

2023
2024

ROCKFORD CHRISTIAN

815.391.8006

Lower School | 220 Hemlock Lane
Rockford, Illinois 61107 | www.rockfordchristian.org



LOWER SCHOOL STUDENT & PARENT HANDBOOK

Cultivating biblically minded students who serve God
to their greatest potential and impact the world for Christ

Table of Contents

| | |
|---|----|
| Mission, Vision, & Core Values of Rockford Christian School | 5 |
| Statement of Faith | 5 |
| Final Authority for Matters of Belief and Conduct | 5 |
| Statement on Marriage, Gender, and Sexuality | 6 |
| Statement on the Sanctity of Human Life | 6 |
| Philosophy of Rockford Christian School | 6 |
| Statement of Diversity, Inclusion, and Unity | 6 |
| Non-Discriminatory Statement | 7 |
| Accreditation | 7 |
| Rockford Christian Education Association | 7 |
| Board of Directors | 7 |
| Admissions / Enrollment | 7 |
| Policy | 7 |
| Procedure | 7 |
| Waiting Lists | 8 |
| Spiritual Life | 8 |
| Spiritual Expectations | 8 |
| Chapel | 9 |
| Biblical Integration | 9 |
| Community Outreach | 9 |
| Standards of Student Conduct | 9 |
| School Communication | 10 |
| Academic Calendar | 10 |
| School-Wide Newsletters | 10 |
| Teacher Newsletters | 10 |
| Faculty and Staff Email | 10 |
| Renweb / FACTS | 10 |
| Telephone Messages / Usage | 10 |
| Social Media and Networking | 11 |
| RCS-Related Social Media | 11 |
| School Health and Safety | 11 |

| | |
|-------------------------------|-----------|
| Security | 11 |
| Emergency Contact Information | 12 |
| School Nurse | 12 |
| Illness | 12 |
| Injuries | 12 |
| Required Health Forms | 12 |
| Medications | 13 |
| Allergy Safety | 14 |
| Vision and Hearing Screening | 14 |
| Safety Drills | 14 |
| School Closures | 14 |
| Inclement Weather | 14 |
| Text Alerts | 15 |
| School Day | 15 |
| Normal School Hours | 15 |
| Early Dismissal | 15 |
| Early Arrival | 15 |
| Lunch Schedule | 15 |
| Afternoon Dismissal | 15 |
| Academics | 16 |
| School Supplies | 16 |
| Co-Curricular Activities | 16 |
| Physical Education | 16 |
| Grading Scales / Report Cards | 16 |
| Homework | 17 |
| Standardized Testing | 17 |
| School Records | 17 |
| Support | 17 |
| Resource | 18 |
| Enrichment | 18 |
| Student Counseling | 18 |
| Attendance | 18 |
| Reporting Absences | 18 |
| Excused Absences | 18 |
| Unexcused Absences | 19 |
| Vacations | 19 |
| Student Sign-Out | 19 |

| | |
|---|----|
| Tardy Policy | 19 |
| Problems Created by Tardiness | 19 |
| Consequences | 19 |
| Dress Code | 20 |
| Dress Code and Appearance Expectations (K-4) | 20 |
| Spirit Wear / Dress-Down Days | 21 |
| Lunch Program / Drink Orders | 21 |
| Recess | 21 |
| Snack Policy | 22 |
| Birthdays | 22 |
| In-School Celebrations | 22 |
| Off-Campus Celebrations | 23 |
| Field Trips | 23 |
| Extended Care | 23 |
| Conferences | 23 |
| Purpose | 23 |
| Conference Schedule | 24 |
| Special Parent/Teacher Conferences | 24 |
| Conferences with the Head of Lower School | 24 |
| Discipline | 24 |
| Acceptable Use of Technology | 26 |
| Extra-Curricular School Activities | 27 |
| Elementary Athletic Program | 27 |
| Clubs | 28 |
| Alcoholic Beverages & Smoking at School Activities | 28 |
| F.O.R.C.E. (Friends of Rockford Christian Elementary) / PTO | 28 |
| Volunteers and Visitors | 28 |
| Lunch Helpers | 28 |
| Room Parents | 28 |
| Classroom Visitors | 29 |
| Lost and Found | 29 |
| Withdrawal | 29 |

● Mission, Vision, & Core Values of Rockford Christian School

The mission of Rockford Christian School is to cultivate biblically minded students who serve God to their greatest potential and impact the world for Christ.

The vision of Rockford Christian School is to provide a legacy of excellent, Christ-centered education where students thrive spiritually, excel academically, and live boldly for Jesus Christ.

The core values of Rockford Christian School are:

- Decidedly Christian - Intentionally nurturing hearts and minds to know Jesus and grow His Kingdom
- Community Minded - Passionately pursuing relationships to influence the culture through intellect, service, and love
- Distinctively Excellent - Diligently seeking excellence in all that we say, think, and do
- Faithful Stewards - Genuinely caring for His people and His school to ensure Christian education remains viable and accessible for today and tomorrow

● Statement of Faith

At Rockford Christian School, we believe...

...in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as wholly inspired by God and inerrant in the original writings, and that they are the supreme and final authority in faith and life.

... in one God, Creator of all things, eternally existent in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (the Trinity).

...in the deity and humanity of our Lord Jesus Christ, in His virgin birth and His sinless life, in His miracles, in His vicarious and atoning death through His shed blood, in His bodily resurrection, in His ascension to the right hand of the Father, and in His future personal and bodily return in power and glory.

...that regeneration by the Holy Spirit is absolutely essential for the salvation of the lost and sinful person.

...that all who receive by faith the Lord Jesus Christ are regenerated by the Holy Spirit, and thereby become the children of God.

...in the bodily resurrection of both the saved and the lost; for those that are saved it is a resurrection into everlasting joy with Christ, and for those that are lost it is a resurrection into everlasting suffering.

...that people were created in the image of God; that they sinned, and thereby incurred both physical death and spiritual death, which is separation from God; and that all human beings are born with a sinful nature, and indeed sin in thought, word, and deed.

...in the spiritual unity of all believers in our Lord Jesus Christ.

Final Authority for Matters of Belief and Conduct

The statement of faith does not exhaust the extent of our beliefs. The Bible itself, as the inspired and infallible Word of God that speaks with final authority concerning truth, morality, and the proper conduct of mankind, is the sole and final source of all that we believe. For purposes of Rockford Christian School's faith, doctrine, practice, policy, and discipline, our Board of Directors is Rockford Christian School's final interpretive authority on the Bible's meaning and application.

Statement on Marriage, Gender, and Sexuality

We believe that God offers redemption and restoration to all who confess and forsake their sin OF ANY KIND, seeking His mercy and forgiveness through Jesus Christ (Acts 3:19-21; Romans 10:9-10).

We believe that every person must be afforded compassion, love, kindness, respect, and dignity (Mark 12:28-31; Luke 6:31). Hateful and harassing behavior or attitudes directed toward any individual are to be repudiated and are not in accord with Scripture.

We believe that God wonderfully and immutably (unchanging) creates each person as either biologically male or female. These two distinct, complementary genders together reflect the image and nature of God (Gen. 1:26-27).

We believe that the term "marriage" has only one meaning: the uniting of one man and one woman in a single, exclusive union, as delineated in Scripture (Gen. 2:18-25). We believe that God intends sexual intimacy to occur only between a man and a woman who are married to each other (1 Cor. 6:18; 7:2-5; Hebrews 13:4).

We believe that any form of sexual immorality (such as adultery within marriage, consensual sexual intercourse between two persons not married to each other, homosexual behavior, and use of pornography) is sinful and harmful (Matt. 15:18-20; 1 Cor. 6:9-10 and 18).

We believe that in order to preserve the function and integrity of Rockford Christian School as a biblical role model to the students of Rockford Christian School, their families and the community, it is imperative that all persons employed by Rockford Christian School in any capacity support in word and action this Statement on Marriage, Gender, and Sexuality (Matt. 5:16; Phil. 2:14-16; 1 Thess. 5:22).

Statement on the Sanctity of Human Life

We believe that all human life is sacred and created by God in His image. Human life is of inestimable worth in all its dimensions, including pre-born babies, the aged, the physically or mentally challenged, and every other stage or condition from conception through natural death. We are therefore called to defend, protect, and value all human life (Psalm 139).

• Philosophy of Rockford Christian School

Education at Rockford Christian School promotes spiritual, intellectual, creative, social, and physical growth guided by a family-school concept, which supports and challenges students of varying abilities. A shared belief in cooperation and involvement among students, faculty, and parents/guardians provides a basis for each child's individual development. Rockford Christian seeks to build confidence and self-esteem within an environment where acceptance of responsibility, respect and concern for others, respect and love for God, and love for learning are actively fostered values. Every subject, whether scientific, historical, mathematical, literary, or artistic, is taught with the consciousness that Jesus Christ is to be central in all living and learning. Rockford Christian School is a multi-campus facility serving students from pre-kindergarten through 12th grade, which encourages continuity of our academic program and enhancement of the family-school tradition.

• Statement of Diversity, Inclusion, and Unity

Rockford Christian School is a community of learners whose mission is to serve God and others. Together we strive to live with one another in unity and peace. Our ability to fully demonstrate these qualities is limited by the extent to which we

resemble the breadth of God's family. Recognizing that unity is not uniformity, and based on the diversity that we witness in the body of Christ, we believe that greater diversity at RCS enhances the educational experience by

- providing a better context for demonstrating the unifying power of the Gospel,
- better equipping our students for success in the increasingly global and diverse world, and
- actively and intentionally seeking to recruit staff and teachers that reflects the wonderful diversity of our community.

RCS has a calling that is higher than superficial compliance or obligation. We are called to build a Christian community as an example to our community and beyond. Our school should model the reality of the body of Christ, and be inclusive of diverse people of God using their unique gifts for God's glory. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, we are to reflect the biblical mandate to be ministers of reconciliation and to bring about genuine unity within a diverse world. RCS actively seeks to attract and serve a diverse group of Christian employees and students in an environment that reflects our guiding values.

• Non-Discriminatory Statement

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

• Accreditation

Rockford Christian School is fully accredited by the Association of Christian School International (ACSI), Cognia (previously AdvancED), the North Central Association (NCA) and is recognized and certified by the State of Illinois.

• Rockford Christian Education Association

- The Rockford Christian Education Association is chartered by the State of Illinois to establish and maintain a Christian Day School offering the regular course of study according to state standards, but with instructions from the absolute standard of the Word of God.
-

• Board of Directors

RCS is an independent, private school governed by a board of directors. Up to 15 members are on the board at any one time with alternating terms of service. Individual committees are tailored each year according to current needs. Contact the Head of School or current president of the board for information regarding its constitution and bylaws.

• Admissions / Enrollment

Policy

RCS shall not discriminate in its admission policy either directly or indirectly on the basis of national or ethnic origin, race, sex, creed or religion. Because of the tremendous positive impact Rockford Christian has on students, many parents wish to enroll their children even though they do not fully support our spiritual

commitment. This philosophical difference creates a dilemma for some families because the Lordship of Christ and God's Word is woven into every aspect of the educational experience. A decision to apply for admission indicates a desire to be challenged spiritually as well as intellectually.

Procedure

- Completed application and application/testing fee must be received.
- Student must successfully complete admission requirements and/or testing/evaluation for placement.
 - 1) Pre-Kindergarten/Junior Kindergarten: Admission to the Rockford Christian Early Childhood program is based on age [applicant must be at least three years old by September 1st to enter the pre-kindergarten program, and at least four years old by September 1st to enter the junior kindergarten program] and social readiness. Applicants must be toilet trained before entering pre-kindergarten.
 - 2) Kindergarten: Through participation in a series of age-appropriate activities, each student's academic and developmental readiness is examined. The evaluation takes approximately 30 minutes and is administered by a qualified testing professional. Current RCS junior kindergarten students are given priority, with new applicant screening prior to the beginning of the school year. Applicants must be five years old by September 1st to enter the kindergarten program.
 - 3) Grades 1 through 4: Applicants for grades 1 through 4 will be given a series of academic tests appropriate for the age and grade level of the student. The results of these tests are expected to be at grade level or above for admission to Rockford Christian School. Admission to the school will not be determined until all admission requirements are met.
- Transcripts/records from prior school must be received.
 - 1) A release of information form (included on new student application) must be signed by the parent or guardian in order to acquire records from any previous educational institution. In the event that records from the previous school are not available because of an outstanding balance, admission may be denied.
 - 2) If an incoming student has an IEP, a copy must be attached to the application.
 - 3) Teacher recommendation form from prior teacher received (grades 1-4).
- The Head of Recruitment or their designee will personally talk with all prospective students and their parent(s). Significant parental involvement and moral support is expected.
- Birth certificate and current photograph must accompany each student's application.
- Current physical from an Illinois physician and immunization records, including emergency medical information must accompany each student's application.
- As room permits: Priority consideration is given to applicants of current families, alumni of the school, and on a first-come-first-served basis.
- Mid-year transfer students: Testing must be completed prior to admission. Parent(s) and student must meet with the administrative team prior to admittance.

Waiting Lists

- An application with paid registration fee must be on file in order for a student to be officially placed in a waiting list for any class that is already at capacity.

- It is the parent's responsibility to periodically check with the school for openings.

• Spiritual Life

Spiritual Expectations

As a private Christian school, which integrates classroom academics and Christian commitment, the student's growth in faith is of the utmost importance at Rockford Christian Elementary. The student body worships together in our weekly chapels, where attendance is required. Students are expected to worship regularly with their parents in a local church of their choice. Rockford Christian School is in partnership with parents in the spiritual training of their children. Therefore, the school cannot accept sole responsibility for the Christian education of students, but rather shares that responsibility with the home and the local church. Because the study of God's Word is so vital to the Christian life, Bible is a required subject each year for students enrolled at Rockford Christian Elementary School.

As a private Christian academic institution, Rockford Christian places a high value on learning experiences for students. It is our desire to develop the God-given talents and abilities within each student to his/her highest potential, spiritually, academically, physically and socially. With this in mind, students are expected to appreciate the opportunity to be part of our school by behaving well and responsibly in the classroom setting and on the school campus.

Chapel

All RCS students attend weekly chapel. Chapel is an integral part of the curriculum. Attentive, courteous conduct that is honoring to God should be displayed at all chapel services. Throughout the year different ministries and community individuals are invited to share at chapel. Parents are welcome to attend the weekly chapel service.

Biblical Integration

At RCS, we believe the Bible is the infallible Word of God and therefore, the standard by which all values, as reflected in school programs, policies and traditions are measured. Bible classes are an integral part of our curriculum. In addition, biblical concepts are integrated into every other curricular area within the school. The Bible is the foundation and the strength of Rockford Christian School, which sets us apart from public and many private schools.

The content and instruction presented in our Bible classes encourages students to develop strong Christian character, offers them a vision for a life of service to Jesus Christ no matter what occupational pursuits they follow, and educates them in sound doctrine and a defined faith so they can give an answer to the hope that is within them.

In addition to Bible as a core subject, students will have learning experiences appropriate to their age levels. These experiences emphasize the concept of a loving heavenly Father, the creation of human beings in the image of God, the fall of humanity and the redemptive work of God's Son, Jesus, and the absolute trustworthiness of God's written Word, the Bible.

Community Outreach

In keeping with our mission statement, Rockford Christian School provides various ministry opportunities in the community for students and families throughout the year. Students will have the opportunity to participate throughout the community in service to local ministries such as area nursing homes and Kids Around the World. All students are strongly encouraged to participate.

● Standards of Student Conduct

Understanding the purpose and mission of Rockford Christian School, we believe the Word of God provides insights for behavior and daily living. We believe that our lives will be enriched by the application of these truths in a consistent manner.

For health and safety reasons, the use or possession of tobacco, alcoholic beverages, illegal drugs, knives, guns or items that could cause a fire are prohibited.

For social, moral and spiritual development, the following code of conduct will be followed:

- Respect authority – Honor God, obey and respect the laws of our country, the standards of one's parents and the expectations of the school and communities (1 Peter 2:17).
- Courtesy will be extended in all relationships – student to student, student to staff, and staff to student (Philippians 2:3-4).
- When an offense is committed, reconciliation will be sought in a biblical manner (Matthew 5:23-24, 18:15-18).
- Profanity, vulgar or offensive speech is an insult to God and others and will not be tolerated (Exodus 20:7,16).
- Demonstrate self-control – Be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to become angry. When you sin, seek forgiveness and make amends (James 1:9).
- Be honest and above reproach. Always speak the truth and avoid even the appearance of dishonesty. Refrain from stealing, lying, cheating, and gambling (Proverbs 8:7).
- Students will be selective in the areas of entertainment, music and reading material (Philippians 4:8).

It is the intent of Rockford Christian School that each student maintains proper respect and usage of all school property. Any abuse of school property will result in assessment of fines, and payment will be expected for the damages.

● School Communication

It is essential that we maintain excellent communication within our RCS community. Written and digital communications are used and recommended for both staff and parents.

Academic Calendar

A calendar of events and activities is constantly updated throughout the school year and can also be found on our school website, www.rockfordchristian.org. If RCS must be closed because of weather and/or other reasons, the days may be made up at the end of the school year. Advance notice will be given.

School-Wide Newsletters

Every Thursday afternoon (or as needed), the school will email a newsletter with important upcoming information. Please make sure your email address is current in Renweb.

Teacher Newsletters

Pre-kindergarten and junior kindergarten teachers send home printed monthly newsletters regarding classroom activities and upcoming events. Kindergarten through grade 4 teachers provide weekly printed newsletters. Watch for these newsletters to come home in your student's communication folder.

Faculty and Staff Email

All RCS faculty and staff members have email addresses through Rockford Christian. You are encouraged to communicate with faculty and staff members through email: Typically the emails will be firstname.lastname@rockfordchristian.org, but please confirm email address with teacher/staff member prior to sending email.

Renweb / FACTS

Student schedules, grades, and other information may be made available in Renweb/FACTS. Instructions for accessing RenWeb are available in the main office. A directory of RCS families is also available in Renweb/FACTS. The directory is not to be used for solicitations of any kind.

Telephone Messages / Usage

- Administrative support staff are available from 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Parents are encouraged to leave messages with the office for teachers during this time.
- Teachers and students will not be called to the telephone during school hours except in case of extreme emergency. Staff members will be notified of your calls and will return such calls at their first opportunity.
- Messages for students will not be delivered during the school day to the classroom except in an emergency. This is necessary in order to avoid undue interruptions to the classrooms. However, students will be notified of messages at the end of the school day.
- If necessary, students may use the phone in the office.
- Cell phones are not to be used by students during school or extended care hours without permission.

Social Media and Networking

"Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen" (Ephesians 4:29).

Social media is electronic communication used to share information, ideas, personal messages, videos, etc. Examples include texting, messaging, Instagram, Facebook, blogs, Twitter, LinkedIn, Pinterest, SnapChat, and others. Social media is neutral. It can be used for good or for harm.

- It is expected that parents/guardians and students will use good judgment. What is written is both permanent and public. A good practice is to assume that what is written to friends will be read by students, parents/guardians, school workers, etc.
- Be especially careful that what is written, posted, and shared will not hinder your Christian witness or that of RCS.
- Students who post or send inappropriate material will face disciplinary actions as outlined in the Student Handbook up to and including probation, suspension, or even expulsion.
- Inappropriate material includes but is not limited to the following:
 - 1) Alcohol or drug related pictures and/or involvement
 - 2) Profane, lewd, obscene, vulgar, rude language
 - 3) Lewd or sexually provocative pictures
 - 4) Smoking or vaping pictures and/or involvement
 - 5) Threatening, harassing and cyberbullying (see that section of this handbook)
 - 6) Disrespectful statements of the school, its workers, and parents
 - 7) Information that is knowingly false or defamatory

Parents and students are to immediately report all such incidents of misconduct to a parent, teacher, or administrator. Do not think, "It's just a post."

RCS-Related Social Media

RCS supports beneficial communication and sharing of accurate information that respects the privacy of students. RCS supports the use of and monitors social media that uses the school's name, a form of the school's name, and/or otherwise "speaks" for the school or any part of the school. Such sites include but are not limited to online sites, such as Facebook groups, for grade levels, athletic teams, clubs, teachers, parent organizations, alumni, etc. The Head of School or their representative must be among those with "administrator" access to the site. Consult the Head of School or their representative before opening a new social media site.

● School Health and Safety

Security

- During school and extended care hours, all doors will remain locked and secure. Entry to the school must be made through the main school door. Ring the buzzer, and wait to be given access. All visitors must report to the office to sign in and return to the office upon departure. Items that may have been forgotten by students (i.e. folder, lunch, etc.) may be brought to the office, and a staff member will deliver items to the student.

●

Emergency Contact Information

It is absolutely essential that we have an emergency form on file for every RCS student with the name and phone number of at least one adult other than the parent in case we cannot locate the parent in the event of an emergency. These forms are updated annually.

School Nurse

Rockford Christian School employs registered nurses, on site from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. Monday through Friday, who are responsible for maintaining all health records. The school nurse works cooperatively with parents, physicians, and all school personnel to maintain and improve the health of all students. Rockford Christian School is a smoke-free environment.

Illness

When a child is ill, or has been ill during the night, they must remain at home. Students who have had symptoms of a fever of 100° or more and/or had diarrhea or vomiting, *must remain at home until they are symptom free for 24 hours*. This will allow the child to feel well and therefore be productive in the classroom. This procedure also protects other students from being exposed to illness.

- If a student becomes ill at school, the nurse will call a parent to determine what will be done. *When the child has a fever and/or vomits at school, the school nurse will contact a parent to arrange for their child to be picked up.*
- When a student is suspected to have a communicable health problem, such as pink eye, strep throat, chicken pox, etc. the nurse will notify the parents to have their child checked by a physician prior to returning to school. The results of the doctor's diagnosis must be reported to the school nurse.

Injuries

In the event that a student is injured at school, we will do the following: administer first aid to the best of our ability and phone a parent regarding the condition of their child and alert them as to what further medical attention needs to be done.

Required Health Forms

- **Health Exam:** All students, upon initial enrollment in ANY grade, who have not been previously enrolled in an Illinois school, must have a current physical that meets the requirements of the State of Illinois. For ALL students entering grades PreKindergarten and Kindergarten, a new physical is required. A physical examination must be on record before beginning the school year.
- **Immunizations:** Students must show proof of basic immunizations and required boosters for Diphtheria, Tetanus, Pertussis, Polio, Measles, Mumps, Rubella, Haemophilus Influenzae Type B (required for preschool only), Varicella (required for preschool through 12th grades), Hepatitis B (required for pre-school and 6th-12th grades), and Pneumococcal Vaccine schedule for children aged 24-59 months of age. All immunizations must be updated and recorded on the Illinois State school physical form. A physician or other healthcare professional must sign these forms.
- **STUDENTS OF ROCKFORD CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS MUST BE IN COMPLIANCE BY THE FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL.** Students who have not submitted a complete school physical and/or all required immunizations by the first day of school will be excluded from school until the state requirements have been met.
- New students in ALL grades must submit a current physical exam with up-to-date immunizations within 30 days of enrollment.
- Parents of students with religious objections must submit a new, signed letter of objection (each year a school physical is required) that meets all state requirements by October 15th and sign the exclusion letter explaining that unimmunized students will be excluded from school in the event of an outbreak as directed by the Winnebago County Health Department.
- The Annual Immunization Data Report submitted to the Illinois State Board of Education for Rockford Christian School is available upon request.
- **Dental Examination Requirement:** All children in kindergarten, second, sixth and ninth grades shall have a dental examination performed by a licensed dentist (Section 27-8.1 (1.5) of the School Code). Parents must present proof of the examination prior to May 15th of the current school year. The dental exam must have been completed within the 18 months prior to the May 15th deadline.
- **Vision Examination Requirement:** Students enrolling in school for the first time must present proof of an eye examination by a licensed optometrist or physician licensed to practice medicine in all its branches and do eye examinations as defined by the law within the previous year before October 15th of the school year.

Medications

Per the State of Illinois, parents are required to work out their child's medication around the school schedule to the best of their ability. The administration of medication to students during regular school hours and during school-related activities should be discouraged unless absolutely necessary for the critical health and well-being of the student. Medications should be limited to those required during school hours which are necessary to maintain the student in school and those needed in the event of an emergency.

Medications will be dispensed at school under the following guidelines:

- All medication(s) that are to be taken by a student at RCS must be dispensed through the nurse's office.
- No student is to carry his/her medication (including over-the-counter medication).
- No student may dispense medication to another student.

- Any student requiring medication should bring the medication in the original prescription bottle and a medication authorization form with the attending physician and parent signature indicating the amount and time that the student is to receive the medicine. This includes over-the-counter medications. Parents or guardians must sign a statement acknowledging that Rockford Christian School and its employees and agents are to incur no liability, except for willful and wanton conduct, as a result of any injury arising from the administration of any medication. Forms are available in the nurse's office.
- Students not following the above procedures may be subject to disciplinary action.
- Students with asthma are permitted to carry and self-administer their rescue inhaler. Parents must provide the health office with the prescription label, detailing the name and dosage of the medication and circumstances under which the medication is to be administered. Parents or guardians must sign a statement acknowledging that Rockford Christian School and its employees and agents are to incur no liability, except for willful and wanton conduct, as a result of any injury arising from the self-administration of asthma medication by the pupil regardless of whether authorization was given by the pupil's parents/ guardians or by the pupil's physician, physician's assistant, or advanced practice registered nurse.
- Parents of students with asthma should provide the school nurse with an Asthma Action Plan completed by the child's physician.

Rockford Christian School has instituted a standing protocol for the use of undesignated epinephrine auto-injectors. Any RCS student exhibiting signs/symptoms of anaphylaxis may be administered epinephrine by the school nurse or trained personnel. Rockford Christian School and its employees and agents are to incur no liability, except for willful and wanton conduct, as a result of any injury arising from the administration of an epinephrine auto-injector. Parents have the right to refuse this emergency medication by submitting their refusal in writing to Rockford Christian School.

Rockford Christian School has instituted a standing protocol for the use of an undesignated Albuterol Rescue Inhaler. Any student exhibiting signs of respiratory distress may be administered Albuterol by the school nurse or trained personnel. Rockford Christian School and its employees and agents are to incur no liability, except for willful and wanton conduct, as a result of any injury arising from the administration of an albuterol rescue inhaler. Parents have the right to refuse this emergency medication by submitting their refusal in writing to Rockford Christian School.

Allergy Safety

- **Food Allergies:** Classroom treats and school lunches may not be safe for your child to consume. Please discuss with your child the necessary precautions he/she needs to take to prevent exposure while in school. No peanut or peanut butter treats are allowed in nut-free classrooms.
- **Other Allergies:** Many students are allergic to latex and animal dander. Pets and latex balloons may not be brought into the school.

Vision and Hearing Screening

Appropriate vision and hearing screenings are performed annually as mandated by the State of Illinois. Vision screening is provided for all students in Pre-K, Kindergarten, (who have not submitted an eye exam), 2nd grade, new students, and all students with an ISP. Hearing Screening is provided for all students in Pre-K, Kindergarten, 1st, 2nd, and 3rd grade, as well as new students and students with an ISP.

According to the State of Illinois School Code (section 27-8.1): "Vision screening is not a substitute for a complete eye and vision screening by an eye doctor. Your child is not required to undergo this vision screening

if an optometrist or ophthalmologist has completed and signed a report form indicating that an examination has been administered within the previous 12 months. Vision screening is NOT an option. If a vision examination report is not on file at the school for your child, your child in the mandated age/grade/group will be screened.

Safety Drills

Emergency fire drills, tornado drills, ALICE drills, and playground evacuation drills are held in accordance with the recommendations of the Rockford Fire Department, Rockford Police Department, and the ISBE. Directions for leaving individual rooms are posted. Students are to follow instructions in moving to designated areas when the alarm sounds.

School Closures

Rockford Christian School will do everything possible to ensure the safety of our children during inclement weather. Decisions will often align with Rockford Public Schools (RPS 205), however, there may be times when RCS remains in session while RPS 205 is canceled or vice versa. In situations where RCS remains in session, students driving to RCS from a school district where schools are closed may remain home with parent permission. Said absence(s) will not be counted against the number of allowable absences.

Decisions to cancel (i.e. snow day) will be determined by 7:00 am on the day of the anticipated weather emergency. Families and employees will be notified through school text alerts, email, and the school website as well as school social media and local television stations.

In situations where the weather emergency is anticipated in the afternoon or early evening, administration may determine it is in the best interest of student drivers to dismiss prior to the end of the school day. We will do our best to determine if an early dismissal is necessary no later than noon. Times for the early dismissal will be established based on the safety of our student drivers. Families will be notified through the same communication channels mentioned above.

The first two snow days each school year are "free" days meaning no remote learning will be expected or provided. If additional snow days occur, administration will determine if remote learning and/or adding those school days at the end of the school year is necessary for student learning. Advance notice will be provided if either is anticipated.

In the case of extreme temperatures, the school will employ the following principles to ensure students remain safe:

- If the heat index is greater than 104 degrees, outdoor activities (i.e. recess, sports) will be moved into an air conditioned space (if space allows), canceled, or postponed.
- If the heat index is between 91-104, school personnel will exercise caution, monitor students closely for necessary action, implement mandatory water breaks, consider reducing time outside (i.e. recess, practice, or play), or consider moving activities inside, canceling, or postponing.
- If the heat index is below 91, students will be monitored closely for necessary action, participate in outdoor activities as usual, and be provided optional water breaks.

• School Day

Normal School Hours

| | |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Pre-K (half-day program) | 8:05 a.m. - 11:40 a.m. |
| JK (half-day program) | 8:05 a.m. - 11:50 a.m. |
| Kindergarten (half-day program) | 8:05 a.m. (8:15 tardy) - 12:00 p.m. |
| Pre-K/JK/K (all day program) | 8:05 a.m. - 2:40 p.m. |
| Grades 1-4 | 8:05 a.m. (8:15 tardy) - 2:40 p.m. |

Early Dismissal

Whenever a school calendar indicates a half-day, the actual dismissal time is 11:40 a.m. If an unforeseen early dismissal is necessary, we will contact parents as soon as possible with details. THERE WILL BE NO AFTERNOON EXTENDED CARE on early dismissal days.

Early Arrival

No students are to be standing outside, unsupervised at the Hemlock campus. All students arriving early must go to extended care.

Lunch Schedule

Each year the lunch schedule is determined by the school administration. The lunch/recess period will normally be 40 minutes in length, allowing time to eat and time to go outside for recess.

Afternoon Dismissal

- All students should be picked up at their dismissal time (2:40 to 3:00 p.m.). If picked up by 3:05 p.m., he or she must report to extended care. The halls must be cleared of unsupervised students by 3:15 p.m.

• Academics

• School Supplies

When a student receives their summer packet, a specific supply list will be enclosed. It will also be posted on our website at www.rockfordchristian.org. It is essential that each student have the necessary supplies each day. Please periodically check with your child to see if he or she has paper, pencils, etc.

Co-Curricular Activities

RCS requires co-curricular subjects to provide a balanced and complete education. Subjects include art, STEAM, music, physical education, Spanish, library, and All-Star Math, depending on grade level.

Physical Education

Students will have P.E. class twice a week. Students will have P.E. outdoors or indoors, depending upon the weather and the P.E. teacher's discretion. Physical education is important for the development of good physical and mental health. P.E. curriculum has been developed for each grade level and is implemented by certified teachers. In addition to P.E. class, each teacher tries to incorporate physical movement into the school day each day through extra recesses, classroom games, etc.. All activities are planned with the children's safety in mind.

- Every student is required to participate during P.E. A student may be excused with a note from a parent in cases of minor injury and/or sickness from which the student is recovering. No student will be excused for more than two days unless the school receives a note from a physician.
- Students are required to have a pair of gym shoes that are used specifically for gym class. These must be kept at school.

Grading Scales / Report Cards

Report cards will be sent home with students at the end of each quarter. Progress reports will be issued during the middle of each grading period. Renweb is a web-based homework and grading system used by RCS. Its purpose is to help enhance parental knowledge of their child's current homework assignments and grades.

To standardize our grading procedure, the following systems will be used:

- Kindergarten through Grade 2:
 - 3 - Consistently achieves the standard
 - 2 - Progressing toward achievement of the standard
 - 1 - Limited progress toward achievement of the standard
 - Blank - Not assessed at this time

Elective/Specials: O, S, N

O = Exceeds Expectations

S = Meets Expectations

N = Needs Improvement

- Grades 3 and 4:

| | |
|-------------|-------------|
| A+ = 100% | C+ = 77-79% |
| A = 93-99% | C = 73-76% |
| A- = 90-92% | C- = 70-72% |
| B+ = 87-89% | D+ = 67-69% |
| B = 83-86% | D = 65-66% |
| B- = 80-82% | F = 0-64% |

Elective/Specials: O, S, N

O = Exceeds Expectations

S = Meets Expectations

N = Needs Improvement

Homework

Clearly communicated homework is an integral part of the instructional process. Challenging homework assignments help students learn. Homework reinforces, enriches, and enhances instruction. It also causes students to work independently and to become more responsible for their own achievements.

- Homework assignments will review, reinforce, or extend classroom learning by providing practice and application of knowledge gained; teach students responsibility and organizational skills; promote wise and orderly use of time; and provide opportunities for enrichment activities.
- Teachers and Head of Lower School will develop strategies of instruction to include homework appropriate for the students and their educational needs. The strategies will consider assignments of other instruction to include homework appropriate for the students and their educational needs. The strategies will consider assignments of other teachers, individual differences in students and other factors that may affect the home as an extension of the classroom.

Standardized Testing

Stanford Achievement Tests (SAT) are administered in the spring for grades 1 and 2, as well as the Otis-Lennon Student Ability Test for students in kindergarten through grade 2. Students in grades 3 and 4 take the ACT Aspire test during the same testing week. Perfect attendance during the week of testing is highly encouraged.

There is not always time for make-up tests. Dates of the tests are published well in advance so that scheduled time away does not conflict with the testing. Achievement tests will be made up in case of illness only.

School Records

Per the U.S. Department of Education and Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), parents of students currently in attendance or eligible students have the right to:

- Inspect and review the student's education records. Call the school office to make arrangements.
- Seek amendment of the student's education records that the parent or eligible student believes to be inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy rights. This request must be submitted in writing to the Head of Lower School's office.
- Consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student's education records, except to the extent that the Act and section 99.31 authorize disclosure without consent.
- File with the Department a complaint under section 99.63 and 99.64 concerning alleged failures by the educational agency or institution to comply with the requirements of the Act.

The school maintains a cumulative academic, attendance, and health record for each student enrolled in accordance with the Federal Family Rights and Education Privacy Act. Information on the student's permanent record will be given out to the following:

- To the parents/guardians and adult students by written request.
- To colleges, universities, and military services upon the student's written request.
- To the court system by parental/guardian permission or by warrant (parent/guardian will be notified).
- Records are not released if accounts are not current.

Technology

As part of the tools and technology provided at Rockford Christian School, we use Google Workspace for Education including many of its third-party services. By signing the handbook, you are giving your consent for your student/child to use Google Workspace for Education and its third-party services. Rockford Christian still maintains control over the apps that are made available to your child/student, and they will be of an educational nature as needed.

• Support

Federal Section 504

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 prohibits discrimination against persons with a disability in any program receiving federal financial assistance. RCS does not receive federal funding and therefore is not legally bound to follow or comply with Federal 504 legislation. However, we do believe in providing (to the best of our ability) the necessary educational support for students who need minor accommodations and will document said needs through a formal RCS Support Plan.

Framework

Rockford Christian School offers a rigorous academic program. Classroom teachers provide additional challenges and remediation for students who require them. A Christ-centered student support system is a proactive decision-making framework designed to address barriers to learning through a collaborative process between home, school, and community partners. The goal of the framework is to identify student needs and intervene as early as possible to counter problematic issues related to learning, behavior, and social-emotional.

Enrichment

Rockford Christian School offers a rigorous academic program. Classroom teachers provide additional challenges and remediation for students who require them. Occasionally a student may need additional opportunities for growing academically. In these situations, we offer a pull-out program for grades 1, 2, and 3. Three factors are considered in determining eligibility for the enrichment program: standardized test scores, classroom performance, and teacher recommendation. These three components make up a matrix for identification.

Support Plans

What is the process to provide a RCS student with an accommodation plan?

RCS provides accommodations for students within the classroom setting. A parent, teacher, student or school staff member may inquire about the need for an accommodation plan. To determine if a student is eligible to receive an accommodation plan the school staff will complete an evaluation. This may include an intervention or additional testing to collect more data. Accommodations will be provided to help students participate in the educational environment; however, it is the student's responsibility to work to the best of their abilities.

What is required to be eligible for an accommodation plan?

- A diagnosis from a medical doctor or psychologist outlining the specific learning, health, or social-emotional need.
- Multiple sources of data within the school proving there is a significant discrepancy from peers such as standardized assessments with a score that is 1.5x or greater discrepant from peers, a 23 (or less) standard score, or scores falling at the 10th percentile or less.
- Displayed need within the school setting.

What is not covered by the accommodation plan?

- Modifications to the RCS curriculum
- Support that is regularly provided to all classroom students
- Support outside the scope of services and/or coursework available
- A health plan written by the school nurse may accompany an accommodation plan, however, it will be considered a separate document.

How will accommodations be written after a student is found to be eligible?

The school team will utilize the data collected from the evaluation and intervention to make decisions about the best accommodations to support the student. At this time the school staff and parents will meet to discuss the plan. While doctors/psychologists may provide a list of suggestions for accommodations, it is the responsibility of the educational experts at RCS to determine what accommodations will be provided to the student. Accommodations will be written based on data collected and will be adjusted over time to increase student independence. Incoming 504 documents will be re-evaluated and converted to an RC Support Plan.

Student Counseling

When students feel stress due to various social/emotional circumstances, it sometimes helps to talk with someone completely removed from his or her situation, rather than with parents or teachers. We have an onsite counselor and may recommend outside counseling if the need arises.

● Attendance

The school will comply with the laws of the State of Illinois regarding attendance and absences.

Reporting Absences

- When a student is absent from school, a phone call from the parent/guardian must be made on the morning of the absence indicating the reason for the student's absence and the anticipated length of absence. RCS has a designated phone line and voicemail box for reporting student absences. If your child needs to miss school, please call 815-391-8009. The voicemail prompt will give you directions to share the appropriate information. If needed, the school nurse will follow up with you.
- Parents' calls should be made to the school prior to 8:30 am.
- Parents or guardians must contact the teacher(s) to make arrangements for missed assignments.
- In the case of an unexcused absence, the teacher has no obligation to accept the make-up work.

■ Excused Absences

- Each child enrolled at RCS should make every effort to be in regular school attendance. It is in the best interest of the child that they attend school each day in order to keep up with the work being presented in the classroom. The recommended reasons for absences are the following:
 - 1) Personal illness
 - 2) Illness in the family
 - 3) Quarantine of the home
 - 4) Death of a relative
 - 5) Emergencies or circumstances which in the judgment of the Head of Lower School or Head of School constitute good and sufficient cause may be excused with prior approval to the event.

■ Unexcused Absences

- Excessive absenteeism is detrimental to a student's progress in school; unexcused absences will be subject to the discipline code.
- If a student has more than five (5) unexcused absences in one semester, the following actions may occur:
 - 1) After 6 absences: Administrator may send a letter to parent/guardian outlining attendance policy.
 - 2) After 8 absences: Administrator may contact parent/guardian by telephone.
 - 3) After 10 absences: Administrator may meet with parent/guardian to review attendance policy.
 - 4) After 12 absences: Case may be referred to the Education Committee for consideration of attendance contract and/or consequences.

■ Vacations

- In the event that it is necessary for a student to miss school because of a family trip, written notice should be directed to the office and classroom teacher at least one week in advance indicating the dates the student will miss.
- In the event that a student must miss school due to a family trip, the teacher will use his or her discretion regarding the issuing of homework prior to the trip. Parents must request homework in writing one week prior to vacation. Any homework given prior to the vacation must be completed and turned in the day the student returns; otherwise no credit will be given for assigned work. Further, if it is decided that no homework be given prior, then all work should be completed within one week after the student returns to

school. It must be recognized that absence from school for any reason is detrimental to the student's progress in school; hence, absences should be minimal.

- In the event that a student must miss school due to a family trip, the administration will use discretion with regards to unexcused absences procedures.

■ Student Sign-Out

- If a student needs to leave early for any reason, such as a doctor's appointment, the parent or guardian must come to the office to have the student paged and to sign the student out.
- A student must attend school for a total of 2½ hours to be counted present for that school day.

Tardy Policy

RCS students are expected to be in their classroom on time every school day. Every effort should be made for students to be on time for school each day. We recognize that all students are transported to RCS by car. We also recognize that there are punctuality difficulties created by car problems and inclement weather which will cause a student to be late for school.

■ Problems Created by Tardiness

- Interruption to the class
- Creates low self-esteem for student walking in late
- Student has missed the important beginning-of-the-day activities
- Student has missed the directions/instruction given prior to arrival
- Wastes teacher/student time while the tardy student is brought to level with class

■ Consequences

Each student will be allowed four (4) tardies per quarter.

- After 5 tardies: Administrator may send letter to parent/guardian outlining tardy policy.
- After 8 tardies: Administrator may contact parent/guardian by telephone.
- After 10 tardies: Administrator may meet with parent/guardian to review tardy policy.
- After 12 tardies: Case may be referred to the Education Committee for consideration of tardy contract and/or consequences.

● Dress Code

Rockford Christian School's dress and appearance code aims to assist in providing an atmosphere conducive to concentration and learning. We desire clothing and appearance to be neat, clean and modest without extremes. We recognize that Scripture does not prescribe proper dress; however, it does give guidelines regarding modesty, appearance and conduct.

Students enrolled at Rockford Christian School are expected to wear the correct clothes in good repair to school each day. They are to remain in these clothes throughout the day until departing the school grounds. Students are to be in uniform for school field trips and when representing the school in an official manner [e.g. sports contests, music competition], unless otherwise directed by a school official. Administration makes the final decision regarding issues of clothing and appearance. Please support the school with your cooperation.

Dress Code and Appearance Expectations (K-4)

Pants/Capris

Pants must be cotton twill khaki or navy with either a flat front or pleats. No denim or cargo pants are permitted. Pants must not be worn oversized or too low, but be of proper fit and at a reasonable waist height. They must not be worn tight fitting or of hip hugger or low-rise styles.

Shorts

Shorts must be cotton twill khaki or navy with either a flat front or pleats. Shorts must be worn at an appropriate length and be of a proper fit. The minimum length is 3 inches from the top of the knee. Cargo shorts in the approved colors of khaki or navy are also allowed.

Skirts/Skorts/Jumpers/Dresses

Khaki, navy blue, and the prescribed plaid are the options for skirts, skorts and jumpers for girls. The minimum length is 3 inches from the top of the knee. The approved plaid is available from Lands' End. Polo-style knit dresses in navy with a solid collar are the only dresses that are allowed.

Shirts

Two or three button polo style shirts with a collar may be worn in either short or long sleeve. Cotton, button-down oxford style shirts in long or short sleeves are permitted as well. Rockford Christian's approved shirt colors are navy, white, black, royal blue, or gray.

Sweaters/Hoodies

Plain, non-hooded outerwear such as sweaters, sweatshirts, or fleece with a visible, collared shirt are permitted in the approved solid colors of navy, white, black, royal blue, or gray. Rockford Christian spirit wear non-hooded outerwear in the approved colors of navy, white, black, royal blue, and gray are also allowed.

Shoes

Students should wear athletic shoes, dress shoes, or sandals with a strap. Athletic shoes are required for participation in P.E. class. Closed toe shoes are safest for recess and playground use. No flip-flops are allowed.

Spirit Wear Fridays

On Fridays, students are permitted to wear official RCS spirit wear tops (t-shirts, shirts, sweatshirts, hoodies, or jackets) in standard RCS colors only with uniform pants, shorts, or skirts. Sleeveless jerseys must be worn with a sleeved shirt underneath in the approved solid colors of navy, white, black, royal blue, or gray.

Miscellaneous

Attention-drawing hairstyles will not be accepted, such as colored, spiked, tails or mohawks.

Jeans and shorts must be in good repair and without holes.

Rollerblading, skating, skateboarding, and shoes with wheels are prohibited on school grounds.

View uniform items and order online at Lands' End: www.landsend.com/school with school code 900094376.

Dress-Down Days

The administration may announce special dress-down days. On those days, students must be dressed modestly and clothing should be in good condition.

- Dress-down days: Clothing must be clean, neat, and modest. Students can wear jeans or shorts with shirts or t-shirts with non-offensive graphics or slogans. Jeans and shorts must be in good condition with no holes or tears. Shorts must be a minimum of 3 inches from the top of the knee. Students are not allowed to wear clothing that depicts questionable writing or pictures (such as those promoting tobacco, alcohol, rock groups, skull and cross bones, or violence).

• Lunch Program / Drink Orders

- Rockford Christian School strives to provide a healthy and nutritious lunch option. A hot or cold lunch is available for each full day. Menus are sent home each month so that students may decide whether to purchase a lunch or bring a lunch from home.
 - The school will not allow negative balances on lunch accounts. Email notifications will be sent from FACTS for accounts with low balances.
 - Students will communicate their lunch choice (hot/cold/double hot/gluten free/lunch from home) to their teacher each morning.
 - Milk/bottled water is not included with the cost of lunch. Milk/bottled water is optional. Students who wish to take milk or bottled water may purchase a drink order. You may NOT purchase milk on a day-to-day basis; RCS offers the pre-paid semester and yearly options for drinks.
 - When students have finished eating, they will be dismissed for recess. Students should refrain from taking food and drink outside the cafeteria.
 - Parent volunteers help daily in serving and clean-up for all lunch periods.

• Recess

- Every student is required to go outside for recess. Therefore, it is important that each student dress appropriately for the weather.
 - In the winter, this means warm coats that are fully buttoned or zipped, hats and gloves or mittens. Boots and snow pants must be worn in order to play in the snow. Students may be instructed by administration to stay indoors if not dressed appropriately for the weather.
 - In the case of rain, heavy snow, or a wind chill of fewer than 10 degrees, the students will have indoor recess.
 - A student may be excused from outdoor recess for not more than three consecutive days at a time with a note from a parent. This may be done in case of minor injury or sickness. No student will be excused more than three consecutive days unless there is a note from a physician.

• Snack Policy

While snacks may have an appropriate place in a child's day to bridge periods of time between meals, some students may develop unhealthy habits, ingest unhealthy foods, and may not be prepared to take advantage of a full meal during lunch.

Additionally, we work hard to keep our classrooms safe for those students with peanut allergies. Please do not send any snacks that contain peanuts or peanut products and/or indicate that they have been made in a factory that processes peanuts.

If your child's teacher has a designated snack time, please choose a healthy snack. Some options are listed below:

| | | |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Fresh fruit or vegetables | Goldfish crackers | Chex mix |
| Animal crackers | Baked chips | Pretzels |
| Raisins | Cheese and crackers | Dried fruit |
| Popcorn | Graham crackers | Baked tortilla chips and salsa |
| Rice cakes | Cheerios | Fruit or oatmeal bite |
| Granola bars | Vegetable sticks with dip | |
| Fig Newtons | Yogurt | |

Please note that the only beverage allowed in the classroom is water. We encourage students to bring a water bottle to school each day for use in the classroom.

• Birthdays

Birthdays are important milestones, and children like to celebrate with their classmates. At Rockford Christian School, we want to celebrate your child's special day without too much disruption to our important work of learning.

In-School Celebrations

Rockford Christian understands and appreciates the importance of birthday recognition and celebrations for preschool and elementary aged students. With this in mind each student will be briefly celebrated by the class on their birthday as organized and facilitated by the classroom teacher. Parents are welcome to bring in simple treats or small favors for the whole class on their student's birthday. However, all treats should be approved in advance.

- **Special Note:** Due to the possibility of severe allergic reactions for some students, no latex balloons are allowed inside the school building.

Off-Campus Celebrations

If a child has a birthday party and wishes to invite school friends, invitations are encouraged to be sent in the mail. Invitations can only be distributed in class, or put into backpacks, when the whole class is invited or all the girls or all the boys. Grade wide invitations are expected to follow the same standards.

• Field Trips

- All field trips are direct extensions of the classroom and must have educational value. Field trips will be planned by the teachers and approved by the administration. All teachers should be notified of students attending field trips a week in advance.

- The teacher will determine the number of chaperones/supervisors attending each field trip.
- Siblings [not in applicable grades] will not be permitted to attend the field trip.
- Permission slips must be signed and returned to school along with any payment required before the field trip commences.
- Any student not having a signed and returned permission slip along with payment the day prior will not be permitted to go on the field trip.

- Unless otherwise stated, uniforms must be worn on all field trips.
- Transportation for any field trip deemed so by RCS administration and teachers may be provided with public transportation. Transportation for all class field trips must be in school approved vehicles. The Illinois State Board of Education provides an outline for legal transport of students in this document. (https://www.isbe.net/Documents/vehicle_use_summary.pdf). The cost will be evenly divided among those attending.

• Extended Care

- Supervised child care is provided for students in pre-kindergarten through grade 4, who need before and/or after school care.
 - Any student arriving at school between 6:45 a.m. and 7:50 a.m. must report to the appropriate extended care room.
 - Any student not picked up from school during dismissal time must go to the extended care program. Students must be picked up by 6:00 p.m.
 - Any student not picked up from an after school activity at the designated time will need to report to the extended care program.
 - Any student waiting for an event or practice that starts after 3:00 p.m. [sports or practice] must report to extended care until that event or practice begins.
 - The cost of this program will be determined by the board each year and announced to the parents in August prior to the start of school. The family will be billed once a month for this program. Charges are billed in 15-minute increments.
 - The RCS Extended Care Emergency Form must be filled out prior to using the program.
 - Student behavior expectations are the same as during the school day.

• Conferences

Purpose

- The purpose of the parent/teacher conference is to discuss specific progress and/or problems that the student may be having in school.
- It is neither professional nor ethical to discuss the progress and/or problems of another child during the conference, in order to protect the privacy and rights of all students.
- Problems related to another child should be shared with the teacher but will not be discussed in detail.

Conference Schedule

- Parent/teacher conferences are scheduled in the fall and spring semesters for the parent(s) of each child enrolled at RCS.
- Administration will determine this schedule with consideration given to various scheduling needs, and the conference schedule will be made available in a timely manner to allow parents to reserve a meeting time.

Special Parent/Teacher Conferences

- Any other conference with a student's teacher must be made by appointment only. This includes picking up assignments, school materials, concerns about behavior, academic progress, etc.
- When there is a disagreement on the part of the parent relative to a teacher's treatment of a student, the parent involved should talk with the teacher involved before any discussion takes place with another parent, teacher, administrator, and/or board member, in accordance with Matthew 18:15-18.
- These special conferences may be requested by the parent or by the teacher.

Conferences with the Head of Lower School

- It is the policy of the Head of Lower School to act in a manner that is professionally respectful to his/her staff. At the same time, he/she holds them responsible for behaving in a manner that serves the spiritual and academic goals of each child.
- If the parent is concerned about the child's spiritual and/or academic progress, it is suggested that a parent/teacher conference be scheduled.
- In the event that the parents are dissatisfied with the response of the classroom teacher, it may be helpful to ask to meet with the teacher and the Head of Lower School. If that is the case, your child's classroom teacher can arrange for such a conference.
- If there is a need for a conference with the Head of Lower School, contact the office in advance to schedule an appointment.

• Discipline

Our discipline system is relationship-driven with the goal being alignment with the expectations of personal responsibility. It is the desire of each faculty and staff member to make every child responsible for his or her learning and behavior. Students will be expected to respect others, respect property, and preserve the learning environment which will ensure a healthy environment for all children that attend our school.

- Discipline always begins with building a positive relationship with each child. Therefore, the child knows he or she is loved and respected as an individual.
- Discipline should be handled at the classroom level whenever possible. Each teacher has class specific incentives that are used to compliment the discipline system.
- The teacher will counsel each student regarding inappropriate conduct.
- If the student does not respond to the efforts of the classroom teacher, the administrator and/or school counselor will meet with the student.
- The teacher and/or administrator may request a conference with the parent(s) to seek their help in dealing with the student's misbehavior.
- Egregious misbehavior will be handled promptly and appropriately by administration in order to bring the student back into alignment with the RCS discipline standard.
- Behaviors that are not in alignment with the RCS discipline standard include, but are not limited to:
 - 1) Disrespect to others
 - 2) Disrupting the classroom environment
 - 3) Fighting or violent behavior
 - 4) Bullying (including cyber bullying)
 - 5) Vandalism
 - 6) Profanity

Cheating

Cheating occurs whenever a student copies another student's work, allows his/her own work to be copied, does another student's work for him or her, or turns in work knowing it is not their own work. At Rockford Christian School, cheating is viewed as a serious offense. In addition to automatic loss of credit on the test or assignment in question, a student caught cheating may be subject to disciplinary action.

Suspension

The administration has at all times the authority to suspend a student. The length of suspension will be 1-5 days as determined by the administrator.

Probation

Probation will take place after the staff has reviewed the student's behavior, attitude, and/or academic performance. The student will be placed on probation for the following semester. If at the end of the probationary period there is no significant improvement, as viewed by the staff involved, recommendation for expulsion will be given to the Board of Directors.

Expulsion

A student may be expelled from school for a serious breach of conduct, and/or repeated problems with behavior or academic performance.

Harassment and Bullying

"Love does no wrong to a neighbor..." (Romans 13:10).

"...be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you" (Ephesians 4:32).

In keeping with our mission statement to love others sacrificially, anything contrary or incompatible with that goal will not be permitted. Harassment of any type – verbal, physical, sexual – is opposed to the mission of Rockford Christian School and will not be tolerated.

Bullying is defined as a repeated aggressive behavior where a person (or group of people) in a position of power deliberately intimidates, abuses, or coerces any individual with the intention to hurt that person physically or emotionally. This also includes any form of cyberbullying.

There is a clear line between conflict and bullying. Incidents of bullying include these three characteristics:

Intentional - the behavior is an aggressive and deliberate attempt to hurt another person.

Repeated - these aggressive actions occur repeatedly over time to the same person or the same group of people.

Power imbalance - the person bullying has more power than the child or children being bullied. That power includes but is not limited to physical and social.

A student who feels that he or she has been subjected to harassment should notify a faculty or staff member. The matter will be reported to the Head of Lower School, and an investigation will take place promptly. Staff will take seriously all reports of bullying. In the case of a substantiated incident of harassment or bullying, the appropriate course of restorative and disciplinary action will be dictated by the particular circumstances of the situation up to and including suspension and expulsion. Parents of all parties involved will be notified.

Off-Campus Bullying

Illinois anti-bullying laws cover off-campus conduct if the behavior causes a substantial disruption to the educational process or orderly operation of a school and if a school administrator or teacher receives a report that bullying has occurred. School staff are not required to monitor non-school-related activity, function, or program.

Anti-Retaliation and False Allegations

Rockford Christian School prohibits retaliation made against anyone who lodges a good faith complaint of bullying or who participates in any related investigation. Making knowingly false or malicious accusations of bullying can have serious consequences for those who are wrongly accused. Rockford Christian School prohibits making false or malicious bullying allegations, as well as deliberately providing

false information during an investigation. Anyone who violates this rule is subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment or enrollment and even criminal prosecution.

Social Networking & Conflict Resolution

Should conflict arise with students, their parents or school workers, all members of the Rockford Christian community will follow the Matthew 18 principle which is to communicate directly with others and will address conflicts using methods described in this handbook that lead to solutions and reconciliation.

Acceptable Use of Technology

■ Rockford Christian School believes the internet offers valuable, diverse, and unique resources to both students and teachers. Our goal in providing this service to teachers and students is to promote educational excellence in school by facilitating resource sharing, innovation, and communication. The use of technology must be in support of education and research and consistent with the educational objectives of Rockford Christian School.

- The use of our electronic resources is a privilege and not necessarily a right. We reserve the right to refuse access to any and all individuals not willing to comply with or who show willful disregard for this policy.
- RCS is committed to providing educational resources while limiting access to inappropriate material. This includes using multiple content filters to block inappropriate sites/materials, supervising students when they are using the internet, and training students in digital citizenship and appropriate use of technology.
- We reserve the right to monitor and review all data contained in the system to protect the integrity of the system and to ensure compliance with the policies and rules governing the use of this technology. No user of Rockford Christian School's computer network has an expectation of privacy in connection with its use.

Electronic Devices

Students are prohibited from using electronic devices such as, but not limited to, radios, CD, handheld games, cell phones, iPods, tablets, smart watches etc. during the school day and during extended care. All such devices are to be turned off and out of sight during the school day and during extended care. RCS is not responsible for any loss or damage of personal electronic devices. Electronic devices are permitted for classroom purposes at the teacher's discretion. Electronic devices that are on and/or in sight outside of this policy will be confiscated, and the student's parent must pick up the device from an administrator.

Consent to Access and Monitoring

By enrolling with RCS, you consent to RCS's access to and monitoring of: (1) school computer and communications systems; and (2) all information produced, received, stored on, or sent from RCS computer and communication systems, including personal email accounts accessed using the organization's equipment and any emails transmitted through personal, web-based accounts that are stored on RCS hard drives or other computer equipment as temporary or other files.

• Extra-Curricular School Activities

Elementary Athletic Program

The RCS elementary athletic program provides opportunities for students who desire to compete at an intramural and interscholastic level. In addition, it provides students an opportunity to work together as a team in order to accomplish the goal of performing well in a given game. The coach will determine the amount of time a student plays in each game.

- Rockford Christian Elementary School athletic program includes, but is not limited to flag football, basketball, volleyball, and cheerleading.
- Competition is held within established leagues and with some teams from the public and private schools in the Rockford community. Games are also scheduled with Christian schools from other communities.
- Each student who participates in a sport for its entire duration will receive recognition for participation.
- Junior Lions: The Junior Lion League is an elementary school (K-4) intramural basketball and cheerleading RCS-only athletic opportunity.

■ Insurance

The school cannot assume any responsibility in the event of a student sustaining an injury. Therefore, the student should have adequate insurance coverage.

■ Participation Fees

A non-refundable participation fee will be assessed to each student for each sport in which they participate. The fee must be paid before participation in the first game of the season is allowed. It should be turned into the office, not given to the coach. These fees help to defray the expenses of the sport.

■ Physical Requirements

A student must submit a completed and signed athletic physical exam form from an Illinois physician and their Athletic Emergency Form before participating in practices or games. Physicals are valid for 12 months from the date of the exam. If the physical expires during the season, a new physical must be completed in order to continue participating.

■ Attendance Requirements

A student is expected to be present for the entire school day when participating in a sporting event that same day. If extenuating circumstances cause an absence, then approval must be given by the Head of Lower School.

■ Academic Eligibility

- Students who participate in extracurricular activities are expected to maintain their classwork and grades while a member of the team. In the event that the student's performance begins to suffer due to the extracurricular demands, the teacher or administration will communicate their concerns to parents.
- In the event that the student's classwork and grades continue to suffer, the Head of Lower School may declare the student ineligible for a period of time.

■ Citizenship / Sportsmanship

Each athlete is expected to behave in such a way that is in accordance with principles set forth in God's Word. Therefore, a student's citizenship [school behavior, attitude toward peers and adults, cooperation] will also be evaluated. Should an athlete's citizenship be found to be unsatisfactory by members of the staff and administration, the athlete will be ineligible for participation. Each athlete who is disciplined for isolated or repeated acts of misbehavior is subject to immediate ineligibility, the duration of which is to be determined by the Head of Lower School and/or athletic director. Each student must show good sportsmanship both on and off the playing field.

■ Uniforms

Any athletic uniforms provided by the school for sports teams are expected to be cared for properly. At the end of the season, the uniform is expected to be washed. If the uniform is lost or damaged in disruption to use, the athlete and family will be responsible for paying the replacement cost.

■ Volunteer Opportunities

The elementary athletic program at RCS provides opportunities for students to participate as well as opportunities for parents and grandparents to be involved in gatekeeping, scoreboard operating, tickets, concessions, and coaching. Persons interested in helping may contact the school office in advance. All coaches must complete the concussion/first aid education training.

Clubs

Special after-school clubs (i.e. chess, cooking, bowling and Young Rembrandts) selections vary from year to year, depending on student interest level and the availability of parent leadership/sponsorship. Depending on space availability, RCS allows certain outside organizations to meet on school property, such as Brownies or Cub Scouts. The Education Committee must approve all clubs, meeting times, and facility use.

Alcoholic Beverages & Smoking at School Activities

To set a good example for students and our community, it is the position of Rockford Christian School that any and all student-centered activities, on or off RCS property, will be drug, tobacco and alcohol free. Drinking and/or smoking by adults at RCS athletic events, team banquets, school trips or other extra-curricular activities is prohibited. Service of alcoholic beverages at adult-centered activities is allowed but discouraged and is subject to the approval of the Head of School.

● F.O.R.C.E. (Friends of Rockford Christian Elementary) / PTO

Mission Statement: To work in cooperation with the administrative team of the Preschool and Elementary School and act as a liaison for the families represented in these schools for the advancement of parent involvement, improved facilities, advanced programming, and other educational opportunities for the students and staff of Rockford Christian Elementary School.

- All parents of Rockford Christian with students in grades Pre-K through grade 5 are eligible to become members of the parent/teacher organization.
- Regularly scheduled meetings will be held throughout the year and will be posted in the newsletter.
- FORCE-sponsored events include: Fall Festival, Mother/Son Event, Father/Daughter Dance, and Teacher Appreciation week

● Volunteers and Visitors

The relationship between staff and parents at RCS is very special. Every time there is a need for extra help, a parent will usually step in and help. We encourage parents to donate at least three hours of their time during the year in a volunteer capacity. Volunteer parents make such a difference in the life of a school, and serve as a wonderful example to their children. A volunteer sign-up sheet is mailed to all school families in the summer, listing various activities and/or areas where volunteer assistance is appreciated. It is helpful to school staff to have these on file as early as possible in the school year for reference when needed.

Lunch Helpers

Parent volunteers help daily in serving and clean-up for all lunch periods. Contact the office to sign up.

Room Parents

Each year at least two room parents are selected for each class from the volunteer sign-up sheet. Under the direction of the head room parent – who works directly with the Head of Lower School, the room parents assist in various ways throughout the year. These may include:

- Organizing workers for their class's booth at the annual Fall Festival.
- Assisting with duties in preparation for the annual auction.
- Assisting with classroom parties (Christmas / Valentine's Day).
- Helping with various activities during Teacher Appreciation Week.

Classroom Visitors

Unscheduled interruptions can be very disruptive to the classroom. Any deliveries for your child such as lunch, homework, medication, or messages should be made in the office and delivered by school staff at an appropriate time. If parents desire to visit their child's classroom, the following should be observed:

- Arrange with the teacher a time to visit the classroom. This should be mutually agreed upon by the teacher and parent ahead of time.
- ALL VISITORS must stop at the office to sign in.

• Lost and Found

Lunch boxes and all clothing articles should be labeled with your child's name. Many items are placed in the lost and found bins each week. The lost and found bins are located by the kitchen exit doors. If items are labeled, every effort will be made to return them to the owner.

• Withdrawal

Written notification must be submitted to the Director of Admissions when a child is withdrawn from RCS. Otherwise finance fees will continue to be added to the account for tuition payments in arrears. School records will be forwarded directly to the new school at the request of the new school when all tuition and fees have been paid in full. It is advisable for the parent to sign a release of information to ensure the records are being sent to the correct school.