

---

# Student Handbook



**2023-2024**

---

# Spiritual Values



## **Mission Statement**

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

## **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.

# 2023-2024 School Calendar



August/September						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
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	28	29	30

October						
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				

November						
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		

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

January						
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	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	29		

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

April						
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				

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	31	

June						
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

## IMPORTANT DATES

### August/September

- 30 First Day of School
- 4 No School: Labor Day
- 29 Fall Picture Day

### October

- 13 Field Trip
- 27 Fall Open House

### November

- 10 No School: Veteran's Day
- 17 All School Thanksgiving Feast (Minimum Day)
- 20 - 24 No School: Thanksgiving Vacation

### December

- 22 Class Christmas Party (Minimum Day)
- 25 - 29 No School: Christmas Vacation

### January

- 1 - 5 No School: Christmas Vacation
- 19 Winter Open House

### February

- 8 100th Day of School (K-1)
- 14 Class Valentine's Day Party
- 16 - 19 No School: President's Weekend

### March

- 1 Dr. Seuss Day (TK-1st)
- Read to Preschoolers (2nd-4th)
- 15 Field Trip
- 22 Spring Open House
- 29 No School: Easter Vacation

### April

- 1 - 5 No School: Easter Vacation
- 19 Spring Picture Day

### May

- 3 Field Trip
- 27 No School: Memorial Day
- 31 Year End Open House & Awards Ceremony

### June

- 5 Last Day of School (Minimum Day)

\* Some dates may vary slightly. Your family will be notified of any changes.

# 2023-2024 Daily Schedule



8:15 AM	Arrival (Opening Activity and Attendance)
8:30 AM	Bible Time (Prayer, Flag, Praise, Memory Verse, and Bible)
9:00 AM	Math
9:50 AM	Morning Snack & Break Time
10:10 AM	Calendar
10:30 AM	Language Arts
11:20 AM	Enrichment Blocks (Blocks 1 & 3: Music & Fine Art) (Blocks 2 & 4: Technology & Spanish) (Fridays: P.E.)
11:50 AM	Read-Aloud Story Time
12:10 PM	Lunch / Afternoon Recess
1:15 PM	Science / Social Studies - Project Based Learning
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 (16 ct.)
- 2 Boxes of Washable Crayola Broad Line Markers, Classic Colors (10 ct.)
- 1 Box of Crayola Colored Pencils (12 ct.)
- 12 Elmer's Glue Sticks or similar brand
- 1 Bottle of Elmer's White Glue or similar brand (4 oz.)
- 1 Box of #2 Pencils (pre-sharpened, please)
- 1 Package of Pink Erasers – any brand (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
- 3 Packages 3x5 Blank Index Cards (100 ct.)\*
- 1 Package of Narrow Chisel Tip Highlighters (4 ct.)\*

\*1<sup>st</sup> through 4<sup>th</sup> Grade Only

**If you prefer to waive the School Supplies Fee, purchase the Required Student Supplies above and bring them to school within three days of your child's first day of school.**

## Optional Classroom Donations

(Even purchasing one or two items from this list will help.)

- Tissue Box Cubes
- Antibacterial Hand Soap
- Baby Wipes
- Band Aids
- 8 ½" x 11" Copy Paper Reams
- White Cardstock
- Jumbo Paper Clips
- Staples
- Scotch Tape
- Blue Painter's Tape
- Command Strips
- Stickers
- Ziploc Bags, all sizes
- Paint Brushes
- Velcro Dots

# Academics



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

**Bible Time:** Because God says to put Him first, we choose to have Bible Time at the beginning of our school day. Although our Bible time sometimes correlates with our Project Based Learning, we also have a structured curriculum. We use the *NirV Adventure Bible for Early Readers* by Zonderkidz. Discovery Christian Academy teaches the Bible and building a relationship with Jesus through object lessons, hands-on learning opportunities, and daily prayer and worship. We also teach monthly character traits: obedience, reverence, gratitude, joy, trust, kindness, self-control, perseverance, patience, and optimism.

## 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. Children will learn from older and younger classmates, as well as support their peers. It also gives older students opportunities to build and expand their leadership skills. Our philosophy on learning causes the students to advance in academics, self-esteem, and social skills.

## Solid Foundations

At Discovery Christian Academy, we teach a strong foundation in reading, writing, and mathematics. Students are placed in small groups, where they can work at the level that is right for them. Rather than struggling or getting bored, children are challenged in a way that they can achieve success.

**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. To supplement, we use 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.



# Academics cont.

**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, but continue to cycle back so that children don't forget what they have already learned. In mathematics, we also use Purposeful Design by ACSI as a primary curriculum. Additionally, we incorporate games, hands-on learning opportunities, and round off with age-appropriate educational apps.

**Enrichment Blocks:** On Mondays through Thursdays, we teach enrichment classes in the form of Spanish, music, fine arts, and technology. Our Enrichment Blocks change about every nine weeks, and we offer two classes per block. Music and fine arts are taught in the first and third quarters, while Spanish and technology are taught in the second and fourth quarters. On Fridays, throughout the school year, students participate in P.E. where they focus on building specific skills like throwing, catching, kicking, hitting, and balance.

## Project Based Learning

This method of hands-on learning involves a dynamic classroom approach. 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. Through inquiry-based research, mini-lessons, and hands-on learning opportunities, children will learn about rules and laws, why they are important, and how they are created. They will learn about God's laws and what the Bible says about following rules. Then the students will 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. 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. Other questions that we have asked include, "How can our class write and perform a play that will tell our friends and family about the first Thanksgiving?" and "How can I design, produce, and market a product that my friends would want to purchase at our classroom marketplace?" There are so many amazing units that we present, and each year is a different experience.

# Academics cont.



## Incorporating S.T.R.E.A.M.

A huge part of Project Based Learning is working on a problem through multiple disciplines. At Discovery Christian Academy, this includes: **S**cience, **T**echnology, **R**eading/wRiting, **E**ngineering, **A**rt, and **M**athematics. We feel that this model allows students to be more engaged in learning and have a better understanding of concepts because they are approached from different angles.

## 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 one of our family Open House events, 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. When he/she starts discussing Rube Goldberg and chain reactions, you will see why a paper test isn't necessary. Final products for each Project Based Learning units 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 our 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. Occasionally, students may need to finish up at home. For younger grades, our regularly assigned homework revolves around the family. Your child might be asked to discuss something that we are learning in class at the dinner table or organize a family game night and talk about it at school. 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, the baseball field, the golf course, and on family vacations! In second through fifth grades, daily homework may be assigned. It should not take more than 30 minutes and is designed to build study skills and positive habits.



# Academics cont.



## Field Trips & Special Events

To introduce or conclude some of our Project Based Learning units, we have special events throughout the school year. Attendance is mandatory for all students at each of these activities as the experiences are an integral part of Project Based Learning. Please take note of these important dates in our annual school calendar on page 2, and plan accordingly so that your child can participate. If there are any changes on our part or due to weather or unforeseen circumstances, we will notify you as soon as possible for you to make the necessary arrangements.

# Attendance

## Attendance Policy

We value being present at school, especially with the hands-on and cooperative learning that takes place. Alternatively, we understand the importance of keeping your child home if he/she is ill. We appreciate that our families work with us to keep our school healthy by keeping children home when they are ill. This especially helps colds & 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. If your family is planning to take a vacation during the school year, please let us know ahead of time so that we can send work with you. 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 an email, a text, or a 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.

# 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 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 children birthdays, but we will communicate, in advance, of any snacks related to class parties or curriculum so that you can plan accordingly.

# 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 can contact us in-person, by phone/text at (805) 807-6911, or by email at [info@DiscoveryCA.org](mailto:info@DiscoveryCA.org). You can also find most information on our website ([DiscoveryCA.org](http://DiscoveryCA.org)).

# Discipline

Because Project Based Learning is highly student-driven, it is crucial that we maintain discipline at all times. 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 “stars and strikes” method of discipline. Stars 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 stars 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 more strikes than stars begins to become a pattern, we will communicate with the parent/guardian. 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” for whole group discipline. 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 whole group is focusing on completing a task. The students vote on the class award when the tank gets full.



# Dress Code

## Uniforms

As with most private schools, uniforms are required at Discovery Christian Academy. With the Uniform Fee that is due on August 1<sup>st</sup>, students will receive five polo shirts in assorted colors with our school logo. Additional items may be purchased to reduce washing or to replace damaged/outgrown items. We also offer uniform dresses for girls at an additional cost. Color selection on additional uniform items purchased is based on availability, but we will make an effort to accommodate your requests. Uniforms are to be worn every day, unless otherwise specified.

## Non-Uniform Apparel

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. All students are required to wear closed-toed 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.

# Pick-Up and Drop-Off

## Drop-Off and Pick-Up Procedures

Each morning, **we open our doors at 8:15 am**. Please walk your child inside and connect with a teacher before leaving him/her. 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 (2:30 pm if not enrolled in our after school care program).**

## Before and After School Care

This year, we are offering before and after school care. If you have an interest, please contact us for more information, as this is a new program.

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.

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:** \_\_\_\_\_