Lutheran schools existed.

St. Matthew’s Lutheran School is here to partner with you to educate and lead your child to know their Savior. That means training them to use all their talents to serve the Lord in the best way they can. When we work to create an atmosphere of communication and cooperation, your child will benefit.

Involved parents make for involved children. Parents who are engaged in school and church activities encourage their children to come, explore, make friends, and learn. Parents, teachers, and students each have expectations. All need to know that they will work as partners in many aspects of school and home life.

As **teachers** of St. Matthew’s Lutheran School we will, to the best of our ability, do the following:

1. Place God's Word foremost in our lives and attend church regularly.
2. Be a solid Christian role model for children and parents.
3. Share the love of Jesus and teachings of the Bible in various ways.
4. Show Christian love and respects for our students and families.
5. Speak well of our students and parents and demonstrate love at all times.
6. Make special efforts to help each child identify and grow in his/her God-given abilities and talents.
7. Use a variety of teaching methods to meet the needs of the students.
8. Use a classroom management plan that clearly states the expectations of the students and teacher.
9. Perform our duties faithfully and communicate with parents regularly.
10. Be prompt and prepared in our educational tasks.
11. Continue to seek ways to grow professionally.
12. Have ways the parents can volunteer at school.
13. Be proactive and empathetic when dealing with classroom matters.

As **students** of St. Matthew's Lutheran School you will, to the best of your ability, do the following:

1. Work to your fullest God-given ability in all that you do.
2. Complete all homework assignments thoroughly and on time.
3. Seek out and find solutions without resorting to excuses.
4. Be seated and ready to begin learning by 7:40 a.m.
5. Wear appropriate clothing and maintain a neat and clean appearance
6. Exhibit Christ-like behavior in all that you do and say.

As **parents** of St. Matthew's Lutheran School you will, to the best of your ability, do the following:

1. Train and guide your child to grow in the ways of the Lord by: Placing God's Word foremost in your lives and in your home (i.e. family devotions, prayers, etc.)
 - a. Attending church regularly with your child.
 - b. Encouraging your child to respect you and all in authority over them.
 - c. Refraining from negative criticism of teachers or school procedures.
 - d. Making sure that your child is prompt and regular in attendance to school.
 - e. Encouraging your child to be considerate, courteous, and Christ-like with all people.
2. Support and work closely with teachers for the well-being of your child.
3. Support the discipline procedures used by the teachers.
4. Lovingly work to address concerns in the following order:
 - a. **Step 1:** Child communicates with teacher; if not resolved, proceed to step 2.
 - b. **Step 2:** Parent communicates with teacher; if not resolved, proceed to step 3.
 - c. **Step 3:** Parent communicates with teacher and dean of students/principal; if not resolved, proceed to step 4.
 - d. **Step 4:** Parent communicates with dean of students/principal, Pastor, and Board of Education.
5. Avoid using inappropriate words and actions when addressing a concern (i.e. not using profane language to make a point, avoiding aggressive body language, etc.)
6. Assist your child with homework assignments, learning memory treasures, and making time to read at home.
7. Read weekly notes, emails, and texts.
8. Volunteer to help as needed and as you are available.
9. Ensure that your child receives the appropriate amount of sleep and nutrients. Studies indicate that school age children need in the area of 9-10 hours of sleep a night.
10. Ensure that your child is dressed each day in keeping with St. Matthew's dress code.