



**Elementary School
Parent & Student Handbook
2026-2027 School Year**

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About Our School

History

Lighthouse Community School is an independent, not-for-profit private Christian school dedicated to serving the academic, spiritual, and developmental needs of students in Kindergarten - 5th grade along with their families.

Lighthouse Preschool of Wesley Chapel, INC (dba Lighthouse Community School) was organized as a nonprofit corporation under the statutes of the State of Florida in 2018. We are recognized as a 501(c)(3) tax exempt religious school operating for educational purposes. The school first welcomed preschool aged students to our present location in August of 2018, and we are closely affiliated with Grace Community Church of Wesley Chapel. Our program of study is an integral part of the church's mission to make disciples of Jesus and to build a better community by God's grace; however, the school's board of directors operates under its own adopted by-laws, policies, and budget.

Lighthouse Community School began offering a 2-day hybrid program for homeschooling families with students in Kindergarten and 1st grade during the 2023-24 school year. In the 2026-27 school year Lighthouse Community School began the transition to a 5-day private school offered to students in Kindergarten, 1st grade, and 2nd grade, and we will continue to add grades to our private school program in future years. While we no longer offer our 2-day hybrid program to new homeschooling families, we are continuing to serve as many existing homeschooling students as possible on a space available basis.

Philosophy

The Bible instructs believers to make disciples by teaching them to obey everything Jesus has commanded (Matthew 28:20) and to train up children in the way they should go (Proverbs 22:6). We consider the Word of God to be central to the mission of our school, and we believe that the role of parents / guardians is essential since they have the primary responsibility for teaching the word of God to their children.

Deuteronomy 6:4-7 states "4 Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. 5 Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. 6 These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. 7 Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up." (NIV)

Academic Emphasis

We want to help families by providing a high quality education that is both academically challenging and faithful to a Biblical view of the world. In support of this goal we will employ only academically qualified teachers who incorporate best teaching practices, engaging curriculum, and purposeful daily lesson plans that will prepare children for life and learning. The school's curriculum shall take into consideration the spiritual, physical and intellectual development of its students. The instructional program shall seek to achieve the curricular goals without creating unnatural divisions between sacred and secular knowledge.

Biblical Enrichment

We want to help parents build character in their children with Bible lessons and activities. We want to come alongside parents in helping them to make disciples who obey what Jesus has commanded (Matthew 28:20). The school does not seek to take the place of the home or replace the role of a church family. Instead it seeks to support both in fulfilling their callings.

Friendly Environment

We expect students will have fun, make friends, and enjoy school. Students, parents, and staff members in our community are expected to support our statement of Christian beliefs and to exhibit Christ-like character, integrity, language, behavior, and respect toward others.

Statement of Nondiscrimination Toward Students & Staff

In the conduct of all aspects of its activities, Lighthouse Community School admits students of any race, color, national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. The school does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national and ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship programs, and other school administered programs. In addition, Lighthouse does not discriminate with regard to race, color, national and ethnic origin with regard to its hiring practices. All students, parents, staff and employees are expected to embrace the beliefs, vision, and moral values of the school.

Exceptional Student Education

Lighthouse Community School does not have an Exceptional Student Education (ESE) department. Therefore we have limited ability to support students with an existing Individualized Education Plan (IEP), specific learning disabilities, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), and other special needs. Unfortunately, our school is not equipped to meet the needs of students with mental health, psychiatric, or behavioral disorders, including but not limited to Bipolar Disorder, Mood Disorders, Oppositional Defiant Disorder (ODD), Emotional/Behavioral Disabilities (EBD), or Schizophrenia.

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) guarantees eligible students with disabilities the right to a Free, Appropriate Public Education (FAPE); however, private schools are not bound by IDEA requirements that apply to public schools. According to FS 1002.421 (1) (j) “a parentally placed private school student with a disability does not have an individual right to receive some or all of the special education and related services that the student would receive if enrolled in a public school under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), as amended.”

School staff will make reasonable accommodations to fulfill the needs of each student and to provide a positive learning experience. In addition, staff will work with parents and therapists when possible to help a student be successful in a group setting and to achieve goals. If it is determined by the administrator that a student's needs cannot be met by the school or that a student has not adjusted to the learning environment, the administrator of the school reserves the right to ask parents to make alternative arrangements. A parent may appeal his or her case to the school board, but the decision of the school board will be final.

Admissions

New students who are interested in applying to our school will be asked to fill out an application. Reading assessments are administered to new students entering 1st grade or higher to determine placement. Typically an application for new students entering 1st grade or higher will include information about previous schools attended along with a letter of good behavior, attendance information, and/or a recent report card. Students who are assessed at more than one grade level behind standards in reading and language arts may not be accepted into our program.

Priority for admissions will be given to the following groups

- 1) Existing students who have met all financial obligations and have a record of satisfactory behavior and attendance
- 2) Siblings of currently enrolled or accepted students
- 2) Children of teachers, staff, and board members at the school.

The school administrator in consultation with the school board president reserves the right to admit or refuse students to Lighthouse Community School in accordance with published policies. All new students will be accepted on a probationary basis for a two-month period. This is to ascertain a pupil's ability to adjust to the school philosophy and academic program.

Attendance / Absences

School Hours

The school doors open at 8:45 am. Students need to be present by the time classes begin at 9:00 am. The school day ends at 2:15 pm. Students must be picked up by 2:25 pm. Parents/guardians should observe start and pick up times carefully.

Mandatory Attendance

Florida Statute 1003.21 states that "All children... who will have attained the age of 6 years by February 1 of any school year or who are older than 6 years of age but who have not attained the age of 16 years, except as otherwise provided, are required to attend school regularly during the entire school term."

Studies consistently show that nonattendance at school is associated with poor academic performance. In addition, nonattendance places a greater burden on teachers who must provide instruction for content that a student misses. Family vacations should be planned for times when school is not in session. Medical and dental appointments should be scheduled to provide minimum disruptions as well.

Excused Absences

Parents agree to contact Lighthouse to notify teachers in advance of any planned absences and to report the reason for any other absence. Please text the school office at 813-994-8678 or email lighthousewesleychapel@gmail.com with your student's name and the reason for the absence. Failure to contact the school to report an absence will constitute an unexcused absence. Below are examples of excused absences:

- Personal illness or injury (requires doctor note if chronic)
- Death in the immediate family - parents/guardians, siblings, grandparents
- Death in the extended family - uncles and aunts, nephews and nieces, cousins
- Medical appointments (please inform teacher of appointments in advance)

Excessive Absences

In compliance with state laws, full-time students are not to be absent for more than 18 days per year for any reason. If this occurs, parents/guardians will meet with the principal to assess the problem and develop a plan for attendance improvement, withdrawal, or retention. Attendance policy is strictly enforced. Extenuating circumstances must have proper documentation.

Schools are responsible for adherence to state law and attendance tracking, and parents must support the school by providing timely documentation and facilitating good attendance. Excessive absences without valid reasons shall be cause to remove a student from the program. Scholarship students who accumulate more than 18 total attendance infractions—including tardiness—risk losing their place in the program.

Truancy

Students who are absent without parental permission are regarded as truant and are subject to disciplinary action. Florida law defines "habitual truant" as a student who is subject to compulsory school attendance and who has 15 or more unexcused absences within 90 calendar days with or without the knowledge or consent of the student's parent or guardian. Parents are legally responsible for their child's attendance and can face court interventions if the child fails to attend school.

Tardies

To support a productive and uninterrupted learning environment, students are expected to arrive on time and remain in school for the full instructional day. Tardiness is a disruption to the entire class, and it is dishonoring to both classroom teachers and to other students. Students are considered tardy if they are not in their designated classroom and ready to begin instruction by 9:00 AM.

Students arriving after 9:00 AM will receive a tardy slip before going to class. Students are responsible for making up any missed assignments due to tardiness or early dismissal. Three (3) unexcused tardies will be counted as one (1) unexcused absence for attendance purposes.

Dismissal & Pick Up

To minimize classroom disruption and to maintain school safety, students should not be signed out between 2:00 PM and 2:15 PM. If an early dismissal is necessary, parents/guardians must sign out students before 2:00 PM.

Anyone wishing to pick up a child from our school other than the parent must be approved by the parent and show the office staff a valid driver's license. In cases where parents are divorced or separated, the school will require copies of all legal papers pertaining to child custody and visitation to know who has legal authority to pick up the child and when.

Late Pick Up Fees

Parents accept the responsibility to pick up their child on time. A prompt dismissal is important to honor staff time and to respect after-school meetings / appointments. On time pick up is 2:15 pm. Late pick up begins at 2:25 pm. Parents should call the school if they expect to be late. The school charges a late pick up fee of \$5 per student for pickup that is between 1 and 15 minutes late and an additional \$5 for every 15 minutes late after that. If students are left at the school after the conclusion of the school day without word from the parent(s) and an emergency contact cannot be reached, authorities may be contacted.

Campus Closings

In the event of a hurricane or other weather-related emergency, Lighthouse Community School will follow the Pasco County Public School schedule. If public schools are closed, Lighthouse Community School will be closed. Please stay tuned to local news for openings and closings. There may be other campus closings due to situations beyond our control. We will do our best to communicate this to our parents.

Academics

Curriculum

At Lighthouse Community School God's Word is the standard by which all instruction is measured. We believe that every student is uniquely created by God with individual strengths and areas for growth, and it is our joy and responsibility to nurture their development through both academic excellence and spiritual guidance. Therefore, the selection of curriculum and the creation of lesson plans shall take into consideration the spiritual, physical and intellectual development of our students.

We seek to challenge students in the areas where they excel and to support them where they face difficulties, recognizing that learning is a lifelong journey shaped by grace and perseverance. Our instructional approach includes both traditional classroom teaching and small group instruction, allowing us to meet students where they are and help them reach their God-given potential.

When appropriate, we incorporate additional curriculum and supplemental resources tailored to the individual needs and capabilities of each student. These materials are carefully selected to enrich our instruction and to support the development of critical thinking, creativity, and a deeper understanding of God's truth in all subjects.

Homework / Teacher Assigned Work

A strong parent-teacher relationship is essential for the success of all students. This relationship is based on trust and mutual desire to honor the Lord Jesus Christ. Parents are responsible to make sure that students complete all teacher assigned lessons in a timely manner. When students miss a class, parents are responsible for making up any in school lessons.

Homework will be assigned based on age, grade, subject and levels. The teacher will explain their expectations for specific assignments to the class. This is necessary to help achieve academic progress. If a student refuses to do his/her work or is putting forth little effort during the school day, it may be assigned as homework. There will also be times during the school year that students will be required to complete projects. These projects are also a vital part of their education. A persistent failure to complete teacher assigned lessons and homework without valid reasons shall be considered just cause to remove a student from the program.

Make Up Work Due to Absences

Consistent daily attendance is critical to student success as daily attendance directly impacts academic performance. Furthermore, daily attendance and presence promotes qualities that will be required of our students in their professional career. Furthermore, responsibility and accountability are essential components of a student's academic and spiritual growth.

Lighthouse teachers and staff recognize that students may be unavoidably absent from school, and this may result in the need to complete make-up work. When a student is absent, it is the responsibility of the student and/or parent to request and complete any missed work. Students and/or parents must communicate with the teacher to request missed assignments, tests, or classwork. While teachers may occasionally post assignments in the classroom or online, it is still the student's duty to confirm all required work. Parents are encouraged to help their child stay organized and up to date, especially after an absence.

Students may make up any and all assignments, tests, assessments, or related work assigned on the day(s) of any excused or unexcused absence at full credit provided that the student makes arrangements with teachers within three (3) days of the student's return to school to complete and turn in such assessments or make-up work at a time determined by the teacher. Failure to complete missed work within the given timeline may result in reduced credit or a grade of zero, unless other arrangements have been made in advance. Assignments or assessments that were due on the day(s) of absence, but which were assigned while the student was present are due upon the student's return unless the teacher finds that illness or other circumstances prevented completion of the assignment and that added time for completion is fair and appropriate under the circumstances.

Late Work

Timely completion of assignments and assessments plays an important role in evaluating progress and determining the need for academic interventions and supports. Furthermore, timely completion of work is an essential skill required as we prepare our students for work readiness. Lighthouse staff members understand that students and families may occasionally face challenges that create obstacles in meeting deadlines, but it is the expectation that students and families communicate with teachers to overcome these challenges. While late work may be accepted in special circumstances, teachers are not expected to accept assignments after a unit has been completed.

Academic Integrity

Students are expected to complete all coursework with integrity and honesty. Any work that is submitted shall be the original and authentic work of the individual student unless otherwise specified in the assignment. The following non-exhaustive list of actions are examples of academic dishonesty that will result in disciplinary action.

- Cheating
- Plagiarism
- Using materials or electronic devices not authorized by the teacher during a test or assignment
- Submitting an assignment from a third party including those written by Artificial Intelligence (AI) unless authorized by a teacher.
- Distributing test questions, homework questions, assignments, or other school testing or evaluation materials in a manner that enables or advances cheating
- Willfully or knowingly taking an online course or examination on behalf of another person or allowing someone to take an online course or examination for you
- Altering or interfering with grading

Consequences may include the following:

- Reduced credit on assignment
- Proctored assessments
- Completion of an Academic Integrity Module

Student Progression and Promotion

The student progression and promotion practices at Lighthouse Community School emphasize high academic standards and the development of each student's spiritual, emotional, social, and physical growth. Recognizing that children develop at different rates, some students may require more or less time to reach their full academic potential. Teachers and school administrators will regularly evaluate student performance and progress. While parents and students may be included in discussions regarding academic concerns, final decisions about student placement—including acceleration, tutoring, retention, or probation—will be made by the school's staff based on the best interest of the student.

Grading Policies and Practices

Evaluation of the progress of students is conducted with appropriate assessments. The following grading system is in place for non-academic areas including conduct.

O Outstanding

S Satisfactory

N Needs Improvement

U Unsatisfactory

The following grade scale is utilized for academic subjects in most classes.

A = 90-100

B = 80-89

C = 70-79

D = 60-69

F = 0-59

** Other grading options may be utilized depending upon the student's needs and abilities. If applicable, the teacher will note if a student is on level for academic subjects. This will be reflected with an "AL" for Above Level, "OL" for On Level and "BL" for Below Level.

Report Cards

Report cards and progress reports are accessed electronically through a parent portal. Hard copies are available for parents to print.

Student Expectations

Student Dress Code

While Lighthouse Community School does not require students to purchase and wear school uniforms, it does require students to wear neat and modest clothing that reflects respect for God, for others, and for the learning environment. Shirts must have sleeves or straps, and they must extend to the waistband of pants/shorts/skirts/etc. Shorts and skirts must be of appropriate length, generally no shorter than the student's fingertips when arms are placed at their sides. Leggings and yoga pants are not permitted unless worn under a skirt, shorts, or a dress.

Students may not have exposed undergarments and may not wear any non-opaque (see through) clothing. Clothing must not depict profanity, drugs, alcohol, violent images, gore, witchcraft, or vulgarity in any form. Hats, bandanas, or head coverings may not be worn indoors unless pre-approved by administration for medical purposes, religious expression, and/or for special school activities.

Students and parents share the responsibility of ensuring that the student arrives at school in compliance with the dress code. School administrators reserve the right to determine whether a student's clothing or appearance meets the school's expectations. Students in violation of the dress code will be required to contact their parent/guardian and change into appropriate clothing. Students may be required to remain in the office until the standards of the dress code is met per recommendation of the administrator. Repeated breaches of dress code policy may lead to further discipline or consequences as appropriate.

Exposure To Inappropriate Language And Content

"Whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things" Philippians 4:8. Lighthouse Community School believes that parents are responsible for the moral and spiritual training of their child(ren) at home. In addition, we want to promote the innocence of students and protect them from unnecessary exposure to inappropriate words and actions. For this reason we ask parents to monitor their child's exposure to media or games with content such as graphic violence, crude humor / language, suggestive / inappropriate sexual situations, witchcraft, etc. Students who use profanity in the classroom or who expose other students to inappropriate content for the first time or second time will at a minimum receive a verbal correction and consequences in the classroom. If the behavior is repeated, a parent will be contacted and interventions may include early pick up, suspension or dismissal from the program.

Unnecessary & Prohibited Personal Items

At Lighthouse Community School we want to establish a learning environment that is focused, respectful, and Christ-honoring. To support this goal students should not bring unnecessary personal items such as toys, games, trading cards, etc to school.

Examples of other prohibited or inappropriate Items include but are not limited to:

- Weapons or sharp objects (including pocket knives, box cutters, or anything resembling a weapon)

- Drugs, alcohol, tobacco, or vaping products
- Prescription or over-the-counter medications not registered with the school office
- Inappropriate or offensive materials, including books, images, or writings that contradict the school's Christian values
- Items promoting violence, profanity, or immoral behavior
- Electronic devices not authorized by the school (e.g., gaming systems, speakers)
- Cash or valuables

Consent To Search and Seizure

Lighthouse Community School reserves the right to conduct searches of students and their property when there is reasonable cause to believe that a student is in possession of prohibited or unauthorized items. Searches may include, but are not limited to, a student's belongings, backpacks, purses, lockers, desks, and other personal items. Searches may be conducted with or without prior notice to the student or parent, as permitted by law. Enrollment at Lighthouse Community School constitutes consent by both the student and parent to such searches. Prohibited or unauthorized items discovered may be confiscated, and disciplinary action may be taken as determined by the Administration. Law enforcement may be notified when appropriate.

Lost and/or Damaged Property

Lighthouse Community School is not responsible for any lost or damaged items. Please allow for wear and tear on items sent in with students. We ask parents to put their child's name on clothing and any necessary personal items such as supplies, book bags, lunch boxes, etc to help in the proper return of misplaced items. Lighthouse Community School does not have a lost-and-found bin or closet due to extremely limited office and storage space. Items not claimed by the end of a week will be disposed of or donated to an applicable ministry.

Electronic Devices / Wireless Communication Devices

While electronic devices may help students and parents to communicate with each other, the use of wireless communication devices on school grounds must be appropriately regulated to protect students, staff, and the learning environment. Often electronic devices remove students socially, intellectually, and emotionally from being present and from participating in school activities. Our staff wants all students to fully engage with their teachers and to participate in social interaction as well.

Although the use of electronic devices can be positive at times, they can also be used in ways that causes others to feel left out, judged, anxious, or targeted. Unfortunately, students can sometimes use electronic devices to initiate and perpetuate inappropriate and/or unlawful conduct that can disrupt the orderly operation of schools and jeopardize the health, safety, and welfare of others in the school community.

Therefore, Lighthouse Community School has established the following expectations regarding the use of electronic devices by students:

Personal electronic devices (cell phones, iPads, smart watches, etc) are not allowed to be used by students during the school day. Any parent who allows a student to bring a personal electronic device to school must agree that it will stay on silent and out of sight (in a backpack) for the entire school day. The parent and the student also agree that the school will not accept responsibility for lost, stolen, or damaged electronic devices. Students are not permitted to use their personal devices to call, text, or message during school hours. If a student needs to contact a parent or guardian during the school day, they must request permission to go to the front office, where they will be allowed to make a phone call using the school phone.

To encourage responsible choices and to reinforce expectations, the following disciplinary actions will be taken for violations of this policy:

1st Offense – Warning & Parent Notification

- A verbal warning will be given.
- The student's parent/guardian will be notified.

2nd Offense – Device Held Until Parent Pickup

- A written warning will be issued.
- The device will be confiscated and a parent / guardian must retrieve it in person.
- The student will lose the privilege of bringing any electronics to school for a designated period.

3rd Offense – Administrative Consequences

- The device will be confiscated and a parent / guardian must retrieve it in person.
- The student may receive other disciplinary action at the discretion of the administrator.
- The student may lose the privilege of bringing electronic devices to school for the remainder of the semester or school year.

Note: Repeated violations may be considered defiance of school authority and could result in additional disciplinary measures

Lunch

Lighthouse Community School does not provide a school lunch program so parents must send students with a lunch that does not need preparation. It is against Health Department regulations for staff to prepare and cook meals. Hot items should be sent to school in a Thermos. Cold items should be sent in a container with a cooler pack. Please be sure your student has utensils. Lunch should include items that are healthy and represent the food groups. Please do not send in items that contain caffeine or excessive sweets and candy.

Birthdays/Parties/Treats

Celebrating successes and special occasions is important at Lighthouse Community School; however, we do not allow parents / students to bring edible treats to be served in the classroom. If desired, you may send in goody bags or a pre-wrapped treat to send home with the students in the class. Please check with the teacher to see if there are any concerns with food allergies among the classmates.

Student Conduct & Consequences

Behavior Policies & Procedures

Students in our school are expected to develop a healthy respect for themselves, for their classmates, for those in authority, for property belonging to others, and for God. In support of this teachers and staff will work together with students to foster a respectful, responsible, and safe learning environment. Positive behavior across all grade levels is encouraged through praise, recognition, and appropriate incentive opportunities. Our goal is to partner with families to help students become respectful members of the school community. Classroom teachers have the primary responsibility for classroom management, and they are the first ones to address problems when inappropriate behavior and conflict situations arise. Therefore, teachers have a certain degree of latitude in recognizing good behavior and applying various disciplinary procedures.

Examples of misconduct include but are not limited to:

- Dishonesty
- Bullying
- Profanity / Inappropriate language
- Excessive horseplay

- Dress code violations
- Vandalism
- Fighting
- Stealing
- Disrespect
- Classroom disruptions
- Blatant disobedience

When misconduct occurs, corrective measures will first be employed by the teacher to help the student change his/her attitude and behavior. Some of the corrective measures that can be taken by a teacher are as follows:

- Student-teacher discussion
- Loss of privilege
- Parent-teacher discussion

When a teacher cannot resolve the misconduct on his / her own or when the severity of an incident requires additional interventions the following corrective measures may also be utilized:

- Parent conference with administrator
- Out of school suspension
- Expulsion

Note: Disciplinary interventions are not limited to situations where intent to harm can be clearly established. Statements like “I didn’t mean anything” or “It was just an accident” are not acceptable excuses for behavior that negatively impacts another student. Staff will consider a range of factors including the student’s behavioral history, the context of the incident, and other relevant information when determining an appropriate response.

Behavior Management Plan

Our Behavior Management Plan is designed to promote positive behavior, support character development, and provide clear expectations and consequences. We utilize a research-based program that aims to improve self-regulation and discipline in schools and classrooms called Conscious Discipline. This program uses a positive approach that focuses on connection, empathy, and reflection to help students learn from their mistakes and improve their behavior.

Here are some key aspects of Conscious Discipline:

- Connection/Creating a school family—Conscious Discipline emphasizes building connections through empathy, encouragement, and rituals to create a healthy-family model that focuses on intrinsic motivation, connection, and problem-solving.
- Reflection—Students need to be in an executive state of mind to reflect on their actions and learn from them.
- Consequences—Conscious Discipline uses three types of consequences to help students learn from their mistakes: natural, logical, and problem-solving.
- Redirection—Teachers use redirection to guide students away from inappropriate behavior and towards another activity.
- Think Time—When redirection and positive reinforcement don't work, teachers and students talk about the situation and how to handle it in the future.
- Safekeeping—Adults are responsible for keeping the classroom safe.

Aggressive Behavior

When teachers observe aggressive behavior such as hitting, pushing, and pulling hair, they will seek to intervene and help the offending student to develop age appropriate problem solving skills. Most of the time when a minor infraction occurs for the first time it will be dealt with by verbal correction and consequences in the classroom. If a minor infraction is repeated multiple times in the same day, a parent may be contacted and asked to pick the student up from school. For major infractions we use our best judgment for interventions that may include early pick up, suspension or dismissal from the program.

A student who causes injury to another student (such as a bruise, bite mark, or an injury requiring medical care) as a result of aggressive behavior may be suspended or removed immediately from the program at the discretion of the administrator (who will evaluate the situation, intent, and any documented special needs of the offending student). If a student intentionally hits another student with an object, hits another student in the head / face, grabs another student with 2 hands near the neck / shoulder area, throws objects in anger, overturns furniture, or damages property that student may be suspended or removed immediately from the program at the discretion of the administrator.

Bullying

Lighthouse Community School is committed to providing a safe, respectful, and inclusive environment for all students. Bullying of any kind is strictly prohibited and will not be tolerated.

Bullying is defined as unwanted, aggressive behavior that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The behavior is often repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, and may be physical, verbal, social, or digital in nature. Students and families are encouraged to report any concerns to a trusted adult, teacher, or school administrator. We are all responsible for maintaining a school culture where every student feels safe and valued.

Example of Bullying: A student repeatedly calls another student hurtful names during recess, spreads false rumors about them on social media, and encourages others to exclude them from games or group activities. This causes emotional harm and creates a hostile school environment.

School Response: Lighthouse Community School determines a course of action on a case-by-case basis. The goal of discipline is not simply punishment, but to help students change their behavior while holding them accountable for their actions. Less severe behaviors may result in intervention by a staff member who focuses on guidance and correction in the moment. More severe or repeated behaviors may lead to a referral to a school administrator for a more serious response, which may include disciplinary consequences and parent involvement.

While Lighthouse Community School cannot guarantee that a student will never engage in bullying, we are committed to correcting behavior when it occurs and holding students accountable in a fair and constructive manner.

Suspension & Expulsion Of Students

Grounds for expulsion are defined by this handbook, and they may differ significantly from public school standards. If a parent is uncooperative in completing and returning forms, fails to pay tuition on time, has excessive absences, consistently picks up late, ignores state or county regulations, or disregards known Lighthouse Community School policies, it may be necessary to dismiss the student(s) from the school. In addition, if the administrator determines that a student's behavior substantially disrupts the orderly conduct of the school or it poses an unsafe situation for the student, other students in the class, or staff members, then alternative arrangements will be required.

The school is not required to refund any tuition or prepaid fees in the case of suspension or expulsion. Parents may request a final hearing / review of the expulsion recommendation by the school board. The school board shall have the opportunity to discuss the appeal in private before issuing a final decision.

Health & Safety

Excluding Students & Staff With Illness

In times of significant community spread of infectious disease (such as COVID-19 or flu), parents should exercise an abundance of caution and do everything possible to prevent the spread of infectious disease. To protect the health of our students and staff, Lighthouse Community School requires students to stay home if they exhibit the following symptoms or conditions. This list covers the most common illnesses, but it is not an exhaustive list of all reasons for exclusion.

1. Any illness that prevents a student from participating comfortably in school activities.
2. Any illness that results in a greater need for care than our staff can provide without compromising the health and safety of other students.
3. Unusual behavior (i.e. a student is irritable or less active than usual; cries more than usual or just seems to not be feeling well; exhibits loss of appetite or general discomfort)
4. Any discomfort / headache that is treated with fever reducing medicine in the past 12 hours (i.e. you may not send a student to school if they have taken acetaminophen or ibuprofen the night before or the morning of school since this may be a sign of an emerging fever).
4. Fever of 100.0°F and above in the past 48 hours
5. Any sign of respiratory infection (i.e. persistent cough, shortness of breath, etc)
6. Vomiting / Diarrhea: the student may return to the school after 48 hours of a firm stool.
7. Rash or mouth sores: unless a physician has determined the condition is not contagious.
8. Conjunctivitis: (defined as pink or red conjunctiva with white or yellow eye discharge) until the student has been on antibiotics for 24 hours.
9. Sore / Strep throat: until 24 hours after treatment has begun and the student is feeling well.
10. Head lice: until treatment is complete and all nits are removed.
11. Chickenpox: until all lesions have dried and crusted (usually 6 days).

We will need to send students home (or call an emergency contact) when they exhibit any of the above symptoms. Students are expected to be picked up from school within an hour. Excluded students may usually return when:

1. They are free of fever for at least 48 hours (without using fever reducing medicine).
2. They are free of vomiting and diarrhea for a full 48 hours.
3. They have been treated with an antibiotic for 24 hours.
4. They are able to participate comfortably in all school activities including outdoor time.

If a student has a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19, he / she must follow CDC guidelines before returning to school. **As soon as your doctor determines that your child has a communicable disease, please inform the School immediately.**

Medical Emergencies

Lighthouse Community School maintains first aid supplies for minor injuries. If a student becomes ill, injured, or has an adverse reaction to prescribed medication while at the school, the parent(s) or emergency contact person will be notified immediately. Therefore, it is imperative that student records are kept up to date with current telephone numbers for home, workplaces, cell phones and other emergency numbers. Please notify the school of any changes which occur throughout the year. If it is necessary to seek immediate medical attention for a student, the student will be transported to the designated medical facility. The student's emergency medical permission forms, as well as the health information file, will accompany the student.

Medication

All prescribed medication must be left with the administrator of the school. A medication form must be filled out completely and signed by the parent or guardian before any medication can be given.

If a student needs to have medication(s)/treatment(s) given during the school day, state regulations and school policy require that the parent/guardian must provide written permission for administration of both prescribed and over the counter medication(s) or treatments(s). Only medications approved by the FDA can be administered by school personnel.

Medications must be in the original container and labeled as follows: student's name; current date; dosage; times to be given, expiration date; and any other special instructions.

Any non-prescription medication must have a signed, dated note from the student's doctor stating the name of the student to receive the medication, name of the medication, amount to be given; times to be given; length of time to be given and any other special instructions.

Medications will only be dispensed by the person or persons designated by the administrator of the school.

Special Diets & Allergies

Please see the administrator for information regarding special diets and allergies. Please be aware that certain allergies held by other students (such as a peanut allergy) may affect the ability of your student to bring certain snacks or treats to school.

Hygiene & Sanitation

We pride ourselves in a clean, well-kept school, and we want to ensure the health and cleanliness of each student. Disinfecting classrooms is done on a regular basis. We teach students to practice the importance of proper hand washing with soap and warm water, and we make cleanliness a part of the everyday routine.

Care of Classrooms, Grounds, & Books

Maintaining a clean, attractive environment is important to successful learning. Students may do their part by using the proper waste or recycling receptacles, picking up trash, sweeping floors, wiping tables, etc. This helps keep the classroom clean. Restitution must be made for any damage done in a classroom by a student.

Books are expected to be handled with care and not abused in any manner. Parents/guardians are financially responsible for any schoolbooks or materials that are lost, damaged beyond normal wear, or not returned by the designated due date. This includes, but is not limited to, textbooks, library books, and other instructional resources. Full replacement cost will be charged for any book or material that is lost or not returned. A damage fee up to the replacement cost of the materials may be assessed for materials returned in a condition deemed unusable by school standards.

Visitors

For the safety of staff and students all adults who volunteer or visit must check in through the office and state the nature of their visit to our staff.

Security & Safety Issues

Safety and security of students and staff is a highest priority for our school. Teachers, assistants, and substitutes are given criminal background checks before hiring. Our staff members are trained in CPR and First Aid. We provide safety drill training every 30 days for tornado, fire, and hurricanes, as well as community supervised lockdowns. Our doors are locked during the day. If it is not a normal drop off or pickup time, then you will need to press the call button outside the door. This will ring us, and we will buzz you in.

Tuition & Fees

Financial Responsibilities

Tuition is an annual obligation and the full amount is due by the first business day of August. Tuition can be paid in advance. Families who do not pay the full annual tuition obligation in advance may pay their tuition in 10 equal monthly tuition installments. Tuition payments are due on the first business day of each month (August - May).

Parents/guardians participating in scholarship programs remain fully responsible for all annual tuition obligations, fees, and charges not covered, delayed, denied, or unpaid by the scholarship program. Participation in a scholarship program does not modify the school's financial policies, requirements, or deadlines. Parents are responsible for completing all scholarship requirements and any scholarship payments must be approved by parents within 48 hours of invoice notification.

A late fee of \$25.00 per month will be added to accounts which are more than 2 weeks past due. A service charge of \$25.00 will be added to any account for which payments have been declined for insufficient funds. If a student's monthly tuition installment is not paid by the last day of the month, your child will not be allowed to return to school until the account is made current, including late fees. Report cards, transcripts, other records, and diplomas will not be issued for any account with an outstanding balance. A student will be allowed to enter school on the first day of the new school year only when a prior year account has been paid in full including late fees.

Parents accept the responsibility to meet their annual tuition obligation to Lighthouse Community School for the entire school year. This financial commitment by each family is critical for the operation of the school and the meeting of its budget. It can be difficult for administrators to fill a classroom seat in the middle of a school year, and even when that is possible a midyear change can be challenging for teachers and students in a class.

Families wishing to be released from their annual tuition obligation must give 30 days written notice for a voluntary withdrawal—otherwise they will be obligated to pay the next monthly tuition installment (including families who voluntarily withdraw less than 30 days before the first day of school). Families withdrawing for the following reasons may be immediately released from their tuition obligation: medical hardship documented by a physician, move to a new home more than 20 miles away, death of an immediate family member, or loss of a full-time job.

Non-Refundable Fees

There is no refund of any paid tuition or fees due to withdrawal, absence, or dismissal.

Registration Fee: For both new & returning students a registration fee is to be paid upon notification of acceptance by Lighthouse Community School. This payment confirms your decision to enroll your student for the upcoming school year, it ensures placement at Lighthouse Community School, and it is due at the time of registration. This fee is non-refundable.

Step Up For Students Scholarships

We are a direct provider with Step Up for Students. We plan to accept the following

- Family Empowerment Scholarship – Education Options (FES-EO)
- Family Empowerment Scholarship – Unique Abilities (FES-UA)
- Florida Tax Credit (FTC) Scholarship

Transfers and Withdrawals

When students are transferred or withdrawn, parents should:

1. Notify administration in writing with the date of withdrawal
2. Return all textbooks, and other school property
3. Pay all outstanding bills, late fees, damage fees, etc

Note: Failure to complete any of the above items may result in a delay of report cards and/or records being released.

Parent Involvement & Support

Parent Communication

Communication is essential for a healthy partnership between parents and the school. Email and the parent portal are the primary methods of communication between Lighthouse Community School and parents. Important updates, announcements, and individual student information will be sent via these platforms.

Parents are expected to stay informed about their child's academic progress, behavior, and school-related matters. Consistent communication helps support student success and keeps families connected to the school community.

Parent/Teacher Conferences

Communication concerning a student's academic, physical, and behavioral growth is encouraged. Conferences may be initiated by parents, teachers, or administrators. Parents who have concerns about a student's performance in a specific subject should first talk with the teacher. If a parent still has concerns, a conference may be scheduled that includes the parent, teacher, administrator, and student (if appropriate.)

Subcontractors/Therapists

Lighthouse Community School reserves the right to approve (or reject) any sub-contractor, therapist, aid, or any other person not employed by Lighthouse Community School to provide services at our location. All such personnel will be required to provide an approved background check, references and any other documentation requested by Lighthouse Community School.

Grievance Procedures

Lighthouse Community School teachers and staff seek to maintain good working relationships with parents/guardians. If any classroom or school-wide concerns should arise, they should be dealt with quickly, ethically and in a spirit of cooperation. Students, applicants for admission, employees, applicants for employment, parents and other non-employees shall have the right to file a grievance. Every effort shall be made to arrive at a satisfactory resolution of the problem on an informal basis. If that is not possible, the principles taught in Matthew 18:15-17 are clear guidelines to follow. Therefore, concerns should be registered in the following sequence:

1. For all classroom related issues concerned parties should contact the teacher first, clearly specify the issue(s) and seek to establish an agreed upon resolution and/or plan. Open and respectful communication is encouraged as most issues can be resolved at this level.
2. If the issue is not resolved, then concerned parties should contact the Administration and/or set up an appointment to discuss the issue(s). If necessary, the Administration will meet with all relevant parties and work toward a resolution.
3. If the issue(s) still cannot be resolved, then the Administrator will present the issue(s) to the Board of Directors for recommendations and/or final resolution that is in the best interest of the school community, family and student. A formal written grievance may be submitted to the Lighthouse Community School Board of Directors within sixty (60) days of the original issue and mailed to:

Lighthouse Community School Board of Directors
7107 Boyette Road
Wesley Chapel, FL 33545

All proceedings shall be kept confidential at every level, and retaliation against anyone who files or provides information about a grievance is strictly prohibited.

Legal Dispute Resolution

The parties to this agreement are Christians and believe that the Bible commands them to make every effort to live at peace and to resolve disputes with each other in private or within the Christian community in conformity with the Biblical injunctions of I Corinthians 6:1-8; Matthew 5:23-24, and Matthew 18:15-20. Therefore, the parties agree that any claim or dispute arising out of, or related to, this handbook or to any aspect of the Lighthouse Community School policy and procedures, including any claim or statutory claims, shall be settled by Biblically-based mediation.

The parties agree that these methods shall be the sole remedy for any controversy or claim arising out of the employment relationship of this agreement and expressly waive their right to file a lawsuit against one another in any civil court for such disputes, except to enforce a legally binding arbitration decision.

Each party, regardless of the outcome of the matter, agrees to bear the fees and cost of his/her/its own arbitrator and one-half of the fees and costs of the neutral arbitrator and any other arbitration expenses.

Appendix 1—PEP Hybrid Program For Homeschoolers

PEP Program vs Traditional Homeschoolers

While PEP students are considered to be homeschoolers, there are a few differences to traditional homeschool students.

- Personalized Education Program (PEP) students are registered with Step Up for Students; traditional (non-PEP) home education students are registered with their school district.
- Parents of Personalized Education Program (PEP) students must prepare and submit a student learning plan to Step Up for Students annually. No similar requirement exists for traditional (non-PEP) home education programs.
- Personalized Education Program (PEP) students must take a norm-referenced test annually, and the results must be submitted to Step Up for Students. Traditional (non-PEP) home education students must be evaluated annually using one of the approved methods, and the results are submitted to their school district.

Find additional information on the PEP program from the link below.

<https://www.stepupforstudents.org/scholarships/personalized-education-program/>.

A PEP-Hybrid Program may be right for you if...

- You want your child to have a Christ-centered education with a biblical worldview.
- You want to remain an integral part of your child's learning environment.
- Your schedule allows for at least one parent to be home and focused on their children's education in the role of the homeschool teacher.
- You understand that homeschooling will likely require 2-3 hours per day of instruction to complete all teacher based assignments (and more hours per day if you have multiple students at different grade levels)
- You want to be assured that your child's core academic plan is well rounded and developmentally appropriate.
- You are committed to following the curriculum and to completing all teacher-assigned plans for at-home learning
- Your child is able to keep up with learning objectives and stay on grade level with core subjects (i.e. reading, writing and math)
- You are able to maintain mandatory attendance for classroom sessions

- Your child is able to stay focused and learn well in group / classroom settings and in a homeschool environment.
- Your child is able to act respectfully toward teachers and other students.
- You want to partner with teachers who support and reinforce Biblical training already being taught in your home
- You want your child/family to benefit from group interactions with other children/families with similar value systems and beliefs.
- You want to make sure that your child's instruction fits his/her learning style, interests, and ability levels.

Appendix 2—STATEMENT OF FAITH

At Lighthouse Community School our students, staff, and parents agree to embrace the following Statement of Faith:

- 1 The Bible, including both Old and New Testaments as originally given, is the verbally and plenary inspired Word of God and is free from error in the whole and in the part, and is therefore the final authoritative guide for faith and conduct.
- 2 There is one God eternally existent in three distinct persons in one divine essence, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
- 3 God the Father has revealed Himself as the Creator and preserver of the universe, to Whom the entire creation and all creatures are subject.
- 4 God created Adam and Eve in His image to live in fellowship with Him. They fell into sin through the temptation of Satan and thereby lost fellowship with God. Through their disobedience the entire human race became totally depraved, that is, self-centered sinners who oppose God, and who by nature are unable to trust, fear or love Him. They are subject to the devil, and are condemned to death under the eternal wrath of God.
- 5 Jesus Christ, the Eternal Son, is the image of the invisible God. To accomplish our redemption, He became fully human, being conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. Jesus Christ, who is true God and true man, by His perfect obedience and substitutionary death on the cross, has purchased our redemption. He arose from the dead for our justification in the body in which He was crucified. He ascended into heaven, where He is now seated at the right hand of God, the Father, as our interceding High Priest. He will come a second time personally, bodily, and visibly to gather the believers unto Himself. He will judge the living and the dead and make an eternal separation between believers and unbelievers. His kingdom shall have no end.
- 6 The Holy Spirit is a divine person eternally one with the Father and with the Son. Through the Word of God He convicts people of sin, persuades them to confess their sinfulness to God and calls them to faith through the Gospel. He regenerates,

sanctifies, and preserves believers in the one true faith. He comforts, guides, equips, directs, and empowers the church to fulfill the Great Commission.

7 The knowledge and benefit of Christ's redemption from sin is brought to the human race through the means of grace.. Through the Word of the Law God brings sinners to know their lost condition and to repent. Through the Word of the Gospel He brings sinners to believe in Jesus Christ, have the forgiveness of sin, become righteous in God's sight, and have eternal life. This occurs as the Holy Spirit awakens them to see their sin and invites and enables them to accept God's grace in Christ. Such individuals will then experience the power of the Gospel to live as children of God.

8 Eternal salvation is available to every living human being on earth by God's grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone. This salvation consists of an instantaneous aspect and an ongoing, continual aspect.

a. Justification is God's gracious act by which He, for Christ's sake, instantaneously acquits repentant and believing sinners and credits them with Christ's righteousness. At that moment, God gives each one who believes a new and godly nature and the Holy Spirit begins the process of sanctification. There is no place for human effort in justification.

b. Sanctification is God's gracious, continual work of spiritual renewal and growth in the life of every justified person. Through the means of grace, the Holy Spirit works to reproduce the character of Christ within the lives of all believers, instructing and urging them to live out their new nature. The Holy Sprit enables believers more and more to resist the devil, to overcome the world, and to count themselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus. The Holy Spirit produces spiritual fruit in and bestows spiritual gifts upon all believers. He calls, empowers and equips them to serve God in the home, in the community, and as a part of the Church Universal. The process of sanctification will be complete only when the believer reaches glory.

9 The same God who created us also instituted marriage when He said that "...a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh" (Gen. 2:24). Marriage is the union of one man and one woman in oneness of heart, mind and body. This marriage relationship of husband and wife is intended by God to mirror God's image (Gen 1:26-27), to multiply a godly legacy (Gen 1:28), and to provide mutual joy, strength, and comfort (Gen 2:18).

Acknowledgement & Statement Of Cooperation

By signing this page, you are stating that you have read the Lighthouse Community School Parent & Student Handbook, that you understand all of the content, and that you will cooperate with all of the policies and procedures

Student Name(s)_____

Parent Name_____

Parent Signature_____

Date_____

The Lighthouse Community School Board Of Directors reserves the right to change or revise any policies or procedures in this handbook if deemed necessary. Written notification will be given to parents.