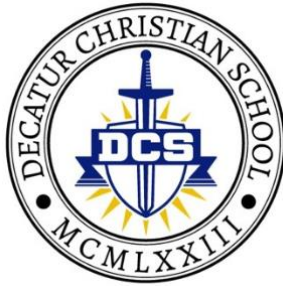


Decatur Christian School



2026-2027 Parent/Student Handbook

Our Mission

Decatur Christian School seeks to fulfill the God-given potential of each student by teaching excellence in academics, character, leadership and responsibility through solid principles based upon scriptural truth in order to enable students to live out their faith as servant leaders in every area of society.

Our Vision

Learn. Lead. Serve.

Learn through academic excellence, Lead with godly character, Serve as Christ-centered leaders

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Decatur Christian School 137 South Grant Street Forsyth, Illinois 62535
(217)-877-5636

Administrative/Office Staff

Administrator and High School Principal: Stephen Cantrell

Assistant Principal: Amy Wendt

Dean of Students: Justin Neufeld

Administrative Assistant: Linda Reed-Thompson

scantrell@decaturchristian.net

awendt@decaturchristian.net

jneufeld@decaturchristian.net

lthompson@decaturchristian.net

Main Office School Secretary: Kristen Troxell

Finance Office: Amy Hill

ktroxell@decaturchristian.net

ahill@decaturchristian.net

Main Office

(217)-877-5636

Introduction

The Student / Parent Handbook provides students, parent(s)*, and staff with a clear, concise statement of the basic policies, procedures, and philosophy of Decatur Christian School. It is our desire to enter into a covenant relationship with parents, to be of one accord in the matters of school policy. Although the Handbook is not intended as a definitive statement on all subjects, it is written to answer the most frequently asked questions about the policies and procedures of DCS. These policies and procedures are basic guidelines that should be viewed as one way we encourage and train students to recognize and assume responsibility for their actions. Commitment to and consistent support of these policies and procedures by students, parents and staff will enable DCS to run in a smooth, orderly manner and will produce even more significant and lasting accomplishments for our students. Therefore, the ultimate purpose of this Handbook is to allow parents, students, and teachers to be “of one mind” in the great privilege of training children to honor God with their whole lives.

*Parent(s) refers to parent(s) or legal guardian(s) for the entire handbook.

History of DCS

“Unless the Lord builds the house, its builders labor in vain. Unless the Lord watches over the city, the watchmen stand guard in vain.” Psalm 127:1

Decatur Christian School began in August, 1973, as a vision of Grace Baptist Church of Decatur, IL, with the desire to provide an outstanding academic program based upon scriptural truth. Since that significant beginning, Decatur Christian has grown in enrollment, academic excellence, and ministry to the Decatur area community.

In 1993, Glad Tidings Academy, a ministry of Glad Tidings Assembly of God, merged with Decatur Christian School. Following the merger, Decatur Christian became a single entity governed by a dedicated school board committed to serving the greater Decatur area and surrounding communities.

Affiliation and Recognition

Decatur Christian School is a member of the Association of Christian Schools International. ACSI promotes the cause of Christian education, protects the freedoms of Christian schools, and aids and strengthens schools through its many services. The Association of Christian Schools International provides teacher workshops and conventions, monitors educational legislation, and provides for academic, athletics, and fine arts competition.

DCS works with ACSI in the areas of teacher certification and standardized recognition of its school programs. DCS registers with the State of Illinois each year, confirming that it meets all the requirements of health, safety, number of school hours, and nondiscriminatory policies. Decatur Christian School has received recognition as a non-public school by the Illinois State Board of Education, providing for the transfer of all credits to qualified centers of higher education.

Christian Philosophy of Education

Decatur Christian School is openly committed to the Biblical view of God, the world, and life. Our purpose is in accordance with Colossians 1:15-17 and is to provide an academic environment where Christ is preeminent. Though God grants parents the primary responsibility for the education of the child, it is our intent to enter into a covenant relationship with the parents in support of this God-given directive.

We believe the following statements to be true for Christian education:

- The only foundation is the inerrant, infallible, authoritative Word of God. (II Peter 1:19-21)
- The concept of truth is based upon the absolute truths from the Word of God as opposed to philosophic relativism. (II Timothy 3:5-7, 3:16, Colossians 2:8)
- The content is based upon the world view from the Word of God that Jesus Christ is the center of all things, as opposed to humanism where man is the center of all things. (Colossians 2:8)
- The view of man’s nature is considered to be sinful, as opposed to humanism, which sees mankind as essentially good. (Romans 3:23)

- The objective is Christ-likeness through God's Holy Spirit, as opposed to humanism where the objective is to become better only by being educated. (Ephesians 4:11-13, Galatians 2:20)
- The methodology is guided by the authority of the Word of God. (Proverbs 22:6, Ephesians 6:4)
- The agency is the home, which takes priority in importance over the school. (Deuteronomy 6:5-7, Joshua 24:15)
- The dynamic is the Holy Spirit working through the lives of Christian faculty, staff and volunteers. (Luke 6:40)

DCS Philosophy

- Decatur Christian School is a caring community of parents, faculty, staff, and students dedicated to living lives that are pleasing to Jesus Christ. We exist to serve the Lord by providing quality Christian education to the youth of Decatur and the surrounding area.
- We believe that there is one God eternally existent in three persons: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit; that Jesus Christ, through His death on the cross, provided for the redemption of sin through His resurrection and life; and that Jesus Christ is the Lord of every Christian believer.
- We believe that the Bible is the inspired, inerrant, and authoritative Word of God with God as the Creator and Author of all life. We believe that the Bible, God's Holy Word, serves as an infallible reference for Christian living and must be incorporated into the curricula as well as into the learning experiences in which our students participate.
- We believe that the education of children is a process that occurs continuously within the home, the school and the church. Our goal is to help children to become "kingdom of God" seekers and to realize the admonition of Romans 8:29, "that we should be conformed to the image of Christ." To accomplish this goal, we provide academic preparation and intellectual stimulation and promote personal initiative in the learning process.
- We believe it is our God-given mission to encourage and help each child who passes through the halls of DCS to develop the spiritual, academic, physical, and social gifts and talents God has given him or her. It is our goal to help each young person to develop a reverence for God and loyalty to American principles of democracy. Our desire is to help young people develop sound morals, spiritual values, ethics, and attitudes that are necessary to having and maintaining a successful, meaningful, and growing Christian life.
- We believe that a sound, well-rounded education should be available to each child regardless of sex, creed, or race.

DCS Statements on Current Social Issues

Critical Race Theory

Decatur Christian School is committed to the truth of Holy Scripture. We look at the issues of race and racism through the lens of a Christian worldview. Therefore, we view Critical Race Theory (CRT) as an inadequate social theory with a fundamentally flawed foundation, diagnosis, and prescription for the human condition.

CRT is a post-Civil Rights social philosophy, legal theory, and strategy for addressing racism and our changing society. Its underlying framework — critical theory — was formed as an attempt to understand human brokenness and oppression and to point a way toward liberation. It was formulated upon a neoMarxist philosophy and worldview as developed by the Frankfurt School in Germany in the 1930s.

A Christian worldview significantly differs from the popular, secular CRT narrative. Because of these distinct differences, DCS rejects and does not promote CRT or critical theory. We believe it is based on the fundamentally flawed (and spent) ideas of neo-Marxist thought, and that it actually leads to more racial division and not less. While we do not shy away from teaching about the shameful aspects of American history or inhibit discussions about race or racism in the classroom or on campus, and while we promote the freedom to discuss any theory, idea, or worldview, we think there is a better way to understand race, define racism, and promote racial justice, i.e., through the gospel of Jesus Christ and a kingdom-based theology of righteousness and justice, built upon the truth of the Bible. Reference: <https://www.ccu.edu/about/position-statements/statement-on-critical-race-theory/>

Gender Identity and Sexuality

"Gender" is your biological sex as God originally created you.

DCS believes that all people must be afforded compassion, love, kindness, respect, and dignity. It will always be our intent as a school to reflect these qualities. Any behavior or attitudes not displaying these qualities should be corrected, as they are not in accord with scripture or the Spirit of Christ. (John 13:35)

We believe that God wonderfully and immutably created each person as distinctly male or female (Gen. 1:26-31; 2:18-25; 5:1, 2). These two distinct and divinely representative genders together reflect the image and nature of God. We believe that the fullest, most rewarding experience of life includes the acceptance of a person's God-given biological gender. The rejection of one's biological gender diminishes the reflection of the image of God within a person.

We believe that God intends sexual intimacy to occur only between a man and a woman who are married to each other. Any form of sexual intimacy outside of such marriage is hurtful to God's heart, and harmful to the spiritual health of those involved. (1 Cor. 6:15-7:6; Eph. 5:3-7) Such activities include, but is not limited to adultery, fornication, homosexual conduct, and pornography.

We believe that God offers redemption, transformation, and restoration to all who seek Him through Jesus Christ. (1 Cor. 6:11).

Core Values

Christ-Centered Environment

I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. Galatians 2:20

A Christ-centered environment means the lives of our staff, the culture of our campus, and our educational program will reflect the Lord's values as revealed in the Bible. At Decatur Christian School, Jesus Christ will be at the center of all decision-making and the truth of God's Word will be integrated into academics, athletics, fine arts, and human relationships.

Truth

For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. John 1:17

Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth. John 17:15-17

We believe that absolute truth exists and is revealed to believers by God through His Holy Spirit and the revelation of His inspired Word. At DCS, God's truth is taught through literature, art, music, history, mathematics, and science. Our hope is that our students will embrace a Christian world view, be critical thinkers and diligent truth seekers, strong in wisdom and able to discern falsehood.

Excellence

Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure – if anything is excellent or praiseworthy – think about such things. Philippians 4:8

Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men. Colossians 3:23
Excellence is defined as, “being of the very best quality.” Our desire is to humbly pursue excellence to glorify and serve God in every dimension of our lives: spiritually, personally, professionally, academically, socially, artistically, and athletically.

Virtue

May integrity and uprightness protect me, because my hope is in you. Psalm 25:21

We strive to develop observable virtue in the lives of our students that is manifested by wisdom, justice, courage, perseverance, responsibility, integrity, discipline, and encouragement. We will edify each other as we seek to imitate and conform to the image of Christ.

Community

The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts, and though all its parts are many, they form one body. I Corinthians 12:12

A new commandment I give to you: Love one another; as I have loved you, so you must love one another.

By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another. John 13:34-35

We are a united covenant partnership of family, school, and church, sharing fellowship, values, and brotherly love. Our desire is to provide a wholesome, Christian environment for our children, disciplining and encouraging them spiritually, academically, physically, emotionally and socially.

Stewardship

If you have not been trustworthy in handling worldly wealth, who will trust you with true riches? Luke 16:11

We are called to honor and glorify God, being wise managers of all He has entrusted to us: relationships, gifts, talents, time, finances, and facilities.

Service

For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do. Ephesians 2:10

As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without deeds is dead. James 2:26

We seek to be Christian servants with compassionate heart attitudes of humility and obedience. Through our acts of service and servant-leadership, we will present Christ, not only by word, but also by example. This attitude of service will be evident among us as we work and learn at Decatur Christian School and as we reach out to serve the greater Decatur area.

Guide for Addressing Concerns

Classroom Concern

Contact Teacher; if not resolved...

..Contact Administrator; if not resolved...

...Contact a School Board Member.

School Concern

Contact Administrator; if not resolved...

...Contact a School Board Member.

School Board Concern

Contact a School Board Member.

If you cannot determine who to call, contact the office at (217)-877-5636.

SECTION A

ACCOMMODATIONS

Students with Special Needs: Educational programs for children between the ages of three (3) and twenty-one (21) years of age who have special needs due to handicaps or mental disabilities are provided by the local district through a cooperative arrangement with the Macon-Piatt Special Education District as prescribed by the Rules and Regulations for the Administration of Special Education in the State of Illinois. Specific inquiries may be made to the DCS Administrator or the Director, Macon-Piatt Special Education District, 101 West Cerro Gordo St., Decatur, Illinois 62523. The telephone number is (217)-424-3025.

Equal Opportunity: Access to all programs is contingent on the ability of the school to meet the necessary accommodations. Any student or parent/guardian with an equal opportunity concern should contact the Decatur Christian School Administrator.

ADMISSION POLICIES

DCS does not discriminate on the basis of sex, nationality, race, color or ethnic origin in the Administration of its educational policies, the awarding of financial aid, or any of its other school administered programs. The Administration will arrange for a personal interview with each student and the parent(s) before admission, so that there is a thorough understanding of Decatur Christian School's Biblical philosophy and goals, its commitment to the student, and the student/parent(s) rights and responsibilities. This interview will be scheduled during the application process. DCS does not provide enrollment to students whose special education or physical needs cannot be met by our existing programs, services, or staff. We do not accept students solely on the basis of their scholastic, musical, or athletic ability.

ACADEMIC HONESTY

Academic honesty and personal integrity are fundamental components of a student's education and character development. Decatur Christian School expects that students will not cheat, lie, plagiarize, or commit other acts of academic dishonesty. Grades should reflect the student's own work in the fairest possible way. The academically honest student produces work representative of his or her own efforts and abilities.

Academic dishonesty, cheating, or plagiarism involves an attempt by the student to show possession of a level of knowledge or skill which he or she does not possess.

Definitions Of Academic Dishonesty

Cheating

Students who cheat deprive themselves of the opportunity to learn – especially how to think. Knowing how to think critically in each subject area prepares students for post-secondary education as well as any profession they pursue. The following offenses, including but not limited to those below, are considered examples of cheating:

1. Copying another student's work or assignment (including homework) to submit as one's own.
2. Allowing another student to copy your assignment (including homework) to submit as one's own.
3. Using or providing notes, documents, answers, aids such as a graphic calculator, computer file or other storage devices (e.g. cell phones, ipods, etc.), or helping another student on any assessment (e.g. test, quiz, exam, etc.) or assignment unless permitted by the teacher.
4. Stealing, borrowing or removing an exam from the classroom, or taking it from a teacher without explicit permission.
5. Tampering with teacher materials and/or student records.

6. Copying, photocopying or having someone other than the student prepare the student's homework, paper, project, computer program, or take-home test for which credit is given.
7. Copying materials, including computer software, in violation of the copyright law.

Plagiarizing

Plagiarism is any use of another individual's ideas, words, or work without giving him or her appropriate credit. Plagiarism includes, but is not limited to, the following misuse of published material or material acquired from internet sources, and or the work of another student:

1. Paraphrasing or copying any source without giving proper credit to the author.
2. Not using denotation when citing sources.
3. Turning in any assignment which is not based on one's own research and writing.

Consequences for Academic Dishonesty: Please refer to "Standard 3: Academic Dishonesty" in Section D of this handbook for consequences.

Athletics

DCS athletics may include but are not limited to: men's and women's soccer, men's and women's basketball, women's volleyball, men's baseball, and cheerleading. Please refer to the DCS Athletic Agreement for complete information and regulations regarding the DCS athletic program.

IHSA - As a recognized IHSA school, we adhere to the policies and schedules for each sport as set forth each year by the IHSA. For more information, go to www.ihsa.org.

Students

Eligibility - A student will be eligible to participate in sports as long as his/her cumulative semester grades do not reflect one F or two Ds. If a student receives a failing semester grade, he/she will be ineligible the following semester. Student athletes' grades for eligibility are checked weekly by the Athletic Director.

Character Requirements - A student who is involved in the athletic program must maintain a high degree of Christian character.

Parents

When attending any DCS function, parents should maintain a positive Christian witness at all times.

Please see the *DCS Athletic Agreement* for more information.

ATTENDANCE

Elementary attendance shall be recorded at the opening of the school day.

Middle and High School attendance shall be recorded daily during each class period.

Decatur Christian School attendance requirements are in compliance with the Illinois State laws regarding compulsory attendance for students who have not graduated.

see <https://www.ilga.gov/legislation/102/HB/10200HB0169enr.htm>

The school year is defined as the period of time from the opening of school in August to the close of the regular school term. Students who are absent due to illness may be required to submit a doctor's statement.

Parent Responsibility:

Parents have responsibility for requiring and promoting their child's regular attendance, the first step in achieving academic success. Punctuality and regularity of attendance expresses responsibility in character and are also vital to the academic success of students, as well as creating a functional environment for all students and teachers for learning and instruction.

Reporting Absences—A parent or legal guardian must email the school office (attendance@decaturchristian.net) when reporting an absence or tardiness including the reason for the absence or tardiness. The parent should communicate with the school office by 8:30 a.m. each day the student is absent.

Parents planning to take their child out of school during the school day must make advance arrangements with the school administration. For accountability and record keeping, if an elementary student is present less than two hours, it will be recorded as a full day absence. If an elementary student is here more than two hours, but less than the full day, it will be recorded as a half-day absence.

In the event of an attendance problem, parents or legal guardians and the school shall cooperatively work to resolve the situation.

Excusable Absences:

Our attendance policy designates **18** days of excused and unexcused absences **per school year** (**9** days of absence **per semester**) as the **maximum** allowed for regular school attendance under normal circumstances.

<https://www.isbe.net/Documents/PA-102-0321-FAQ.pdf> <https://www.isbe.net/Documents/Chronic-Absence.pdf>

The following absences will be excused. If the absence is foreseeable, a written notification is required two days in advance so teachers can be notified and school work given to the student for the time they will miss.

1. Illness of the student.

2. Death in the student's immediate family or parent's immediate family.
3. Doctor and dental appointments.
 - a. Doctor, dental, and other appointments are to be made after school hours if at all possible. Students returning to school after a doctor/dental appointment must have a written excuse from the doctor/dentist.
 - b. If a child is absent three consecutive days for illness, a note from a doctor must be provided (unless there are special circumstances cleared by Administration at the beginning or during the absence.)
4. Emergency, which, in the judgment of Administration, constitutes good and sufficient cause.
5. Illinois Law allows for 5 Mental Health Days, but those days still are factored into the 18 total days allowed to be absent.
6. Court appearance.
7. School approved vacation. When a family is leaving town and desires to take the student with them, they may be excused if the family and student follow these guidelines:
 - a. The school is notified at least 48 hours in advance of the absence.
 - b. The student procures assignments or establishes a written plan for make-up work with all of their teachers in advance of the absence - at least a 48-hour notice is required.
 - c. Students are expected to be accomplishing their assignments while on school approved vacation.
 - d. All assigned work shall be turned in immediately upon returning to school or it is considered late work, with any exceptions at the direction of the individual teacher. Also, all tests will be made up at the direction of the individual teacher.
 - e. See also "Make-up Work After Excused Absences" in this section.
8. College Visits - Juniors and Seniors are allowed to take days away during the year to visit college campuses.
 - a. These days are not to be used as "vacation" days or for any other purpose than the one stated.
 - b. For an excused absence, at least 48-hour written notification from the parent/guardian stating the days requested and college to be visited should be provided to the teacher and school office.
 - c. Students are expected to be accomplishing their assignments while on school approved college visit(s).
 - d. All assigned work shall be turned in immediately upon returning to school or it is considered late work, with any exceptions at the direction of the individual teacher. Also, all tests will be made up at the direction of the individual teacher.
 - e. See also "Make-up Work After Excused Absences" in this section.

Other Attendance Considerations:

1. Absences for other reasons that are inexcusable shall be treated as truancy. A student is considered truant when he/she is absent from a class or school without permission or knowledge by parent or guardian.

2. The Administration shall determine the impact of suspensions on absences and credit loss on a case-by-case basis.
3. When parents/guardians request that students leave the campus during the school day, a note from home will be required, and a pass to leave must be secured in the office. During the school day, students must secure permission from the office before missing a class or leaving the campus. Failure to comply will result in disciplinary action.
 - Any student leaving campus for any reason during the school day must either leave with a parent or designee. No student will be allowed to leave the school facility during the normal school day with anyone other than a parent or guardian unless advance notice is given to the office by note. This policy is for the protection of each student.
 - All students who leave school early will need a parent note presented to the office **before school** stating the reason for early departure. No student may leave early without a note of explanation signed by a parent/guardian, or a personal contact from the parent/guardian.
 - All students (or parent for the student) must sign out of the office prior to leaving school early.
 - Students who drive must have a parent-signed permission slip and permission from the Administration.
 - When a student returns, he/she is to sign in at the office and is expected to report to class immediately.
 - Off-campus senior lunch privilege will be addressed at the start of each school year and will require a signed agreement by parent and student for conduct, departure time(s), and return time(s). The senior lunch privilege is subject to review and adjustment, including cancellation of the senior lunch option for individuals or the entire program based upon administrative judgement.
4. Students who have been absent because of injuries or communicable diseases must receive a note of clearance from their doctor presented to the school office before returning to classes.
5. Students participating in school-sponsored activities (field trips, away competitions, etc.) are not considered absent.

NOTE: There are still limits to the total number of absences (excused and unexcused combined) as outlined in this section of the handbook.

Make-up Work After Excused Absences (other than approved vacation or college visit):

1. Students who have an **excused absence** shall have the opportunity to make up work after they return.
2. For elementary students, the teacher shall determine make-up work and assignments.
3. For secondary students, it shall be the **responsibility of the student**, on his or her own initiative, to contact the teacher or teachers involved to determine make-up assignments. FACTS lists all lesson plans and homework assignments.
4. Students will be granted the amount of time they were absent in which to make up work.

5. Students who have justifiable reasons for absence such as quarantine, long-term illness or accident and whose probable absence will extend beyond two weeks shall be considered by Administration for homebound or remote instruction.
6. Students who have an **unexcused absence will not be allowed** to receive credit for work missed.
7. The Administration and staff have the authority to establish specific procedures for administering the Make-Up Policy.

ATTENDANCE - PROCEDURES AND ACTIONS

Unexcused Absences

No credit **for the semester** will be given to students whose **unexcused absences exceed five (5)** periods per class per semester without administrative approval.

1. On the third (3rd) and fifth (5th) **unexcused** absence from the same class, the parents/guardians will be notified by phone or email by the office Administration that **the student is being placed on credit probation. It should be noted that parents are always notified for any absence issues.**
2. On the sixth (6th) **unexcused** absence from the same class, parents/guardians will be notified explaining that loss of credit will occur and an administrative review will be arranged to discuss future academic options.

Total Absences (Combination of Excused and Unexcused Absences)

Secondary:

On the eighth (8th) total absence from the same class during the semester, the parents/guardians will be notified by phone or email by Administration that **the student is being placed on credit probation.**

On the ninth (9th) total absence during the semester for any class, **there will be an administrative review meeting.** The **administrative review** is a conference with the said student, parent/guardian, grade level administrator and possibly teachers/advisors to discuss attendance concerns and academic options that best suit the student's needs.

On the tenth (10th) total absence from the same class in one semester, parents/guardians will be notified of student **loss of credit and the grade will be recorded as an "F" for the semester for that class.**

DCS Attendance Communication Protocol

Communication of a student's absences will consist of, but not be limited to one or more the following prior to administrative review or loss of credit:

1. DCS office will call home for each unexcused absence
2. Email correspondence to parent/guardian with attendance concerns
3. Administrative contact after 3rd and 5th unexcused absence
4. Administrative contact after 8th and 9th total absence

5. If parent/guardian is not reachable via e-mail or phone, a certified letter will be sent with information regarding attendance concerns.

Attendance - Tardiness:

Being tardy to class is detrimental to student learning, disrespectful to the teacher, and disruptive to the learning of fellow students. DCS students are expected to be in class, ready to work when the bell rings to start each period. A late arrival of less than 15 minutes will be counted as a tardy. Late arrivals of more than 15 minutes will be counted as absences and must be excused by the verification methods outlined in the "Excused Absences" section. A tardy may not be excused by a parent or guardian, only by a DCS staff member. Tardy students **will not** be given additional class time or make-up opportunities for what is missed due to their late arrival.

Tardiness

If a student is late to homeroom in the morning, he/she will report to the office before reporting to class. A student with excessive tardiness will be referred to the Administration. Approved tardy excuses will include uncertain weather conditions, vehicle problems, family emergencies, etc.

Any student who is not in class when the bell rings and does not have a pass, is considered tardy.

1. Tardiness due to oversleeping or chronic vehicle problems will not be excused.
2. Tardy counts are considered on a semester basis; that is, the first semester does not carry over to the second semester.

All students must report to the office for a late pass if arriving to school at 8:15 am or later. No secondary students will be admitted to class without a late pass if they are tardy for any hour. If the student anticipates being late to class for any reason, they must get a pass from the teacher of the class they are leaving, or the teacher of the class they will be in next.

Elementary Tardy Policy:

Excessive tardiness will result in parent communication and a meeting with the Administrator to discuss and develop a solution.

Secondary Tardy Policy:

Tardy attendance for students is documented and counted cumulatively (i.e., for all periods together), per semester, and assigned interventions and consequences per the following structure:

- Tardy #5: Warning by Administration with restorative planning, and parent contact.
- Tardy #10: 30 minutes after school detention with restorative planning and counseling, and parent contact.
- Tardy #15: 1-hour after school detention with restorative planning review, and parent contact
- Tardy #20: 1-day **In-School Suspension** with restorative planning review, and parent meeting with Administration.

- Tardy #25: 1-day **In-School Suspension**, restorative action counseling, and parent meeting with Administration.
- Tardy #30 plus: Administrative-Parent meeting with possible consequences of loss of privileges, including, but not limited to: athletic-activity restriction, extra-curricular restriction (LEGO League, FIRST Tech Challenge, Drama, etc.), restrictions on attending sporting or school events, etc.

AWARDS

Academic Awards - Secondary

Annually, Decatur Christian School hosts an academic awards event where students and their families are invited to witness the bestowing of achievement awards in our 6-12th grade classes. Teachers select students from each course based upon academic achievements and other criteria. This is a semi-formal event. Other honors awarded include acknowledgement of our valedictorian(s) and salutatorian(s).

Athletic Awards - Secondary

Each Spring, an event honoring our student athletes takes place. Accomplishments in DCS sports, as well as in cooperative sports hosted by other schools make up the evening agenda. Each coach or a representative presents special awards like MVP, Most Improved, Most Christlike, etc. during the ceremony.

Christian Character Award

The Christian Character Award is presented to a graduating senior selected by his or her classmates based on the following criteria: Positive attitude, encouraging to others, reflects Jesus Christ in his or her life, and represents DCS well at home, in school, and around the community.

DCS Honor Society

Students may qualify academically for induction into the DCS Honor Society based on a 3.5 GPA or higher. Additional qualifications of leadership, service, and character are also required. A special induction ceremony for new DCS Honor Society student is held in the Spring of each year.

Honor Roll is posted quarterly. Honor roll is based on the current quarter GPA. A GPA of 3.000 to 3.499 merits an Honor Roll standing. A GPA of 3.500 and above merits a High Honor Roll standing.

Perfect Attendance - To receive recognition for perfect attendance, a student must not be absent from school for any reason, excused or unexcused.

SECTION B

BEHAVIORAL EXPECTATIONS – CODE OF CONDUCT

To have a great school, all students must recognize the role they play in creating an academic atmosphere as well as a safe and Christ honoring culture. Decatur Christian School seeks to develop within our student's Christian character exemplary of one who has been changed by Jesus Christ. DCS students are expected to demonstrate a Christ-like lifestyle, consistent with Scripture, in their school life and in their personal life. We believe that a Christ-like lifestyle is one rooted in obedience to Scripture which teaches us how to relate to others with respect and how to resolve difficulties successfully. Ultimately, the student is responsible for his/her behavior; not society, parents, teachers, or the school. The goal of respectful relationships includes student to student respect, student to faculty respect, and faculty to student respect. Understanding and meeting these expectations is one giant step to creating a culture of excellence.

Students are required to abide by the class rules and standards established by each teacher and the school administration. Rules are designed as guidelines to reinforce successful habits for living the Christian life. Our desire is to develop Christ-like character within our students. Parental support is a key element in working together with the school in guiding our students.

Behavioral Expectations - Respect for Learning

Students are expected to:

1. Comply with all school and classroom rules and conduct themselves in an orderly manner. These rules apply in school buildings, on school grounds, and at recognized functions. Disciplinary guidelines may be applied to difficulties even with activities off school grounds.
2. Be punctual and attend class every day.
3. Complete class work and homework assignments. Decatur Christian School's major purpose is to offer a sound and exciting academic experience for students to become involved learners. Class work and homework are a vital part of this learning process.
4. Personal electronic devices are to be kept in the student's locker powered off or left at home.
5. Bring items that are appropriate for educational purposes. Items which may interfere with the educational process, are unnecessary or distracting for learning, or may endanger the safety of another person are not to be used during the school day. Inappropriate items may be confiscated and held in the office for the remainder of the school day. NOTE: Decatur Christian School is not liable for any lost or stolen items.
6. Give all authorized medications to the office with instructions for use.
7. Refrain from leaving campus at any time during the school day unless authorized. You may not leave campus during the day without prior parental and administrative permission. After appropriate permission is obtained, you must sign out in the office. Students are not permitted to be on the parking lot during school hours without administrative approval.
8. Be honest. You are expected to deal honestly with all staff in your relationships and in your work. (See Academic Honesty Policy)

Behavioral Expectations - Respect for Staff

Students are expected to:

1. Hall Passes: Students are expected to have a hall pass whenever they leave a class, and produce the hall pass when asked by any DCS staff member. Please ask your teacher, administrator, or school secretary to give you a pass.
2. Follow the directive of any DCS staff member.
3. Respect adults in both manner and language. Any language directed toward a DCS staff member in a loud manner or which is insulting or derogatory or threatening in nature is prohibited. Any words considered to be of a cursing, swearing, or vulgar nature directed toward a staff member are prohibited.

Behavioral Expectations - Respect for Institution

Students are expected to:

1. Keep the buildings, equipment and materials clean, and in good condition. Deposit trash in trash containers provided. Leave the table and floor areas of the cafeteria and hallways clean.
2. Take proper care of textbooks, equipment and lockers. Students shall not cause destruction, defacement or damage to property. Students will be required to pay for damages and or may be subject to legal prosecution.
3. No tobacco or vaping product use is allowed in the building or on school grounds at any time.

This policy includes all school sponsored activities. DCS is a "smoke-free" campus for students and adults.

Behavioral Expectations - Respect for Self

Students are expected to:

1. Dress appropriately for school. "Appropriateness" is defined by the school dress code.
2. Operate their vehicles in a safe manner on the campus. Any type of driving which endangers the safety of the driver or others is considered to be reckless driving.
3. Leave campus promptly upon dismissal unless in a supervised activity. Students who are not in a supervised activity will be asked to leave campus.
4. Maintain high personal standards of behavior while on campus. Inappropriate displays of affection are not acceptable. No student will possess, use, or be under the influence of illegal drugs, alcoholic beverages, intoxicants, or controlled substances.
5. Be truthful when interacting with all faculty, staff, administrators, and students. Students shall not lie or falsify school-related materials.
6. Attend assigned detentions and other assigned consequences.

Behavioral Expectations - Respect for Others

Students are expected to:

1. Walk in the hallways and refrain from pushing, shoving, blocking walkways, or causing disturbances.
2. Show respect for others, buildings, and grounds. Refrain from any behavior which could injure another person.

3. Do not bring items to school which could be deemed a weapon. The possession or use of a weapon shall be prohibited in all school buildings, on or about school grounds, and at all school activities.
4. Refrain from making threats and harassing others. Every member of the school community is entitled to attend school free from harassment, threats or fear.
5. Resolve differences and conflicts in a peaceful manner. Fighting, defined as physical and or verbal abuse where all parties have contributed to the conflict, either verbally or physically, is prohibited. Students are expected to seek nonviolent means in solving disputes. If physical confrontation is anticipated, students are to seek assistance from an administrator, teacher or staff member immediately.
6. Respect for the possessions of others. Do not access others lockers or personal belongings. Taking or using others' possessions without their knowledge is stealing. Theft by acceptance, possession, purchase, taking and or transfer of property belonging to another is prohibited. Offenders are subject to legal prosecution.
7. It is prohibited to possess, be under the influence of, sell, transfer or distribute illegal drugs, alcoholic beverages, intoxicants or controlled substances.
8. Use appropriate language at school. Obscenity, obscene gestures, swearing, cursing, whether verbal or written, is considered inappropriate language.
9. Refrain from Hazing and Bullying. Hazing is defined as any action which intentionally creates mental or physical abuse, discomfort, embarrassment, ridicule, or harassment and is prohibited at Decatur Christian School.

SECTION C

CALENDAR

See decaturchristian.net for calendar of events.

CHAPEL SERVICES

Chapels are held every week. Chapel attendance is required. It is a time of devotion and worship. For secondary students, chapel is included as part of the Bible class (including attendance promptness) and is grade impacting.

COMMUNICATION PROCESS FOR CONFLICT RESOLUTION

We consider it a great privilege to serve families in educating their children from a Christian perspective. We are committed to upholding and supporting each family's authority in the lives of their children. This kind of relationship requires clear communication.

We recognize that in this relationship there lies a temptation to talk about a specific problem or person rather than take direct action to resolve conflicts in a manner consistent with Scripture. We have outlined the proper lines of communication between the school and home according to the Biblical principles found in Matthew 18 and James 3. We believe that Scripture teaches that conflicts should be

handled discreetly and carefully, while believing and speaking the best about each individual involved toward the goal of restored fellowship.

The procedure for student/parent to register and work toward resolve of a complaint and/or to discuss issues is as follows:

1. Teacher
2. School Administrator
3. School Board

Any matter that involves a teacher should begin with the teacher. If it is a matter that involves the principal, it should begin with the principal, etc. Starting at a higher level in the chain of command will result in the matter being sent back to the area where the discussion needs to begin. If satisfaction is not achieved at that level, then the matter should be taken to the next step in the chain of command. While Decatur Christian School understands the importance of email and telephone communication, matters which cannot be properly addressed through those means should be addressed in a face-to-face meeting between the parties.

Decatur Christian School Staff and Administration will abide by these same principles in communicating with parents and students.

COMMUNICATIONS METHODS AND TOOLS BETWEEN HOME AND SCHOOL

E-Mail:

Decatur Christian School utilizes gmail and FACTS to send emails to parents with school news and information about upcoming events. Parents' email addresses for this service are drawn from the student data system utilized by the school. To receive these e-mail updates, parents should include their email contact information on all registration forms. Please contact the school office when there is a change in any contact information.

***Important: If you email a DCS staff member and do not get a response in a timely manner, please call the school's main office at (217)-877-5636. Teachers are unable to respond instantly in many cases as they are actively involved in instruction and classroom management. Decatur Christian School e-mail also has a spam filter which may prevent emails from getting to the teacher.**

Decatur Christian strives to provide the best technology and communication paths between our students, teachers, families and the school. The following is a list of platforms we are using during the school year to improve communication and student learning.

Email for parents to report absences or tardiness: attendance@decaturchristian.net



FACTS (formerly RenWeb) Learning Management System

FACTS allows our students, teachers, and families to see students' assignments, gradebook reports and homework plans. FACTS is also our tuition management and family accounts management system. FACTS allows teachers and Administration to generate reports and communication emails.



Decatur Christian School Website – School and District Information (www.decaturchristian.net)

Visit the DCS website for calendars of school events, general school and district information, cancellation information, emergency information, student handbooks, forms and supplies lists.



Social Media – Twitter and Facebook

Social media is used for sharing information about school and district events, community activities, and schedule and time changes. Social media may also be used as a communication tool in a crisis situation, because posts appear immediately. Our Facebook page www.facebook.com/decaturchristianschool/. Follow us on twitter.com/dcswarriors.

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SECTION D

DISCIPLINE – PHILOSOPHY

Discipline involves teaching proper behavior as much as it involves correcting wrong behavior. Therefore, disciplining of students while in class or at lunch is primarily the responsibility of the classroom teacher or the teacher on duty. Discipline involves setting guidelines and limitations.

The role of the Decatur Christian School staff is to ensure all students learn in a safe, respectful, effective, nurturing, and Christ-centered environment. This environment includes the school facility and school sponsored events. Behaviors that affect the safety of others or disrupt school events or the normal course of running school may be addressed by this policy, even if such behavior occurs off school property. The purpose of discipline is to provide opportunities for students to develop personal Christian character, learn and practice self-control skills, and learn to practice kindness and respect in all social interactions. The five steps for effective discipline involve instruction, reinforcement, correction, restitution, and reassurance.

TERMS USED

Detention- a time-period after school, or before school, or during lunch used as a consequence for misbehavior. During this time period, loss of privileges to participate in and/or attend activities occurs. Students should come prepared with work or appropriate reading material. The teacher may assign specific work for the student to do during detention so the detention supervisor will know what is

expected. All detentions will be served on the day following the receipt of notice, unless otherwise scheduled through the administration. Therefore, a student receiving a detention on a Monday will serve it on Tuesday. Students receiving a detention on a Tuesday will serve on Thursday, due to early Wednesday dismissals, and detentions earned on a Friday will be served on the following Monday. **Work schedules and athletic activities will not excuse students from detention. NOTE: All detentions will be recorded in the student's behavioral record in FACTS.**

-After-School Detention: Standard detentions will be held from 3:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday in the library unless other arrangements have been made and communicated by administration. Longer detentions may be assigned per disciplinary code.

Excessive Detentions: Upon the fifth (5th) detention, a meeting with the administration, parent(s), and student will be required to remedy the behavior issues. This meeting will analyze the causes for each detention, and consequences will be clearly delineated. If the student continues to incur detentions, they will receive an In-School and/or Out-of-School Suspension.

Out-Of-School Suspension (OSS) The student is deprived of all the privileges of attending school, participating in classes, participating in, or attending any extracurricular activities or school sponsored functions whether on campus or at another facility for the length of the suspension. Further, during the time of a suspension the student is not permitted on school campus without prior permission from an administrator. Administration can assign an out-of-school suspension for a number of days up to ten days. Depending on the severity of the offense a recommendation for additional days up to 180 school days and or expulsion may be made and will involve School Board consultation. Students are excluded from any school activities until the first calendar day after the assigned OSS time is successfully completed. Suspensions will be extended in the event of emergency school closings. Suspensions, either in or out of school, **may result in a lowering of a letter grade** on all work the student is responsible for during the suspension period.

In-School Suspension (ISS)- Students will be assigned to a monitored designated location during in school suspension. It is designed to be a positive and supportive educational environment while also serving as a disciplinary consequence. Students are to report to in school suspension with appropriate textbooks and academic materials and are expected to complete daily schoolwork. Failure to comply with in school suspension structure may result in an Out-of-School Suspension.

Restorative Practices

1. Re-teaching expected behavior with required practice
2. Student-teacher conference and reflection on behavior
3. Conference with parent
4. Behavior contract
5. Conflict resolution with administrator
6. Referral for professional counseling

Expulsion It is the expectation of the school that expulsions would be extremely rare and given only in severe circumstances. Expulsions may be considered by the administration upon the second suspension in any given school year. Expulsions will typically be served for the remaining part of the school year but may be modified depending on the situation and time of year it arises. These would occur in very severe situations.

Student Searches: School administrative officials have the authority to search students and students' property (including purses, backpacks, gym bags, etc.), provided that the search is justified at its inception and reasonable under all the circumstances. School officials will exercise discretion to perform searches, as they deem necessary to maintain the safety and welfare of students and staff, to prevent violations of discipline policies, or to prevent interference with the educational process.

Lockers, desks and school laptops assigned to students remain the property of Decatur Christian School and may be searched by school officials with or without notice. Vehicles driven by students to school are likewise subject to search by school officials. School officials will also call law enforcement officials when they deem it necessary or appropriate or otherwise required by law. Those law enforcement officials may also conduct searches and take other appropriate action pursuant to their authority as law enforcement officials.

DISCIPLINE - STANDARDS OF CONDUCT

No code can be expected to list each and every offense that may result in disciplinary action. Any conduct not included herein, an aggravated circumstance of any offense, or an action involving a combination of offenses may result in disciplinary consequences and/or restorative action as determined by the principal, administrator and/or School Board. Repeated infractions could warrant increased disciplinary consequences. For all offenses worthy of an office referral, student conference and parent contact will occur.

Minor (Classroom Managed)

Academic Dishonesty and Plagiarism

Any act of cheating, copying, falsifying information, using unauthorized assistance, or presenting another person's work, ideas, or words as one's own. This includes copying homework, sharing answers, using artificial intelligence or online resources without permission, and failing to properly credit sources.

Bullying

Intentional, repeated behavior that harms, intimidates, humiliates, threatens, or excludes another person. Bullying may be physical, verbal, social, written, electronic, or cyber-based and creates a hostile or unsafe environment for the victim.

Disrespect and Disruption

Any behavior that shows a lack of respect toward students, staff, visitors, or school property, or that interferes with the learning environment. This includes talking out of turn, interrupting instruction, mocking others, inappropriate gestures, or actions that distract from teaching and learning.

Defiance

The refusal to comply with reasonable requests, directions, or expectations given by school personnel. Defiance includes arguing, refusing to follow instructions, or deliberately disregarding school rules and procedures.

Dress Code Violation

A dress code violation occurs when a student's clothing, appearance, grooming, or accessories do not comply with the standards established by Decatur Christian School. Students are expected to dress modestly, neatly, and appropriately for a Christ-centered educational environment.

Harassment

Unwelcome verbal, written, physical, or electronic conduct that demeans, intimidates, threatens, or creates a hostile environment for another individual. Harassment may be based on personal characteristics or may involve repeated inappropriate behavior directed toward another person.

Insubordination

Willful refusal to obey the lawful authority or directives of a teacher, administrator, coach, or other school employee. Insubordination is a more serious form of defiance and may include direct challenges to authority.

Inappropriate Language

The use of profanity, vulgarity, crude expressions, offensive remarks, derogatory comments, slurs, or any language that is disrespectful, disruptive, or inconsistent with the school's Christian values and standards.

Tardy

Arriving late to class, chapel, study hall, or any school activity without an approved excuse. Students are expected to be present and prepared when the scheduled period begins.

Technology Violation

Any misuse of school-owned or personal electronic devices, networks, software, internet access, or digital resources. This includes unauthorized use of devices, accessing inappropriate content, bypassing security measures, recording others without permission, and violating classroom technology rules.

Wandering

Being in an unauthorized location or outside an assigned area without permission during the school day. This includes loitering in hallways, visiting unauthorized classrooms, leaving supervised areas, or failing to report promptly to an assigned destination.

Major (Administrative-Managed) Major offenses are based on severity or repetitive infractions of each of the following:

Academic Dishonesty and Plagiarism

Any act of cheating, copying, falsifying information, using unauthorized assistance, or presenting another person's work, ideas, or words as one's own. This includes copying homework, sharing answers, using artificial intelligence or online resources without permission, and failing to properly credit sources.

Alcohol/Drug Offense

The possession, use, distribution, sale, purchase, being under the influence, or involvement with alcohol, illegal drugs, controlled substances, drug paraphernalia, vaping products, tobacco products, nicotine products, or any substance used in a manner inconsistent with its intended purpose while on school property, at school-sponsored events, or in any situation that reflects upon the school. This also includes the misuse of prescription or over-the-counter medications.

Bullying

Intentional, repeated behavior that harms, intimidates, humiliates, threatens, or excludes another person. Bullying may be physical, verbal, social, written, electronic, or cyber-based and creates a hostile or unsafe environment for the victim.

Disrespect and Disruption

Any behavior that shows a lack of respect toward students, staff, visitors, or school property, or that interferes with the learning environment. This includes talking out of turn, interrupting instruction, mocking others, inappropriate gestures, or actions that distract from teaching and learning.

Defiance

The refusal to comply with reasonable requests, directions, or expectations given by school personnel. Defiance includes arguing, refusing to follow instructions, or deliberately disregarding school rules and procedures.

Dress Code Violation

A dress code violation occurs when a student's clothing, appearance, grooming, or accessories do not comply with the standards established by Decatur Christian School. Students are expected to dress modestly, neatly, and appropriately for a Christ-centered educational environment.

Fighting

Any physical altercation or attempt to cause physical harm to another person. Fighting includes hitting, kicking, pushing, shoving, striking, wrestling, encouraging others to fight, or any physical aggression that threatens the safety and well-being of students or staff. Self-defense claims will be reviewed based on the specific circumstances of each incident.

Gang-Related Activity

Any involvement in, association with, promotion of, or participation in gang-related behavior, whether actual or perceived. This includes displaying gang signs, symbols, clothing, colors, tattoos, hand gestures, drawings, writings, recruitment efforts, threats, intimidation, or any conduct that suggests gang affiliation or promotes gang activity. Such behavior is prohibited because it threatens the safety, unity, and Christian environment of the school.

Harassment (Including Sexual Harassment)

Unwelcome verbal, written, physical, visual, or electronic conduct that demeans, intimidates, threatens, humiliates, or creates a hostile, offensive, or disruptive environment for another person. Harassment may include repeated teasing, offensive comments, insults, inappropriate jokes, gestures, intimidation, spreading rumors, or other actions directed toward an individual.

Sexual harassment includes unwelcome sexual comments, jokes, gestures, advances, requests for sexual favors, inappropriate touching, sharing or displaying sexually suggestive material, sending inappropriate messages or images, or any other conduct of a sexual nature that interferes with a student's or employee's ability to learn, work, or participate in school activities.

All forms of harassment are inconsistent with the school's commitment to providing a safe, respectful, and Christ-centered environment and will be addressed promptly and appropriately.

Insubordination

Willful refusal to obey the lawful authority or directives of a teacher, administrator, coach, or other school employee. Insubordination is a more serious form of defiance and may include direct challenges to authority.

Inappropriate Language

The use of profanity, vulgarity, crude expressions, offensive remarks, derogatory comments, slurs, or any language that is disrespectful, disruptive, or inconsistent with the school's Christian values and standards.

Stealing (Theft)

The taking, possessing, concealing, or using of another person's property without permission. Stealing includes taking money, personal belongings, school property, academic materials, electronic devices, or any other item that does not belong to the student. It also includes knowingly possessing or distributing stolen property, attempting to steal, or assisting others in theft.

Students are expected to respect the property of others and demonstrate honesty and integrity in all situations. Theft, regardless of the value of the item involved, is a serious violation of school standards and may result in disciplinary action, restitution, and, when appropriate, involvement of law enforcement.

Tardy

Arriving late to class, chapel, study hall, or any school activity without an approved excuse. Students are expected to be present and prepared when the scheduled period begins.

Technology Violation

Any misuse of school-owned or personal electronic devices, networks, software, internet access, or digital resources. This includes unauthorized use of devices, accessing inappropriate content, bypassing security measures, recording others without permission, and violating classroom technology rules.

Threat

Any verbal, written, electronic, visual, or physical statement, action, or gesture that expresses an intent to harm, intimidate, frighten, or endanger another person, school property, or the school community. Threats may be direct or indirect, serious or made in jest, and include statements made in person, online, through social media, text messages, or other forms of communication. All threats will be taken seriously and investigated appropriately.

Tobacco/Vapes

The possession, use, distribution, sale, purchase, or being under the influence of tobacco products, nicotine products, electronic cigarettes (e-cigarettes), vape devices, vape cartridges, smokeless tobacco, cigars, cigarettes, or any similar products while on school property, at school-sponsored events, or in any situation that reflects upon the school. Possession of related paraphernalia is also prohibited.

Unexcused Absence

An absence from school, class, chapel, study hall, or any required school activity that has not been approved or properly excused according to school attendance policies. Students are responsible for completing any missed work in accordance with school procedures.

Vandalism/Destruction of Property

The intentional, reckless, or negligent damaging, defacing, destroying, or misusing of school property or the property of others. This includes graffiti, breaking equipment, damaging buildings, technology, furniture, vehicles, books, or other materials. Students may be required to pay restitution for damages in addition to disciplinary consequences.

Violence with Physical Injury

Any intentional act of physical aggression that causes bodily harm or injury to another person. This includes, but is not limited to, striking, kicking, punching, choking, assaulting, or otherwise inflicting physical harm upon a student, staff member, or visitor. Incidents resulting in injury will be treated as serious violations and may involve law enforcement when appropriate.

Wandering

Being in an unauthorized location or outside an assigned area without permission during the school day. This includes loitering in hallways, visiting unauthorized classrooms, leaving supervised areas, or failing to report promptly to an assigned destination.

Weapons

The possession, use, transfer, sale, display, or threat of use of any weapon or object that could reasonably be used to cause injury, harm, or intimidation. Weapons include, but are not limited to, firearms, ammunition, knives, explosive devices, martial arts weapons, tasers, BB guns, air soft guns, pellet guns, and any item used or intended to be used as a weapon. Look-alike weapons or replicas that could reasonably be mistaken for actual weapons are also prohibited.

Student Discipline Flow Chart

Minor Offenses (Classroom Managed)

Minor offenses are behaviors that can be effectively addressed by the classroom teacher. Each teacher shall maintain a classroom discipline plan that incorporates the following progression:

1. **Student Conference** – Teacher meets with the student to discuss the behavior and expectations.
2. **Parent Contact** – Parent/guardian is notified of the concern.
3. **Detention** – Student receives a teacher-assigned detention.
4. **Parent Meeting and/or Detention** – Conference with parent/guardian and additional disciplinary action as needed.
5. **Administrative Referral** – Matter is referred to the Dean of Students for further review.

Note: Repeated minor offenses may result in the behavior being treated as a major offense.

Major Offenses (Administrative Managed)

Major offenses are serious violations of school policy or repeated minor offenses that demonstrate a pattern of misconduct. These incidents shall be referred directly to the Dean of Students.

The Dean of Students will investigate the matter and determine the appropriate course of action, which may include:

1. **Student and Parent Conference**

2. Detention

3. Suspension (In-School or Out-of-School)

4. Expulsion Recommendation

Disciplinary consequences will be determined based on the severity of the offense, the student's disciplinary history, and the best interests of the school community.

DRESS STANDARDS – CLOTHING

General Dress Code Guidelines for All Students

DCS students honor themselves and our school by honoring the dress code. The purpose of this or any dress code is to set guidelines for acceptable dress so that the code is easily understood, remembered, and enforceable. Representatives of the school have final say with respect to compliance.

When students are not in dress code, the responsibility of achieving compliance will be upon the student. As soon as they can correct the infraction, they may return to class. Repeated infractions can lead to disciplinary action.

****Third offense of dress code infraction will be enforced by making a mandatory student dress code...polo and Khakis for the rest of the year.***

As always, if a student is in doubt about a particular item, they should check with Administration **before** risking being out of compliance. Student's dress and appearance will be the responsibility of the individual and parents or guardians, within the following guidelines:

DCS Dress Code

- Students' dress and appearance are required to be of such character as to not disrupt nor distract from the instructional procedures of the school day.
- Clothing that promotes drugs, alcohol, tobacco, violence, is sexually suggestive, or displays inappropriate pictures or writing, displays political or controversial or divisive messages is prohibited.
- Clothing (tops and bottoms) must be neat, well-maintained, without frays or holes, not distressed and correctly fitted. ***Clothing must cover undergarments, upper and lower (midriff) torso, back, waist, and chest. No see-through apparel.*** Pajamas are not acceptable except on specifically designated occasions (by administrative approval).
- Necklines should be no lower than 1" below the collarbone and should stay in place with movement as a point of modesty. ***No V-neck shirts are to be worn.***
- Hoodies- Pullovers and zip-up are allowed as long as no hoods are worn while in the building. They must be plain in color. Only approved graphics are allowed, and this goes for both Elementary and Secondary:
 - DCS Spirit wear
 - Brand logos
 - Christian messages (scripture or messages that highlight Christian mottos or ethics).
 - College logo or colors
- Camo is **allowed**.

- Jackets or coats are not to be worn in class unless permitted by the teacher.
- Tops that can be worn at DCS:
 - Elementary students and Secondary are **NOT** permitted to wear sleeveless shirts. All shirts/tops must cover the shoulder. Must be 2 inches below waistline.
 - For Elementary and Secondary, only Christian graphics or wording will be allowed, other than DCS approved Spirit Wear. Patterns (floral, camo, stripes, etc. will be allowed)
 - Optionally, tops with trademarks, brand logos, etc. must have images no larger than 2 inches.
- Bottoms that can be worn at DCS:
 - For elementary students (K-6), shorts/skirts/dresses hemline must reach the end of the fingertips when hands hang naturally at student's side while standing. If elementary students choose to wear a dress or skirt, shorts or leggings **must** be worn under the dress or skirt. For secondary students, shorts and skirts must be no more than 3" above the knee.
 - Elementary and Secondary are **NOT permitted to wear leggings** unless they are worn with a dress, which is required.
 - Pants should fit properly—not baggy and not skintight—and should be worn at the waist at all times.
 - All students - Jeans, khakis, slacks, cargo shorts, dress shorts - neat, well-maintained, without frays or holes, solid, or patterned, not distressed and correctly fitted. No sweatpants or athletic shorts. For secondary students, shorts and skirts must be no more than 3" above the knee when standing.
- Footwear must be always worn appropriate to the school activity/situation. All foot wear must have a heel-strap or back to keep the footwear on the foot.
- Hair must always be neat and clean and always worn out of the eyes. Young men can wear a mustache or beard as long as they keep it well maintained.
 - Eccentric styles or unnatural colors are unacceptable. DCS does not prohibit hair styles that historically associated with race, ethnicity, or hair texture, including, but not limited to, protective hairstyles such as braid, locks, and twists.
- Make-up for young women should be modest and not distracting to learning. Visibly displayed body piercings (other than ears), tattoos, hats, or sunglasses are unacceptable.
- Class activities that present a concern for student safety may require the student to adjust hair, jewelry, and/or clothing during the class period in the interest of maintaining safety standards.
- Additional dress guidelines may be imposed upon students participating in PE and certain extracurricular activities. On game days, for example, the coach may request their athletes to wear team attire or other coach directed attire.
- As stated above, when students are not in dress code, the responsibility of achieving compliance will be upon the student. As soon as they can correct the infraction, they may return to class. Repeated infractions can lead to disciplinary action (detention and mandatory dress code).
- Final decisions regarding "appropriateness" of dress will be determined by Administration.

Spirit Wear

With the exception of jackets in the classrooms, students are welcome to wear official DCS Spirit Wear every day at Decatur Christian School. PE uniforms and athletic warmups are not spirit wear, and spirit wear is not a PE uniform nor athletic warm up. During the school day, hooded clothing and jackets must remain in lockers. Please plan seasonally to be able to keep warm in the classrooms and remain in compliance with dress code. Each Friday will be designated as a Spirit Wear Day to promote school spirit.

PE Uniforms

All 6th – 12th PE students must dress for PE in an official DCS PE uniform (All students must have 2 complete uniforms). For health and safety, athletic shoes must be worn at all times. Students must change back to regular dress code before returning to class and may not wear PE clothes in other class hours. DCS PE Uniforms may be purchased at registration or through the school office. Cold weather provisions will be addressed as cold weather approaches.

SECTION E

ELECTRONIC DEVICES (cell phones, iPods, iPads, Air Pads, etc.)

Electronic devices are a modern convenience that have become a way of life for most people. However, in schools, they can become a major distraction to the student and to the class. Students may use their devices before the first bell of school and after the last bell. Any use of electronic devices during the school day including, but not limited to: checking for messages, taking pictures, using it as calculator, checking the weather, texting, etc. will not be allowed between first and last bell, with the exception of direct instructions of the teacher. Our intent is to encourage students to focus on school and not be distracted by their devices. During the school day, all cell phones must be turned off.

Parents who need to communicate with their children during the school day should call the office phone, (217)-877-5636. Any student needing to contact a parent may do so from the office phone.

NOTE: Upon teacher/staff directive or request, students are to turn off or put away un-approved electronics. Electronics that cause disruptions or failure to follow staff requests regarding use of said items may result in administrative confiscation of any inappropriate items. Decatur Christian School is not liable for any lost or stolen items.

ENTERING BUILDING

When a student enters the building in the morning, he/she may not leave the building for any reason without permission from the office.

Extended care is available for Pre-K through 6th grade students from 7:00-8:05 a.m. for an additional charge. Unless a student has specific responsibilities, which have been prearranged by the administrative staff, students may not enter the classrooms before 8:05 a.m. without permission and supervision.

EXITING BUILDING

Students should exit the building immediately at dismissal time unless there is inclement weather. Students may wait for rides inside the front door foyer. Extended care is available for Pre-K through 6th grade students from dismissal until 5:30 p.m. for an additional charge.

EXTENDED CARE

We offer families a before and after school program in a safe, supervised setting for DCS students enrolled in preschool through fifth grade.

Schedule

Morning: 7:00 am - 8:05 am

Afternoon: 3:30 pm - 5:30 pm (Wednesdays: 2:30 pm - 5:30 pm)

In order to offer the best program possible, the students will have a daily schedule. In the morning, students will be allowed to bring breakfast, read, work on homework, color, and/or play games sitting at designated tables. Students will be dismissed to their classes at 8:05 am. If your student arrives before 8:05 am, please ensure they come to Extended Care. Students dropped off before 8:05 am will be charged for morning care. During the afternoon hours, students will enjoy outside playtime (weather permitting), snack time (snacks not provided by school), homework time and/or inside playtime.

Homework is a priority. Any student needing to work on assignments will be given the opportunity to do so each day.

SECTION F

FIELD TRIPS

Parents or guardians will be notified when their student's class will be going on a field trip. Letters and permission slips will be sent home to inform parents of the details and reminders. A student will not be allowed to participate in the field trip activity if the form has not been signed and returned by the parent or guardian.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Annual tuition may be divided into ten installments unless other arrangements have been made through the finance office. Payments are due the 1st of each month, August through May. An enrollment fee is

required for each student and is non-refundable due to processing costs. All fees are due prior to the school term unless arrangements have been made through the finance office. Specifics:

- All tuition/fees required by the school are expected to be paid on time. This includes fund raising, athletic, academic, lunch and extended care fees.
- No student whose account is delinquent will be permitted to participate in extracurricular activities, award ceremonies, or graduation ceremonies.
- All past-due accounts are to be paid in full by May 31 of the current school year.
- A \$30 late fee is assessed for tuition accounts unpaid after the 10th of each month.
- A \$25 fee is charged for returned checks and/or ACH payments.
- In the event your account is past due 60 days, the student(s) may be subject to dismissal and a collection agency and/or attorney may be notified. Parents will be responsible for all costs and fees necessary for the collection of the delinquent account including, but not limited to, collection agency/attorney fees.

FOOD SERVICE

Decatur Christian School follows the USDA regulations for school food service. Following is an overview of what your student can expect to see in our school cafeteria.

We will continue to offer top quality meal options in the cafeteria. Daily meal options include choice of main entree, alternate entree or chef salad. Free and reduced lunch is also part of our food service program with the exact same menu for any student choosing to eat in our cafeteria.

Fruits and Vegetables

A large variety of nutrient-dense vegetables, including dark green, red-orange, starchy and legumes and fresh, frozen, and canned fruits will be offered. Students are required to take 1/2 cup of fruit or vegetable for their meal to be considered a full meal. Colorful fruits and vegetables provide essential vitamins and minerals important for growth and development during childhood.

Grains and Proteins

Menus will offer specific amounts of whole grains and proteins. This is intended to make sure students are receiving age-appropriate, nutritionally adequate meals that provide the right amount of energy from healthful food sources. Everything we offer contains at least 50% of whole grains (items like whole grain pizza crust, rolls, etc.)

Lower Sodium

We will continue to work with food manufacturers to lower sodium in products. Our kitchen staff prepare healthy recipes using non-salt seasonings, herbs and tasty fresh foods.

Reduced Fats

Unhealthy fats such as saturated and trans-fat can lead to heart disease and high cholesterol, as well as other chronic diseases. Only food products and ingredients that contain zero grams of trans-fat per

serving will be offered. No foods are fried. We are proud to say we have not sacrificed flavor in our food service area.

Menus by Age Groups and Nutritional Information

Grade groups for menu planning are aimed at ensuring students receive age-appropriate portions and nutrients. Calorie requirements are aligned with these grade groups. Menus with pricing are distributed in our weekly email to families.

Meal Payment Process

The DCS office uses FACTS accounting system to manage lunch charges and payments. This program tracks student payment and charge information for the current year.

1. Lunch accounts may be pre-paid in the office. Options for payment are credit card, debit card, check or cash in the office.
2. Students may charge meals to their lunch account or payment can be made in cash at the point of sale.
3. Lunch statements for balance due are emailed monthly, and payment is expected by the 1st of the following month. Options for payment are credit card, debit card, check or cash in the office.
4. Remaining balances left in meal accounts at the end of the school year will rollover to the following school year.

Free and Reduced Lunch

At registration, those seeking free and reduced lunch benefits must fill out (annually) an application form which is validated by our finance department per legal guidelines to confirm and certify eligibility. If you qualify, you will receive notification of certification for the current school year.

SECTION G

GRADE PROMOTION

A student will be promoted to the next grade if mastery of current grade level subjects has been demonstrated. An elementary/middle school student receiving two or more failing grades for the yearly average may not be promoted to the next grade level. In order for a middle school student to be promoted to high school the student must pass all five core classes as defined on the following page. Administration will review each case.

GRADING SCALE

Teachers use various methods for evaluating a student's progress which are adapted to the course material they teach. However, for uniformity the following scale has been approved for all classes

A+	97		C-	70
A	93		D+	67

A-	90		D	63
B+	87		D-	60
B	83		F	59 or Below
B-	80		S	Satisfactory
C+	77		U	Unsatisfactory
C	73		I	Incomplete

ACADEMIC REPORTS

- Progress Reports –FACTS generates weekly progress reports delivered via email. Please contact the teacher if you have a question about progress reports or grades. The teachers are usually available for conferences after school by appointment.
- Report Cards – FACTS generates quarterly report cards delivered via email.
- Parent Conferences – Conferences are scheduled the week after the 1st quarter report cards are received.

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

Middle School

- Students must pass all five of the core academic areas based on a yearly grade average: (English, Bible, Math, Science, Social Studies)
- Students must pass the United States Constitution, the Illinois Constitution, and the United States Flag Test

High School Senior

Attendance

Seniors must be classified as a full-time Decatur Christian School student in order to participate in commencement and awards activities.

“Full-time student” is defined for seniors as a 12th grade student enrolled in classes at DCS through 5th period. A student may be enrolled in 5 classes or in 6 classes during that time period, depending on possible enrollment in a ‘zero hour’ class, such as Soul Purpose. A full-time senior may only be excused after 5th hour if enrolled in on-campus college coursework, or is enrolled in a DCS approved homeschool curriculum.

Because physical education is mandated, a full-time student may not be excused from that class unless enrolled in on-campus college classes.

English	4 credits
Social Studies (including Constitution)	3 credits
Math	3 credits

Science	3 credits
Computer	1 credit
Fine Arts	1 credit
Foreign Language	2 credits
Consumer Education	½ credit
Health	½ credit
Bible	4 credits (1 credit for each year a student attends DCS)
P.E.	4 credits (1 credit for each year a student attend DCS); Exceptions must be approved by Administration
Community Service*	15 hours per year

*Hours will be recorded by May 1 of each year and become a pass/fail factor of the second semester Bible grade.

Electives must be taken to make up the difference between the number of credits earned by the required courses and the 26 credits needed for graduation from Decatur Christian School.

Students must pass the United States Constitution, the Illinois Constitution, and the United States Flag Test.

Credit

The curriculum of DCS is college preparatory in nature. In high school one-half unit of credit is earned for each class that meets the equivalent of five days a week in each semester.

One-quarter unit of credit is earned for classes meeting less than five equivalent days.

Dual Credit

Dual credit classes offered by Richland Community College at and away from the DCS campus are available to juniors and/or seniors upon approval by Administration.

Valedictorian/Salutatorian

To be selected, a graduate must have:

- Been enrolled at Decatur Christian School for a minimum of their last four high school semesters.
- Met the “graduation requirements” for high school as indicated in this handbook.
- Taken the following classes: Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Algebra 1, Algebra II, Geometry, Advanced Math, English 9-12, and four years of Bible. (For transfer students, portions of the criteria may be waived by Administration.)
- Earned a 4.0 grade point average (GPA) **and** the have highest overall percentage average to be considered valedictorian.

- If no graduate earns a 4.0 then the valedictorian will be the graduate with the highest GPA, which will be determined to the nearest 1/10th of a percent.
- The graduate with the next highest percentage (%) will be the salutatorian.
- The selection of Valedictorian and Salutatorian is based on seventh (7th) semester grades. To maintain these honors, students must maintain academic integrity, exemplary behavior, and attendance throughout their eighth (8th) semester. It's important to note that this determination is subject to administrative review.

Speeches

- Each valedictorian will be asked to give a speech at commencement.
- If there is only one valedictorian, the salutatorian(s) will be asked to speak at commencement as well.

*All speeches will be evaluated and approved by the Administrator.

SECTION H

HEALTH SERVICES

Students not feeling well are cared for in the office. If not feeling well or injured, students should obtain a pass from their teacher and report to the office. Students should not bypass the office by directly contacting a parent without the office knowing of the situation beforehand. Parent contacting is done by the office.

Office personnel are responsible for the following:

1. Verifying that students are properly immunized.
2. Providing emergency care in cases of accidents or illness.
3. Supervising the Administration of medication and/or medical treatments.
4. Monitoring attendance to assure the safety of students and to be aware of patterns of communicable illnesses within the school population.

Parents and/or guardians can assist the school by:

1. Notifying the office when your child is absent from illness.
2. Keeping the student home if they are running a fever of 100.4 degrees or more, vomiting, and or seem too sick to benefit from school programs.
3. Sharing medical information that might affect your child's performance at school in any way.
4. Notifying the office of immunization records, and the results of physical, eye and dental exams.
5. Notifying the office of any changes in the information on the student's emergency contact list.
6. Completing the online annual update of student medical information.

Allergies:

If your child has allergies, please provide a list of all allergies (and any special instructions on how to handle an allergic reaction) to your child's teacher and the office.

Communicable Diseases:

If your child is exposed to or contracts a communicable disease, please report this information to the office. We are required to notify all families when a child contracts a communicable disease, such as chicken pox, measles, etc. (Your child's name will be kept confidential.)

In some cases, you will need to provide written verification from your child's doctor stating that the condition is no longer contagious and that it is safe for your child to attend school.

Exams:

Physical Exams: A physical examination is required for a student entering PreK, Kindergarten, 6th, or 9th grade or enrolling for the first time in an Illinois school system. In order to protect the student's health, students participating in interscholastic athletics must have an annual physical exam. All examination forms may be obtained in the school office.

Dental Exams: A dental examination is required for any student entering Kindergarten, 2nd, 6th or 9th grade or enrolling for the first time in an Illinois school system are required to have a dental exam and is due by the first day of school.

Eye Exams: All children enrolling in kindergarten or enrolling for the first time in an Illinois school system are required to have an eye examination by an optometrist.

Immunizations:

It is the policy of Decatur Christian School that all students attending the district schools shall be immunized in accordance with law. Students cannot attend school without providing satisfactory evidence of immunization, unless they are exempted from immunization and provide proper documentation of exemption.

A student is exempted from obtaining immunizations if the school has on file the completed forms necessary to prove that the student will not be immunized for religious or medical reasons.

Medical Immunization Exemption - An exemption for medical reasons requires certification by a licensed doctor of medicine or doctor of osteopathy that either the immunization would seriously endanger the child's health or life or that the child has documentation of laboratory evidence of immunity to the disease.

More information on Medical Immunization Exemption can be found here:

<https://www.ilga.gov/commission/jcar/admincode/077/077006650E05200R.html>

Religious Immunization Exemption - An exemption for religious reasons requires written declaration that immunization of the student violates his or her religious beliefs. The form for religious immunization exemption can be found here:

<https://dph.illinois.gov/content/dam/soi/en/web/idph/files/forms/religious-exemption-form-081815040816.pdf>

Medications:

All medications (including over the counter and doctor prescribed medicine) must be kept in the office to be supervised by office personnel. Medications should be in the original pharmacy RX bottle. Over the-counter medicine should be in the original container. A note or consent form must accompany any medication. The consent form should be signed and dated by the student's parent or legal guardian.

NOTE: Students may keep inhalers on their person or in their locker. EpiPens may also need to be kept in a classroom under teacher supervision.

About asthma/diabetes/seizure medications, and epinephrine injectors, students are allowed to self-administer and carry medications as long as they have the necessary documents provided their doctors and consent of parents.

The school allows a student with a medical condition requiring medical cannabis-infused products to have them administered by a school nurse. Alternatively, the student may self-administer if they have a documented plan from a doctor and parental consent.

Stay Home If:

Students with the following symptoms will be excluded from school.

1. Chicken Pox: Until all blisters have scabbed, usually five to seven days after rash begins.
2. Conjunctivitis (Pink Eye):
 - a. *Purulent Conjunctivitis* (redness of eyes and or eyelids with thick white or yellow discharge and eye pain) Exclude until appropriate prescribed treatment has initiated, or discharge has stopped, unless a doctor has diagnosed it as non-infectious.
 - b. *Non-Purulent Conjunctivitis* (redness of eyes with clear, watery discharge. No pain or fever or eyelid redness) No exclusion necessary.
3. Diarrhea: Free of diarrhea for 24 hours.
4. Fifth Disease (Parvovirus): No exclusion necessary. When rash appears, it is no longer contagious.
5. Hand, Foot, and Mouth Disease: Until fever is gone and child is well enough to participate in school.
6. Head Lice: If live lice are present, exclude until first treatment has been completed and no live lice nor nits are seen. Administration will assess student prior to being released to return to school.
7. Impetigo: If impetigo is confirmed by a healthcare provider, exclude until 24 hours after prescribed treatment is completed. Lesions on exposed skin should be covered with water-tight dressing.

8. Mononucleosis: No exclusion necessary. Student may return upon feeling well enough to participate in school.
9. Ringworm: Until treatment has been started. If the lesion cannot be covered, or the lesion is on the scalp, until 24 hours after starting treatment.
10. Scabies: Until 24 hours after treatment begins.
11. Strep Throat or Scarlet Fever: Until 24 hours on prescribed antibiotic treatment begins and student is fever free.
12. Vomiting: The student should stay home for 24 hours after the last incident of vomiting, unless determined to be caused by a non-communicable condition and the child is not in danger of dehydration.

HOMEWORK PRACTICES

Homework - General

The majority of schoolwork is expected to be completed during school hours, although some homework may be assigned. Homework will be given to students at the discretion of the teacher to help reinforce concepts, to provide independent study time, and to help them prepare for tests. All students are required to finish their assignments and submit them by the due date. The teacher has the discretion to decline late homework submissions or impose penalties for tardiness. Typically, homework will not be assigned on Wednesdays with a Thursday due date in order to allow for church and family time. However, in the event that a project is due or a student is behind in work, Wednesday evening homework may become necessary.

Late Work

All assignments are due on the date determined by the teacher. Special, extenuating circumstances sometimes arise. In these unusual cases, parents should notify the teacher of the situation which prevented the completion of homework. Teachers will be free to determine if extending grace is warranted. Otherwise, the following policy will be in effect school-wide:

- Drop one letter grade if not turned in when due.
- Drop an additional letter grade for each additional day work it is not turned in.
- Students with incomplete assignments may be required to attend work sessions as determined by administration until assignments have been completed. This may include break and/or lunch. Ninth hour may also be assigned following communication with parents/guardians.

Extra Credit

DCS recognizes that teachers may desire to give students extra credit for extra work done. When this extra credit is given, the following principles should be adhered to.

- Extra credit should be academic in nature and of an educational value. The number of points given should reflect the difficulty of the assignment. Extra credit should not be worth more than five percent of the total quarter grade.
- Extra credit should extend, stretch and expand the student's understanding of a concept.
- Extra credit should be labeled "Extra credit" and not given "In place of credit." All other assignments must be in before students are allowed to receive points for extra credit.

SECTION L

LAPTOPS

Decatur Christian School is excited to continue to loan DCS students a laptop for their use during the school year. This is seen as a tremendous opportunity to personalize learning for students and help develop future-ready skills.

For 9th through 12th grade students, laptops are to be brought to school every day fully charged. Middle school students will keep their laptops at school and they will be charging overnight. Laptops are to be handled carefully. Students will be charged fines for lost or damaged laptops, cords, and chargers.

Students are to use the network for school projects only; students may not use the DCS network for any other purpose (downloads, games, etc.). Student work is mostly saved via laptops – flash drives are also acceptable.

Laptop Use and Protocols:

All DCS students use technology (laptops) on a regular basis. Technology is used as a tool for inquiry, research, development, and publication.

Please remind your child that downloading apps is a process that only occurs at school through the proper procedures. We ask that students take care of the equipment they are issued and use it in a responsible manner. Students who do not comply with the technology expectations may lose the privilege of using the equipment.

LEADERSHIP ELIGIBILITY

Student leaders are expected to be examples in all areas of their lives; academic, spiritual and behavioral. Class officers, club presidents and publication editors must maintain a 3.0 grade point average. Any student who fails to maintain grade eligibility for any quarter will be placed on leadership probation. If his or her grades do not improve, the student may be removed from leadership.

Upon receipt of a detention for any reason, the student leader will be considered warned. Upon receipt of the second detention for any reason, the student will be placed on probation. Upon the receipt of the third detention the student may be removed from his or her position. Our desire is not to embarrass any student but to help them understand the Biblical accountability associated with leadership.

LIBRARY SERVICES

Students will use the school's library center on a regular basis for inquiry, skill instruction, and reading pleasure. Books may be checked out for a specific time interval. Damaged or lost books may incur a fee for repair or replacement.

LOCKERS

1st -12th grade students will be assigned a locker. Since there is no expectation of privacy, authorized school personnel may open a locker, search the locker, and the contents of the locker at any time.

LOST AND FOUND

The Lost and Found is located in the cafeteria. If you are unable to locate your lost item, proceed to the office to complete a "Lost Item" form. If you find an item, please turn it in to the office IMMEDIATELY. Protect your own property by clearly marking your items (including gym clothing) with your name.
Please Mark Your Belongings.

SECTION M

MEDIA COVERAGE

Throughout the school year reporters for television, radio, newspapers, and other media outlets may visit Decatur Christian School. They will cover stories as part of the local news or as features that highlight school activities and special events. **If you do not want your child to be included in media publications, please make sure to alert the school office.**

SECTION O

OFFICE HOURS

The office is open from 7:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday during the regular school year. Because the office phone is used for school business, students will only be allowed to use it with permission. Official summer office hours are 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., Monday through Thursday.

SECTION P

PARENT CUSTODIAL ISSUES

We cannot deny a parent access to his or her child unless we have a copy of a current court order. It is essential for a custodial parent to notify the principal when there are legal restrictions regarding releasing the child to the non-custodial parent. This information must be on file in the office to guarantee guidelines are followed correctly. Please contact the office if you have any questions.

PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES

Parents are encouraged to contact the school to discuss their child's progress. You will have the opportunity to review progress through parent-teacher conferences.

PHOTO RELEASE

As part of our development program, Decatur Christian School occasionally uses photography for publication purposes. We would like your permission to photograph your student for inclusion in these publications. This would include our yearbook, website, newsletters, brochures, fliers and other like materials. The images will remain the property of Decatur Christian School and will be used for the designated purpose of promoting Christian education in Central Illinois.

A Parent Permission Agreement regarding **photo release** is signed upon registration.

SECTION R

REVIEWING YOUR CHILD'S RECORDS

As a parent, you have every right to review the records that the school keeps on your child. Please notify either your child's teacher or the school office that you are interested in reviewing your child's records. We will collect the records and set an appointment time for you to come in to review them. If you wish, copies of the records may be made for you, but the originals cannot leave the school.

SECTION S

SCHOOL CLOSINGS, DELAYED OPENINGS, EARLY DISMISSALS

In the event of severe weather or some unforeseen problem that necessitates the closing of school, the announcement will be made through email, Facebook, decaturchristian.net website, and television station WAND. All efforts will be made to make the decision as early as possible.

No announcement means school operates on regular schedule.

PLAN 1 - SNOW DAY: School closed all day - Before and after school activities are canceled. Some athletic competitions may remain scheduled based upon IHSA guidelines per weather.

PLAN 2 - DELAYED START SNOW SCHEDULE: School starts two hours later than regular time A two-hour delayed opening allows for snow removal and traffic clearance after evening snowfall or during relatively light storms. In the event of a two-hour delay, there will be no Extended Care before school. Soul Purpose also will not meet on delayed opening school days.

SCHOOL HOURS

Elementary and Secondary classes (grades 7-12) are regularly scheduled from 8:05 a.m. – 3:30 p.m. each day.

Early dismissal on Wednesdays: Elementary and Secondary (2:36 pm).

Preschool classes (PreK3/PreK4) are from 8:10 a.m. – 11:15 a.m. (half day) or 8:10 a.m. - 3:15 p.m. (full day), Wednesday dismissal 2:15 p.m.

The school is not responsible for students who remain on campus after dismissal unless involved in a school-related activity. It is our expectation that students will either be in the pick-up area, involved in an after-school sport or activity, with a teacher for extra help, or in preschool/elementary Extended Care. In all other cases, students will not be allowed to remain on campus.

SCHOOL SAFETY

Emergency Contacts:

If your child is ill or hurt during school hours and the nurse or principal thinks the student should go home, a family member or emergency contact person will be notified before the student is released.

Please make sure the school has up-to-date contacts and emergency pickup information for your child or children at all times. It is essential that you notify the school of any changes regarding phone numbers of parents or guardians and emergency contacts. Adults picking up children should bring a photo ID with them to the DCS main office.

Emergency Situations and Drills:

Students will participate in regular fire, tornado, and other safety drills throughout the year as required by law. Our teachers are trained by local law enforcement annually for active shooter training. All teachers and students will be given information about safety procedures appropriate for such situations. In the event of an actual emergency situation, you may understandably want to pick up your child from school. Be sure to check the local news and radio stations and our school Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/decaturchristianschool/>.

It is Decatur Christian School's goal to notify parents of an incident or crisis as quickly as possible. We strive to provide the most accurate and timely information. We ask that you remember that all of the DCS staff members care about your children. We know you are worried and anxious. We want to provide you with information without creating undue alarm or anxiety.

Should an incident occur at our school, school staff will work to assist emergency personnel as well as communicate with families. Office personnel will be responsible for making parent notifications **via text, email, and voice calls with our families**. Please be aware that this process does take time.

We must communicate what we know – when we know it – without jeopardizing the safety of the people within the school. Please remember communication in a crisis is difficult. We will do our very best to be fast and accurate, knowing the possibility of human error exists.

Message from Administrator

PLEASE READ THE FOLLOWING MESSAGE FROM OUR ADMINISTRATOR CONCERNING SAFETY AND SECURITY:

Dear Parents of DCS and Families,

Communication is key to keeping our schools safe and is important at all stages of a safety incident. It is so important when our students see, hear, or interact with other students about something that concerns them (at school or over social media) that the student reports it to a trusted adult. These adults could be teachers, school staff members, principals, police officers or you, their parents.

Often major incidents can be avoided if critical information is provided. That information is anything referencing the potential for violence, a threat to school safety, or acts that could result in serious physical or mental harm.

To our parents we ask that if you are made aware of a safety or security concern, either through your student sharing or some other means, that you make the first step of reporting that concern to either school administrators, teachers or the appropriate law enforcement agency. Our DCS staff is trained to respond to safety concerns promptly and will involve law enforcement as needed. In event of an emergency, our school district has safety measures in place, including but not limited to:

- 1. Locked doors, and perimeter safety**
- 2. Lockdown, evacuation plans, and reunification**
- 3. Visitor management policies**
- 4. Security cameras in strategic places**
- 5. Coordination with emergency responders**
- 6. Communication via text, email, and voice call with families and community members**

We encourage you to take a few minutes to discuss our safety plans with your students and remind them of the importance of sharing any and all safety concerns with you, school staff members, or through other channels:

- 1. Report to school Administration**
- 2. Local Law Enforcement 911**
- 3. School Violence Tip Line (Illinois) 1-800-477-0024 tip line - for more information**
<https://illinoisattorneygeneral.gov/children/tiplinefacts.html>

We thank you for your support and partnership as we work together in making the Decatur Christian School safe and a positive learning environment for every one of our students.

Sincerely,

Pastor Stephen Cantrell

Decatur Christian School Administrator

Lockers

1st -12th grade students will be assigned a locker. Since there is no expectation of privacy, authorized school personnel may open a locker, search the locker, and the contents of the locker at any time. Secondary students may use a combination lock to secure their locker if the combination is registered in the office. Lockers cannot be decorated on the outside without administrative permission. Book bags are to remain in the locker during the school day and may also be searched at any time by the Administration.

Protect your property! Print your name in ink on all property for which you are responsible. Do not bring items of value or large sums of money (in excess of \$20) to school. The school does not assume responsibility for lost or stolen items. Valuable items are to be left at home.

Student Searches: School officials have the authority to search students and students' property (including purses, backpacks, gym bags, etc.), provided that the search is justified at its inception and reasonable under all the circumstances. School officials will exercise discretion to perform searches, as they deem necessary to maintain the safety and welfare of students and staff, to prevent violations of discipline policies, or to prevent interference with the educational process.

Lockers, desks and school laptops assigned to students remain the property of Decatur Christian School and may be searched by school officials with or without notice. Vehicles driven by students to school are likewise subject to search by school officials. School officials will also call law enforcement officials when they deem it necessary or appropriate or otherwise required by law. Those law enforcement officials may also conduct searches and take other appropriate action pursuant to their authority as law enforcement officials.

Weapons in School:

The possession or use of a weapon by any person, except where authorized by law, shall be prohibited in all school buildings, on or about school grounds, and at all school activities.

A weapon shall be defined as any instrument or device customarily used to attack or defend against an opponent, adversary or victim or any instrument or device used to inflict physical injury or harm to another person. Violators of this policy may be referred to the appropriate legal authorities. In addition, any student who violates this policy will be subject to suspension and or expulsion from school.

In accordance with federal law, any student who brings or possesses a firearm (as defined in 18 U.S.C. 921) on school property will be suspended from school for at least one calendar year and will be referred to the appropriate legal authorities. The suspension may be modified on a case-by-case basis upon recommendation by the administrator to the school board.

SCHOOL SUPPLIES

Refer to individual class lists for specific supplies. See www.decaturchristian.net/forms.

SCHOOL WELLNESS POLICY

A school wellness policy, which sets goals for nutrition education and also goals for physical education, is available on the DCS website, as well as in the school office.

SOCIAL MEDIA AND CELL PHONES

Generally speaking, communication between and among students that takes place outside of school is not the responsibility of Decatur Christian School unless it is brought to our attention because there is a disruption to the learning environment and or to our students. If there are conflicts or disruptions brought to our attention, these will be addressed through our discipline guidelines. Common reasons for our involvement include name calling, bullying, and threats.

Guidelines and privacy boundaries: The school may not request or require a student to provide a password or other related account information in order to gain access to the student's account or profile on a social networking website:

The school may conduct an investigation or require a student to cooperate in an investigation if there is sufficient evidence to suggest the student's social network account violates the school's disciplinary policy; and the school may require the student to share content in the course of such an investigation.

Here are some examples to further clarify how our discipline guidelines and school procedures can intersect with student cell phones and internet activities:

Social Media:

Example #1: A conflict at school that begins with comments written on the internet will be evaluated according to our discipline guidelines. If the comments reflect name calling, bullying or threats, we will address these as if they happened at school or were written on a piece of paper.

Example #2: If students have identified themselves as DCS students on social media sites, and it is brought to our attention that they have made comments which do not reflect our behavior expectations, the student may be investigated and or disciplined pursuant to our discipline guidelines.

Cell Phones:

Example #3: A phone that rings during school hours (call or text) can be taken by an administrator because we have explicitly asked that cell phones be kept in the locker powered off. Phones that are taken will be returned at the end of the day unless the phone is being held as evidence, or this is a repeated offense, which may require parent involvement.

Example #4: If a phone has been lost and is then found, we will read information in the phone in order to learn the identity of the owner.

Conflict regarding cell phones and social media can be avoided by complying with school guidelines about phones being kept in the locker and powered off during the school day.

SPECIAL CLASSES FOR ELEMENTARY

(Art, Music, P.E., Library, Ag (5th & 6th grades only, First Lego League)

DCS is excited to offer additional courses for your child's growth and creativity. All students will participate in special focus classes on a rotating basis. Comprehensive instruction in art, music, physical education, etc. are critical to your child's development.

STUDENT PARKING

Students may park only in the designated student parking section. Students must exercise caution and careful driving practices, as well as obey all applicable traffic laws. There is a 15-mph speed limit on campus and adjacent streets.

Vehicles are to be parked immediately upon arrival at school and are not to be moved or visited until the close of the school day. Students will not be able to access their cars during school hours without permission from school personnel.

Violation of driving rules may result in the suspension of DCS parking privileges. Vehicles driven to school may be searched by school officials as deemed necessary to maintain the safety and welfare of students and staff.

DCS will not be liable for items stolen from cars or damage done to vehicles.

Parking at DCS is a privilege. This privilege may be revoked at the discretion of an administrator due to violation of parking regulations and or inappropriate and unsafe conduct on the parking lots.

SUPPORT SERVICES FOR STUDENTS

Students who qualify for speech or reading support may participate in Macon/Piatt Special Education Services (Title I services). These services are not operated by Decatur Christian School, but are under the guidance of Macon/Piatt Special Education. This program is for elementary students who qualify for assistance, and if you have any questions about these services, please talk to the Elementary Liason.

SECTION T

TELEPHONE - OFFICE

Use of the office telephone by students should be reserved for emergencies and with the permission of the office personnel.

TESTING (College Preparatory)

High school students should check with the school administrator with any questions about college preparatory tests.

PSAT:

This test is primarily for Juniors. Sophomores may choose to take it as a practice test. This is a shortened version of the SAT and is used to determine National Merit Scholars.

ACT (American College Test) and SAT (Scholastic Assessment Test):

These are college aptitude tests which are utilized to help determine a student's admissibility to college. DCS does not administer the ACT or SAT. These are tests taken at other locations.

Consult the school administrator as to the fees and registration dates and locations for the test.

TEXTBOOKS AND CURRICULUM

Most textbooks used by the students are from the ABeka Book, ACSI, Positive Action Press, and Bob Jones University Press. These organizations have excelled in producing Christian texts and materials and have a proven success record. Some high school classes will be using other materials which have been carefully reviewed.

SECTION V

VALUABLES

As a general rule toys, collectibles, electronic games, and equipment (including cell phones, and video game players), stuffed animals, etc., should not be brought to school unless specifically requested by the teacher for a classroom event. Students are discouraged from bringing any personal items to school. We do not want students to be faced with the loss, damage, or disappearance of items they value which can greatly affect their ability to keep their mind and body ready to learn.

VISITORS TO DECATUR CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

ALL VISITORS ARE "REQUIRED TO REPORT AND SIGN IN " AT THE DECATUR CHRISTIAN SCHOOL OFFICE.

Do not go directly to any student areas. It is important that we know who is in our building at all times.

Parent Visits

Parents, if you wish to speak with your child's teacher, please arrange for a private conference by emailing that teacher. Teachers are happy to arrange conferences with parents at scheduled times. If you are bringing lunches, homework, books, and/or other items after 8:15 a.m., please leave them in the school office and DCS personnel will deliver them to your student.

Our Administration is eager to be of help to you and has an open-door policy. Therefore, if you would like to visit the school, please check with the office and a time can be arranged for your visit. The school office will be glad to answer your questions and be of general help to you in many ways.

VOLUNTEERS AND CHAPERONES

While volunteering in a classroom, we require:

1. Christlike behavior, language, humor, demeanor, and respect for all students, staff and volunteers.
2. Remember all information concerning students is strictly confidential and should not be shared with others.
3. Notify the teacher if a student tells you information that could affect his or her health or wellbeing.
4. Avoid interrupting teachers while they are teaching. Questions should be addressed during teacher plan time if possible.
5. Let the teacher handle discipline issues and communicate any behavior problems with the teacher.
6. Leave pre-school children at home so you can spend quality time with your child.
7. Ask any staff member for help.
8. Absolutely no drugs, alcohol, or tobacco are allowed on school property.

Please see the office if you have interest in volunteering or chaperoning at DCS.