

Official School Handbook

MT. AETNA ADVENTIST SCHOOL

PRINCIPAL – ROD KERBS II – M.S. EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP



2023-2024

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PHILOSOPHY & MISSION

Philosophy

The mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Education System is to develop our young people physically, mentally, socially, and spiritually. The staff and faculty model God’s character as they work to shape each child’s potential. We seek to provide an atmosphere where each student may develop an understanding of healthy living, have the opportunity for physical activity, and grow their mental facilities. We support our students in developing a positive self-image and encourage them to grow and become successful, productive adults. We encourage our students to take an active interest in their community, to develop positive attitudes toward work, to appreciate cultural differences and acceptance of others, thus guiding them to develop a Christ-like character. Mt. Aetna’s staff and faculty train each student to develop an appreciation for whatsoever things are true, honest, just, pure and lovely.

Mission Statement

Our mission is to provide a safe and loving learning environment where children are nurtured and challenged to educational excellence. We will strive to help our students grow deep roots in Jesus and be of service to others.

OBJECTIVES

The following objectives reflect and expand the philosophy of Seventh-day Adventist Education System in general and Mt. Aetna Adventist School (MAAS) in particular:

Spiritual

1. To help students to know God as their Creator, Savior, and Friend and to love reading the Bible as God's written Word.
2. To provide an environment where students develop a Christian character through a personal relationship with God.
3. To help students develop habits of faith, prayer, worship, and service to others (mission).

Mental

1. To help students acquire advanced skills in reading, mathematics, and communication.
2. To provide opportunity for students to develop aesthetic values and talents.
3. To encourage students to become academically curious and challenge them to reach their individual potential.
4. To encourage students to develop skills in critical thinking and to be able to make decisions based on moral and ethical values as well as on accumulated facts.

Physical

1. To help students develop habits of healthful living and develop good judgment in the use of their leisure time.
2. To provide opportunities for students to develop an appreciation for the value and dignity of labor.

Social

1. To help students exhibit unselfish acts of kindness through service to their community, country, and world projects.
2. To provide opportunities for social growth within the context of the strong moral and ethical standards of the church.
3. To help students appreciate, understand, and accept those who are different from themselves.

August 12, 2023

Memo to: Parents, MAAS Parents Association, Employees

From: Chesapeake Conference, LEA

Subject: Availability of Asbestos Management Plan

In October 1986, the US Congress enacted the Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act (AHERA). Under the law, comprehensive regulations were developed to address asbestos problems in public and private elementary and secondary schools. These regulations require most schools to inspect for friable and non-friable asbestos, develop Asbestos Management Plans that address asbestos hazards in school buildings, and implement response actions in a timely manner.

These regulations assign schools many new responsibilities. Our program for fulfilling these responsibilities is outlined in our Asbestos Management Plan. This plan contains information on our inspections, response actions and post response action activities, including periodic re-inspections and surveillance activities that are planned or are in progress.

You can review this plan at our administrative office:

Chesapeake Conference of SDA: Education Department
6600 Martin Rd. Columbia, MD 21044

The plan will also be available for review at:
Mt. Aetna Adventist School
10207 Crystal Falls Drive, Hagerstown MD 21740

If you have any questions about the management plan, please contact:

Rod W. Kerbs (301) 824-3875 – Principal MAAS

Janesta Walker (410) 995-1910 – Superintendent of Schools

Admissions Policy

This school is open to children of all religious faiths if they come to MAAS for the purpose of doing earnest and faithful work and when they have a desire to develop their characters based upon Christian values. Students are welcome to attend, providing they show due respect for the Word of God, maintain a reverent attitude during religious exercises, and observe the regulations of the school as outlined in this handbook. All applications are prayerfully considered by the admissions committee, with admissions finalized by a select committee on the local school board.

1. Please apply only if you are in agreement with the standards of the Seventh-day Adventist Education System.
2. Transfer students who apply should be in good standing in their present school. MAAS is not staffed to accept students with *severe* mental, physical, social, or scholastic challenges. Be honest about your child(s) challenges so that we can assess our ability to meet their individual needs. Failure to disclose learning or behavioral challenges may be grounds for dismissal.
3. Students who transfer from another school will be required to present a birth certificate and records from the last school attended before they are admitted. They may also be required to take a placement test.
4. Any child transferring from a home school situation must take a placement test before admission.
5. New students may be accepted for a probationary period of 90 days. A review of the student's progress will be arranged at the end of that period and appropriate recommendations made.
6. No child will be admitted whose account from the previous school year has not been paid in full. Any request for an exception to this policy will be considered on a case-by-case basis.
7. Physical examinations are required for all students upon initial enrollment in an Adventist school. Transfer students may present records from their former school. All students must comply with Maryland State law regarding immunizations against measles, rubella, diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis, and polio. This must be cared for before a student enters school. Children entering PreK or who plan to attend after/before care must also have a copy of a blood lead test on file.
8. Admissions will be handled on first come first serve basis. We utilize specialized admission teams for students entering grades K-2, 3-5, and 6-8. Placement testing must be completed prior to admission. Admission appeals and questions may be directed to the local school board.

Attendance Policy

Mt. Aetna SDA School specializes in providing learning opportunities that are not easily copied, printed, or taken home. That means our classes utilize hands-on, lab based, and problem-solving methods. Missing class for any amount of time results in lower performance and robs your student of the opportunities provided by our professional and caring teachers. Trying to help chronically absent/tardy kids catch up with missed instruction steals our teachers' attention from the other students who are present and ready to learn. Please make every effort to be on time and have your child present when school is in session.

Maryland law requires regular school attendance. Students are expected to attend school daily unless ill or otherwise excused. Attendance becomes part of a student's permanent record and transcript. Reasons for excused absences are limited to: (1) illness of student; (2) death in the immediate family; (3) court summons; (4) Doctor / Dentist visits. A written email note explaining the cause of the absence or tardy is required for each occurrence. Parents should make every effort to schedule all appointments outside of school hours.

*Parents **must** notify the school office via email if their child will be absent or tardy. All information regarding tardies and/or absences must be directed to our administrative assistant, Idalia Cruz at icruz@mysdaschool.org. For any child that is absent without notification, the school office will make every effort to contact the parents.

Standards for attendance

- School starts promptly at 8:10am. Please make plans to arrive by 8:00am so that your student has time to put away their things, fill up their water bottles, and settle in without adding undue stress to their mornings.
- Arriving any time after 9am counts as a ½ day of unexcused absence and parents must inform the office via email of the reason for the late arrival.
- Departing early from school any time before 2:30pm on Monday – Thursday and before 11:30am on Friday counts as a ½ day of unexcused absence and parents must inform the office via email of the reason for early dismissal.
- For absences of more than 2 days due to illness, a doctor's or medical professional's note is required to return to school.
- Class officially ends at 3:30pm on Monday – Thursday and on Fridays at 12:30pm.
- Absences for reasons other than illness, death, court summons, or doctor/dentist visits are considered unexcused in the sight of the law.

Process for reporting an excused absence/tardy

- All absences will be listed as unexcused until a parent note or physician's note is submitted.
- Parents must contact the office before 9am each day their child is absent.
- Please provide the office, icruz@mysdaschool.org, with an emailed excuse sent from the registered parent/guardian, stating the dates and reasons for absence/tardy.
- An extended absence due to illness more than 2 days requires a physician's note/email as well as an email of explanation from the parent.
- In case of extended illness, contagious diseases, or hospitalization, please notify the school office at once. A physician's note should be obtained, indicating when the child may return to school.
- Absences and tardies that are not reported in writing to the office within 24 hours of the occurrence will automatically be recorded as unexcused until the proper documentation is submitted.

Consequences for excessive attendance violations

- The admissions committee has discretion to determine whether academic credit will be awarded to students who incur 20 or more absences per year, (even if a medical excuse from a doctor has been provided for those absences.)
- Family vacations or trips are strongly discouraged during the school year when school is in session. If a trip must be arranged, we require written advance notice and no more than 5 days will be approved per year. Any days taken for vacation beyond 5 days will be applied toward your total absence count. Please note: Students who take an unapproved, extended absence will forfeit the opportunity to makeup tests and assignments missed during the absence.
- Attendance records will be reviewed at the end of each quarter. Students who have 5 or more unexcused absences at the end of a quarter will be required to re-apply for the next quarter and submit an attendance improvement plan to the appropriate admissions committee for review.
- Departing school earlier than 2:30pm or arriving later than 9am without a valid excuse will result in ½ day of unexcused absence being added to your student's yearly total absence count.
- Attendance records will be reviewed at the end of the year. Students who have 20 or more total unexcused absences at the end of the year will be required to re-apply for the next school year and will no longer be eligible for any worthy student funds for the period of one full school year.
- Students who have 20 or more total unexcused tardies will be required to re-apply for the next school year and will not be eligible for early registration discounts.

Accreditation and Curriculum

MAAS is accredited by the North America Division of Seventh-day Adventist, the National Council of Private Schools and the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Elementary Schools. It is recognized by the State of Maryland as an educational institution. The curriculum meets all state and denominational standards and requirements.

POLICIES & PLEDGES

Pledges

1. Student's Pledge: I pledge to abide by all guidelines as defined in the MAAS Handbook, and to honor Jesus in all that I do. I will maintain a cooperative and willing spirit, treating the entire school community with respect. I will do my best to make positive contributions to the school program. Breaking this pledge jeopardizes my right to remain at Mt. Aetna Adventist School. (All students entering the third through eighth grade must sign the Application Form, which states they have read this handbook and are prepared to abide by the school policies outlined herein.)
2. Parent/Guardian's Pledge: I agree to support the regulations and policies of the school, as listed in the MAAS Handbook, policies announced by the administration during the year, and will encourage my child to do so. I agree to assume the financial responsibility for my student, and to pay my bills promptly. I understand transcripts will not be released unless my child's account is paid in full.

Policy Changes

Regulations/schedules/other pertinent information are published in the monthly School Scoops newsletter throughout the school year, and carry the same force and effect as information published in the handbook. Any significant policy changes that occur during the school year will be communicated to the parents via email.

Non-discrimination Policy

Recognizing that all people are children of God, MAAS admits students of any race, color, national or ethnic origin, gender, or religion, to all rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. This school does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin, gender, or religion in administration of their educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship, or other school-administered programs.

School Hours

School begins at 8:10 a.m. and dismisses at 3:30 p.m. Monday through Thursday. On Fridays school dismisses at 12:30 p.m. Students are not to arrive before 7:50 a.m. and should leave within 15 minutes after dismissal. Teachers have other significant duties that prevent them from providing supervision for your child beyond the normal school hours. If you wish to speak with a teacher please make an appointment for a time after 3:45pm on Mon-Thursday and after 12:45pm on Fridays. The school provides before and after school services for an additional fee; students who come before 7:50 a.m. or stay after 3:45 p.m. (12:45 p.m. on Friday) will automatically be enrolled in the Before/After School Care program. The fee for this program is \$5 per hour and \$2.50 per half hour. The Before/After School Care program bills in half-hour increments. Monthly charges accrue and will be added directly to your school bill.

Before/After School Care

Supervised child care will be provided from 7:00-8:00 a.m. and 3:45-6:00 p.m. (Monday through Thursday), and 12:45-6:00 p.m. on Friday for an additional fee of \$5.00 per hour (we charge on the half hour). When Daylight Savings Time ends in November, Before/After School Care will close at 4:00 PM on Fridays until Daylight Savings Time resumes in the Spring. Each parent is required to sign the child out of after school care. Additional Before/After School Care information is available at the front office. Fees incurred will be charged to the student's account monthly.

Cancellation of School Due to Inclement Weather

Any cancellation or delay of school because of snow or ice will be announced over Remind push notification, email, and posted on our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/mysdaschool

MAAS follows the closing procedures of Washington County public schools for all instances of severe weather. If severe weather occurs while school is in session an early closing may occur. In case of an early closing, all parents will receive a

Remind push notification and an email announcing the procedure but it is the responsibility of the parent to check for school closing in the event of extreme weather and pick up his or her child at school if school closing has been announced. We encourage parents to have an emergency plan in place so that someone you trust can pick up your child in case you or a loved one experiences an emergency during the course of the school year.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Textbooks: One set of textbooks are provided on loan to the student for free each year. We are able to keep this service free because of the funds provided by the Maryland Textbook Program. Please take good care of your books so that we can continue to keep our textbooks free and be sure to thank your congressman. At the end of the year MAAS would like these textbooks returned in good condition as the books are needed for the next year's curriculum. However, the replacement costs for damaged or missing textbooks are the responsibility of the parent.

Returned Check Policy: A service charge of \$35.00 will be charged for checks returned for insufficient funds. After two returned checks, the school will require a different type of payment, i.e., certified check, money order, cash, or credit card. Credit card payments can be made in the school office.

Tuition: Please see our website, www.mysdaschool.org for updated tuition info, registration fees, etc. Tuition is due on the 5th of each month starting in September and ending on June 5th of the current academic year. If a payment is made before 15 days past the 5th we will not assess a late fee.

Class Trip (8th Graders): The school bill must be paid in full before a student is permitted to participate in the class trip.

RESPONSIBILITIES & RULES

Conflict and Resolution

Parents are welcome to visit their child's classroom by making a request to visit through the principal. Parents and visitors are asked not to go directly to the classroom during regular school hours.

School-age children should visit only by special arrangement with the teacher and principal.

Parents are encouraged to counsel with their child's teacher if they have any questions concerning the child's school experience. If a satisfactory solution is not reached by counseling with the teacher, then the parents should counsel with the principal and teacher. If a satisfactory solution still is not reached, then the parents should counsel with the school board chairman, school principal, and teacher.

All such counseling sessions with teachers are to be held outside normal school hours.

The school board reserves the right to refuse admittance to any student, and to dismiss any student/s, whenever such action is considered necessary for the welfare of the student/s or the school. Such action will be taken only after consultation with the parents. The reservation of this right is essential to the smooth operation of our school program.

Responsibilities of Parents

To best facilitate a balanced school program, we ask that parents work with us in the following ways:

1. Always uphold the school and the teachers in the presence of children. Discuss any criticisms of the school with the teacher rather than with the children. You can always reach us via phone or email.
2. Confer privately with teachers in person or by phone after school hours, not before school, during classes, or at recesses.
3. Be prompt in meeting financial obligations to the school.
4. Keep students at home who show symptoms of sickness. If starting antibiotics please keep students at home under watch for a full 24 hours before returning to school. If the school sends a student home sick with fever or vomiting please keep the child at home under watch for a full 24 hours before return to school.

*Parents will be called to pick up their children if symptoms develop at school. Sick care will be provided in the event that a parent does not pickup with one hour of being notified. Sick care is billed at the rate of \$7 per hour.

5. Encourage your children by showing interest in and concern for their daily progress.
6. Be responsible for what your child wears to school (see dress code) and help your child make appropriate choices.
7. Be aware of the need for good health habits in your children:
8. Supervise your children during all school events, programs and meetings, before and after regular school hours.

Responsibilities of Students

1. Each student is expected to be reverent at all religious services. It is expected that the student will obey all school rules and regulations and render prompt and cheerful obedience to the directions of the teachers.
2. Experience has shown that there are some behaviors that cannot be tolerated in Seventh-day Adventist schools. Since this school does not knowingly admit a student who practices these behaviors, the first offense on any of the following fundamental points may result in suspension and/or dismissal:
 - a. Behaviors or acts that undermine the religious ideals or faith upheld by the school family.
 - b. Swearing or using indecent language, indulging in vulgar or suggestive conduct, possessing or displaying obscene pictures or articles.
 - c. Distribution, possession and/or use of tobacco, alcohol, or drugs.
 - d. Gambling or betting.
 - e. Dishonesty, including theft, cheating and lying.
 - f. Improper sexual conduct and/or sexual harassment.
 - g. Discussion of inappropriate topics found in theaters, videos, books, TV programs, etc., is not permitted on the school grounds.
 - h. Aggressive behavior that leads to the physical harm of any other student.
3. Respect all school and personal property. The student(s), as well as the parent(s) or guardian(s), will be held accountable for any damage done by the student to school property.
4. Respect for MAAS teachers, staff and other students is mandatory.
5. No student may leave the school during the school day without written permission (e-mail is written) from his or her parents and specific approval of the principal.
6. Required Attendance Policy: Punctuality and regular attendance are expected.
7. State compulsory education law states: "All students are required to be in school 180 days each year. The only exceptions are for sickness, death in the immediate family, and religious holidays, which are considered excused absences." Make-up work for these excused absences will be provided by the teacher at the request of a parent/guardian of the student. This work should be completed and turned in (per teacher set deadline). Normally, the student has the number of days missed plus one, to make up missed school work. Written excuses from parents or doctor are required for an absence to be recorded as an excused absence. If a note is not received, the absence will be recorded as unexcused. Removal of children from school for reasons other than those stated above is highly discouraged. Permission cannot be given for this, but the school will deal with unexcused absences in the following manner:
 - Parents must notify the principal in writing a minimum of one week prior to the planned absence. -
8. Play equipment and play areas may not be used except during school hours and then only with adult supervision. At no time should a child be left unsupervised in the play areas.
9. Cell phones and other electronic devices are welcome at school when used for approved educational purposes. All devices used without permission or used improperly will be confiscated. Confiscated devices will be returned in one of two ways: 1) after a 24 hour period, 2) item may be picked up before the 24 hour period by parent/guardian.

10. Unannounced locker/backpack checks will be conducted regularly.
11. The use of electronic devices on field trips is up to the discretion of the field trip administrator.
12. The use of skateboards, roller blades, and Heelys are approved on a case-by-case basis by the administrator.
13. Knives, guns (real, toy, gesture or any facsimile thereof), or anything that might normally be used as a dangerous weapon are NOT ALLOWED AT SCHOOL.

Discipline Policy

All faculty and staff are responsible for shaping the character of each student enrolled at MAAS. Students on MAAS campus, or at MAAS events are required to comply with directions given by the faculty and staff. Parents are asked to help the student(s) understand the need for orderly conduct. In addition, a regular classroom management program is in effect in each classroom. When a student continues to act inappropriately the principal may use extended time-out, in school suspension, community service hours, external suspension, and/or expulsion, in order to protect the learning environment.

DRESS CODE

As a Christian school, we place emphasis upon the principles of cleanliness, modesty, neatness, simplicity, comfort, and appropriateness of dress. MAAS does not claim to define the rightness or wrongness of particular styles of clothing for non-school functions, but its board does establish policies on clothing appropriate for MAAS students to wear in the classroom and at all school functions. The Dress Code for MAAS is as follows:

1. Clothing is to be clean and in good repair. Ripped and/or torn clothing are prohibited, even when fashionable.
2. Upper shoulders, chest, back, and midriff are to be covered at all times, including while stretching or bending. Under wear is to be covered at all times. Tank tops and camisoles are only to be worn under other clothing. Spaghetti strap shirts are not permitted. Sleeveless shirts are appropriate.
3. At the minimum, shorts should reach mid-thigh or below and skirts should include shorts underneath.
4. Clothing should be free of objectionable pictures and writing.
5. Shoes, or sandals that stay securely on the feet, have a heel strap, are to be worn on campus and in the building at all times. Flip-flop style sandals are prohibited, except at pool side. Crocs are prohibited at PE and recess.
6. Jewelry and wristbands, other than a wrist watch and/or a medical alert bracelet, are prohibited.
7. Hair styles must be neat and clean, and teachers need to be able to see your face.
8. Head coverings, such as hats, caps, hoods or beanies, are not to be worn in the building.
9. At school swimming events, males are prohibited from wearing Speedo style swim wear. Females are prohibited from wearing bikinis. Modest tankinis are acceptable.
10. Exceptions to this code may be made by the principal, for special events such as field day or athletic events. Such exceptions will be announced ahead of time, in writing, in an official school document.

Door Protocols

1. Never should a student or staff member prop a door open during regular school hours.
2. A child should never open the front door or any auxiliary exit for the purposes of letting someone into the building.
3. The office staff, and employed adults are permitted to open doors for the community.
4. Front doors will only be unlocked in the presence of a staff person from 7:45am-8:10am each day.
5. All doors shall be locked all the time including classroom doors, and auxiliary classroom doors.

ACADEMICS

Grades K - 2 use the following system:

- E - Excellent
- S - Satisfactory
- N - Needs Improvement
- W - Working on _____

These grades may include a minus or plus as indications of the level of work within the grade.

Grades 3 - 8 use the following system:

A+.....98-100	A.....92-97	A-.....90-91
B+.....88-89	B.....82-89	B-.....80-81
C+.....78-79	C.....72-77	C-.....70-71
D+.....68-69	D.....62-67	D-.....60-61
F.....0-59		

In any subject an “incomplete” grade may be given in lieu of an “F or D” for work completed at less than a 60% level. We prefer that students try for mastery instead of accepting a level of achievement that is not consistent with their ability level.

RenWeb

MAAS uses an on-line grade/communication program that enable parents & students to check up on academic progress at any time. To access your child’s information, it is mandatory that we have your e-mail address. Once your child is registered on RenWeb, you may login by going to our school’s website (mysdaschool.org) or by going directly to renweb.com. Click Parents Web login under the login tab and follow the directions. The district code is CC-SDA.

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS – 8th Grade

1. Diploma

To receive a diploma, a student must have at least a “C” average in eighth grade and no final grade lower than a “D”.

2. Certificate of Completion

A student who does not meet the diploma requirements may be given a certificate of completion if the student has at least a “D” average in eighth grade and no more than two “F”s.

3. Certificate of Attendance

A student who does not meet the requirements for the diploma or the certificate of completion may be given a certificate of attendance if the student has complied with attendance requirements.

4. Participation in Public Graduation Exercises

Students are not automatically granted the privilege of participating in the public graduation exercises. This privilege may be withheld for the following reasons:

- a. An outstanding school account.
- b. Behavior during the final days that results in suspension from school.

MISCELLANEOUS POLICIES

Hot Lunch Program

Hot lunch is served Monday through Friday. If you choose not to participate in the Hot Lunch Program, your children will need to bring a sack lunch. Lunch may be purchased on Sunday for the entire week of hot lunch. The hot lunch program will begin the second week of school and will end the week before school is out. Hot lunch needs to be ordered by midnight on Sunday immediately preceding the current week.

Field Trips

Most class trips in grades K-8 are limited to single-day trips. Drivers are often needed to help transport children on field trips. In order for a small child to attend a field trip, parents must furnish appropriate car seats according to Maryland law. All vehicles transporting Mt. Aetna students must carry proof of insurance and a volunteer driver form is to be completed and on file for the volunteer driver. This protects you the most so please take the time to complete the form if you intend to drive for MAAS during the school year.

History study tours to distant American sites are available for upper grade students. These are overnight trips under strict supervision, providing hands-on learning for MAAS students. A child who is unable to attend is required to complete comparable assignments at home. Parents will be informed in advance of all field trips in Grades K-8. A permission slip signed by a parent is required before a student will be permitted to go on a field trip.

First Aid and Medication

In case of accident or sickness, only first aid may be rendered by the staff. State law prohibits local school officials from distributing medication unless they are specially trained and licensed to do so. The faculty and staff of MAAS is not permitted to dispense any medicine (prescription or over-the-counter medications). If your child must have a medication during the school day, a parent or family member must come to the school and administer that medication and have written permission of the guardian. The only exception to this policy are inhalers and Epi-pens.

Library

Students are not permitted in the library unless accompanied by a teacher or the librarian. Books are not to be removed from the library unless they are properly checked out. Students are welcome to pay for the replacement cost if a book becomes lost while under their care.

Toy Policy

Toys need to be left at home except for on special occasion when a teacher has given special permission for students to bring toys for show-n-tell, or for other teacher approved events. This policy is in effect from 8am-3:30pm. It does not apply to after care or before care times. Toys found in the classroom during the 8am-3:30pm will be detained but may be picked up by their rightful parents at dismissal time.