

Student/Parent Handbook

*Parents must
recognize and embrace
their role as the primary educators
of their children.*

Lourdes Public Charter School

In small towns and rural areas, where the school is the hub of the community, the school integrates family and community life with education and learning. The small-school environment allows the teachers to develop strong, emotional relationships with students: family-like, caring, personal, familiar, respecting and patient. There are clear expectations for student behavior, and this close relationship with students allows teachers to push students to higher levels of achievement. Teachers are able to educate because in this arena the community and the school have the same ideals. The two support each other. For decades this model of education had been successful in many areas of the country, but because of size and congruent ideals, the process was seldom put in writing; it was just something that evolved. With the recent school mergers, many small communities have lost their schools. Even though many fought to save their school, they were unable to communicate to outsiders the value of their system.

With the charter school movement, there is a rediscovery of the value of community based education. The model that we are presenting in our project has developed over a period of 105 years. It outlines what community schools have successfully done for years. If education reform is to be a reality, the local community must be part of the equation. The establishment of community support and the school's accountability to the community are a must in educational reform. We believe the model we are presenting will be a great help to rural communities; however, this does not mean that it is exclusively for rural areas. Building community and accountability is the key to successful education reform.

The following two pages are excerpted from the Lourdes Public School Charter

“Not one way for all learners...The right way for each”

We believe that every child has special talents and potential, and it is the responsibility of the school, the family, and the community to support, encourage and nurture each student. We expect each student to commit to and to be active and responsible in the learning process.

We believe that all students can meet or exceed the 21st Century standards. The blended, non-graded structure of Lourdes School meets the individual needs of all students but is especially helpful in personalizing the instructional program for TAG students and students having difficulties meeting the 21st Century standards. The Lourdes School requires a strong parental commitment and involvement in each child's educational plan.

Charter Proposal

Lourdes Charter School endeavors to assist each student to develop their talents and meet their potential through a strong program of basic skills and critical thinking. This curriculum follows the 21st Century requirements. With success in academics, comes growth in aesthetic, social, emotional and civic areas.

Lourdes Charter School will increase learning and achievement in a small learning environment that provides flexibility and innovation. Lourdes Charter School will continue to build a strong working relationship among teachers, parents and other community members.

**WE ARE SEEKING A CHARTER BECAUSE OF OUR
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COMMUNITY**

parents, staff, students, extended families, and local community members, who have established a 100 year history of support for this school.

Charter Components

1. The small student-teacher ratio facilitates multi-grade classrooms. Each classroom contains 3-5 grade levels, allowing each student to progress at his or her own developmental rate. For example a first grade student could be in second grade math and third grade reading. A fifth grade student might be in sixth grade reading and seventh grade history. At the same time these students are with their peers in the classroom and other curricular areas. Each student progresses at their ability level without academic labeling. Each student treated as a unique individual, with their own P.I.E. plan (Personalized Individual Education). This type of instructional delivery is not available to our students in the district schools.
2. Parent and community members sharing their talents, careers, and interests with the students enables the students' to realize the importance of education. Education outside the community alienates the student from their immediate rural community, thus reducing the effectiveness of education.. The Lourdes community embraces the words of Ernest Boyer “ ..In the basic school, the separate classrooms are connected by a sense of purpose, in a climate that is just, disciplined, and caring, with occasions for celebrations”, (*The Basic School: A Community for Learning*, Carnegie Foundation). It is only in the local community in which these students live that such a ‘Boyer Community’ is established.
3. Because of the proximity of families to the school, daily parent-teacher communication is an essential part of the program.
4. Each student participates in the arts program, which culminates in two all-school musicals. Every student has a speaking part, and many students perform solo musical presentations.
5. Students are given an in depth experience in technology; computer assisted instruction, satellite courses, virtual field trips, and a weather station are part of the curriculum. Technology is integrated into the curriculum. The school maintains a minimum of a 1-6 computer-student ratio.
6. Our school library is a community library so the students and families can participate in the ‘Information Age’ together. Modern media and technology are employed. This is of extreme importance since our community has no county library services.

Parental/Community/Student Involvement

The parents, community, staff, and students combine to make a complete learning environment and experience. Each entity's role interacts allowing an enriched community to emerge.

The school and community involvement takes many forms. The community is active in the student produced musical programs by creating backdrops, providing musical accompaniment and direction, and by providing an enthusiastic audience for the performances. The community also participates in several fundraisers instituted by the school which include an ongoing newspaper and can drive, a Spring Bingo/Raffle/Silent Auction event and a summer garage sale.

The students and staff at Lourdes respond to the community by including them in their end-of-year picnic, door-to-door Christmas Caroling (especially for the elderly and shut-ins), a Thanksgiving feast for a very supportive local Rotary group, and by writing cards and letters of encouragement for the sick, lonely, or bereaved of the community. The community helps in supporting these efforts by notifying staff members of community members in need of sympathy or support.

There has also been a special emphasis placed on letters/cards to active and retired military members of our community and the extended community. This is achieved by thank you cards/care packages sent to active military personnel as well as our ongoing program of thank you cards sent to military veterans for Veteran's Day.

The community in return has been very generous monetarily. Every year following our Christmas mailing, the school has received hundreds of dollars in donations. In 2003, when the school faced a significant deficit because of the delayed payment from the state school fund, the community members and local businesses donated over \$30, 000 to the school. Memorial gifts are often received. These monies are being used to build a security fund for Lourdes Charter School.

Parent Requirement/Participation Expectations

Parental involvement is considered essential in a small charter school such as Lourdes. The top priority for parents is supporting your child at home with very basic nurturing techniques. Your child needs to have:

- a regular schedule with a consistent bedtime
- a good breakfast at home
- a mid-morning snack for school

- a healthy lunch for school which should include fresh fruits, vegetables, and whole grains with little processed foods which tend to be high in sugar, salt and fat

- a scheduled time for homework to be done and checked by parents (i.e. spelling words, math facts, reading comprehension, and additional outside-of-class assignments)

- a parental review of daily class work. Parents are expected to establish a routine with their children for reviewing homework, communications, letters, and permission slips sent home with students. Students in grades K-6 should have assignment folders that are sent home daily

Parental volunteerism is also a priority in the Lourdes School environment. Parent participation is essential to maximize the total school and student success. Depending on home and work commitments, there are a variety of ways to participate in your child's classroom:

- volunteer in your child's classroom on a regular basis

- help with weekly housekeeping chores such as dusting, sweeping porches, landscaping, dust mopping the hall, cleaning bathrooms, washing rags etc.

- volunteer to teach organized skills in sports and fitness, such as volleyball, basketball, softball, soccer, etc. (4-6 week sessions)

- volunteer to teach painting, craft projects, photography, clay work, etc. (1-6 week sessions)

Volunteers working directly with children will be required to fill out a pertinent information questionnaire and undergo a criminal history/background check.

Parent Club Participation is another very important expectation at Lourdes. The goal is 100% participation by parents in our Parent/Teacher Club (PTC). Parents (at least one per family) are expected to attend monthly PTC meetings and to actively support all school functions and benefits. The success of the school is determined by the total involvement of our parents and teachers in this very worthwhile organization.

Student Expectations

Academic Expectations

Lourdes Public Charter School has high expectations for each student. The school encourages responsible individual decision-making, goal setting, self-evaluation, and independent learning skills. It is the desire of the school that at the end of eighth grade, students will meet or exceed the state assessment benchmarks and be prepared to set and reach their high school goals. We expect they will have developed strong cooperative skills, self-confidence, respect, and self-discipline that will continue through high school, college and throughout life. Parents are urged to encourage their child's success by monitoring progress in school and at home, and to participate as fully as possible in the school.

Classroom Academic Expectations are as follows:

1. Be courteous and respectful.
2. Follow directions.
3. Work quietly and independently unless otherwise assigned.
4. Complete assignments neatly and on time.
 - a. Students in grades 1-8 will have a daily assignment record.
 - b. In grades 4-8, work is to be completed in cursive unless otherwise directed by the teacher.
5. Use learning time wisely.
6. When working outside of a classroom, work quietly, and have signed permission from a staff member.
7. Follow the rules of each classroom. Some expectations may differ from teacher to teacher.

Grading Scale

95-100	A
94-86	B
85-75	C
74-70	D
Below 70	F

Homework

Class assignments are designed to be completed at school. Work at home is to focus on basic skills such as math facts, practicing spelling words, review of concepts, and reading, reading, reading. If classroom time is used wisely, there should be few class assignments to be completed at home.

Assessment

Students are assessed in a number of ways including:

Personalized Individual Education Plan

Developed with teacher, parents, and student in the spring of each year, this plan is reevaluated at the fall conference and assessed in the spring. Goals can be set for academics, study skills, social skills, critical thinking skills, etc.. A plan for assistance by teacher and parent is included in this plan, as well as a plan for assessment.

Standardized Academic Testing in Basic Skills (Such as the *Stanford Academic Test*, *California Test of Basic Skills*, etc.)

Quarterly Report Cards

Curriculum Assessment Tests

School Discipline Policy

The main goal of the discipline policy is to help students make responsible decisions about appropriate behavior in different situations. We want students to develop a set of standards in which they know right from wrong and then choose to behave by this set of internal values. The objectives of the discipline program are to teach the following concepts for living:

1. Understanding and respect for the rights, dignity and safety of all individuals.
2. Understanding and respect for law, procedures, rules, and regulations.
3. Understanding and respect for public and private property rights.

Behavioral Expectations

1. Students will follow individual classroom expectations and rules.
2. Eating of food is limited to lunch and break times. Please leave gum at home.
3. Students may run only on the playground or during recess in the hall.
4. Nothing is to be thrown in the classroom.
5. Only appropriate play equipment may be thrown on playground.
6. Treat every person with respect.
7. Treat school property with respect.
8. A student responsible for damage or destruction of school or school property will provide financial compensation for repair or replacement.

The following behaviors will result in discipline, suspension, or expulsion of any student. The age of the student and past pattern of behavior of the individual shall be considered prior to a suspension or expulsion of a student.

1. Assaulting or menacing a school employee or another student.
2. Willful disobedience.
3. Willful damage of school property.
4. Theft.
5. Use or possession of tobacco, drugs, or alcohol.
6. Use of threats, intimidation, harassment, or coercion against fellow student or school employee.
7. Open defiance of an authority figure.
8. Use or display of profane or obscene language or gestures.

Students in the school may have differing levels of discipline related to an infraction. Discipline may include time out, a discussion with the student, a call to parents, recess privileges may be revoked, in-school time in another classroom, an incident report, classroom apologies, or other as seemed fit. A compilation of infractions may result in suspension or consideration for expulsion.

Playground Rules

1. Follow instruction without argument with the adult in charge of recess.
2. Jumping out of swings or climbing up swing set bars is forbidden.
3. If you leave a swing or other equipment, you have given it up.
4. Everyone must stay within the playground boundaries.
5. Team games are to be played by the rules.
6. If equipment is left out at the end of recess, the class responsible will not be allowed equipment for the following recess.
7. Stage, kitchen, and bathrooms in the hall are off limits.
8. No one will return to the classrooms after recess until they are dismissed, and then they will return directly to their own classroom.
9. No one can return to the classroom during recess for things forgotten unless permission is given by the supervising adult.
10. Enter school quietly at all times.
11. If there is any type of problem, take it to the teacher(s) on duty right away.
12. Proper use of equipment is required.
13. Students must have teacher's permission before bringing any toys, play equipment, or non-school-required items to the campus.
14. Students must be physically active during recess.
15. A clean pair of shoes with non-marking outer soles is to be kept at school for use in the hall.

Dress Code

The school expects students to dress and groom to meet standards, which will ensure that the following conditions do not exist:

- Disruption or interference with the classroom learning environment;
- Threat to the health and/or safety of the student concerned or for that of other students.

Certain activities may require a higher standard of dress. For these times, it is asked that girls wear a modest dress, skirt, or dress slacks. We ask that boys wear collared shirts and dress pants.

Students are expected to dress modestly and neatly at school.

1. Students should wear tops that have 2 inch or greater straps and cover the top band of pants or skirts when standing or sitting.
2. Coats or jackets worn to school need to be removed during the school day, except while outside. It is expected that students will come to school dressed appropriately for the current weather conditions.
3. Shorts, skirts, and dresses need to be modest in length.
4. Hats may be worn outside the school building. No hats, hoods, bandanas, scarves, caps, etc. on the head in the school building.
5. Make up is not to be worn by students at school.
6. Clothing with symbols or slogans deemed inappropriate by staff will not be permitted in school.

Rules/Procedures

Registration Fees. To finalize the annual registration process, a non-refundable registration fee will be assessed for each student. This will ordinarily be due in June for the school year beginning the following September.

Attendance Lourdes Charter School only accepts full-time students. Regular attendance is important to ensure achievement in school. Excessive absences and tardies by a few individuals can impede the learning program for others. Attendance rates are submitted to the district office. Regular public school attendance rules apply to this school.

Parent and Student Contracts Each year parents and students are asked to sign a contract with the school. This contract outlines the school's expectations of the parents and the students.

Student PIE/Parent Conferences At the end of each school year, the student, parents and teacher will meet to discuss the student's progress and set goals for the next school year. The student will set his/her goals, and the parents and teacher will discuss how they can assist the student in achieving their goals. The student will then refer to this Personalized Individual Education during the school year. This plan will be discussed again at the fall parent/teacher/student conferences in November and be assessed at the spring conference.

Absences If your child is absent because of illness or an appointment for which we have not been notified previously, please call to make us aware of the situation before 8:30am. It is critical to student safety that we know where they are at all times. Please call every day that your child is absent. If a student is not reported absent by parents, the school will place a call to confirm the absence. Excused absences are those resulting from temporary or extended illness, injury, or physical, mental or emotional disability, family emergencies or prior request of parents or guardians. Students returning to school after extended absences due to illness may be required to submit a doctor's note.

Medications The school will not provide any oral medications for students. Over-the-counter and prescription drugs will only be dispensed to students if the school receives the medication in the original container, and is given signed written instructions on administration of the medication. Forms for over-the-counter administration of drugs to students are available at the school.

Tardy Tardiness is a failure to appear on time and is considered a form of absence. Repeated tardiness will be reported on the student attendance records.

Early Dismissal Parents arriving at school prior to dismissal should wait outside their child's classroom quietly while the student is preparing to leave.

Make –Up Work Students are absent from school for a variety of reasons. One day for each day that the student has been absent will be allowed for make-up work. It is the student and/or parent’s responsibility to find out what work was missed. Parents are asked to monitor the completion and return of the homework completed by the student during the absence. Tests announced before the students absence will be given the extended time only if arrangements have been made prior to a student returning. No credit will be given for any student for any class or portion of a class during which time the student was absent without an acceptable excuse.

Computer Policy Each year the students are given guidelines for computer usage, students are then asked to sign an acceptable use contract. If the contract is broken, the student will lose computer privileges for a time determined by the administrator and/or teacher in charge.

Telephone Students may only use the phone after receiving permission from their teacher. Parents or guests may make local calls, but only staff members are to answer incoming calls.

School Equipment Parents and/or community members should receive permission from a staff member before using the copy machine, laminator, or other school equipment. Students may only use school equipment if they have been designated and trained.

Student Supplies Students need to have an adequate supply of school materials at all times. Supply lists are given out before each school year, but parents need to check the status of student supplies throughout the year.

School Supplies Only staff members may access storage cupboards or staff desks.

School Newsletters/Announcements School newsletters and announcements are distributed through the students. A copy of the announcements are posted on the parent/teacher, community communication bulletin board.

Student Organizers Students are issued an age appropriate school planner. These are to be completed for all subjects and assignments. When a student takes this home, they are responsible to bring them back to school each day.

Lost & Found Valuable items and money should not be brought to school. Lost clothing, notebooks, and other items will be given to the classroom teacher. Unclaimed lost and found items are given to a local charity at the end of the year.

Textbooks All basic texts are on loan to students for their use during the school year.

Textbooks are to be kept clean and handled carefully. We require students to cover their textbooks. Students are charged a fine for damaged or lost books. Textbooks lost and/or damaged during the school year will be assessed the full cost of a new book.

Library Books All students, their families, and members of the community are able to obtain a library number and are allowed to check books from the library. Students may not check out books from the community section unless they have written permission by title from their parents/guardians. Lost or damaged books will be assessed the full cost of a new book.

Field Trips During the school year classes will take field trips. The students fund these trips. The Parent/Teacher Club often assists in the funding. From time to time small groups of students may go on extraordinary trips necessitating parent transportation. Before that may occur, a specific insurance form must be completed, and submitted to the office. These forms are distributed at the beginning of the school year, or may be picked up at the office. All field trips are planned and organized by the staff. Parents may be asked to assist as chaperones.

Report Cards Student report cards are completed at the end of each 9-week quarter. Progress reports may be given out during the instructional term.

School Closures While emergency closings occur infrequently, evacuation procedures will be followed when building systems malfunction making the building unfit, or when weather makes it necessary to send children home. Parents will be called and arrangements will be made for every child to leave school in parental or parental approved custody.

If school is closed before the school day begins, parents will receive a phone call alerting them of the cancellation. Since the weather conditions vary in our attendance area, it is ultimately the responsibility of the parent to determine if they can safely transport their child to school. At such times, parents must notify the school.

Lunch Parents are responsible to provide their children with a mid-morning snack and a lunch. The school provides refrigerators and microwaves for student use.

Carpool Information Interested parents can organize their carpools. A carpool schedule must be given the classroom teacher as students will not be dismissed unless their name appears on the carpool schedule.

Classroom Rules Each teacher is required to have a set of classroom rules in addition to the general school rules. Classroom rules will further define acceptable behaviors. Parents will be informed of classroom rules through classroom newsletters, scheduled parent teacher conferences, and/or phone conferencing.

Searches Students are assigned a desk and shelf or “cubby” for their belongings. These are school property and not the individual’s. Students are held responsible for any excessive damage to their desks. The school has the authority to search desks, shelves or “cubbies” when deemed necessary. Valuables such as radios, walkmans, compact discs, cassettes, video games, etc., are not to be at school.

Advertising/Sale of Products on School Grounds All materials posted or distributed on school grounds must be submitted to the school administrator for formal approval before posting or distributing. This applies to students, staff, parents, and community members. Sale of any product must have pre-approval from the school administrator. Students may not sell products during the school day. This must be done, before or after school with parental supervision.

Released Time If students are participating in a religious instruction program through their church during the school day, parents are responsible to register their children at the church and notify the school of the released time schedule. By Oregon statute, all students in Oregon are allowed 90 minutes a week of released time for religious instruction without attendance consequences.

Parental Conflict Resolution Procedure If there are concerns about school issues, it is the policy of the Lourdes Public Charter School that such concerns be addressed at the lowest possible level. It is the Board’s expectation that your child’s teacher be contacted before administrative or board involvement. If the results of the contact are unsatisfactory, the parent should then approach the administrator. The final “steps” in the “chain of command” is the Board of Directors. (A complete summary of the complaint procedures can be found in the policy book in the school library.)

Governing Board The Board meetings are held in the library on the first Monday of the month starting at 7pm. It is here that the business of the school is discussed and action taken to define the policies and some formal operational procedures of the school. All meetings are governed by public meeting laws. This is a business meeting which the public is allowed to view. There will be a time at each meeting for public input. Parents or community members should contact the administrator or Board Chair a week before the meeting date if they wish to place a discussion item on the agenda. If anyone is interested in serving on this board they should contact the school administrator.

Foundation The Lourdes Educational Foundation was founded to establish economic security for the school. As a charter school, Lourdes does not have a taxing district and does not have access to any public monies except 80% of the state school fund. The foundation goal is to raise sufficient funds so that a percentage of the earnings may be used in the annual school budget. If anyone is interested in serving on this board they should contact the school administrator.