



Half-Day Preschool Parent Handbook

2026–2027

Welcome & Purpose

Mauldin Christian Academy (MCA) is a ministry of Mauldin First Baptist Church of Mauldin, South Carolina. We are grateful to partner with families and count it a privilege to love, lead, and disciple students each day.

This handbook provides clear, consistent guidance for families enrolled in MCA's Early Education (Preschool Half-Day) program. Please familiarize yourself with the policies and procedures outlined here; it will answer many common questions and includes updates that are new to this handbook. Please disregard all previous MCA handbooks.

Important — This handbook is a general guide and does not create a contract. MCA reserves the right to interpret, modify, or waive policies at its discretion, consistent with applicable law and the school's mission.

Website Information

Important school information (including handbooks, school calendars, events, and financial information) can be found on the Mauldin Christian Academy website: mauldinchristian.org.

Notice of Nondiscrimination

Mauldin Christian Academy does not discriminate on the basis of race, sex, color, religion, or national origin in its dealing with students and their families.

MCA Mission Statement

Our purpose at Mauldin Christian Academy is to partner with parents to provide a solid academic environment, lay a biblical foundation, lead them to understand the value of hard work, pursue everything with excellence, love one another, and bring glory to God.

Our Vision

MCA students who understand the value of:

- A strong work ethic
- Striving for excellence
- Viewing the world through a biblical lens
- Loving and leading others
- Bringing glory to God

Administrative Team

Role	Name	Email
Director of Operations	David Pearson	dpearson@mauldinfirstbaptist.org
Children's Pastor	Paula Southwell	psouthwell@mauldinfirstbaptist.org
Director of Early Learners	G-na Simmons	gsimmons@mauldinchristian.org
Principal of Preschool & Elementary	Gwen Johnson	gjohnson@mauldinchristian.org
HR & Finance Manager	Ann Parlier	aparlier@mauldinchristian.org
Front Office Manager	Amber Brangman	abrangman@mauldinchristian.org

Program Overview

MCA offers Early Learners (full day, full year), Early Education (preschool half-day), Elementary (K5–5th), Elementary Afterschool Care, and a Summer Camp program—each designed to meet the needs of the child at his or her level of development.

This handbook applies to Early Education (Preschool Half-Day: P3 & P4) unless otherwise noted.

Half-Day Preschool Operating Hours

School begins at 8:00 AM.

- Half-Day Preschool morning carline: 7:40–7:55 AM
- Preschool carline dismissal: 12:00 noon
- Late pick-up fees begin: after 12:15 PM (see “Other Fees”)

Placeholder — If additional operating hours, early arrival, or extended care hours apply to your child’s program, refer to the current EE Calendar or MCA website for the published schedule.

Academy Closings

The Academy Early Education program will be closed two weeks at Christmas and one week for Spring break, as well as other closings as communicated by the EE Calendar.

The Academy will not reimburse or credit accounts for emergency closings or prorate monthly tuition for holidays or closings. Please follow the MCA calendar for all holidays and closing dates.

Inclement Weather

Applies to Early Learners (full year), Half-Day Preschool, and Elementary departments.

MCA does not necessarily follow Greenville County School closings or delays during inclement weather.

If weather conditions are such that faculty and staff are unable to get safely to the Academy, an announcement will be made by the following methods:

- WYFF-TV (Channel 4) — Look specifically for Mauldin Christian Academy Early Learners, Half-Day Preschool, or Elementary (news stations will not air school openings, only delays or cancellations).
- Email from the school
- FACTS Parent Alert (text message)
- Dojo message from your child’s teacher

In the event of a school delay, doors will open at the announced time. There will be no early arrival.

Policy — We do not prorate or refund tuition on days shortened or missed due to inclement weather.

Disasters and Evacuations

If a disaster should occur such as a gas line break, MCA has evacuation plans and designated student pick-up location(s). Parents may receive emergency information through:

- FACTS Parent Alert (text message)
- Class Dojo

Parents may pick up children after all students and staff have been accounted for.

Cooperation by all persons during an emergency will make procedures more efficient and secure for all involved.

Financial Policies

Payments — All tuition payments must be made through the online FACTS system. MCA accepts cash, check, MasterCard, and Visa debit and credit cards for incidental fees.

Insufficient Funds — A fee of \$30 will be charged for insufficient funds. If the insufficient funds charge occurs more than twice, the account will be considered delinquent. If the insufficient funds occur a third time, a fee of \$60 will be charged to your account. More than three occurrences of insufficient funds in one school year may result in your child's dismissal from that MCA program.

Important — All returning student accounts must be paid in full by June 1st to maintain their position in next year's class. If a balance remains on June 1st, the student will be placed on a waiting list for their class until the balance is paid in full.

Re-Enrollment

Re-enrollment begins in January for the following school year for currently enrolled MCA Early Education (EE) students. Please check the MCA website for specific dates for priority enrollment and when enrollment will be open to the public.

If at the time of re-enrollment there is a balance on the student's account, the student will not be eligible to re-enroll. Re-enrollment fees will apply and secure classroom placement only if the account balance is current and paid in full.

Re-enrollment fees will be communicated on the MCA website prior to the re-enrollment season.

Withdrawal From Program

A one-month notification in writing must be given directly to the Early Learner principal when a child is being withdrawn from the program. A communication with the Preschool Principal should also occur to discuss the details behind the student’s withdrawal.

In the event a one-month notice is not given, the parents will be charged for one month’s tuition.

There is a \$300 withdrawal fee as stated in the Tuition and Fee documents that is in effect any time after the enrollment/re-enrollment process.

Other Fees

Re-Enrollment Fee — Re-enrollment for Early Education (EE) begins in January for the following school year. The Early Education Preschool and Elementary program runs from August to May, and payment of re-enrollment fees reserves a space for your child for the next school year. These fees are non-refundable and must be paid at the time of re-enrollment.

Age Requirement — The student must have reached the age of the class by September 1st.

Late Pick-Up Fee — A “late pick-up” charge is assessed to each parent whose child is picked up after 12:15 PM. The following fee schedule will apply for up to 3 late pick-ups. After more than 3 late pick-ups, the fee will increase (noted in parentheses below).

Time	Fee
12:15–12:20	\$15.00 (after 3 occurrences: \$20)
After 12:30 until picked up	Additional \$1.00 per minute (after 3 occurrences: \$3 per minute)

This fee is charged to your school FACTS account. Children who are picked up late on a consistent basis may be dismissed from the program.

Parking Lot Safety

Please help keep our campus safe by following these expectations:

- Enter and exit slowly.
- Enter only through entrances and not the exits (marked).
- Do not park under the drive-thru by the Front Academy Office. This area is for emergency vehicles only.
- Use a designated parking space before exiting your vehicle.
- Drive slowly. The safety of our students and parents is the highest priority.

Student Drop-Off and Dismissal

Morning drop-off (EE) — EE morning carline runs from 7:40–7:55. Drop-off is located on the church sanctuary side (please consult your map for details).

- Please pull around into the parking lot area directly across from the carline drop-off and unbuckle your child before entering the carline.
- Be sure your child is ready to exit the passenger side door with jackets, backpacks, etc. when you pull up to the carline.

If you are late, please park and walk your child to their class. You always have the option of parking and walking your child to class each day.

Preschool dismissal — Preschool carline dismissal is at 12:00 noon. Carline takes place in the area next to the playground under the covered drive (different from morning drop-off).

- Car should be in the PARK position.
- Students will be escorted to you as you wait outside your vehicle.
- You are responsible to secure your child in their car seat.
- For your child's safety, please have a secure car seat in your vehicle.
- Please pay close attention to school personnel directing carline movement.

Arriving and Leaving Safely

Under no circumstances should a child be left when a member of the staff is not present. Please do not drop your child off at the door and let them walk in unattended.

Communication With Teachers and the Office

During carline — If you need to speak with your child's teacher regarding a personal matter or a subject that may take time, please schedule a conference time by contacting the teacher through Dojo to schedule a meeting after school hours. Teachers are focused on student safety during drop-off and pick-up and are unable to engage in lengthy conversations.

Messages — Special information for parents will be distributed throughout the year. Please check your child's backpack daily for information.

Teachers will check their phones periodically when they are not supervising children. If you need immediate contact with your child's teacher, call the school office at 864-288-1917 and a staff member will reach the teacher.

All messages from parent to teacher or office should be written or by email.

Social Media / Electronic Communication

Always, if you have questions or concerns, please contact your child's teacher first. If the teacher was unable to assist you, please contact the EE Principal. We want to hear from you and resolve concerns or answer questions as we pursue bringing glory to God in our everyday work of loving and leading students.

Pick-Up Authorization

Only persons authorized by the parents/guardians may pick up a student.

If a parent plans to have someone not on the list pick up a student, the school must be notified in writing or through the Dojo app; otherwise, no access to the student shall be given.

Verbal permission will be accepted in emergency situations only.

In the event of divorce, separation, etc., a court order must be provided specifying the custodial parent.

If there is a custodial parent, they are the only person from whom the school will accept a list of authorized persons to pick up a student.

MCA does not allow non-custodial parents to pick up a student unless authorized to do so, in writing, by the custodial parent.

Identification is required even when the person's name is on the authorized list.

If notification has not been given, the student will not be released until communication has occurred with the parent(s).

People authorized on the Emergency Contacts are for emergency contacts only when the parents cannot be reached.

Records

MCA will keep records of attendance, health, and fees of each child. A South Carolina Certificate of Immunization for Daycare Attendance (DHEC Form 2740A), a medical exemption, or religious exemption form is required for each child in the program. These forms must be updated each time your child has an immunization.

New addresses and telephone numbers (both work and home) must be provided so that we can reach parents immediately if needed.

Please contact the Academy Main Office if you have any changes to your contact information.

Holidays and Birthday Celebrations

Holidays — MCA approaches the celebration of holidays from a biblical perspective, seeking to glorify God and focus on Christ. Holidays recognized include:

- Fall/Harvest (October)
- Veteran's Day
- Thanksgiving
- Christmas
- Valentine's Day
- St. Patrick's Day
- Easter
- Independence Day

Birthday parties — We welcome celebrating our students' birthdays at MCA. Only store-bought items are permitted. Examples include:

- Cookie cakes
- Donuts / donut holes
- Mini cupcakes (light colored icing preferred)
- Cookies

Parent-Teacher Communication

Teachers and parents may communicate through:

- Class Dojo
- Class newsletter
- E-mail (your child's teacher will supply their school e-mail address)
- Daily notes (please check backpack daily)
- Weekly folder

If a parent has a concern regarding their child or a classroom issue, the parent should first contact the teacher directly. If the issue cannot be resolved with the teacher's input and suggestions, the parent may contact the Preschool/Elementary Principal and ask for additional support.

Teachers will make every effort to respond in a timely manner (usually the same day, but no later than 48 hours). Teachers are not available to speak with parents during drop-off and pick-up times since they are required to supervise students.

Teacher Requests and Conferences

Teacher requests — Many factors are considered in student placement. The administration will not accept requests for specific teachers. If you have specific concerns regarding your child's placement, please contact the Early Education Principal.

Conferences — If you have questions about your child's progress or an occurrence at school, the teacher will be happy to arrange a time to speak with you. Please contact your child's teacher or the Early Education Principal to schedule a conference.

Behavior Philosophy and Discipline Practices

At MCA, we believe we are instructed to love and lead our students. Loving and leading the student means we are disciplining them each day while they attend the Academy.

Disciplining our students will:

- Help students solve problems based on heart decisions with a goal to make wise decisions
- Help students know the character of God
- Help students know who they are in Christ
- Make wise choices and leave the student with a healthy sense of control
- Teach that there are consequences for behavior and teach responsibility for actions
- Demonstrate how to honor and respect those who lead and one another

Teachers will:

- Give choices
- Create and model an environment of honor and respect
 - Teacher to student
 - Student to teacher
 - Messages to students: we are a family/team; we help each other; we work together; we encourage each other; we respect each other

MCA guidelines we will follow:

- Teacher eye-contact redirecting the student
- Teacher “look” (not a mean look, but a firm look)
- Provide the student with choices (both choices must be safe)
- Reward system to celebrate wise choices (“I see you making wise choices”)
- Social rewards (verbal/non-verbal): wink, thumbs up, pat on the back, “great job,” etc.
- Graphic rewards: stickers, notes, stamps, etc.
- Activity re-enforcers: use activities students love (games, extra recess, extra learning center time, board games, etc.)
- Tangible rewards: candy, certificates (free donut, etc.), pizza party, etc.
- Communication to parents: notes, phone calls, or emails
- Speak God’s word over students daily; use appropriate scriptures when correcting in love
- Elementary students: walk laps on playground; reflect on choices and communicate conclusions
- Office visit to Principal or Early Learner Director, when needed
- Communication to parent

Student Items, Dress, and Daily Needs

Clothing — Please dress your child in simple, comfortable play clothes with as few buttons as possible.

Shoes

- No flip flops or slip-ons
- Closed-toe sandals with back straps are permitted
- Boots are permitted
- Sneakers are encouraged

Change of clothing — P3 and P4 students must have a change of clothing, marked with your child’s name, in your child’s backpack. If your child needs clothing or supplies, we may contact you to provide those.

Backpacks — Please send a full-sized backpack each day. Label the bag with your child’s name on the outside. Check your child’s bag daily for information from the teacher.

Toys — Please do not allow your child to bring toys to the classroom unless the teacher has requested it. Teachers will provide instructions regarding show-and-tell or reward days.

Water bottles — Please send a small water bottle no larger than 20 ounces. It should not be breakable. Flip-tops are preferred.

Breakfast & snacks — The Academy does not provide breakfast; students should eat breakfast before arriving to school. The snack plan for your child will be communicated by your child's classroom teacher.

P4 field trips — Students in the P4 program take field trips to educational locations throughout the year. Payments will be charged through your FACTS account. You will receive notification from the business office before funds are due. A parent is required to attend any off-campus field trip.

Field trip policy — Siblings are not permitted to attend field trips. Additionally, parents may not meet a group at a field trip location with siblings. This policy supports student safety.

Classroom Visits and Potty Readiness

Classroom visits — Parents and other family members are welcome to visit the classroom. If you have special skills (storytelling, music, art, crafts) or information about your occupation you are willing to share, please contact your child's teacher.

If your child becomes distressed due to separation and cannot be consoled, MCA reserves the right to call and ask you to pick up your child. We will work with you to support a positive transition into the classroom.

Potty ready — Children must completely master potty habits before entering the 3-year-old program. If a child enters the 3-year-old program with the assumption that they are potty ready and they are not, MCA reserves the right to dismiss that child.

MCA allows a grace period at the beginning of the year to allow adjustment for new classrooms/teachers and late birthdays. The grace period runs from the start of school through the end of September.

Due to DSS regulations, staff are not permitted to change a three- or four-year-old student after an accident. Most of the time, the student can change their own clothes with teacher assistance. If a student cannot carry out this task, parents may be contacted to come assist their child.

Parent Volunteer Team (School Partnership Council)

MCA is blessed to have support from our parent volunteer organization, SPC (School Partnership Council). SPC leads fall and spring fundraisers and provides meaningful support for teachers during Teacher Appreciation Week, "O" Week, and throughout the year.

You are invited to join this group of serving individuals. To participate, email SPC@mauldinchristian.org with your name and contact information.

Join and make a difference today!

Health Services

Students who become ill or injured during the school day will be given proper care by the nurse or certified faculty and staff. Parents will be notified if medical attention is needed or if a parent should determine further care.

If your child becomes sick, MCA will determine whether the child should be sent home. Parents will be notified to pick up a child if deemed necessary by the nurse or office personnel.

If a student must take prescription medication during the school day, the medicine (with the doctor's directions) must be brought to the office as soon as the student arrives at school. It will remain locked and be administered as prescribed. Parents must bring the medication and complete the required medication form provided in the office. No prescription or over-the-counter medication may be kept in a student's possession during the school day.

Student Illness and Exclusion Guidelines

Students absent due to illness should not return until they are free from symptoms for a minimum of 24 hours. If prescribed an antibiotic, students should refrain from returning until medication has been administered for at least 24 hours.

Illnesses such as conjunctivitis (pink eye), impetigo, pediculosis (head lice), ringworm, and similar conditions must be treated before a student may return.

If a student is sent home due to illness or absent due to illness, the student may not participate in afterschool activities or events.

Fever — If a student has a fever of 100.4 or higher, the student is not permitted to attend MCA. The student must remain fever-free for a minimum of 24 hours without the use of over-the-counter medications before returning. If evaluated by a medical provider and a non-communicable fever source is identified, the student may return with a doctor's note prior to 24 hours.

Exclusion of mildly ill children (selected conditions):

- **Chicken pox / Varicella:** May return with a parent note once all sores/blisters are dried or scabbed over. If there are no scabs, the child may return when no new sores appear for 24 hours.
- **Diarrhea:** Any child with three occurrences of diarrhea, or a bowel movement that flows out of the diaper/underwear in a 24-hour period, must go home and may not return until diarrhea stops for a full 24 hours without medication. Children whose diarrhea is contained in diaper-type underwear may not need exclusion if the diarrhea is from a non-contagious condition or continues after completing antibiotics for a diarrhea-causing illness.
- **Hand, Foot, and Mouth Disease:** Should remain out of childcare while they have fever, above-normal drooling, trouble swallowing, or are too sick to do normal school/childcare activities. Red blisters should be dry and crusted over.
- **Head lice:** May return with a parent note after one treatment with an over-the-counter or prescription lice-killing product, if there are no active lice crawling. MCA will check the scalp upon return; if any are present, the child must be removed and retreated before returning.
- **Impetigo:** May return after receiving antibiotics for 24 hours if sores have stopped oozing and are starting to get smaller, or if sores can be covered completely with a watertight bandage. Medical note required.
- **Pinkeye / Conjunctivitis:** Should see a healthcare provider if fever or eye pain is present. Treatment for at least 24 hours is required prior to returning.
- **Rash with fever or behavioral changes:** Quickly spreading rash, or rash with fever/behavior change, requires immediate removal. Medical note required to return.
- **Ringworm:** Must remain out from the end of the day until topical antifungal treatment has begun. May return with a parent note.
- **Strep throat / Streptococcal pharyngitis:** May return with a medical note 24 hours after starting antibiotics and if there is no fever for 24 hours.
- **Surgery:** May return based on medical provider release instructions; provide a copy or a medical note upon returning.
- **Vomiting illness:** If vomiting occurred one or more times in the previous 24 hours, the child should remain home until vomiting has resolved for 24 hours.
- **Thrush:** A child with an oral yeast infection (thrush) may return to childcare with a medical note after they have been on prescribed antifungal treatment for at least 24 hours.

If a student is unable to participate in classroom activities due to illness, the student will be sent home.

Medication Administration

All medications must be in the original container.

Prescription medications

- Written parental and prescriber authorization must be completed.

- Medication label must be present on all medications.
- Medication will only be administered as prescribed on the label and medical action plan.
- Prescriptions must be brought to school by a legal guardian or designated person over 18 and given directly to the nurse or designated personnel.
- Parents are responsible for tracking expiration dates and replacing medication before expiration. Medication past the expiration date will not be administered.

Over-the-counter medications (OTC) — MCA will not administer OTC medications. A parent may come to MCA and administer OTC medication to the child.

During summer months, MCA is not authorized to apply sunscreen or insect repellent. Please apply these topical formulas at home for the full day.

Herbal / alternative medicinal products — These products are not regulated by the FDA; quality and effectiveness vary. Employees of MCA will not administer herbal/alternative medicinal products.

Allergies and Life-Threatening Allergies

Allergies — All allergies and reactions to the allergen must be written on enrollment forms. MCA will strictly monitor allergies. Please communicate with your child's teacher and the school nurse.

Life-threatening allergies — EpiPens and other lifesaving medication will be kept in a locked safe box in the child's classroom. An action plan completed by the child's medical provider must be on file and turned in with the medication so MCA can respond quickly and efficiently to emergencies.

If the student is present at MCA, the student is required to be outside when their class participates in outdoor play. MCA understands seasonal/environmental allergies can be problematic; however, the student must remain with their class.

State Immunization Requirements

A child will not be allowed to attend any school or child development program without a valid SC Certificate of Immunization, or medical, religious, or special exemption certificate.

If your child does not have a valid certificate, take shot records to your physician or the county Health Department (282-4100). A parent or adult authorized by the parent must accompany a student under 16 who requires shots.

If a valid SC Immunization or exemption certificate is not provided, the child may not attend MCA until one is obtained and on file with the academy.

MCA Procedure for Handling Suspected Abuse

The Academy and church staff are required by law to immediately report all cases of suspected child abuse. Procedures include:

1. Teacher verbally reports concerns to the director or principal.
2. Teacher completes a written report to be placed in a confidential file by the director or principal.
3. Director reports to one of the following as appropriate:
 - Child Protective Services
 - DSS
 - Police
 - Child Abuse Hotline (for further instruction)

Accident / Injury Procedures

It is MCA policy to report all injuries to the parent/guardian. If an injury is minor, you will receive information from the school in written form. If the injury is major, we will contact you directly by phone.