
Student Handbook



2025-2026

Mission, Vision, & Values



Mission Statement

Discovering God, a love of learning, and a servant's heart.

Vision

- To develop creative and passionate life-long learners who demonstrate the love of God, wisdom of the Holy Spirit, and compassion of Jesus.
- To provide opportunities for students to grow as Jesus did (academically, physically, spiritually, and socially - Luke 2:52) through a strong academic foundation with hands-on projects and STEM based learning.

Values

We value LOVE: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind... and love your neighbor as yourself." Matthew 22:37-38

We value LEARNING: "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it." Proverbs 22:6

We value SERVICE: "Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me." Matthew 25:40

Statement of Faith:

At Discovery Christian Academy our values of love, learning, and service are based on the understanding that the Bible is the inspired Word of God. We believe that Jesus is the Son of God and that He was born of a virgin through the Holy Spirit. We believe that Jesus died on the cross and was raised on the third day so that we can live eternally in heaven with Him. Our view of morality is defined by following the examples that Jesus showed us on earth. Through Him, we can love God and others, learn to live the way He wants us to live, and give of ourselves to those in need. We also understand that God's grace and His forgiveness is the reason that we can follow Him.

2025-2026 School Calendar



August/September						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27

October						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
28	29	30	1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	1

November						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30						

December						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

January						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

February						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28

March						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

April						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

May						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

June						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
31	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

IMPORTANT DATES

August/September

27	First Day of School
1	No School: Labor Day
26	Picture Day

October

9	Field Trip: MOXI children's museum
24	Fall Open House

November

11	No School: Veteran's Day
21	Thanksgiving Feast (12pm P/U)
24-28	No School: Thanksgiving Vacation

December

12	Christmas Dinner Theater
19	Class Christmas Party (12pm P/U)
22-31	No School: Christmas Vacation

January

1-2	No School: Christmas Vacation
19	Field Trip: Wildlife Learning & Cons. Center

February

6	TK-1st: 100th Day of School
12	All School Attendance & Valentine Party
13 & 16	No School: President's Weekend

March

13	Spring Open House
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April

1	Read-a-Thon Reward Field Trip
3-10	No School: Easter Vacation

May

1	Field Trip: Long Beach Aquarium
19	Field Trip: TO Public Works Week
25	No School: Memorial Day
29	Year End Open House & Awards Ceremony

June

3	Last Day of School (Min. Day)
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* Some dates and events may vary slightly. Your family will be notified of any changes.

Daily Schedule



8:15 AM	Bible Time (Worship, Prayer, Memory Verse, Bible Lesson, and Flag)
8:45 AM	Language Arts (TK-2 nd) Mathematics (3 rd -5 th)
9:45 AM	Snack and Morning Recess
10:15 AM	Calendar (TK-1 st) Silent Reading or Literature (2 nd -5 th)
10:45 AM	Mathematics (TK-2 nd) Language Arts (3 rd -5 th)
12:00 PM	Lunch / Afternoon Recess / Physical Education
1:00 PM	Story Time (TK-1 st) Typing & Computer Skills (2 nd -5 th)
1:20 PM	Science / Social Studies – Projects
2:15 PM	Clean Up / Pack Up
2:30 PM	Dismissal

*The above Daily Schedule is a general guideline and may vary slightly based on the needs of specific grade levels, special events, or other circumstances.

Required Student Supplies List



- 3 Boxes of Crayola Crayons (24 ct.)
- 1 Box of Crayola Broad Line Washable Markers (10 ct.)
- 6 Elmer's Glue Sticks
- 2 Packages of USA Gold #2 Pencils (12 ct.)
- 1 Pair of Scissors (5" for TK-1st, 7" for 2nd-5th)
- 1 Package of Pink Erasers (3 ct.)
- 1 Package of Black Sharpies, Fine (5 ct.)
- 1 Package of Expo Markers (chisel tip)
- 1 Set of Crayola Watercolor Paints
- 1 Pair of Child Headphones w/3.5mm connector
- 4 Pack Kleenex Tissue Box Cubes
- 1 Ream 8 ½" x 11" Copy Paper

All students also need a 16" backpack and lunchbox that they can easily open and close without help.

Optional Classroom Donations

(Even purchasing one or two items from this list will help. We appreciate you!)

- | | |
|---------------------------------|------------------------------|
| • Hand Soap | • Blue Painter's Tape |
| • Clorox/Lysol Cleaning Wipes | • Command Strips |
| • Huggies Baby Wipes | • Velcro Dots |
| • Band Aids | • Stickers |
| • 8 ½" x 11" Colored Copy Paper | • Ziploc Bags, all sizes |
| • White Cardstock | • Paint Brushes |
| • Scotch Tape | • Tissue Paper (Any Color) |
| • Jumbo Paper Clips | • Popsicle Sticks (Any Size) |
| • Rubber Bands (Any Size) | • Pipe Cleaners |
| • Staples | • Wiggle Eyes (Any Size) |

Academics

We pray that your child's God-given desire to learn is brought to life because of our approach to academics at Discovery Christian Academy.

Multi-Grade Clusters

Discovery Christian Academy is a one-room schoolhouse, reimagined to create classes and small groups using multi-age clusters. Allowing students to work with different grade levels benefits children in many ways. In a Project Based Learning environment, students are challenged by individual abilities. They will learn from older and younger classmates, as well as support their peers. This learning model also gives older students opportunities to build and expand their leadership skills. Our teaching philosophy encourages students to advance in academics, self-esteem, and social skills.

Solid Foundations

Bible Time: We use the *NirV Adventure Bible for Early Readers* by Zonderkidz in most of our daily lessons as well as weekly memory verses. We teach the Bible and build a relationship with Jesus through object lessons, class discussion, prayer and worship. We also teach monthly character traits: obedience, reverence, gratitude, joy, trust, kindness, self-control, perseverance, patience, and optimism.

Language Arts: We believe that reading and writing are two of the most important academic skills that young children need to learn. Also, a love of reading will make learning other subjects more enjoyable. To create a solid foundation, we use Purposeful Design's language arts curriculum by Association of Christian Schools International. We also use teacher created materials, manipulatives, games, journals, age-appropriate learning apps, and a multitude of leveled reading books and literature. In addition, language arts is often integrated into our Project Based Learning through research and writing assignments.

Mathematics: At Discovery Christian Academy, we want to inspire children to excel in math. We build confidence by placing students where they can succeed while offering obtainable challenges. We teach to mastery and use the spiral approach as a form of review. This means that the children can understand a concept and apply it. Then we move on, circling back so that students don't forget what they have already learned.

Mathematics Continued: In mathematics, we also use Purposeful Design by ACSI as a primary curriculum. Additionally, we incorporate games, hands-on learning opportunities, age-appropriate and educational apps, and teacher created materials. Math concepts are also incorporated into Project Based Learning themes at times. For example, students might make measurements of a dinosaur's foot and compare it with measurements of their own.

Science and Social Studies through Project Based Learning

Project Based Learning starts with a question. For example, "How can we create rules for our class to learn in a safe and fun environment?" Students discuss and brainstorm what they know and what they need to know to answer the question. Students learn through inquiry-based research, mini-lessons, and hands-on learning opportunities. In a social studies unit, children might learn about rules and laws, why they are important, and how they are created. They learn about God's laws and what the Bible says about following rules. Then the students might create a government that writes and passes bills into law. Because this question is relevant to the students, they will gain a deeper understanding of information that applies to their young lives. Because a huge part of Project Based Learning is working to solve a problem through multiple disciplines, most units either incorporate or center around STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math). Another question we have tackled is, "How can we create a dinosaur museum for family and friends to visit?" Students worked in partners, using tablets to research a dinosaur. They measured and created a model tooth and footprints. They used images on projectors to sketch giant drawings of their dinosaur. Each student's scientific research paper was also incorporated in the museum exhibits. Most project units last two to three weeks so our students have time to really answer the driving question and get a full understanding of each theme. There are so many amazing units that we present, and each year is a different experience.

Visual and Performing Arts

Within other subjects, we integrate music and art. For example, we may incorporate music during Bible Time through praise and worship, or we might use different art mediums to make a social studies unit come alive. At Open Houses, students often have opportunities to present information through speeches, perform skits, or sing songs. through organized sports or family activities.

Physical Education

Students participate in organized physical education each week. Younger students focus on building specific skills like throwing, catching, kicking, hitting, and balance. Older students will build on the skills above and may incorporate these abilities in organized games. Hybrid homeschool students also log physical education hours through organized sports or family activities.

Discover STEM Lab

In addition to our regular curriculum, we have a makerspace lab where students can build STEM projects and create works of art. While other schools allow students to rotate through their STEM lab once a week for less than an hour, we set aside blocks of time that allow every student to practice designing and engineering on a daily basis. Learning in our Discover STEM Lab cultivates inventive thinking that flows into other subjects. Through trial and error, students develop a growth mindset by reworking a problem for the best solution. In the Discover STEM lab, projects are open-ended, without a definitive correct or incorrect solution. This encourages students to think more independently, with less direct instruction because they are learning to problem solve.

If your child wants more time in the Discover STEM Lab or you know families who do not attend Discovery Christian Academy who are looking for a program like this, we also offer Discover STEM afterschool classes for elementary aged students.

Grading Policies

We believe that students can learn and demonstrate their knowledge through many forms. Although, students do take quizzes and tests in their regular math and language arts curriculum, these are not the highest priority at our school because an understanding of academic standards is evident in daily activities and final projects that students create. At our Open House events, for example, you will see how much your child knows about Simple Machines when he/she takes you through each of six models, demonstrating and discussing their real life uses along the way. Final products for each Project Based Learning unit are only one part of our grading system. Daily assignments, student journals, portfolios, and class discussions also illustrate learning and continued growth. For more official records, your child will receive two report cards each year based on grade-level standards.

Homework

Reading with your child each day is our top priority when it comes to homework. We try to make time for every child to complete their work at school, but some students may need to finish an assignment at home. On occasion, your child might have a homework assignment that involves family resources. For example, he/she may be asked to complete a task like visiting the grocery store and calculate the total grocery bill. When learning about rocks and minerals, we created pet rocks, and students took them home each night to care for them. Some of the "pets" had amazing experiences at the park,

Homework

the baseball field, and on family vacations! Because homework is assigned so infrequently, when a student does bring work home, it is expected to be completed before returning to school the following day. Please remember that sports and other activities do not take precedence. Obviously, hybrid homeschool students will have “classwork” on the days they are at home. Often times, homeschool assignments will be sent home on Monday and due that Friday.

Field Trips & Special Events

To introduce or conclude some of our Project Based Learning units, we have special events throughout the school year. While attendance is not mandatory, field trips are highly recommended as the experiences are an integral part of Project Based Learning. Please take note of these important dates in our annual school calendar, and plan accordingly so that your child can participate. If there are any changes on our part due unforeseen circumstances, we will notify you as soon as possible for you to make the necessary arrangements. Any costs involved with field trips or special guests are not included in the price of tuition and will be added to your monthly statement to be paid before the event takes place.

Attendance

Attendance Policy

We value being present at school, especially with our hands-on and cooperative learning that takes place. Alternatively, we understand the importance of keeping your child home if he/she is ill, and appreciate that our families work with us to keep our school healthy. This especially helps colds and coughs not to run rampant. Please also keep your child home if he/she has a fever and for at least 48 hours after the fever breaks. Thank you for your cooperation. We value family time and understand that vacations can be amazing learning opportunities and a time to build special connections. If your family is planning to take a vacation during the school year, please let us know ahead of time so that we can arrange to have work completed before, during, or after your trip. If possible, we will create a Project Based Learning opportunity for your child based on your travels.

Reporting Absences or Tardiness

If your child does miss a day of school due to illness or other reasons, or if your child is arriving late, we require written communication from a parent in the form of a text, email, or hand-written note. If possible, we ask that you contact us the same morning your child will be absent or tardy. Because our curriculum is primarily Project Based Learning, make-up work will likely vary from the assignments the child may have completed if present. Your child will have one day for every day that he/she was absent to complete all absent assignments. If more time is needed, requests can be made and will be granted on a case-by-case basis. Failure to complete assignments may affect the student's grades on his/her report card.

Pick-Up and Drop-Off

Drop-Off and Pick-Up Procedures

Each morning, we open our doors at 8:00 AM. Please walk your child inside and connect with one of our teaching team before leaving him/her. School begins promptly at 8:15 AM and late arrivers will miss a portion of our morning activities. Dismissal is at 2:30 PM each day. We ask that you are on time and wait outside until we open the door. We will dismiss students one at a time to ensure that they connect with a parent or guardian.

A fee of \$5.00 will be charged for every five minutes a child is left waiting after his/her scheduled pick-up time.

Health and Safety

Medications

When it is necessary to administer a prescription or over-the-counter medication to your child during school hours, a parent/guardian will be asked to sign a medical release waiver. Both the waiver and the medication will be stored in a locked cabinet, and the parent/guardian will be contacted with each dose administered. All medications must come to school in original packaging. Personal inhalers may be kept on the student's person or in his/her backpack, but a waiver allowing school personnel to help administer it must still be signed by the parent/guardian. Unless medically necessary, please apply any lotions, sunscreen, etc. before coming to school. We DO NOT allow personal lotions to be kept in your child's backpack.

Student Property

Teachers may ask students to bring items from home to share with the class. We are happy to be able to incorporate these into the classroom learning. However, on a general basis, we ask that students keep personal items at home to protect them from getting lost or damaged. On the occasion that a toy or other item does come to school, we will ask that it remain in your child's backpack. Please label all backpacks, lunch boxes, jackets, and water bottles that come to school each day.

Student Lunches & Snacks

As our school is small, we do not offer cafeteria options. Please pack your child a healthy lunch with an additional snack that can be eaten at the morning recess. On occasion, we might have food brought in from local eateries. In this case, you would have plenty of notice, and you are always welcome to opt out.

Food & Allergies

It is the parent's responsibility to notify the school if your child has an allergy to food or nature so that our Project Based Learning lessons can be carefully planned. We do allow families to provide a special treat to share for child birthdays, but we will do our best to communicate, in advance, of any snacks related to class parties or curriculum so that you can help substitute accordingly as needed.

Communications

We make an effort to stay in close communication with families. We send announcement and reminder texts through TalkingPoints, our communication app. We also send home occasional newsletters and flyers of specific events. You may also see photos and announcements on our FaceBook and Instagram @DiscoveryCA91320. You can contact us in-person, by phone/text at (805) 807-6911, or by email at info@DiscoveryCA.org. You can also find most information on our website (DiscoveryCA.org). Parent/Teacher conferences are also available upon request.

Discipline

Because Project Based Learning is highly student-driven, it is crucial that we maintain discipline. Though we are often very busy bees, and onlookers may view our classroom as controlled chaos. That being said, our students are a big part of the rule making process at the beginning of the school year. Because they are involved in creating the rules, they feel a sense of ownership to keep them. Often, they also help their peers maintain them. One method to encourage students to build strong work habits is our "super tickets and strikes" method of discipline. Super tickets are rewarded for things like exhibiting good behavior, completing assignments, being a kind friend, helping with clean up, or saying a Bible memory verse. At the end of each week, students can exchange their super tickets for small prizes at our Discovery Store. When a student makes choices contrary to our class rules, a strike is earned. Each strike results in one minute of lost recess. A teacher will always take time with the student to discuss the actions that led to the discipline as well as appropriate alternatives should a similar situation arise in the future. We make every effort to use positive reinforcement through words and support. If three strikes are earned in one day, we will communicate with the parent/guardian so that we can work together to help modify any negative behaviors. To set every student up for success, children with habitual discipline issues may be placed on individual behavior plans. These will be created and implemented through student/parent/teacher collaboration.

Some of our students, along with one of our teachers, developed a "crank tank" to keep groups engaged. Simply put, when students are "cranking" on their work, the teacher fills up the jar with "crank juice". Technically, this is a shape on the corner of the whiteboard that is slowly colored in with dry-erase markers every time the group focuses well to complete a task. The students vote on the class reward when the tank gets full. Crank tanks are generally only used for our older classes as younger students are highly motivated by super tickets.

Dress Code

Uniforms

Uniforms are required at Discovery Christian Academy. Polo shirts and dresses in assorted colors with our school logo can be purchased directly through the school. Boys' polos are offered in navy, red, and heather grey. Girls' polos and dresses are offered in navy, red, and light blue. Color selection is based on availability, but we do make an effort to accommodate requests. Uniforms are to be worn every day, unless otherwise specified.

Non-Uniform Apparel

In addition to the required uniform polos, boys may wear long pants or shorts. Girls may wear long pants, shorts, or skirts. To avoid cartwheel embarrassments, please make sure girls have shorts or leggings on under their skirts and uniform dresses. All students are required to wear closed-toed shoes. If your child has not yet learned to tie shoes, please send them in shoes that they can manage easily and be worn all day. We do walk to local parks on a regular basis so tennis shoes are preferred. Long-sleeved tees may be worn under polos on colder days. We ask that jackets, apparel, and other personal belongings refrain from inappropriate logos or sayings. Jewelry and watches that become a distraction from learning are not permitted. Hats are only permitted to be worn when at recess, and they must be kept in student backpacks during class time.

Please complete this page, remove it from the handbook and return it on the first day of school.



Student's Name: _____ **Grade:** _____

☐ I give Discovery Christian Academy permission to include my family in the school directory with the understanding that this directory will only be shared with other Discovery Christian Academy families for the purpose of building school community. Often, this is used for birthday or play-date invitations.

By signing below, you are acknowledging that you have taken the responsibility to review the Discovery Christian Academy Student Handbook and agree to work with us to help your child abide by these policies and procedures.

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ **Date:** _____