



Forest Hills Lutheran Christian School  
Middle School Handbook  
2019-2020

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## Introduction

The purpose of this document is to highlight specific expectations, outcomes, and procedures for the Forest Hills Lutheran Christian Middle School student. This does not replace the Forest Hills Parent Handbook. Rather, this document is meant to supplement the information provided in the Parent Handbook with how the Middle School Teaching Team will enforce the procedures outlined in the Parent Handbook. We look forward to providing students with a solid Lutheran Christian Middle School education.

## Understanding Middle Schoolers

Middle schoolers typically range in age from 11 through 14. There is, obviously, a wide range of development represented in these years. While not all children enter each stage or exhibit the characteristics at the same age, the following generalizations are often true of students in this stage of life:

- Age 11
  - May often be emotional and moody
  - Sensitive
  - May be critical and argumentative
  - Does not like to admit wrong
  - Wants independence from parents / authorities
  - May feel insecure
  - Needs to be noticed
  - Dreams about being famous
  - Inquisitive, without the intent of being rude to authorities or peers
  - The onset of puberty brings about additional hygiene challenges
- Age 12
  - Outgoing and enthusiastic
  - Generous and open
  - Friendly
  - Displays a sense of humor, wants to be seen as funny
  - Has emotional extremes
  - Shifts between childlike and more mature behavior
  - Less self-centered than an 11-year-old
  - Self-critical of personal appearance
- Age 13
  - Preoccupied with self and self-evaluation
  - Extremely sensitive
  - May sulk and become sarcastic when angry
  - Has more worries than fears
  - Self-conscious about dress and physical attributes
  - May be reclusive and private
  - Introspective
  - Works toward independence and wants to know 'why'
  - Often the least happy of the adolescent years
- Age 14
  - Outgoing and enthusiastic
  - Happy; displays a sense of humor
  - Less sensitive than at age 13

- o More open to expressing opinions
- o Less fear and worries, but more specific
- o Gets over emotional upsets more quickly
- o Increased emotional maturity
- o Shows self-acceptance and can accept personal strengths and weaknesses

Spiritually, the middle schooler often does what is right for social approval or because it is the “law.” Therefore, it is important that the student know about God’s unconditional love and acceptance of them and others. As they become independent of their parents, they are ready to learn from other adults such as their teachers, pastors, and the people they read about in the Bible. People who say one thing, but act differently from their beliefs confuse the middle schooler. They need to be able to trust God and His people. It is hard for middle schoolers to forgive.

It is for this reason that we must team together in raising a child in the way they should go. At FHLCS, we commit to praying for your middle schooler each and every day. We also pray for the families in our school as we understand that we can’t do this alone. Each child is unique. Each family is unique. Each situation is unique. Yet even in the midst of unique things, God knows all. He takes care of each of us, and will do so through all times in our lives, even Middle School!

## Core Values

Forest Hills holds the following core values as the guidelines by which we operate the Middle School:

- **Christ-centered** Jesus Christ is the Son of God, our Savior, who yearns for a relationship with all people; therefore, we share Jesus with students and families when we share His love, forgiveness and the message of salvation. It is our desire that all students and families develop personal relationships with Jesus Christ.
- **Christian Service** Recognize that we have been blessed with a variety of gifts and talents, our school, classrooms and individuals will respond with compassion to the needs of others. We will actively seek ways to put our faith in action by serving those in need. This may include partnering with other churches or organizations.
- **Partnership** Partnership has an integral role in every aspect of what we do as a school. All members of our school family (staff, students, parents, church bodies, community) are asked and encouraged to develop partnerships with each other. We utilize our talents and abilities to maximize our ministry not only to those in our school, but also to those in our community. Open communications is central to these partnerships. “We are one body, but many members.”
- **Academic Excellence** With Christ as our foundation, we use our God-given gifts to pursue excellence in all that we do academically, creatively and athletically. Through continuous improvement we strive to create lifelong learners, encouraging each student, faculty and staff member to achieve their best.
- **Christian Character** A person who displays Christian character is rooted in the absolute moral values of God’s Holy Word. Christian character is a spiritual fruit that is built from a real, godly relationship and commitment to Christ as Lord. It encompasses the virtues of:
  - Faith:** steadfastness in belief
  - Hope:** a God who never stops seeking us
  - Love:** a selfless, unconditional, voluntary loving kindness
  - Service:** a willingness to help others

## Cheating and Plagiarism

Work submitted by students at FHLCS is presumed to be their own. FHLCS holds students individually responsible for understanding and maintaining a standard of scholastic honesty in the execution of their work. FHLCS defines scholastic dishonesty broadly as any act that violates the rights of other students in the execution and evaluation of their work or that involves the misinterpretation of the work of another as one's own.

Scholastic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to: cheating, plagiarizing, submitting the same or substantially the same work as another student to meet the requirements of an assignment, or submitting the same work for credit an additional time, unauthorized sharing of documents through Google Drive; OR collaboration on an assignment, project, or research paper without the prior consent of the teacher. This may also include giving or receiving help, assistance, or information of any form before, during, or after an examination for the purpose of obtaining or granting an unfair advantage, submitting as their own assignments that have been prepared in whole or part by another student, and the use of materials previously published without citing material with identification to the research source (electronic or print media). Violations of Scholastic Honesty fall under the general discipline policy of the school.

## Questions

Your teachers are here to help you learn. Please let them know when you do not understand an idea or an assignment. You can ask before or after class (although the day an assignment is due is too late to ask how to do something that must be turned in that day), email, or make an appointment after school hours if needed. The teachers love to help, and the best learners are those that ask questions!

## Homework

Homework at FHLCS is designed as part of the learning program. It serves the purpose of allowing parents to be part of the educational team, helping their children in their learning journey.

While we value student learning and completing their school work, we also value the time that families need to spend together with one another. Homework is not intended to impede that time or prevent it from taking place. If a child's homework creates undue stress on the student or the family, we invite parents to talk to the teacher to discuss modifications that would be appropriate during that time.

Assignments not completed at school may be brought home for completion by the time the assignment is due. An average time expectation is approximately 60-90 minutes per night.

### **General Homework Guidelines**

Parents can assist by providing encouragement and a quiet place to study. Providing too much help is discouraged. The following guidelines are in place to help students succeed:

- Consult with the teacher if assignments are consistently burdensome.
- Students must make use of a daily planner. They are welcome to choose the planner that best suits their needs, whether it be in paper format or electronic. They are expected to use them for keeping track of assignments.
- Textbooks should return to school each day for use in class.
- Incomplete assignments interfere with class discussions of a previous lesson, and should therefore be completed on time.

- Students absent because of illness will be given extra time to complete assignments missed.
- Students who travel with their family while school is in session will not be given work in advance of their absence. Missed work will be provided when they return. However, projects that were previously assigned, and are due during the planned absence must still be submitted on time or prior to the absence.
- On average, students should spend approximately 40% of their time on math, 40% on language arts, and 20% on other subjects.
- Teachers will communicate to parents when students are not using their class time effectively.
- Students can typically expect by class:
  - A Lesson a day in math
  - Weekly lessons in both grammar and vocabulary
  - Hands-on activities in Science
  - Lessons connected with the novels being read in literature
  - Weekly memory passages
  - Weekly lessons in social studies
  - Book reports throughout the year
  - Various projects throughout the year
  - Daily lessons in Christian Studies

### ***Late Work***

All late work will be assessed a penalty of 20%. Work is considered late when it is not turned in at the beginning of the class when it is due. Work that is more than 5 days late will be given a grade of zero. Students are still expected to complete all school work, regardless of how late it is.

### **Communication**

Communication is critical in the learning journey of each child. In order for a child to be effectively educated, the student, the teacher, and the parents must be in constant communication. In the Middle School, the main method of communication is Edmodo. Students will be given training on how to access this program. Parents can access their child's account in order to receive all the class updates posted by the teachers.

Teachers in each grade will communicate by Edmodo on a regular basis. The updates will include information on upcoming lessons in each subject area, field trip information, memory verse for the week, and other pertinent information for middle school students.

Grades posted on Gradelink are also a form of communication. See Grades and Grading below for more information. Parents should also be looking for assignments that have been turned back to the students. These assignments contain percentage grades, and sometimes comments regarding the work. This communication is also informative, and the responsibility of this lies with the student.

### **Grievances and Misunderstandings**

In all cases, we follow Matthew 18, which dictates that if there is a problem you speak directly with that person. Should there be a grievance or misunderstanding between a parent and a teacher, the parent should speak directly with the teacher involved first. If the situation is not resolved, the principal may become involved. The Principal's decision is final. Should there be additional concerns, the Grievance Policy will come into effect, as found in the Forest Hills Lutheran Christian School Policy Manual.

## Lockers

At the beginning of the year, each student is assigned a locker for their own personal use. Teachers will inform the students about what belongs in the locker and what needs to be stored in another space.

Each locker has its own combination, provided by the school. Students are not to go into any other student locker without permission from the other student. Students must keep their lockers clean and organized. Food should not be stored in lockers any longer than one day. It is expected that students will clean out their lockers regularly throughout the school year.

Teachers and staff of Forest Hills reserve the right to conduct locker searches if there is reason to do so, as deemed by the staff member.

## Medications

All medications intended for students are to be stored and administered in the school office. All medicine, prescription and over the counter, should be brought to the office in the original container and clearly marked with the child's name. Parents are asked to inform the teacher of the time at which medication is to be administered. Parents are to pick up medication from the school office when it is no longer needed. Parents can sign a form, allowing the office to provide certain over the counter medications to students if it is deemed necessary. No medication is to be stored in the student's backpack or locker, unless it has been approved by the teacher (i.e. epipen, asthma inhaler, etc.).

## MAP Testing

Forest Hills administers the Measure of Academic Progress (MAP) tests three times per year. Students take these tests in the fall, in the winter, and in the spring. MAP testing measures student learning in relation to the Common Core State Standards, and assists in charting student progress. Results of these tests will be provided to parents upon request. Teachers use the results to assist in planning instruction. Copies of the results are placed in the student's permanent record.

## Outdoor Science School

Sixth graders at FHLCS go to Outdoor Science School for four days in the spring of the year as part of their science curriculum. Qualified instructors at Outdoor Science School, assisted by high school and college volunteers, lead the students through structured small group activities in a variety of ecosystems. Students are exposed to careers in science and natural resource management and have the opportunity to participate in real scientific research through data collection and analysis while in the outdoors.

The natural laboratory at Outdoor Science School, allows for the study of ecology, science, math and conservation of natural resources to take on real meaning for the students. Through hands on activities, students develop an understanding of individual parts of the environment and how the parts fit together. They develop an appreciation of the natural world and their place in it.

Students are assessed after their return from Outdoor Science School on their understanding of and growth in the science concepts presented. All students enrolled in sixth grade are expected to attend Outdoor School.

## Lost and Found

Students are responsible for their own belongings at school. To help them, lockers and other storage areas are provided. If students choose not to use these areas, or if they legitimately lose things, they will be placed in Lost and Found.

At multiple times throughout the year, Lost and Found items are laid out for students to claim. Anything unclaimed will be either disposed of appropriately, or donated to a local community agency.

Students are not permitted to bring items to school that are not part of the educational program, or invited in by the teacher.

## Discipline

Forest Hills works to instill the word and love of God in the hearts of students. As this happens, students are taught how to live at peace with one another and to demonstrate God's love through both words and actions. In Middle School, students experience a variety of changes that lead to behaviors that are new to them, and sometimes out of their character. Discipline for misbehavior is outlined in the Forest Hills Discipline Policy. This policy is followed for all students in our school, including Middle School. It is the prayer of the school that those in Middle School will demonstrate leadership qualities and use their behavior as a model of behavior for younger students to look up to and exemplify. Intentional instruction, modeling, and practice is included in the Forest Hills program to promote such behavior.

In the Middle School, students see different teachers throughout the day. Each teacher uses Class Dojo to track student behavior. If a student engages in a distracting or negative behavior, they will be given a point on the Class Dojo System.

If a student receives three distraction infractions in one class period, or 8 over the course of the day, the consequences will be:

1. The first time this happens, they're sent to the office and removed from class for an hour. Parents will receive an e-mail indicating that this happened.
2. The second time, they will go to the office, they will have community service, and parents will be called in for a meeting with me, the teachers, and the student.
3. The third time it happens, everything from number two takes place, and a one-day in-school suspension is issued.
4. The fourth time, everything from number three happens but with a two-day in-school suspension.
5. The fifth time it happens, the student may be expelled.

## Special Awards

We pray that students always give their best at school in order to both grow as individuals and to glorify God. At FHLCS, we recognize all students for their growth and efforts. We also recognize students in a few special categories, based on criteria defined by the staff. The following is a list of awards given to students in Middle School:

### ***LEST Champion of Character***

This award is given to an 8<sup>th</sup> grade student who demonstrates a high level of Integrity, Respect, Responsibility, Sportsmanship, and Servant Leadership. The Champion of Character represents the school at the Lutheran Elementary Schools Tournament (LEST) in February each year.

### ***The Dan Seim Run the Race Award***

This award is given to an 8<sup>th</sup> grade student in honor of the founding Principal of Forest Hills, Mr. Dan Seim. It is given to students who demonstrate perseverance in all they do. They persevere academically, socially, spiritually, and physically as they show their faith in their actions.

### ***The Faszholz Christian Service Award***

This award is given to a student (one boy and one girl between grades 4-7, and one student in 8<sup>th</sup> grade) who demonstrates active faith, service, character, and commitment during the school year. This award is in honor of Tom and Jean Faszholz, servants of God who give willingly of love for God in many ways.

### ***8<sup>th</sup> Grade Top Academic Award***

This award is given to the student in 8<sup>th</sup> grade who earned the highest GPA throughout middle school.

### ***The President's Award for Educational Excellence***

This award recognizes academic success in the classroom. All students in Middle School are eligible to receive this award, providing they have a cumulative annual GPA of 3.5 or higher, and that they are attentive and focused in class, and turn in their homework on time.

### ***The President's Award for Educational Achievement***

This award recognizes students that show outstanding educational growth, improvement, commitment, and intellectual development in their academic subjects. One award will be given for each Middle School grade.

## Planners

The planner is an additional level of communication with parents. It is important that students fill out their planners. All teachers write their homework for the day on their whiteboard so that students can fill out their planners at the end of each class, or at any point throughout the day.

Students must make use of a daily planner. They are welcome to choose the planner that best suits their needs, whether it be in paper format or electronic. They are expected to use them for keeping track of assignments.

## Grades and Grading

Student grades are posted online to their private accounts on Gradelink. At the beginning of each school year, parents are equipped with information regarding how to access their own child's account and receive alerts regarding their child's grades. In the subjects of Math, Language Arts, Social Studies, and Science, grades are updated regularly throughout the term. In other subjects, grades are updated as assessments are graded by the teachers.

### Grading Scale

A+	100%
A	92%-99%
A-	90%-91%
B+	88%-89%
B	82%-87%
B-	80%-81%
C+	78%-79%
C	72%-77%
C-	70%-71%
D+	68%-69%
D	62%-67%
D-	60%-61%
F	0%-59%

## Technology

Technology is a blessing to the students at Forest Hills. In Sixth and Seventh grade, students are loaned a school-owned Google Chromebook. Students in Eighth grade are provided a list of laptops available for purchase in August. They work with the Technology committee to select a laptop that will work for them, one that they will take with them after they leave Forest Hills. More details are outlined for families in August. All students and parents sign a Technology Code of Conduct agreement, outlining the expectations around the Chromebooks.

Students are not permitted to bring any other pieces of technology to school without teacher permission. We understand that some students have their own devices, and in some cases, they come to school. We ask that students keep these devices in their backpack or locker, and that they remain out of sight. If students bring any devices to school that are not permitted, Forest Hills assumes no responsibility for them.

## Middle School Student Dress Guidelines

In the Middle School, the dress code will be enforced as it appears in the Parent Handbook. If there is any doubt as to whether an article of clothing is in compliance with the dress code, check with your teacher first. The teacher is the final authority on whether a student is in dress code or not.

Students will be required to change their complete outfit for PE. At the end of PE, students will change back into their school clothes. All PE clothes must meet dress code requirements. PE clothes need to be washed at least weekly.

Acceptable clothes for PE include:

- Any Forest Hills related T-shirt or sweatshirt (this includes Run for the Hills, LEST, and anniversary shirts)
- Athletic pants (shorts, sweatpants, leggings) in black, forest green, gray, or white.
- Sneakers (converse are ok, hiking boots are not)

Students will have 5-7 minutes to change into and out of their PE clothes before and after PE. It is recommended that students who have PE after fine arts take their PE clothes with them to fine arts. They will not have time to go to their locker between fine arts and PE. If someone is unable to change in those time constraints, changing during recess is recommended.

Any student who does not come to PE in appropriate PE clothes for the day will be marked down 1 point and must change into PE provided clothes. The third time a student does not have the correct clothes, he/she will not participate for the day and receive a 0 for that day. Sneakers are a requirement to participate in any PE class.

## Student Work Time

In many classes, students will be given time to work on assignments. During this work time, students will be expected to work on the assigned task, not work for another subject. When the assigned task is completed, students may work on other assignments or read a book.