

**Rancho Christian Schools**  
31300 Rancho Community Way  
Temecula, CA 92592 (951)303-1408

# **Rancho Christian Schools**

## **Elementary and Middle School**



# **Parent/Student Handbook**

**2010-2011 School Year**

**Rancho Christian Schools**  
31300 Rancho Community Way  
Temecula, CA 92592 (951)303-1408

Dear RCS Family,

Thank you for choosing to partner with the faculty and staff of Rancho Christian Schools in the training up of your children in the image of Christ. It is an amazing ministry and an incredible blessing to watch them mature into vessels which He will use for His glory. I commend you for your commitment to this ministry in your home.

The Bible teaches that parents are to raise their children in the fear of the Lord (Deut 6:4-9). However, in today's fast-paced culture this is not an easy task for anyone. Thus the need for a partnership between the home and the school becomes vital. In addition, the church family is essential for biblical, spiritual, emotional, and social growth. Therefore, I believe there is a great need for a partnership between the **home**, the **school**, and the **church**. These three work together to instill a Christian worldview at every stage of a child's development. Christian educators have the privilege of partnering with parents and the church family in training children in the fear of the Lord.

God's purpose for mankind, since the Garden of Eden, has always been redemptive. There is a dual nature in Christian education. On one hand, people are created in the image of God. On the other hand, that image is broken due to sin. Therefore, part of Christian education is to point students to Christ in order that they may be redeemed. Part of the redemptive process is for students to discover their purpose in life. All instruction is to point toward the Creator and to reveal one's need for salvation and destiny in Him.

Contrary to popular beliefs, education is more than job preparation. Our English word for education comes from the Latin root "*educere*," which means "*to lead out or draw out*." Likewise, our English word vocation finds its root in the Latin "*vocare*," which means "*to call*." Thus, Christian educators "*lead out or draw out*" the individual's "*calling*." Children must be given opportunities to discover their calling in life within the grand scheme of God's ultimate purpose of bringing all things back to perfection in Christ (Romans 8:28-29; 11:36). Christian education is purposely designed to provide a scope and sequence curriculum that challenges students to engage their – **Head**: by growing in knowledge of truth and skill; **Heart**: by loving the Lord with all their being; **Hands**: by serving others in Christ. In the end, the goal of Christian school education is to graduate students who know God personally, embrace biblical values, and uniquely further God's kingdom in all levels of society. Therefore, our partnership in this process has eternal significance for each child and for those whom they will influence.

I feel very strongly that the strength and success of Christian school education is dependent upon the partnership of parents and staff through the power of the Holy Spirit. To this end I will continue to pray for each of us daily. May God grant us the energy and strength to be the best; may He grant us wisdom in each decision, and may we honor Him with everything that we do.

Thank you for giving of yourself sacrificially to the work of the Lord. May God bless you richly as you continue to do His will.

In Christ,



Mike Johnson,  
Superintendent

## **School Leadership and Administration**

### **Administration**

Mike Johnson	Superintendent and Principal K-11
Michael Rea	High School Vice Principal
Daniel Bolechowski	Middle School Vice Principal
Bob Swedberg	Elementary School and Operations Vice Principal
Alex McLean	Director of Communications and Development
Diane Oakden	Preschool Director
Jacquie Becker	Financial Accountant
Debbie Fallon	Director of Admissions and Office Staff
Anna Marovich	Reception
Kerry Rodda	Middle School/ High School Secretary
Brenda Heideman	Middle School/High School Secretary

### **School Board Members**

Dave Moorhead	Church Member
Rick Rahn	Church Member, Businessman
Sharon Smith	Church Member, Educator
TBD	P.T.F. Representative
Tina Khatchaturian	Finance Representative (non-voting)
Karen Pinch	School Faculty Representative (non-voting)
Tiki Beech	Preschool Faculty Representative (non-voting)
Tamara Clare	Church Member, School Parent
Rae Ann Struikmans	Church Member, Educator
David Koltivich	Church Member, Educator
Craig Shadle	Church Member, School Parent

## **SCHOOL BOARD RESPONSIBILITIES**

The primary role of the School Board is to hold the school administration accountable to the school mission and vision. As a vehicle for doing this, each member remains alert to any issues or concerns relating to curriculum and instruction, personnel, school programs and financial stewardship. Although the School Board does not finalize tuition rates, budget or philosophy, they are an instrumental part of the process. School Board members are involved in the accreditation self-study, and they serve on various special committees, such as the finance committee or superintendent's panel. In the end, the school administrators are commissioned by the School Board to carry out the daily operations and the implementation of the school mission. For more on the structure, meetings and School Board selection, refer to the School Governance document found on Edline under "From the Superintendent's Desk."

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## **Mission**

Rancho Christian Schools seeks to provide an academically challenging, Christ-centered education, in a safe environment, equipping students to serve our Lord Jesus Christ.

**To insure that students of Rancho Christian School(s) are equipped and prepared to serve the Lord Jesus Christ in any endeavor, they shall be challenged to:**

### **Core Values**

Know Jesus Christ as their personal Savior,  
Love God and love others as themselves as an act of service,  
Work at everything with their whole heart as work done for God,  
Grow in Christ obtaining both knowledge and skill.

### **Expected Schoolwide Learning Results**

**The Rancho Christian School(s) graduate shall be:**

- **Christ-Like:** having obtained an understanding of the Christian faith, equipped for continued spiritual growth, able to integrate the word of God into their lives, prepared to serve Christ and others and having the character of a virtuous man or woman.
- **A Life-Long Learner:** having read a wide scope of literature, trained in the skills of doing research, gathering and assimilating information, recognizing their own personal giftedness, and having a knowledge and appreciation of art and culture.
- **Articulate:** able to express thoughtful ideas through writing, speech, and the creative arts.
- **A Thinker:** having obtained knowledge, skilled in critical analysis, able to solve problems and to draw logical conclusions.
- **Wholesome:** having both the knowledge and understanding to care for the mental, physical and spiritual welfare of themselves and others.

## **Vision**

Rancho Christian School(s) will help students grow up in Christ: skilled in reading, thinking, and rhetoric, prepared to seek out truth, to find answers to difficult questions, not conforming to the pattern of this world but to see the world with a transformed mind, knowing God's good and perfect will, ready to serve Him and His Church uniquely within the sphere of their gifts, abilities and calling at every level of society.

### **Student Vision**

We aim to grow and train young men and women of virtue and honor who demonstrate discernment and understanding, who reason and articulate clearly, who are capable of evaluating their entire range of experience in the light of the Word of God, and who do so with eagerness in joyful submission to God. We desire they be: sensitive to the needs of others, socially and spiritually gracious, loving without condition, physically healthy, equipped with the tools of learning, desiring to grow in understanding, yet fully realizing the limitations and foolishness of

the wisdom of this world. We desire that they have a heart for the lost and the courage to seek to dissuade those who are stumbling towards destruction, that they distinguish personal faith from religion in form only, and that they possess the former, knowing and loving the Lord Jesus Christ. Because of this growing knowledge of and relationship with Christ, we will provide opportunities for students to grow in their gifts, training them to have a biblical worldview; envisioning themselves as agents of change and vessels of light in a dark world. All these we desire them to possess with humility and gratitude to God.

### **Faculty and Staff Vision**

We desire the same vision for our faculty and staff as for our students as they enter into this partnership of learning and growing in joyful submission to God. We desire them to be professional and diligent in their work and manners, gifted in teaching, loving their students and their subjects, that they possess a lifelong hunger to learn and grow, and that they have opportunity to be refreshed and renewed. We desire to see them coach and nurture new staff and to serve as academic mentors to students. We look to see them mature in Christ, growing in the knowledge of God, and raising their own children to walk with the Lord. Each member of the faculty and staff is a qualified and dedicated Christian who is committed to educating your child. Full-time faculty are required to have a minimum of a Bachelor's degree, and to be obtaining a state credential and are encouraged to have an ACSI teacher certification.

### **Parent Vision**

We aim to cultivate with our parents a sense of partnership and responsibility for the school community. Our desire is to see parents well informed about the goals of our Christ-centered approach. This approach includes the mutual benefit of each person being involved in and excited about the journey. This is why we work diligently to help parents join the faculty and staff in following biblical principles. While addressing concerns, hear both sides of a story before rendering a verdict, avoid gossip or slander at all costs, and embrace the Scripture's injunctions to encourage and stir up one another to love and good works. In this, and other ways, parents will support the faculty and staff in word and deed. This will in turn support the general mission and philosophy of the school.

## **General School Philosophy**

*Children are created in the image of God, which means they have the capacity to love, to make moral and rational decisions, and to be creative. Education should seek to address all aspects of the human person. At the same time children are a product of the fall, and therefore prone to sin and in need of moral and intellectual direction. As a result students need to be taught true from false and right from wrong. Just as the apostle Paul writes, our students should be encouraged to pursue whatever is right, whatever is true, whatever is noble and whatever is pure. Education should equip students to take up their vocation in obedience to Christ's cultural mandate. Each child should understand that God has given him or her special gifts to make a unique contribution to humanity's task of reversing the effects of the fall and extending the Lordship of Christ in the world (Total Truth, Pearcey, 2005, pg. 129, paraphrased).*

## **Admissions**

Rancho Christian School(s) admits all school age children and does not discriminate on the basis of sex, race, color, national, or ethnic origin in the administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, and other school-administered programs. Although families enrolling their children in RCS do not have to attend Rancho Community Church, they are strongly encouraged to participate in regular worship and education in a local Christian church. Although a student may not have made a personal faith decision upon entering the school, parents must understand that their child will be receiving a thoroughly Christian education, and their child will be encouraged to embrace the Christian faith as their own. Furthermore parents are expected to support in principle the mission, vision, philosophy and faith statement of the school as stated above.

## **Procedures**

The admissions process begins with initial testing and evaluation. Students must complete a battery of tests prior to admissions and an application fee is required prior to testing. Parents may be required to provide standardized test results and report cards as a part of the evaluation process. Parents and students are then asked to participate in an interview as a part of the final evaluation for admission. Once a child is accepted for enrollment, they are either enrolled in a class or placed on a wait list if the class is full. A non-refundable registration fee is required upon enrollment. An admission packet will be given to parents to be filled out before the student starts school. If admission is granted after June 1, a matriculation fee is required to complete the enrollment process.

## **Student Files**

All parents will need to complete the Student Information Packet when they enroll their child in Rancho Christian School(s). All forms must be completed and all immunizations must be up-to-date before admission. Please be sure that the office has, on record, a current phone list of local persons who may be called in an emergency if you cannot be reached. Please list at least three persons on your child's Student Information Packet. Notify the office immediately if there are any changes in your address or telephone number(s).

## **Testing**

All new students will need to fill out an application form and pay a non-refundable application fee. An appointment will be set up with the office. Your child's test will be evaluated within 2-3 days of the testing date. RCS will contact you within that time with the results. When accepted, you will need to fill out a registration form and pay a non-refundable registration fee.

All students who are new to RCS are subject to a one semester probationary period. A failure to maintain a minimum GPA of 2.0 may result in a Superintendent's panel to determine whether a student will be dismissed or placed on an individual plan for student improvement.

## **Registration**

Priority re-registration will be open to currently enrolled students and their siblings on a first-come, first-served basis. A non-refundable registration fee for the new fall school year is required. Upon receipt of your registration form and fee, a space will be held for your student(s).

Registration is guaranteed up until June 1<sup>st</sup>, at which time the matriculation fee is due for each student registered. Failure to pay the matriculation fee shall result in the removal of the student from the grade list and placed on a wait list until such time the matriculation fee is paid. Classes which are full retain a wait list of prospective students throughout the summer. Wait list priority is set at: children of faculty first priority, previous student second priority, siblings of current student third priority, new student by date of registration. This makes it very critical that matriculation fees be paid promptly. **Rancho Christian Schools will not accept registration for students whose tuition payments are not current or the previous year's tuition has not been paid.**

## **Attendance Policies**

### **Attendance**

Consistent attendance and promptness are essential for a student to be successful. Attendance at school provides the student with a classroom experience that is comprised of participation in class activities and direct instruction conducted by the classroom teachers. All instruction is a part of a designed program that leads a student in the necessary progress and development to insure success.

Rancho Christian Schools realize that occasional absences are understandable. RCS places the responsibility for regular attendance and punctuality on the parent(s).

**Absences:** It is imperative that our young people be in school. While certain absences are unavoidable, such as illness and family emergencies, it is of great importance that each child attends school regularly. If a child is going to be absent, the parent or guardian is to call the school office, explain the reason for the absence and the date of the absence(s). The office will communicate to the teacher, so that make-up work can be provided at the time of the student's return.

*The California State Education Code defines that an excused absence from school can only be granted for illness, medical appointments, or bereavement. The school determines when an absence is deemed unexcused. It is not the prerogative of a parent to excuse an absence. Prearranged absences are not excused. Unexcused absences may have academic consequences. Teachers are not required to provide make-up work for unexcused absences.*

If the absences are excused due to illness or another legitimate reason, the student is responsible to see that all missed work is made up in a timely manner. It is the student's responsibility to meet with the teacher to get assignments and due dates. This will be at the teacher's discretion.

**Excused Absences-** An "excused" absence is an absence with the knowledge and consent of parents and school due to a personal illness, serious illness in the family, death in the family,

school-approved trips, medical and dental appointments, and court appearances. **After five consecutive days of illness, a doctor's note is required, indicating the nature of the illness.** Family trips, although pre-arranged, are not classified as excused absences.

**Unexcused Absences-** An absence for any reason other than those listed above will be considered "unexcused" regardless of parent knowledge and consent.

**Excessive absences-** Ten unexcused absences in one semester can result in the lowering of a student's grade by one full grade. Twenty absences of any kind in any individual class may result in failure and no credit for the class in question or subject to retention for elementary students.

**Leaving School Early- We ask that you make medical appointments after school hours.** Should your child need to leave early for some reason the parent is required to provide a note at the beginning of the day and to sign the student out in the office before the student may leave. If your child leaves school within an hour before school ends, a P.M. Tardy will be issued.

**Pre-arranged absences-** For absences that are anticipated, make-up assignments may be completed. If you have a prearranged absence for more than one day and want your child to receive credit for the work missed you must submit a written request to the office. A Prearranged Absence Form must be filled out and initialed by each of the student's teachers. This form is located on Edline. If the amount of makeup work is excessive, a fee may be charged to prepare the work in advance of normal school schedule.

**Tardiness-** Being on time at school is crucial for your young person. The enforcement of tardy rules is intended to teach the importance of punctuality, consideration for others, and pride in self for taking responsibility for one's actions. Parents are asked to reinforce this training by making sure that students are delivered to school in a timely fashion. Middle school begins promptly at 8:00 A.M. If you are more than ten minutes late to your first period class, you will be considered absent for that class. Middle school students should be prepared to begin the school day at 8:00 A.M. Elementary begins at 8:30 for flag salute. Elementary students who arrive after 8:30 are to report to a playground attendant for a tardy slip.

**Excessive Tardies:** For elementary students- three tardies within a grading quarter will result in a recess detention. Three recess detentions may lower your child's grade by one grade. For middle school students- two tardies in one week in any one class, will result in a 45 minute detention. Three tardies in a quarter in any one class, will result in a 45 minute detention. *Three (3) detentions in one semester for attendance or tardiness reasons will result in a Saturday School.*

The school recognizes that some tardiness to school will be unavoidable (accidents, car problems...) and will be excused. This will be at the office's discretion. Parents of students who are continually tardy will be required to meet with the teacher and Vice-Principal to resolve the problem.

### **School Hours**

Elementary School - Kindergarten	8:30 A.M. to 2:00 P.M.
Elementary School - 1 <sup>st</sup> – 5 <sup>th</sup>	8:30 A.M. to 3:00 P.M.
Middle School- 6 <sup>th</sup> – 8 <sup>th</sup>	8:00 A.M. to 2:45 P.M.
High School	8:00 A.M. to 2:45 P.M.

### **Extended Care**

Before and after school supervision is provided for all students at RCS on school days from 6:30 A.M. to 6:00 P.M. Families who use this service are billed monthly. This service to families is available only on days when school is in session and on a prearranged basis only. Each child must be registered for extended care to utilize service. Any elementary student who is not picked up by 3:10 will be sent to extended care. Any middle school student who is not picked up by 3:00 will be sent to extended care.

Extended care is a privilege, not a right. Students who are not respectful and/or disobedient will be refused use of this service. Consistent inappropriate behavior may result in the service being denied temporarily or on a permanent basis. You are eligible for extended care if your tuition account is current and in good standing.

### **Late-Pickup**

Children left after the closing time 6:00 P.M. will be charged a late fee. When the school has a minimum day and closes prior to 6:00 P.M., late fees will apply at the stated time of closure. It is the parents' responsibility to notify the school in the event of a late pick-up. If the school is not notified of a late pick-up the staff will contact someone whom you have given authorization to take your child from the facility. If the school has not been contacted by a parent or someone with permission to take your child from the facility after one hour of closing, we will call the police and release your child to their authority. (See Tuition & Fee Schedule for more information)

### **Drop-off**

Drop off instructions and maps can be picked up in the front office. Typically families dropping middle school and upper elementary students only should enter the east end of campus and drop students at the u-turn area in front of the faculty parking. Families with lower elementary students should enter the west entrance, pass through the parking lot and drop students at the designated areas. At all times parents should drive slowly with caution to protect the safety and welfare of our students.

Parents are welcome to join the elementary student body at flag salute each morning. To join students on the black top, parents must first check in at the Elementary School Office. Once announcements begin (at 8:30 A.M. promptly) parents must stand off to the side of the student body (south end of black top). Parents need to say goodbye to their student prior to the beginning of announcements. If a parent chooses to remain during pledges, they are requested to join the student body in pledging and prayer. Please be respectful at all times, ceasing conversations that may be disruptive and distracting. Once prayer is over classes will be

dismissed and parents are to remain on the side and are not to rejoin their student's class or follow their student to their classroom.

**Pick-up**

In order for students to go home with an adult whose name is not on the emergency contact list, the parent must complete a pick-up authorization form. In case of an emergency, please call and give us the name of the person picking your child up. Minors under the age of 18 years of age may NOT pick up any student from RCS.

Any middle school student who has permission to ride a bike or walk to and from school must provide written documentation to the school office giving parental authorization for this to take place. Fourth and fifth grade students may be granted permission to ride bikes to school if they are accompanied by an older sibling.

**Visitors**

We do encourage parent involvement and welcome visitors; however, our priority is the students and their education. It is at the school's discretion if timing is appropriate for a visitor to be on campus. All visitors to the campus (parents included) are to sign-in in the Elementary School Office and receive a visitor's badge.

**Security**

We have installed a new safety feature called "The Raptor System." This is a computer system for checking in and out of our school campus. Every person entering our campus will need to swipe their Driver's License, and this system will track who they are, when they arrive, and when they depart. This is just another proactive step we are taking to ensure the safety of our children at RCS.

To provide additional security, all gates and fences will be closed and locked and therefore the only access to the campus will be through the Elementary School Office. Parents and visiting students may request to visit specific classes. Forms will be available in the office. Families of prospective students must request school visits and tours through the admissions office.

**Office Hours**

Elementary School	7:30 A.M. to 4:00 P.M.
Middle School Office	7:30 A.M. to 4:00 P.M.
High School Office	7:30 A.M. to 4:00 P.M.
Extended Daycare	6:30 A.M. to 6:00 P.M.

**Dress Regulations**

As Christians, it is our desire for students to please the Lord and be a good witness to others in both appearance and behavior. RCS believes there is a definite relationship between good dress habits, good work habits, and proper school behavior. Students are required to dress modestly and with neatness without drawing undue or excessive attention to themselves. At the same time we also believe God looks on the inward person and that dress is not an indication of spiritual maturity or personal value. The purpose of requiring uniforms is to encourage good habits, dressing modestly, and to remove distractions from the educational experience. Uniforms were

selected by the Administration and Parent Uniform Committee and are intended to be attractive, durable, and inexpensive.

There will be more flexibility with uniforms this school year. RCS has chosen to continue with *Dennis Uniform* and has also added *Lands' End Uniform* as our uniform suppliers. Uniforms can be purchased on-line, by phone, by mail order, or from their retail outlet in San Diego. **In addition, uniform bottoms may be purchased from other vendors as long as they meet the standards of the RCS uniform codes.** P.E. uniforms should also be purchased from Dennis Uniform. Royal blue basketball shorts (for P.E.) may be purchased from other vendors as long as they meet the standards of the RCS uniform codes.

**RCS Uniform is as follows: (Khaki is beige not green)**

**Chapel Uniform-Royal Blue top w/Khaki bottom**

**Girls**

Twill pants- Navy or Khaki

Capri pants- Navy or Khaki

Straight Skirt\*- Navy, Khaki, or Plaid (Plaid from Dennis only)

Skort- Navy\*- Khaki or Plaid (Plaid from Dennis only)

Bermuda Short- Navy or Khaki

Polo Shirt (with logo)- Royal Blue, Light Blue, Gray, White or Pink (Dennis only)

Blouse- White (Dennis only)

Sweater- Navy **\*\*see sweater memo**

Sweatshirt- Navy **\*\*see sweatshirt memo**

Nylon Hooded Jacket- Navy

\*Skirts, shorts and skorts may not be more than 2 inches above the knee.

**Boys**

Twill Pants-Navy or Khaki

Cargo Shorts- Navy, Khaki

Polo Shirt (with logo)-Royal Blue, Light Blue, White, Pink or Gray (Dennis only)

Sweatshirt- Navy **\*\*see sweatshirt memo below**

Nylon Hooded Jacket- Navy

Outer Clothing such as coats, jackets, etc. are optional and are not under the restriction of the dress code. Coats and jackets must be removed before entering into class. A coat or jacket is any outer garment that zips or buttons that is not sweater or sweatshirt material. The determination of the outer wear is at the discretion of RCS Staff & Faculty.

**\*\*Sweatshirts, pullovers or sweaters of any kind that are to be worn in or out of the classroom must be solid, plain, navy in color, or you may wear the Dennis or Lands' End Uniform sweater or sweatshirt containing the RCS logo. No other logos, writing, or patterns are allowed. All other sweatshirts & sweaters are not allowed.**

### **Additional Dress Code Items**

- Shoes must be worn at all times.
- Flip-flops may be worn. (Middle School Only)
- Single Ear Piercing is permitted for girls only. All other body piercing is forbidden.
- No choke chains, wallet chains, dog collars, studs or spikes may be worn.
- Sunglasses are acceptable outside only and are not to be worn in classroom or adjoining buildings.
- Hair should be clean and combed. Avoid extreme or questionable hairstyles or colors.
  - All hair color must be of a natural color.
  - Boys- hair must be cut to a length that it does not extend beyond the eyebrows in front or beyond the top of the collar on the sides or in back.
- Hats may only be worn to and from school, not during the school day. Hats must be removed during flag salute and prayer. If students have a condition which requires hats to be worn outdoors, a request from the parent with doctor recommendation may be submitted.
- P.E. uniforms should be worn for P.E. activities unless otherwise directed.
- Clothing must be worn without tears, holes, or frays.
- Undershirts must be white with no lace or fringe.
- Leggings must be navy, white, pink, light blue, or gray. They are to be solid, plain in color, and be similar to uniform shades of color.
- No tattoos including temporary tattoos.

### **Special Dress Days**

During special dress days students must still adhere to principles of modesty, neatness, and handbook uniform regulations. Tank tops are not allowed to be worn, underclothing should not show, and the waistline of the bottoms must fall at the waist and not below.

**This dress code is not all-inclusive. The administration of RCS reserves the right to make the final decision in these matters at their discretion. ANY situation not specifically covered herein will be resolved by the administration in accordance with the general intent and purpose of the code.**

### **Dress Code Violations**

**Middle school students** will be given one warning during the first week of the school year. Any violations after the first warning will result in an after school detention. When possible a child will be allowed to borrow clothing to allow them to return to class. If this is not possible a child may be held out of class until a parent can come to school to remedy the situation. If clothes are loaned to the child, please return them cleaned within two days to avoid a fee charged to your account.

In the event of a hair violation, a student will be given a warning along with 5 days to remedy the offense. If the offense is not corrected within 5 days, the student will not be allowed to return to class and shall serve in-school suspensions until corrected. In the event of an extreme hair color or haircut the parent will need to pick up the student immediately to correct the violation.

## **Student Behavior**

### **Discipline**

Disciplinary action taken by the administration and faculty is intended to both help a child understand what is right and wrong behavior, but also to provide a reasonable deterrence in order to promote right behavior. Our faculty and staff are committed to disciplining in love, believing that it is for the good and healthy development of the child.

It is essential that parents and teachers act as partners in the training of students. This requires that teachers consistently communicate with parents the nature of a child's offense and the course of disciplinary action. Parents must support the disciplinary process, believing that the faculty and administration seek to act in the best interests of every child. Therefore, it is expected that parents support the teachers of their students. If an issue occurs with a teacher and parent, it is expected that a meeting be set up as quickly as possible to discuss and resolve the issue in a positive, productive manner.

### **Bullying**

It is the policy of the Rancho Christian School(s) to maintain a safe learning and work environment that is free from bullying. Students, staff, and the school community are expected to conduct themselves in a respectful, Christian manner, and demonstrate a level of respect and dignity towards others. We prohibit all forms of bullying.

#### **Definition:**

Bullying is intentional harmful behavior initiated by one or more students and directed toward another student. For our purposes, it takes place in the school, on school property, cyber (internet/text) both at school and home, or on school field trips. Examples of bullying are as follows:

Verbal: name calling, put downs, racist remarks, teasing, threats, spreading rumors, sending inappropriate (violent, sexual, malicious, etc.) notes or pictures in any medium (notes, over a cell phone or internet, texting etc.)

Physical: pushing, hitting, shoving, biting, hair pulling, scratching, spitting, tripping, damaging or stealing the victim's property, locking a person in a room, making mean faces or rude gestures, initiating or forcing inappropriate touching, etc.

Social: ostracism or exclusion, ignoring, being unfriendly, alienating, etc.

Psychological: acts that instill a sense of fear or anxiety, etc.

Any act that insults or demeans an individual in such a way as to cause distress, reluctance to attend school, a decline in work standards, or problem behaviors.

#### **Awareness:**

Annually, as part of the required in-service training for all school staff, the Vice Principal or designee shall arrange for Bullying Awareness and Response Training. Because adults must take the initiative in combatting bullying, they must be watchful for bullying warning signs; closely supervising children on the playground, in the classrooms, hallways, rest rooms, gym, etc. Teachers will, conduct class discussions, role-playing, and activities to educate the students in seeking help from an adult, reporting incidents, speaking up and

supporting the victim, expressing disapproval of bullying behavior, responding assertively to the bully, walking away from bullying behavior, etc. This information may be presented in Bible, Health, Social Studies, and/or other classes. Late enrolling students will be educated by the teacher as part of their first week orientation.

At the beginning of the school year during an all school assembly, and as needed, the principal or designee shall ensure that the student body is familiar with the No Bullying Policy. Because we are a TELLING school, we expect everyone to tell if they suspect bullying is happening.

The Vice-Principal or designee shall notify the parents/guardians that our Bullying Awareness and Procedures are listed in the Student Handbook and on the website. The *Bullying Incident Report* will also be available online and included in their Open House folder.

### **Reporting:**

Students and staff are prohibited from knowingly falsely accusing another of bullying. Disciplinary action, up to, and including expulsion/suspension for students and termination for staff, shall be taken if they knowingly make false reports.

Any member of the school staff receiving a suspected bullying report (verbal or written) shall address the matter as soon as possible, prior to the end of the school day. The staff member shall assess the situation to determine if the behavior meets the criteria for bullying or if the behavior is an isolated incident that can be resolved within the classroom. (Not all conflict constitutes bullying.)

If the behavior meets the criteria for bullying, the staff member must report this to the school Vice-Principal or designee immediately in order to protect the alleged victim. The staff member is to immediately forward a *Bullying Incident Report* to the Vice-Principal for investigation. The staff member shall remind the victim/witness that “No one deserves to be bullied, and we are going to do everything we can to stop it.” The staff member is to commend the victim/witness for bringing the matter to the attention of school staff, and they are to begin intervention strategies for the victim.

The Vice-Principal or designee will promptly and thoroughly address suspected reports of Bullying and will individually meet with the victim/witness and bully privately. If it is determined that bullying has occurred, he/she will act appropriately within the discipline codes of the board and will take reasonable action to end the bullying. The message for the child who bullies will be, “Your behavior is unacceptable and mean and must be stopped.” The Vice-Principal will inform the student that he/she will be closely monitored, and the student’s movements outside the classroom will require adult supervision at all times until trust has been built and all bullying behaviors cease. The Vice-Principal will also ensure the careful monitoring of the victim during this time by enlisting the help of a class buddy. He shall ensure that prior to the end of the school day notification of the incident has been given to the parents/guardians of both the victim and the offender, and that steps have been initiated to address and resolve the issue. An intervention plan will be developed in cooperation with the parents of the bully. Parental notification and the intervention plan shall be documented on the *Bullying Incident Report*.

If necessary and appropriate, the police will be contacted.

Copies of the *Bullying Incident Report* shall be given to the victim's and offender's teachers, be placed in the victim's and offender's files in the school office, and be sent home to their parents. The report will serve as a reference for the school staff in determining whether or not a pattern of bullying behavior or abuse exists in regards to the offender or the victim.

### **Christian Lifestyle**

Rancho Christian Schools promote high academic standards in a Christ-centered environment. We also realize that we have a responsibility to "train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it" (Proverbs 22:6). As children approach high school and college, our purpose extends to preparing Christian young people for effective service for Christ in whatever career they choose. Only those who are truly Christian can perform effective Christian service. Our goal for each student is his/her desire to have a vital, personal relationship with God through faith in Jesus Christ. Our expectations are that all students measure their lives by scriptural standards of conduct.

Spiritual growth is never the result of rules superimposed by the school; therefore, RCS standards of conduct are not designed merely to produce a pattern of outward conformity. RCS desires that students demonstrate, by their conduct, an inward acceptance of Christ and an attitude of submission to Him. We want all students to be led by the Holy Spirit to live above the letter of rules and standards. In order for our school(s) to be an environment conducive for encouraging and establishing these standards, RCS expects every student to demonstrate, by attitude and behavior, a life committed to following Christ.

In order to maintain an effective learning environment that is necessary to lead our students into maturity and self-discipline, all faculty, staff, students, and parents are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that exhibits a spirit of cooperation, consideration, and respect. The following are general behavioral expectations of all students:

Students are expected to live by a scriptural standard of behavior that is consistent with the principles of conduct encouraged by the Bible. This scriptural standard of behavior is expected on and off campus:

1. No use of illegal drugs, alcoholic beverages, or any form of tobacco.
2. No involvement in immoral activities including but not limited to sexual immorality, premarital sex, and pornography.
3. No swearing, telling dirty stories, or using language unbecoming as a Christian.
4. No acts of dishonesty, such as cheating\*, lying, or stealing.
5. No publication or expression, including web publishing of images or text that would be considered immoral, occultic, abusive, or distasteful.

### **\*Definition of cheating:**

It is considered cheating anytime a student receives credit for the work done by another. An individual who knowingly aids another to cheat is also cheating. An individual who knowingly allows another to cheat without attempting to stop it is also guilty of cheating.

An individual who is found in the possession of an exam (or quiz) or an exam (or quiz) answer key prior to the scheduled exam is cheating. Discussing an examination with other students prior to the completion of all examination periods is cheating. Talking or asking questions aloud during an examination is considered cheating. Copying an answer from another student's test or quiz is cheating. Having possession of any form of the answers to an exam at anytime in the room during an examination is considered cheating. Using a programmable calculator to store information for use on an examination is cheating, unless specifically permitted by the instructor.

Copying homework of any kind is considered cheating. Plagiarism is cheating. (Plagiarism is defined as copying material from a book, periodical or the Internet without giving credit to the source by way of bibliography and/or footnote. The material copied does not have to be a perfect quote to be considered plagiarism. A paraphrase is still considered plagiarism if the source is not referenced and the material is not considered general knowledge).

### **Honesty and Integrity**

The faculty of Rancho Christian School(s) are of one mind in realizing a part of presenting the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ is to teach our students about character in the form of honesty, honor, and integrity. Regardless of what discipline we teach, if we fail to teach these important personal character traits, whatever else we do is of little consequence. In light of this, every effort will be made to be sure the students will understand what it means to cheat and every effort will be made to be sure that students will be encouraged to avoid the pitfalls of temptation.

### **General Behavioral Standards**

In the interest of creating an orderly and wholesome atmosphere for all students, **the following behavior is not permitted:**

1. Displaying on one's clothing or personal property such items as pictures or emblems that exalt groups or movements that are contrary to Biblical standards.
2. Bringing or possessing on campus harmful materials, flammables, pyrotechnics or any thing that may be used as a weapon.
3. Chewing gum or eating unshelled sunflower seeds in classrooms.
4. The use of magazines, radios, tape recorders, CD players, iPods, or any other electronic device, except by special permission of the classroom teacher for educational purposes\*\*.
5. Tampering with or taking items from another student.
6. Demonstrations of personal affection, i.e., familiar touch, holding hands, embracing, kissing, etc.
7. **No cell phones** are to be used during the school day. Cell phones can be used after school hours.

**\*\*Note: Electronic devices should not be brought to school unless special permission is granted by a teacher or administrator.**

### **Classroom Discipline**

It is expected that the individual teacher handle most discipline problems. In order to maintain a classroom environment which allows for maximum learning, each teacher will establish those standards deemed necessary to enhance an orderly environment and wholesome atmosphere for all students. However, all classes will maintain the following standards:

1. Each student must always demonstrate respect for and cooperation with all teachers, staff, and volunteers.
2. Students will be on time to each class, and will be prepared with the necessary materials and mental attitude, which indicates a readiness to learn.
3. Communication of any kind between students which is disruptive to the teacher or other students is unacceptable.
4. Personal grooming is inappropriate during class sessions and is not permitted.
5. Food and beverages will not be brought into the classrooms without expressed permission of the classroom teacher.
6. Students may not be in classrooms, the gym, the family life center, the library, or any school office without a teacher or staff member present.
7. The teacher's desk, briefcase, grade book, or any other personal belongings are personal property and will be treated as such by all students.
8. Students are to respect all school property including, but not limited to furniture or equipment inside and outside of the classroom.
9. Students are not to throw things, create unusual noises, abuse the classroom furniture or any other activity that will cause disruption, pose danger or otherwise cause a negative experience for their classmates and teacher.

## **Miscellaneous**

### **Child Abuse**

Each staff member is required by law; to report to the Child Protective Services of Riverside County any observed or suspected injury, unusual behavior, or incident which may threaten the physical or emotional health of any child.

### **Child Custody**

If legal stipulations apply to your child, it is required that this information be communicated to the school office. A copy of court orders will need to be in your child's file. It is also recommended that you conference with your child's homeroom teacher at the beginning of the school year to make this information understood by the teacher in order for everyone to comply with the court orders.

### **Communications**

Edline.net is our school webpage. Edline is an easy way for you to keep up-to-date online. All school communications will be emailed and can be reviewed online through this webpage. The school will generate a monthly newsletter. It is the discretion of each middle school teacher, to determine on an as-needed basis, how often to send written communication home. If you have any questions about classroom or school activities, please contact your child's teacher by note, email, or through the school office.

## **Disaster and Emergency Procedures**

### **Emergency Health Procedures**

R.C.S. offers immediate first-aid to all injured or ill students. See injury and illnesses for further information.

### **Evacuation drills**

Evacuation drills (fire and earthquake) are held monthly during the school year. Instructions regarding these drills are given to each class. Evacuation routes are posted in every classroom. All of our staff members have been trained in CPR and First Aid.

### **Field Trips**

Field trips are a vital and important tool in our educational program. They are considered part of the regular school day. Charter buses or private vehicles driven by parents will be used for field trip transportation. The child's teacher will notify parents about field trip information and collect permission forms. Under no circumstances can a child attend a field trip without a signed field trip permission form. Anyone desiring to chaperone or drive on a field must complete a Chaperone/Driver Application and a LiveScan. The process takes 2-3 weeks to complete and must be done in a timely manner. No volunteer is able to attend field trips unless approved by the office. Parents or grandparents who volunteer to help must be able to attend the entire field trip. We cannot allow siblings to accompany parent helpers on field trips. Drivers must possess a valid California driver's license, carry the proper insurance, and must have a usable seatbelt for each child in the car.

Parents who are on a cash-only payment requirement will be required to pay for field trips directly to the school office. In order for a student to attend an overnight field trip, their account must be current and in good standing,

### **Holidays**

We will observe the following holidays and will be closed on the days nationally recognized.

- New Year's Day
- Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
- Presidents' Day
- Good Friday and the week before or after Easter (depends on calendar year)
- Memorial Day
- Labor Day
- Veterans Day
- Thanksgiving Day and the day after
- School is closed for 10 school days at Christmas

School will not be in session on faculty in-service days as well as the ACSI Elementary Speech Meet.

***Reminders are also given prior to each holiday. Please refer to the Annual School Calendar located on Edline.***

### **Injuries/Illnesses/First Aid/Emergencies**

**Injuries:** All injuries, no matter how small, are to be reported immediately to the teacher supervising the activity in which the injury occurred. The school personnel are only allowed to apply water and ice as a means of first aid. We will apply band aids or bandage to keep any wound clean. In the event of an injury to the head, the school personnel will notify the parents, and the child will be observed for 15-20 minutes in the school office. In the case of serious injuries or other emergencies, parents will be notified and the paramedics will be called, if needed. In the event a parent cannot be reached, someone listed on the child's emergency form will be notified.

**Illness:** In an effort to protect other students and staff members from illness, we require parents to keep their child at home when he/she is ill. Please do not return your child to school until they are able to participate fully in the normal school day.

Every student is required to have medical and emergency information on file. It is the parents' responsibility to update any medical or emergency contacts in their child's file. Please notify the office of any changes in order that specific steps may be identified should the students become ill or have an emergency for which immediate treatment is necessary.

If a student becomes ill during the school day and is not able to remain in class, the parents or another designated adult will be notified. Parents are responsible, once notified, for having their ill child picked up from school within **30 MINUTES**. They are not allowed to remain in the office and must be picked up promptly.

### **24 Hour Policy**

If a child experiences a fever of 100.0° F or greater, vomiting, or diarrhea, the student must remain at home until the symptoms have been gone for 24 hours.

**Medication:** The school is not permitted to administer non-prescription medication, including aspirin/Tylenol. Only doctor prescribed medication may be administered. The medication must be in its original prescribed package with the student's name on it. The student's parent must complete the Authorization to Administer Medicine Form and submit to the office for approval. All medicine must be accompanied by a physician's directions or be in their original pharmaceutical container describing directions for administering and left in the school office.

No medication will be administered without the parent first filling out the proper consent forms in the office with detailed information regarding the name of the medicine, dosage, and time to be administered. All students are not to have any medication in their possession at school (this includes vitamins and cough drops).

As a precaution, please notify your child's teacher in writing if your child is on a new medication (permanent or temporary), including any possible side effects he/she might be experiencing or could develop as a result of this medication. Side effect papers are provided by your pharmacy with new prescriptions.

### **Exposure to Communicable Illnesses**

If your child is exposed to a communicable illness, you will be informed by a letter which will be sent out by your child's teacher. If your child develops any of the symptoms, please make the school aware ASAP. A physician's note is required indicating communicability and the date the student may return to class.

### **Library**

Our school library is expanding to meet the needs of all the students. Use of the library is a privilege. Students will be permitted to check out library books. Any damaged or lost books will be the responsibility of the parent for replacement.

### **Lost and Found**

Items left at school will be turned into the Lost and Found. To assure that your child does not lose books, clothing, etc. Please label with the child's name. Found items are kept for a short period of time before being donated to a charitable organization.

### **Lunch/Snack/Hot Lunch**

We encourage students to bring a healthy snack to be eaten during their morning break. Information for the lunch program is published each year and provided in the Back to School Packets or may be found on our Web site. You may also pick up a copy of the lunch schedule and a price list in the office. The lunch a' la carte window will be open to 4th grade – middle school students before school and during the morning break.

Vending Machines are available to students in the school hallway after school hours. Middle & high school students may use them during school hours. These machines contain a variety of Snapple and Gatorade beverages along with a variety of snacks. We encourage parents to help their child to make good choices in their spending and in purchasing of snacks.

### **Messages to Students**

In an **emergency**, students can be reached by calling the school office, and we will get the message to your child immediately. Students are permitted to use the school phone only if approved by the classroom teacher. **PLEASE only call if an emergency out of respect to the students in the classroom, the staff, and faculty.** (Requesting a lunch from home, or other forgotten items, will not be permitted.)

### **Parent Involvement**

We encourage parents to get involved in the school. We will have several opportunities throughout the year for you to visit your child's class. However, remember siblings may only attend with the teacher's permission. A monthly newsletter will be sent home around the first of each month to keep you informed of upcoming events. There will be occasions when we need parents to assist with special activities, drive on field trips, or donate food for special events and activities. We look forward to working with you and appreciate your help.

Please recognize that our students learn better in an environment where distractions are kept to a minimum. Any change in the learning environment, including visitors, will disrupt the students' attention. Administrators and staff take care to enter classes only when necessary and at

moments when it creates the least disturbance. Parents should always arrange visits to the classroom by making appointments through the school office. For parents who volunteer and are on campus on a regular basis, it is very important to observe the proper procedure for visiting classrooms.

### **Volunteers**

Parent involvement is encouraged and appreciated. Please let the school office know how you would like to help. We need volunteers to help in the classrooms, the school office, lunch program, class tutor, handyman, home projects, school programs, field trips, and on the playground. Let us know how you would like to help. All parents who come on campus, especially those who volunteer for us must;

- Check in at the elementary office and then the middle school office.
- Be appropriately dressed. Parent volunteers must agree not to discuss anything with other parents while volunteering regarding teachers, students, or classroom procedures.
- Must be background checked through our Live Scan system. Make an appointment with the office.

### **Parent -Teacher Fellowship**

The Parent Teacher Fellowship (P.T.F.) is a helpful part of the total school program. Through the P.T.F., parents often assist in room parties, field trips, fund-raisers, and other events. Parents are encouraged to join this program. All P.T.F. members must be background checked through our Live Scan system.

### **Parties**

Birthday parties must be arranged in advance with the classroom teacher. The classroom teacher and room parent will plan holiday parties. Parents are encouraged to help in the preparation of activities and the serving of food.

### **Harassment**

Rancho Christian School(s) are committed to providing an environment for students, faculty, and staff that is free from unlawful discrimination. In keeping with that commitment, the school maintains a strict policy prohibiting harassment based upon race, color, national origin, ancestry, physical handicap, medical condition, marital status, sex, disability, or age. This policy prohibits unlawful harassment, including verbal, physical, and visual harassment.

Any student who believes that he/she has been the victim of unlawful harassment should immediately report the matter to the immediate supervisor, school director, or if necessary, to any other administrator. Complaints of harassment will be promptly investigated and appropriate corrective action will be taken.

### **Student Withdrawal**

**Parents requesting to withdraw their child must give a written notice to the school office 90 days prior to withdrawal.** Any refund of tuition is based on the 90-day withdrawal policy as stated in the Financial Contract. The student's books must be turned in to the school office by

the date of withdrawal, all necessary fees and any outstanding charges must be paid in full, and the necessary paperwork must be completed before a student's grades will be provided. If the grades are in progress and are not available at that time, the school secretary will notify the parent when they are available.

### **Transportation**

Rancho Christian School(s) does not provide any transportation for students to and from school. It is the responsibility of the student's parent(s) to provide transportation to and from school. Students who are driven to school are to be dropped off and picked up at the designated area. Parents may inquire in the office about carpooling lists.

### **Textbooks**

All textbooks used in the classroom are the property of Rancho Christian School(s). A fee will be charged if books are damaged or lost. Students are required to handle all of their books with respect and treat them with care. Hardbound books must be covered with an appropriate book cover.

### **Tuition Payments**

Tuition payments are due by the first day of each month and considered late after the fifth of each month. Cash payments need to be made in the school office to obtain a receipt. All other tuition payments may be placed in the designated drop box. A late fee will be assessed to payments received after the fifth of each month. If your account is past due, all sibling discounts will be revoked for each month past due. All checks that are returned NSF will be charged a service fee. If your check is returned NSF, and it is after the fifth of the month, a late charge will also be assessed. A 2.5% discount will be given to families who pay their tuition in full by July 1st. The sibling discount is applied to the sibling(s) with the lower tuition. Refer to the Financial Contract for tuition and discount amounts.

## **Elementary School Policies**

### **Academics**

Rancho Christian Schools strive to offer a challenging and rigorous academic program. Each student is encouraged to apply Colossians 3:17, 23 by "working at everything with their whole heart as work done for the Lord." In keeping with our core values, students are taught to value learning, realizing that grades are not the primary objective, but instead to apply themselves to becoming reading, thinking, and articulate students.

Even though grades are not the sole objective, they are still a useful tool in assessing student progress and helping students to recognize their personal talents and gifts. As such, RCS uses traditional grade scales as described below:

<b>A</b>	<b>90% and above</b>
<b>B</b>	<b>80%-89%</b>
<b>C</b>	<b>70%-79%</b>
<b>D</b>	<b>60%-69%</b>
<b>F</b>	<b>below 60%</b>

### **Grade Reports**

Report cards are sent home at the end of every quarter. Progress reports are also sent home at the middle of the First Quarter and for students who have a C- or below at the middle of every other quarter. The First Quarter report card will be given at a parent/teacher conference. Most academic subjects receive letter grades and citizenship receives O, S, N, and U grades. Only academic subjects are counted for grade point averages at the end of the year.

Citizenship grades are defined as follows:

O = Outstanding

S = Satisfactory

N = Needs to Improve

U = Unsatisfactory

Report cards are to be signed by the parent and returned promptly to the classroom teacher where it will be kept on file until the next report card period. All report cards are sent home at the end of the school year.

### **Academic Testing Information**

**Exams:** Tests are a regular part of academic measurement. In addition to scheduled exams that are given as part of daily instruction, students may expect unannounced quizzes to evaluate progress.

**Achievement Tests:** Achievement tests in the form of SAT 10s are administered to all students each year in order to help parents and teachers evaluate their progress. Parents are notified in advance of the achievement tests, and suggestions are given to assure that each student is prepared to take the test (proper sleep, nutrition, etc.). A fee will be charged to administer a make-up test for students who have an unexcused absence during the testing period.

Results of the achievement tests are sent home with the student's 4th quarter report card at the end of the year.

### **Academic Performance Leading to Retention**

When a student is failing academically because of inconsistent academic performance due to poor work habits, lack of self-motivation, learning difficulties, or the absence of adequate self-discipline, the following will be undertaken:

1. Parental help will be sought in encouraging and motivating the student.
2. Teacher will make a referral to the principal.
3. Principal will make appropriate recommendations (i.e., tutoring, remedial, etc.).

4. Testing and diagnosis may be recommended to determine appropriate level of support services.
5. RCS will continue to enroll a student as long as adequate support services are in place, and there is evidence of academic progress.
6. If inconsistent academic performance continues a student may be recommended for retention or removal from school.

Ultimately a decision regarding retention is a result of a partnership of parents, teachers and administrators working together for the best interests of a child.

### **Curriculum**

Rancho Christian Elementary School (K-3) uses the ABeka curriculum. ABeka promotes excellence in education from a Christian perspective. The curriculum uses a Christian and traditional approach to education. Textbook decisions are made based on compliance with the educational mission and vision of the school as well as the course standards defined in each department. The textbook is seen as a resource, and the responsibility for adhering to curriculum standards and benchmarks falls on the teacher under the supervision of the school administrator.

### **Homework and Make-up Work**

Homework is to be expected; however, children need to be free after school to socialize, be with their families, and participate in special interests and church activities. Homework will be assigned to promote responsibility, reinforce classroom work, aid in preparation for a quiz or test, or to finish work not completed in class. Make-up work due to absences will also be assigned as homework. Special projects such as book reports are also considered homework. Class work that is not completed during the day can also be sent home as homework.

Below are listed general daily time frames for homework:

Kindergarten:	0-20 min.	3 <sup>rd</sup> Grade:	30 min.
1 <sup>st</sup> Grade:	15-20 min.	4 <sup>th</sup> Grade:	30 min – 1 hr.
2 <sup>nd</sup> Grade:	15-20 min.	5 <sup>th</sup> Grade:	30 min. – 1 1/2 hr.

Contact your child's teacher if actual time consistently exceeds suggested time. The above guidelines are averages, and it is understood that there will be times when a child exceeds these times, especially when preparing for occasional tests, and when completing major projects.

If a student is out for one day, missing assignments will be given the following school day. If a student is to be out for several days, the parent needs to call before 9:30 A.M. and plan to pick up the assignments in the office at the end of the school day. The student has one day for each day absent to return all assignments. All unexcused absences will result in a zero for the day and make-up exams will not be given. Excused absences include illness, family emergencies, and death in the family. Tests missed during an excused absence must be made up within three school days. Students may not have more than 20 total absences per year to qualify for promotion.

### **Extra Credit**

Extra credit shall not be used to make up points for missed assignments and homework, loss of points for unexcused absences, poor test performance, etc. This does not foster disciplined study habits in our students. When extra credit is offered, it will be offered to the entire class without discrimination. Once offered it will be the student's responsibility to follow through and observe all due dates. Extra credit will not be offered for previous grading periods once the final date of the grading period has passed.

Teachers use extra credit work sparingly and with discernment. It is used primarily to motivate students to go above and beyond what is normally required, to be stretched and challenged.

### **Conferences**

**With Teachers:** Parents are expected to attend formal conferences scheduled at the end of the first quarter. Should you desire additional conferences, phone the office and leave a message for the teacher. Teachers will be glad to call you and schedule an appointment.

**With the Vice Principal:** The Vice Principal's door is always open. If you have any questions or concerns, contact the school office and set up an appointment to meet with the Vice Principal.

### **Student Conduct and Discipline**

The following are general behavioral expectations of students in first through fifth grade:  
Students will:

- Raise hand before speaking.
- Respect and show courtesy to teachers, staff, classmates and school property.
- Walk quietly from place to place.
- Sit properly in chairs and stay on-task.
- Encourage others with words and actions.
- Keep hands and feet to themselves.

### **Consequences**

When a student's behavior or attitude is in conflict with the standards of our school, every effort is made to encourage the student to demonstrate a change and improvement necessary to comply with these standards. As much as possible, misbehavior in the classroom will be handled by the classroom teacher. Attempts to correct behavior may be handled in the following ways:

1. Each teacher may use unique techniques for modifying student behavior; however, if disruptive behavior becomes common, the teacher may seek to offer a warning, counsel with the student, write a White Slip, or contact parent.
2. If initial warning or counsel does not result in a change in behavior a White Slip will be written, accompanied by a visit to the principal. The White Slip will be sent home and returned the next day with a parent/guardian signature. The parent may be required to meet with the teacher, student and administrator.
3. The administrator has the freedom to assign a suspension to a student for any disruptive behavior, regardless of whether the student has been issued a warning or White Slip. The behavioral expectations listed in this handbook are considered adequate warning.

4. The student may also expect to have his citizenship grade lowered.
5. In certain serious misbehaviors, such as disrespect to teachers, student fighting, vandalism or school property, injuries purposefully caused by a student, or other violations of the Christian lifestyle standards, students will be immediately referred to the Vice Principal. These behaviors can result in the initial suspension from school followed by additional disciplinary action. If the student is not remorseful or willing to correct the behavior, the student may not be allowed to return to class until a parent conference with the teacher and administrator takes place.

### **White Slips/Suspension/Superintendent's Panel**

Serious behavioral problems and repeated infractions will be referred to the Vice Principal in the form of a White Slip. Once a student receives three White Slips a mandatory conference between the Vice Principal, teacher and parent(s) will take place in order to resolve the behavioral issues. Three White Slips will result in suspension. Three suspensions will result in a Superintendent's panel. This panel is made up of the school administrators, a teacher, and a member of the School Board. This panel serves to determine if the student is a candidate for expulsion.

### **Zero Tolerance**

A student may also be brought before a Superintendent's panel in the case of any act of violence, sexual immorality, the possession of drugs or alcohol, the possession of weapons, or if found under the influence or in possession of alcohol or illicit drugs.

### **Probation for Misconduct**

Probation is a conditional testing period assigned to a student who fails to meet the standards of the school with regard to conduct and attitude. A student who is placed on behavioral probation will have a designated period of time to demonstrate the ability to follow the standards of conduct at RCS. During a period of probation, the student is expected to improve his conduct to the extent necessary to satisfy the faculty and administration so that he will benefit from continued enrollment at RCS.

In the event of behavioral probation, the student will meet with the administration on a regular basis to discuss progress. Definite individualized goals will be established for each student in the following areas:

- Spiritual Growth
- Academic Progress
- Attitude
- Citizenship

Probation should be viewed as a time when the school and the family can work closely together to encourage growth and improvement in the life of the student. The goal is a positive experience for everyone involved. However, if the student fails to respond positively to these efforts and adequate progress is not shown, the student may be asked to withdraw from the school for his own benefit and for the benefit of his classmates.

## **Miscellaneous Elementary School**

### **Band**

Beginning band is offered as a pull-out program for 3<sup>rd</sup> thru 5<sup>th</sup> grade. Students will be excused from one half hour of class for a sectional lesson and one half hour for combined band.

Beginning band is considered an extra-curricular activity and a student must maintain a GPA of 2.0 in order to participate. The fee for beginning band is a monthly fee as defined in the Tuition & Fee Schedule. Students must provide their own instrument.

### **Cell Phones**

No cell phones are to be used during the school day. Cell phones can be used after school hours only. If you need to get a message to your child please leave a message with the office.

### **Chapel**

RCS provides a unique chapel experience geared to the student. Chapel is held once a week and students are required to attend. The service involves prayer, singing, a speaker, and occasional special programs. Parents and guests are welcome and encouraged to attend. **Proper respect and reverence is expected in chapel.** Students whose actions prevent others from experiencing an environment conducive to worship and prayer will be disciplined accordingly.

- Each student will demonstrate proper courtesy and Christian hospitality to all guest speakers by listening carefully and behaving properly. Their attitude toward the speaker will be respectful and attentive.
- At no time will studying or doing homework be allowed in chapel.
- There is to be no unnecessary talking, distracting others, or disturbance.
- No food or drinks are allowed.

## **Middle School Policies**

### **Academics**

Rancho Christian Schools strive to offer a challenging and rigorous academic program. Each student is encouraged to apply Colossians 3:17, 23 by “working at everything with their whole heart as work done for the Lord.” In keeping with our core values students are taught to value learning, realizing that grades are not the primary objective, but instead to apply themselves to becoming reading, thinking, and articulate students.

Even though grades are not the sole objective, they are still a useful tool in assessing student progress and helping students to recognize their personal talents and gifts. As such, RCS uses traditional grade scales as described below:

<b>A</b>	<b>90% and above</b>
<b>B</b>	<b>80%-89%</b>
<b>C</b>	<b>70%-79%</b>
<b>D</b>	<b>60%-69%</b>
<b>F</b>	<b>below 60%</b>

### **Grade Reports**

Report cards are sent home at the end of every quarter. Progress reports will be posted to Edline at the middle of First Quarter and for students who have a C- or below at the middle of every other quarter. The semester grades are posted to transcripts and are the only official grade used for determining pass or failure as well as academic awards. The First Quarter report card will be given at a parent/teacher conference. Most academic subjects receive letter grades and citizenship receives O, S, N, and U grades. Only academic subjects are counted for grade point averages at the end of the year.

### **Citizenship grades are defined as follows:**

O = Outstanding  
S = Satisfactory  
N = Needs to Improve  
U = Unsatisfactory

### **Academic Awards**

Academic awards are presented in assemblies at the close of every semester. Awards of Merit are presented in every individual discipline at every grade level. Honor Rolls are defined as follows:

<b>Eagle Plaque</b>	<b>High Honor Roll for 5 Semesters</b>
<b>Eagle Award of Distinction</b>	<b>GPA of 4.0</b>
<b>High Honor Roll</b>	<b>GPA of 3.5-3.99</b>
<b>Honor Roll</b>	<b>GPA of 3.0-3.49</b>

**Exams:** Tests are a regular part of academic measurement. Besides those exams that are given as part of daily instruction, students may expect unannounced quizzes to evaluate progress. Middle school students can expect appropriate notice to prepare for chapter tests in all academic subject areas.

**Achievement Tests:** Achievement tests in the form of SAT 10s are administered to all students each year in order to help parents and teachers evaluate their progress. Parents are notified in advance of the achievement tests and suggestions are given to assure that each student is prepared to take the test (proper sleep, nutrition, etc.)

Results of the achievement tests are sent home with the student's 4th quarter report card at the end of the year unless there is an outstanding balance on your child's account.

### **Academic Probation**

- If a student's semester cumulative GPA falls below a 2.0 or if they have one F, a letter is sent to the parents announcing that they are placed on academic probation.
- A failure to make necessary progress to bring their GPA to 2.0 by the end of the next semester can result in the student being denied enrollment for the subsequent semester.
- If a student is admitted on academic probation, they must achieve a 2.0 GPA at the end of their first semester at RCS in order to enroll in the subsequent semester.
- If a student is below a GPA 2.0 for two successive semesters or if they fail to meet any other academic standard required, they may appeal to faculty academic council to determine if they will be allowed to enroll for the subsequent semester.

### **Eighth Grade Promotion Requirements**

In order for a student to participate in Promotion Ceremonies or to be allowed Admission to the Rancho Christian High School-

- Students must not have a GPA below 2.0 for two successive semesters (i.e. during their 8<sup>th</sup> grade year).
- Must have a minimum of C- in Math and English during second semester of 8<sup>th</sup> grade year.
- Any appeals of special circumstances will be made to the Faculty Academic Council.

### **Faculty Academic Council**

The academic council shall consist of members of the faculty representing each of the various disciplines. This council will review all academic concerns. When hearing appeals, consideration will be given to students: who have a record of good behavior, who support the mission and vision of the school, and who by attitude and effort are making progress toward improvement.

### **Eighth Grade Promotion Awards**

- **Paideia Award for Excellence in Learning (2 Timothy 3:14)**-This award is given to an outstanding eighth grade student who is chosen by the faculty. The criteria for this award will include academic excellence, having demonstrated the qualities described in the school ESLRs of being Christ-like, wholesome, articulate, a critical thinker, and one who values education.
- **Doulos Award for Servanthood (Philippians 2:7)**- This award is given to an outstanding eighth grade student who is chosen by the faculty. The criteria used by the faculty for choosing this recipient shall include: academic excellence, a critical thinker, articulate, Christ-like character, and a demonstration of a servant's heart and spiritual leadership amongst their peers.

### **Academic Eligibility for Extra-curricular Participation**

A student must maintain a 2.0 GPA in order to remain eligible for all extra-curricular activities including but not restricted to all athletics, worship team, and student government. Eligibility is determined quarter by quarter and therefore is determined by quarter report cards, not semester grades.

## **Curriculum**

Rancho Christian Middle School uses a variety of textbooks from a variety of publishers including ABEKA, Prentice Hall Science, Teachers Curriculum Institute History and Saxon Math. ABEKA promotes excellence in education from a Christian perspective. These textbooks use a Christian and traditional approach to education. Prentice Hall Science provides a wealth of resources and support materials for the teacher and student. A supplement is provided for both the sixth and eighth grades science class, offering a Christian perspective on the origin of the universe. The Saxon Math systematically distributes instruction and practice and assessment throughout the academic year. Teachers Curriculum Institute is a highly interactive curriculum that engages students through a wealth of supplemental resources for the teacher and student. Textbook decisions are made based on compliance with the educational mission and vision of the school as well as the course standards defined in each department. The textbook is seen as a resource and the responsibility for adhering to curriculum standards and benchmarks falls on the teacher under the supervision of the school administrator.

*Curriculum is not driven by the textbooks, but is instead driven by the collaborative efforts of the faculty and administration to design scope, sequence and objectives that are consistent with and supportive of the overall school mission, vision and global expected learned outcomes.*

## **Homework and Make-up Work**

Homework is to be expected; however, children need to be free after school to socialize, be with their families, and participate in special interests and church activities. Homework will be assigned to promote responsibility, reinforce classroom work, aid in preparation for a quiz or test, or to finish work not completed in class. Make-up work due to absences will also be assigned as homework. Special projects such as book reports are also considered homework. Class work that is not completed during the day can also be sent home as homework. Homework can be assigned in any subject area including the core subjects, Bible, electives and physical education.

Below are listed general daily time frames for homework:

Sixth Grade:	1 - 2 hours
Seventh Grade:	1 - 2 hours
Eighth Grade:	1 - 2 hours

Contact your child's teacher if actual time consistently exceeds suggested time. The above guidelines are averages and it is understood that there will be times when a child exceeds these times, especially when preparing for occasional tests, and when completing major projects.

Students are provided time to work on lessons and homework in class. Therefore, excessive homework at night may be a consequence of poor use of class time. Therefore it is very important that parents communicate with teachers when homework seems excessive.

Homework may be made up for approved, prearranged absences (refer to page 20 of handbook). If a student is sick for any more than one day, then the student shall be allowed two days to complete make-up work for every day absent.

## **Conferences**

**With Teachers:** Parents are expected to attend formal conferences scheduled at the end of the first quarter. Should you desire additional conferences, phone the office and leave a message for the teacher. Teachers will be glad to call you and schedule an appointment.

**With the Vice Principal:** The Principal's door is always open. If you have any questions or concerns, contact the school office and set up an appointment to meet with the Vice Principal.

## **Student Behavior and Consequences**

When a student's behavior or attitude is in conflict with the standards of our school, every effort is made to encourage the student to demonstrate a change and improvement necessary to comply with these standards. As much as possible, misbehavior in the classroom will be handled by the classroom teacher. Attempts to correct behavior may be handled in the following ways:

1. Each teacher may use unique techniques for modifying student behavior; however, if disruptive behavior becomes common, the teacher may seek to offer a warning, dismiss the student from the classroom and follow-up with the student to clarify the classroom expectations.
2. If initial warnings, removal from class or counsel do not result in a change in behavior, the parent will be required to meet with the teacher, student, and an administrator.
3. The teacher has the freedom to assign a **detention** to a student for any disruptive behavior, regardless of whether the student has been issued a warning. The Parent/student handbook is given as a guideline for students to follow. The behavioral expectations listed in this handbook are considered warning enough.
4. The student may also expect to have his citizenship grade lowered.
5. In certain serious misbehaviors, such as disrespect to teachers, student fighting, vandalism of school property, injuries purposefully caused by a student, or other violations of the Christian lifestyle standards, students will be immediately referred to the principal. These behaviors will result in the initial suspension from class followed by additional disciplinary action. If the student is not remorseful or willing to correct the behavior, the student may not be allowed to return to class until a parent conference with the teacher and administrator takes place.

## **Suspension**

An accumulation of three behavioral detentions will result in a one day suspension. In addition a student may receive a suspension for any of the following extreme behaviors.

1. Stealing.
2. Extreme disrespect for any adult.
3. Any form of physical violence endangering another student or a teacher.
4. Possession of any inappropriate material or object deemed dangerous or harmful.
5. Any form of physical, emotional or sexual harassment.
6. Foul or obscene language.

### **Superintendent's Panel**

Repeated offenses leading to an accumulation of **three behavioral suspensions** will result in a Superintendent's panel. This panel made up of the school administrators, a teacher, and a member of the School Board will determine if the student's behavior warrants expulsion.

### **Zero Tolerance**

A student may also be brought before a Superintendent's panel in the case of any act of violence, sexual immorality, the possession of drugs or alcohol, the possession of weapons, or if found under the influence or in possession of alcohol or illicit drugs.

### **Probation for Misconduct**

Behavioral probation will result if a student receives two suspensions in one semester, or by recommendation of a Superintendent's panel.

Probation is a conditional testing period assigned to a student who fails to meet the standards of the school with regard to conduct and attitude. A student who is placed on behavioral probation will have a designated period of time to demonstrate the ability to follow the standards of conduct at RCS. During a period of probation, the student is expected to improve his conduct to the extent necessary to satisfy the faculty and administration so that he will benefit from continued enrollment at RCS. These behavioral expectations will be provided via a contract to both the parents and student.

In the event of Behavioral Probation, the student will meet with a mentor teacher and subsequently with the administration on a regular basis to discuss progress. Definite individualized goals will be established for each student in the following areas:

- Spiritual Growth
- Academic Progress
- Attitude
- Citizenship

Probation should be viewed as a time when the school and the family can work closely together to encourage growth and improvement in the life of the student. The goal is a positive experience for everyone involved. However, if the student fails to respond positively to these efforts and adequate progress is not shown, the student may be asked to withdraw from the school for his own benefit and for the benefit of his classmates.

### **Detentions:**

Detention will be held once a week after school from 2:50 p.m. until 3:35 pm for middle school. A staff or faculty person will be assigned to monitor the detention. When a detention is issued a copy will be sent home with the student for the parents to sign and return to the office the next day. Students are also given a reminder the day before the detention as to where the detention is located. During the detention the student will be given an assignment to be completed during detention, and will not be allowed to use the time for completing homework. **If the student is unable to attend detention (due to a previously scheduled conflict) the student must receive permission in advance to reschedule detention.**

In the event that a student fails to show up for an assigned detention, or in the event that a student receives two detentions within the same week (the detention failing to be an effective deterrent), the student will be required to attend Saturday school.

If a student receives three detentions for tardies (a total of nine tardies) they will be assigned to Saturday school.

Students may avoid Saturday school by prompt attention given to serving any detention.

### **Saturday School**

Disciplinary policies are put in place to correct student misbehavior and move a student in a direction of understanding expectations for right behavior. In order for discipline to be an effective deterrent for wrong behavior, the disciplinary action must be received by the student with an attitude of humility and submission, while at the same time the action must be supported fully by the administration, faculty and parents. When there is a failure to support the policies and procedures of the discipline code, then further action must be taken to maintain the integrity of the discipline code.

Saturday school carries with it a fee of \$10.00/hr to defray the cost of supervision. Saturday school will begin promptly at 9:00 A.M. and dismiss at 12:00 P.M.

Failure to show up for Saturday school will result in the student being suspended the following Monday from school. Notification to parents of Saturday school assignment or subsequent suspension will be sent via email (Edline).

Students may avoid the consequence of suspension by completing the Saturday school assignment.

### **Miscellaneous Middle School**

**Bible:** Students are required to have an NIV Bible for Bible class and chapel. Their Bibles should be at school at all times. Bible classes are daily and a part of the regular academic program.

### **Chapel**

RCS provides a unique chapel experience geared to the middle school student. Chapel is held once a week and students are required to attend. The service involves prayer, singing, a speaker, and occasional special programs. Parents and guests are welcome and encouraged to attend. Proper respect and reverence is expected in chapel. Students whose actions prevent others from experiencing an environment conducive to worship and prayer will be disciplined accordingly.

- Each student is to bring his/her Bible to chapel.
- Each student will demonstrate proper courtesy and Christian hospitality to all guest speakers by listening carefully and behaving properly. Their attitude toward the speaker will be respectful and attentive.

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- At no time will studying or doing homework be allowed in chapel.
- There is to be no unnecessary talking, distracting others, or disturbance.
- No food or drinks are allowed.

**Athletics**

Rancho Christian School(s) participates in the IVIAA athletic league composed of private middle schools from Temecula and Murrieta. RCS competes in flag football, volleyball, basketball, golf, track, and soccer.

**Athletic Eligibility-** In order to participate in athletics or any extra-curricular activity a student must maintain a minimum GPA of 2.0 each quarter enrolled. Student athletes who are deemed ineligible at the end of a quarter may only regain eligibility at the end of the subsequent quarter.

**Fees-** Middle school sports require an athletic fee per sport enrolled in as indicated in the Financial Contract. The fee will be charged to the parents' bill once final rosters have been established by the head coach and athletic director.

**Athletic Awards-** At the close of each athletic season family and friends are invited to share in honoring the accomplishments of each athlete at an awards gathering. During this time students will receive certificates of participation. Special awards will also be announced at this time.

**Eagle Award-** The highest award of distinction in athletics shall be given to the player that demonstrates not only excellence in performance, but also exhibits the qualities outlined in the school ESLRs including: Christ-like character, one who receives instruction and acts on it, a thinker, one who leads by example and expression, and one who is wholesome.

**Band**

Advanced band is offered as an elective during the regular school day. Beginning band is offered before the school day begins. Both classes require a fee as defined in your Tuition & Fee Schedule. Middle School Advanced Band is offered to those who have completed one full year of beginning band.

**ASB:**

The ASB program is an opportunity for students to take a greater part in the activities of the school. Students will take part in leadership opportunities, serving areas, and event planning.

## **School Philosophy**

### **History**

In 1968, seven farmers living in the rural Rancho California valley made a decision to build a little Chapel on a hill, and Rancho Community Church was born. Since these early beginnings, Rancho Community Church has faithfully served this community (now the Temecula/Murrieta Valley) -- by loving people, teaching God's word, developing a positive community, building strong families, and helping parents train up children. We serve children and families when we build a solid foundation of character, faith, love, leadership, and quality academics through the ministries of our schools.

In 1984, Rancho Community Church opened the valley's first preschool, Sonshine Preschool, and through this ministry, thousands of students have been nurtured in a warm, caring environment, preparing our youngest treasures for elementary school and beyond. In 1993, at the urging of our preschool parents, the elementary school opened and in 1999 the middle school. Recently, our Board made the decision to pursue opening a high school as early as September 2008, so those in 6<sup>th</sup> grade in 2005-6 will likely have the opportunity to be the first graduating class of Rancho Christian High School.

Beginning with the fall of 2005, the church and school moved to the present campus on Temecula Parkway (Highway 79 South). The forty acre campus along with 80,000 square feet of buildings now houses our church, preschool and K-8 programs.

### **Historical Background**

Between 1837 and 1848 Horace Mann wrote a series of letters to the Board of Education of the state of Massachusetts. These letters became a part of Mann's legacy and today he is often credited with being the father of public education in America, a common school for all. It might seem strange, therefore, to find within the pages of these letters a framework for private Christian school education. At some point, education in western society stopped being a thoroughly Christian endeavor and became secular. Mann wrote the following: "Those who knowingly withhold sustenance from a newborn baby commit infanticide. And by the same reasoning, they who refuse to enlighten the intellect of the rising generation are guilty of degrading the human race. They, who refuse to train up children in the way they should go, are training up incendiaries and madmen to destroy property and life, and to invade and pollute the sanctuaries of society!" These were very strong words, a common attribute of Mann's writings. Before you begin to think that it was mere coincidence that Mann quoted scripture to make his point, think again. Mann was convinced of the importance and necessity of Bible education. In fact, when questioned about it, he argued vigorously that the common school must remain essentially Christian with the Bible at the core of the curriculum.

Beginning with the Scopes trial of 1925, public schools became the focal point of a debate over the role of school prayer and Bible education that lasted well into the 1960s until finally the Bible was removed from public instruction. It is probably no coincidence that the removal of the Bible and prayer from American schools paralleled a steady decline in American education and falling test scores that continues today. The growth of Christian school education over the past 50 years has primarily been a reaction to the removal of the Bible from schools as well as a return to the common school envisioned by Mann. Why did Horace Mann feel so strongly that Bible education was a "necessity of social existence" and even more, believed that "training a child in the way he should go" comes with a promise?

Recent research in education shows that one of the primary keys to student success in school is a healthy, nurturing, stable home. When the Bible was removed from schools it was also removed from society. The pattern of self-less love, moral conviction, purity, and integrity contained within the pages of scripture have been lost to generations. Not only may we soon see the fulfillment of prophecy as described by Mann "a community without a conscience will soon extinguish itself", but today's generation of youth is faced with the pain of dysfunctional families and the influence of immorality in society with little or no help. Where are they supposed to find answers to their feelings of abandonment and despair? Where will they find acceptance? How will they know to do what is right? How are they to know that they are not alone?

### **Moral Education and Society**

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In the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the authority of the Bible began to be questioned all over Europe as liberalism began to take its root in western society. As a result the church began to falter all over Europe until now more than a century later less than 5% of the population of Europe are evangelical Christians. In America the rise of fundamentalism stemmed the tide of liberalism, at least for a time. Central to the fundamentalist tradition was the inerrancy and absolute authority of the Word of God. Today, for the most part, conservative evangelical Christians are the offspring of the fundamentalist movement of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

In the mid twentieth century, liberalism began to take hold in America, especially in the east. Before long, the Bible was removed from public life under the guise of separation of church and state. Soon it was no longer “politically correct” to view the Bible as a rule and guide for life and by the 1960s the Bible was removed from public education entirely. Today in America, we have a generation of adults who no longer reveres the Word of God, nor believe in its truth.

The Christian school is a necessary response by the Christian community to again claim the responsibility for training children in the Truth. Any education apart from the Word of God, neglects what is true, and what is right. All truth comes from God, and as He grants us wisdom and understanding, this same truth eventually leads us back to Him. Justin the Martyr expressed so eloquently in his *First Apology* during the second century, that the soul purpose of philosophy is to know what is true about God. To pursue truth is to pursue God.

Education is more than an accumulation of knowledge and skills enabling us to pursue a career and or life style that will bring us contentment, wealth and happiness. Education is about growth. It changes a person, it builds character, it affects the way we see the world around us. Education that is integrated with the Word of God is all about bringing us to a place of knowing God better. Knowing God is the primary directive for every Christian and therefore the cornerstone of sound Christian education.

Teaching children to know God is more than just relating the stories of the Bible. True integration of the Bible into the Christian school means that it becomes the framework for how we live, think, and love. This is the advantage of the Christian school. We have the freedom to use the Bible as the standard for teaching our children important values and life principles. Today public schools are struggling to teach values and morality because they have no standard. Without the Word of God, what becomes the standard of right and wrong? Is it relativism, humanism, or naturalism? None of these provides a working standard. This is what Mann was describing when he wrote of a society “without a conscience.” In the end it is destined for destruction.

Consider the important values that are basic to the gospel message of Christ. The Gospel (along with the rest of the New Testament) directs us to love one another and to put the interests of others above our own selfish ambition. The gospel directs us to pursue truth, nobility, and righteousness in all things. The gospel directs us to respect and obey any authority over us. The gospel directs us to be honest and to work at everything with our whole heart. Each of these directives becomes central to the philosophy and operation of a Christian school.

### **Academic Excellence**

In Colossians chapter 3 the apostle Paul writes, “Whatever you do whether in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus... and whatever you do work at it with your whole heart as work done to please God, not to please men.” God is not pleased with mediocrity. It is not enough for a school to be content with providing a safe and healthy environment. A Christian school needs to strive for excellence in all things whether it is training a child intellectually, emotionally, physically, morally or spiritually.

Recent studies show that students enrolled in ACSI member schools generally score 1.5 to 2 grade level equivalents above their counterparts in public schools on national standardized tests. This is a strong testimony to the success that Christian schools are currently experiencing, but is it enough? As mentioned before, one of the keys to student success in school is a nurturing home life. Students in Christian schools, who come from stable homes on average, demonstrate better student performance. Is this enough to account for the strong disparity in test scores between public and private education? Are there other advantages of private Christian school education?

As students climb the ladder of cognitive development as described by Piaget, they need to grow in areas of self-discipline, initiative, creativity and work ethic as well. The strength of these attributes in any individual is usually

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driven by a sense of ownership and maturity. This maintains the balance between the intellectual development and emotional development. Each individual matures emotionally and intellectually at a unique rate; however, this does not mean that the growth cannot be accelerated. The acceleration of this growth is strongly tied to the individual's spiritual development.

“Academic excellence must not be construed only to mean producing future collegians or to having all students test two years above national norms. If we truly believe that each child is individually gifted by God, then academic excellence will be defined as a program which helps each child reach his individual maximum, which may or may not be two years above national norms” (Philosophy of Christian Schools, ACSI). Academic excellence will be measured by how a student is stretched and challenged to the highest potential, while at the same time directed toward recognition of personal giftedness. The mission of the Christian school is to provide a high quality academic program that assists young men and women toward a balance of rigorous intellectual competence, healthy personal development, and strong Christian commitments. Studies show that the number one desire of parents is to have their child attend a school where they feel comfortable and happy. However, this is not our intent, for even though we desire that each child discover what it means to know happiness and peace, we know that this is accomplished by stretching and challenging them and in fact making them feel very uncomfortable.

***Christus Primatum Tenens***

Roughly translated this phrase means “Christ first always.” This reminds us of the words of Paul in the letter to the Philippians when he wrote “to live is Christ, to die is gain.” To Paul, Christ was and is everything. Regardless of our life pursuit, Christ is preeminent. In Christ everything else finds meaning. There is a strong connection between these words and what Paul wrote later in Philippians 4, “Whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable, if anything is excellent or praiseworthy, think on these things.” In Christ we come to know what is right, what is true, what is praiseworthy, what is excellent.

Imagine the importance of putting Christ first in everything and how it applies to “training a child in the way that he should go.” It all begins with the Lordship of Christ. How do we begin training a child to obey parents and teachers if we do not first establish the importance of obedience to God? In the same respect excellence in education is all about Christ. Would Christ have us be only mediocre? If Christian school students are improperly trained either to meet the demands of higher education or to contribute to society, would it be honoring to God?

**Spiritual Nurturing**

The Christian school is an arm of both the church and Christian home. As such, implied in its mission is the desire to see each student come to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. However, the Christian school provides a special role in the spiritual growth and discipleship of the student as well. With Biblical integration across the curriculum, students are provided with an opportunity to grow in their depth of understanding of their personal faith and development of a Christian world view.

Although students may come to know Christ by what they hear and learn in the classroom, the objectives of the classroom are not primarily evangelistic, but instead educational. Educational objectives are measurable and personal faith in Christ (a true heart felt commitment) is something the church or Christian educator refrains from attempting to measure. In the Christian school classroom, whether the child is a Christian or non-Christian the educational objective is the same. The goal is to take the student down a path to discovering what it means to be a Christian, to grow in knowledge and skill, to develop a Christian world view, and to adopt habits and lifestyle that are consistent with this world view. For the non-Christian student it is a journey of exploration that hopefully will lead to a moment of conversion, but in the very least will provide the student with Biblically sound life skills, that will encourage him to become a positive contributor to society. For the Christian student it is a journey of discipleship and spiritual growth that will leave the student thoroughly equipped to not only serve society with knowledge and skill, but to live as salt and light in a darkened world that needs a savior.

**A Christian Faculty**

At the heart of the Christian school are the faculty and staff. It is essential that every member of the faculty, administration and staff be thoroughly equipped both academically and spiritually. The strength of the Christian school will be found in the level of expertise, professionalism, passion and personal Christian faith of the faculty. It

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is an unhealthy philosophy which allows any of these areas to be compromised in the hiring of Christian school faculty.

Christian school teachers are amongst the most sacrificial and giving individuals within the Christian community. Despite their level of sacrifice and commitment, it would be harmful to the effectiveness of a Christian school to place an individual in a position where they are asked to perform a task that is beyond their level of training and expertise. At the same time it is just as harmful to both the school and community to ask the teacher to make sacrifices that represent an economic hardship. Either of these scenarios will result in faculty who are overwhelmed, anxious, stressed, and even spiritually empty.

The Christian school teacher is to be above reproach, committed in their personal faith and actively participating in the ministry of the local church. The Christian school is not a substitute for the church in the personal walk and growth of the teacher. The church is there to provide spiritual sustenance and nourishment in the same way the teacher provides it for the student. Horace Mann wrote “no teacher should be allowed to cross the threshold of the classroom who is not clothed, from the crown of his head to the sole of his foot in garments of virtue, ... pure tastes, good manners, and exemplary morals.” These standards of lifestyle require a teacher to be committed to personal spiritual growth and a depth of knowledge and understanding of the Word of God.

Teachers are students first. Teachers should never view themselves as a completed vessel. They are lifelong learners on a journey of growth and discovery. The joys of this journey are fans that feed the flames of their passions to teach. Teachers need to partner with students, walk alongside, open doors to new discoveries, never surprised to learn something new along the way.

Hopefully, every Christian school administrator has to come to the realization that a school can only be as strong as its faculty. Too often administrators are struggling to hold on to authority when what they need to do is let it go. The Biblical perspective on positional authority has already been established for every believer. It is not something that has to be claimed, Christ has already claimed it. The administrator has authority granted by Christ, what is needed is an attitude of servanthood. The Christian school administrator needs to discover what is necessary to empower the faculty, to build them up, to help them to get better at what they do. This requires constant support in all areas including: finances, facilities and resources, professional training, and spiritual training. The effectiveness of an administrator to correct, train, even rebuke when necessary, begins and ends with his ability to provide support, encouragement, sensitivity and love.

### **Effectiveness**

“Young men and women who are products of Christian schooling will mature to loving God with their whole heart, mind and soul; growing in wisdom and stature; living in the world as salt and light; and giving sacrificially of themselves and their resources, reflecting the essence and love of the Christ who lives and dwells within them” (Smitherman, ACSI). This is an awesome task set before us. The effective Christian school requires several dynamics to accomplish this: 1) A guaranteed and viable curriculum that sets the instructional course with a documented scope and sequence clearly tied to the mission and objectives of the school; 2) A committed Christian faculty, who themselves are lifelong learners, who are professionally equipped, who know what is to be taught, to what level and to what ends; 3) An administration who upholds the mission and vision of the school in all matters of decision making, who support and serve the teachers by empowering them to be better tomorrow than what they are today and who seeks to partner with parents in the process of training each child; and 4) Parents who understand and support the school mission, who trust the administration and faculty as trained professionals equipped to accomplish the mission, and who seek help in reinforcing the Biblical values of the school when necessary.

### **Philosophy of Bible Instruction in a Multi-denominational Community**

Rancho Christian School is a ministry of Rancho Community Church, a member church of the Reformed Church of America. As such, the school has adopted a statement of faith that is consistent with reformed traditions, being consistent with the statements found in the Apostles’ Creed. However, it is understood from our admissions philosophy and policies that students admitted to the school come from a variety of church backgrounds, including the various protestant denominations, American evangelical denominations, charismatic or Pentecostal denominations, as well as the Catholic Church. It is also understood that there may be students admitted to the school of different faiths other than orthodox Christianity.

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The statement of faith establishes the basic framework of doctrinal teaching contained within the school curriculum. It is believed that this statement provides a summary of those fundamental teachings consistent within all of orthodox Christianity. As such these fundamental teachings are taught with conviction to be true. At no time will the teaching faculty waiver on these fundamental teachings.

Aside from these fundamental teachings found within the statement of faith it is understood that there are a number of peripheral doctrines within the Christian Church, and that there is a difference of opinion amongst the various denominations of the church as to the teaching of these doctrines. Examples of these peripheral doctrines might include: the role of free-will as discussed by Calvinism and Arminianism; the gift of speaking in tongues as described by the Charismatic and Pentecostal traditions; doctrines concerning the sacraments and ordinances; doctrines of eschatology; traditions of worship and lifestyle; etc. These teachings and many others are clearly defined within the Reformed tradition; however, because RCS seeks to provide training to children who come from a variety of traditions, it has adopted the following principles for Bible instruction:

1. The doctrines as described by the Statement of Faith, shall be taught with conviction as truth, and supported by all faculty and staff.
2. Any peripheral doctrines not described specifically in the Statement of Faith shall be discussed openly and respectfully in class. All positions will be presented fairly without intent to indoctrinate the student.
3. It will not be the intended goal of the Bible curriculum or instructor to settle disagreement of opposing viewpoints, but instead to provide students with the tools to seek further study and find answers to difficult questions. In all things the student will be encouraged to view the Bible as the final rule and guide for knowing what is true.
4. Clear distinctions will be made between what is considered orthodox Christian teachings, and unorthodox teachings offered by both cults and other world religions.
5. Although Christians vary in their views of Christian lifestyle, we believe that there are specific moral directives that are Biblically founded including obedience to the Ten Commandments, and a lifestyle of integrity, temperance and purity.
6. During discussion, students will be encouraged to offer opinions and insight, and each student will be treated with respect and integrity.

The teaching faculty are not required to be members of Rancho Community Church or the Reformed Church of America, and therefore shall come from a variety of church backgrounds. At all times, they will be asked to moderate discussion with fairness and openness. They will also be encouraged to make clear to the students when they are expressing opinions that have originated with their own heritage, personal study and reflection, and that these opinions may or may not be consistent with the teachings of RCC or the RCA.

In keeping with the mission of the school, the Bible curriculum and instruction will strive to provide students with knowledge and understanding of the Word of God, so that they may remain committed in their faith, and so they may be equipped to continue in a life of personal growth. To accomplish this, the curriculum will emphasize the following core objectives at each level of education from preschool through high school:

Each student will be challenged to know and understand:

1. The Bible is the Word of God, fully inspired, inerrant and infallible.
2. God is the creator of all that we call the universe.
3. God is completely sovereign and directly involved in the lives of men.
4. Man was created to have fellowship with God.
5. Sin and the resulting separation from God entered the world as a result of the fall, one man's sin.
6. Jesus Christ is God incarnate, fully God and fully man.
7. Redemption comes as a gift of grace through the sacrificial offering of Christ.
8. We have hope, in that our salvation is in Christ, and we shall inherit eternal life as a result of Christ's death and resurrection.

\*Note: For more information see "Philosophy of Bible Education," a document available from the Bible Department.

### **A Christian Philosophy of Science Education**

A philosophy of science education examines questions of the nature of scientific truth, the methods used in the gathering of evidence and the formulation of theories or laws, the premises or biases that might influence the way we view science, and even the relationship between faith and science. The way we view science and the way we do science is influenced by what we know of the Bible and what we believe about God.

### **God is the Creator of the Universe**

Fundamentally all Christians, including Christian scientists, must believe that God is the creator of the universe. For “since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. For since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities-his eternal power and divine nature-have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made.” (Romans 1) This simple truth, God is the creator, is central to the Christian faith, and should always be the cornerstone of scientific education in the Christian school.

Scientists are human. As every other human they are subject to the fall, for like everyone else they have inherited sin since the time of Adam. As a result, like every other man, scientists are vulnerable to sin and the failures it brings. Scientists are not perfectly moral, but in fact can be motivated by selfish desires. Scientists are not purely objective, like everyone else, they can be affected by personal bias and prejudice shaped by a lifetime of experience. This means that science is in fact held hostage to man’s humanity and the fall.

Theories regarding the origin of the universe and the origin of life are often seen as controversial and in conflict with religion. This is because these theories strike right at the heart of the belief in a creator God. At the same time there are a variety of viewpoints within the Christian scientific community with regard to the interpretation of Genesis 1 and the question of origins. Accepting that this wide range of viewpoints does exist, the faculty of Rancho Christian School(s) will openly teach and discuss each and every viewpoint with regard to the question of origins without attempting to indoctrinate, except for the fundamental doctrines, which all Christians must hold to, that God is the creator of the Universe, all things have been created by Him, and He holds all things together in heaven and earth by His sovereign hand. To state it further, the faculty of Rancho Christian School(s) shall support the following core values in their science instruction:

1. God is the creator of the universe.
2. God is sovereign and is actively involved in the physical world.
3. Science is an investigation of the workings of creation.
4. The primary goal of the Christian scientist is to glorify God as the creator of the universe.
5. The primary goal of the Christian science student is to know God through creation.
6. Scientific truth gives us glimpses of God but is bound up in the limits of mathematical probabilities and can be influenced by human bias and prejudice.
7. Naturalism is a philosophy that is in direct conflict with Christianity since it espouses that nature is all there is; therefore, there is no God.
8. Naturalism is supported by the theories of evolution and spontaneous generation, since they both argue origin of life and of the species by only natural processes.
9. Any and all scientific theories shall be discussed openly, with freedom to explore all viewpoints.
10. Students shall be encouraged to examine all viewpoints in light of the fundamental teachings of orthodox Christianity. (For further reading see the expanded version of the “Christian Philosophy of Science Instruction” on Edline as well as “Origins: A Supplement to Life Science” and “Beginnings: A Supplement to Earth Science” available through the science department)

### **A Mission of Growing Servants of Jesus Christ**

Consider the important values that are basic to the gospel message of Christ. The gospel (along with the rest of the New Testament) directs us to love one another, and to put the interests of others above our own selfish ambition. The gospel directs us to pursue truth, nobility and righteousness in all things. The gospel directs us to respect and obey any authority over us. The gospel directs us to be honest and to work at everything with our whole heart. Each of these directives becomes central to the philosophy and operation of a Christian school.

“Young men and woman who are products of Christian schooling, will mature to loving God with their whole heart, mind, and soul; growing in wisdom and stature; living in the world as salt and light; and giving sacrificially of

themselves and their resources, reflecting the essence and love of the Christ who lives and dwells within them” (Smitherman, ACSI) .

### **Christian Liberal Arts Education**

The purpose of the Christian liberal arts education is to create the good man, a man of virtue, a man of good tastes, a man who is both interesting and interested. C.S. Lewis in his book *The Abolition of Man*, would describe this as creating “men with chests.” This is necessary, for it is the chest, not the head, which controls the appetites of the stomach.

### **Developing Thinking, Articulate Students**

Christian liberal arts education connects methodology to the level of cognitive development of the child. It begins with the accumulation of knowledge by repetition and practice in the grammar stage continuing with the development of critical thinking through the early adolescent (dialectic) stage and culminating with building skills to articulate and express ideas during the late adolescent (rhetoric) stage.

### **Developing Lifelong Learners**

“The sole true end of education is simply this: to teach men how to learn for themselves; and whatever instruction fails to do this is effort spent in vain. For the tools of learning are the same, in any and every subject; and the person who knows how to use them will, at any age, get the mastery of a new subject in half the time and with a quarter of the effort expended by the person who has not the tools at his command. To learn six subjects without remembering how they were learnt does nothing to ease the approach to a seventh; to have learnt and remembered the art of learning makes the approach to every subject an open door” (Dorothy Sayers).

At every level the students shall be challenged with problem solving, extensive reading lists and writing assignments. The difference is clear when students are taken beyond conventionally taught subjects and asked to apply their knowledge through logic and clear expression. The objective is to form students who are passionate about learning.

### **Complete Integration**

In the Christian liberal arts model, subjects are not thought of as individual compartments, but connected disciplines relating to each other. Not only is the Bible integrated into each discipline, but connections are made between Literature, History, Art, Music, Science, and Mathematics. Teaching styles range from the didactic method (lecture) toward the Socratic method (discussion) as children move through the levels of the classical Trivium from grammar to rhetoric stages.

For education to be effective, it must go beyond conveying fact. Truly effective education cultivates thinking and articulate students who are able to develop facts into arguments and convey those arguments clearly and persuasively.

### **Traditions**

#### **School Verse**

*“They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk, and not faint.” (Isaiah 40:31).*

#### **School Colors**

Blue and Gold

#### **School Mascot** Eagle

### **Statement of Faith**

**We believe** in one God, who is our Heavenly Father, who made all things and rules over all in wisdom, righteousness, and love. We believe that this one living and true God is a Trinity of persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

**We believe** that man was originally created in the image of God. As he came forth from the hand of the Creator, he was truly righteous and holy. By a free act, man rebelled against God's rule, and by this rebellion, separated himself from God who is the source of all life. We believe that sin is rebellion against God. Whenever we break God's holy

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laws we sin against Him. Since sin cuts one off from fellowship with God, who alone is the source of life, it can finally lead only to eternal death.

**We believe** that "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life" (John 3:16). We believe that the Eternal Son of God became man for us men and our salvation, and that He is forever the Son of God and Son of Man, in one Divine Person. We believe our Lord Jesus Christ was born of the Virgin Mary, that He lived a perfect and holy life, and that He died on the cross to bear the sin and guilt of His people. We believe that this same Lord Jesus Christ arose from the dead, and is even now reigning at God's throne in Heaven.

**We believe** that by faith we have applied to our hearts all the benefits which Christ merited for us on Calvary's cross. We believe that by a living faith in the Savior our sins are forgiven us by God, and the perfect righteousness of Christ Jesus is declared to be ours.

**We believe** that everything we receive, including our faith and salvation, is due only to the grace of God. By "grace" we mean God's unmerited favor toward us; God blesses us because of what He is, rather than what we are. This marvelous truth forever cuts off all grounds for human pride and vain glory.

**We believe** that we are saved from sin and condemnation by God's grace, through faith alone. Faith, however, is never without good works. As Christians, we are called upon to pattern our lives after the example of the Lord Jesus Christ. These good works can never become a source of pride, as though God has saved us because we are better than other men, for these very works also are the result of God's grace in our lives.

**We believe** that the church is the special possession of the Son of God, who in every age and in every place calls people into its fellowship by His Word and Spirit. We believe that all those who by true faith are united to the Savior, are part of His body, the church. We believe that it is the duty of every Christian to unite himself to a worshipping congregation where the true Christian faith, as presented to us by the witness of the Holy Scripture, is proclaimed.

**We believe** that there are but two sacraments, instituted by Christ for the edification, or strengthening of the faith of His followers. The sacraments of Baptism and Holy Communion are signs and seals of God's activity and grace. In Baptism, we receive the mark which sets us apart as belonging to the family of God. The water of Baptism symbolizes the washing away of our sins by the blood of Jesus Christ. The sacrament of Holy Communion presents to us in visible and symbolic form the same Savior who is proclaimed in Holy Scripture. Thus when by faith, we partake of the bread and fruit of the vine, we reaffirm our faith in Jesus Christ.

**We believe** that the same Lord Jesus Christ, who ascended into Heaven, shall one day return as the judge of the living and the dead.

**We believe** that at the return of Christ the dead shall arise, and all men shall receive their just judgment of God.

**We believe** that those who have confessed Christ before men, He will own and confess before God and the holy angels, and receive them into the eternal joys of Heaven.

**We believe** these doctrines are confessed in the Apostles' Creed.

**APOSTLES' CREED**

I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of Heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ, His only Son our Lord; Who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified dead and buried; He descended into Hell. The third day He arose again from the dead; He ascended into Heaven and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; From thence He shall come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit; the Holy Universal Church; The communion of saints; The forgiveness of sins; The Resurrection of the body; And the life everlasting.  
Amen.

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**Resolving Conflict and Communication**

In every school there are a multitude of interpersonal relationships. If Satan can cut off any line of communication, he will score a victory. People end up offending others and being offended themselves because of the gossip and slander that prevail. In such an atmosphere it is impossible to enjoy the presence of God. Our goal is to build unity so we can enjoy an atmosphere of the presence of God and to impress to our students and their families His love and power. Our goal is to exalt Jesus Christ and to build His body of believers. In keeping with this goal we ask that each member of the faculty and staff commit to the leadership covenant of Rancho Community Church and Schools.

**Leadership Team Covenant**

- Always speak the truth in love
- Disagree with each other openly but respectfully
- Support, defend and speak well of each other
- Misconduct or offenses will be handled in the spirit of Matthew 18
- We will listen to feedback from each other within our school community without taking it personally, and seek God's direction for implementing change
- We will not entertain gossip (often disguised as "concerns", "prayer requests", "constructive criticisms")
- To avail ourselves to one another in service, prayer, encouragement, support both personally and in one another's ministries
- Fully unite around the decisions of the team – the team's decision is your decision
- We will sharpen each other in our personal growth and ministries, enhancing one another's strengths and minimizing one another's weaknesses
- Forgive one another quickly – hold no grudge
- We are a leadership team in ONE ministry striving together toward ONE vision

If differences between parents or fellow staff members arise it is important to remember that it is not always the Principal's or Vice-Principal's responsibility or place to settle disputes among other people. It is our place to listen and give only good reports about others and to help our staff do the same. This attitude will demonstrate that we have one goal. This is not to build up an administrator or a teacher, but to exalt Jesus Christ and to build His body of believers. If differences or conflict should happen the Matthew 18 principle will apply at our school when it comes to resolving differences and/or conflict.

"Moreover, if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: If he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established." Matt.18:15-16

1. If you feel you have been offended by someone, pick a time when you can be alone and go to that person in love and honesty to talk with them. Your goal should be to restore and resolve, not accuse.
2. If you are not satisfied that the matter has been resolved then go to the Principal, with another teacher or staff member so he/she can go with you as a witness and to provide objective counsel.
3. If the matter is not resolved after meeting with a third party, then you may have to take the matter to be heard by the superintendent or in some instances the superintendent's panel. (Before going to this step, be sure that you have followed each step of the "Matthew 18 checklist.")
4. The role of Superintendent, Principal, Vice Principal, or any other observer, is to offer objective counsel in resolving any concern or issue. Ultimately the decision of the team must be supported by all. The belief is that the decision of the team provides checks and balances which eliminates personal bias and agendas.

Like anything else in the Christian life, this commitment requires continual vigilance. Remember, a mark of spirituality is not whether we are able to expose the faults of others, but whether we are able to restore and work toward resolution. Unity, security and the knowledge that we are exalting God will be the result of our commitment.

For additional reading see the document "The Matthew 18 Principle: A Guide for Conflict Resolution" as well as "Matthew 18 Checklist" on Edline.